

## Chapter 3: Academic Controversy and Reaction to Strauß' Life of Jesus

### Chapter Overview

Two controversies marked Strauß' career as tutor at the Protestant Seminary in Tübingen: 1) His Hegelianism of the 1830s and 2) the *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* of 1835. An account is provided of similarities and differences already in the *LJ* between the Hegelians and Strauß in which he sought a 'correction' to Hegelianism, not a rejection of it.

The criticism of the *LJ* by his beloved professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur as well as an evaluation of their basis in Baur's work, as well as the review of the *LJ* written by Edgar Quinet are presented.

The chapter ends by addressing Strauß' ambivalent relationship to the Hegelians and his claim that biblical criticism does not necessarily mean either destruction of the text or the denial of history in the text.

### Two Academic Complaints, the Hegelians, and F. C. Baur

With the publication of the *LJ* in 1835, the 27-year-old David Friedrich Strauß joined the elite circle of the best-known 'Second' Testament scholars of all time. Strauß made important contributions in Hegel Studies and in Historical Theology, and the incompleteness of his reading of Kant points to a 'middle' way in theology between Absolute Idealism and Reductionist Materialism.

With the 1839 political revolution that toppled the government in Zurich making clear that he was to be excluded from the classroom, Strauß turned his attention to writing about key individuals who represent a commitment to intellectual self-determination in pursuit of truth no matter at what cost to themselves: Nicodemus Frischlin (1856), and Ulrich von Hutten (1858). In 1870, he published his lectures on Voltaire. I will leave the judgment regarding these biographies to those more qualified than I. However, Strauß' choice to write on these authors was not capricious. He was making a case for unprejudiced scholarship. His 1862 work on Reimarus' unpublished writings represents his re-entry into the field of theology that was capped with his *Life of Jesus Examined for the German People* of 1864.

As familiar as the name David Friedrich Strauß is among 'Second' Testament scholars, one can unequivocally say that there has been no such thing as a 'Strauß reception.' He has been used as a strawman to be ripped apart on the basis of a superficial grasp of his work by his opponents and merely portrayed as a martyr by his defenders. Anything close to a full appreciation of his contributions has yet to begin with respect not only to gospel scholarship itself but also Hegelian' Speculative Metaphysics: and the history of Church Doctrine.

Perhaps an initial surprise to most readers is that Strauß' encounter with resistance in the academy did not begin with his *LJ* in 1835. Strauß had been appointed lecturer (*Repetent*) in the Tübingen Protestant Seminary (*das evangelische Stift*) in 1832, where he himself had studied. Over the course of his first three semesters, he taught courses on Hegel, also a 'son' of the Tübingen Stift, who in Strauß' day was the intellectual 'supernova,' whom everyone 'needed,' to 'know' in some fashion even if they didn't want to know. The conservative Tübingen School was angered by the Hegelian criticism of traditional Christology that turned the Christ event from a historical 'fact' into a 'mere representation' of the unity that is Absolute Spirit and by what they called Hegelian 'pantheism'<sup>1</sup> that challenged the traditional conception of a Personal Deity as well as individual forgiveness and immortality.

Strauß' courses on Hegel were eagerly attended by students, and their popularity led to competition for instructional space in the *Stift* and university – to the chagrin, especially, of the Philosophy Faculty.<sup>2</sup> This led to a complaint from the Philosophy Faculty over lecture hall assignments being filed with the University Senate, whose rejection of the complaint led to the first appeal to Stuttgart (the Ministry of Education) with regard to Strauß.<sup>3</sup> Strauß' response was to stop teaching Hegel. His biographer Ziegler speculates that he did so in order to focus his attention on the writing of the *LJ*,<sup>4</sup> which appeared three years later.

However, when it came to his embracing of Hegel in his *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, the reader today may experience a second surprise. Strauß' intention was

1. Ferdinand Christian Baur pointed out in his "Abgenötigten Erklärung gegen einen Artikel der evangelischen Kirchenzeitung, herausgegeben von D.E.W. Hengstenberg, Prof. der Theol. An der Universität zu Berlin. Mai 1836" in *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*, III (1836): 225\*, that the label 'pantheist' is inappropriate for Hegel. He and the early Strauß are "Immanentists" or today we would say "Pan-en-theists." God is not identical to the world/universe but an inseparable spirit (not substance) ubiquitously present in the world/universe. Ziegler labels Hegel a 'Panlogist,' which is the label I prefer, as will be obvious why below: "[...] Reason, Logos, *ratio* was for Hegel the principle governing the world [*Weltprinzip*]. He was a Panlogist, which one could translate with 'Arch Rationalist, just as well. Ziegler I: 257

2. Theobald Ziegler writes, Strauß faced strong opposing wind in Tübingen because of his Hegelianism: "In fact, though, the submission [of a letter of complaint over Strauß already in 1832 sent to the *Inspectorat* in Stuttgart] demonstrated [...] a completely petty spirit that dominated the academic guild [in the Philosophy Faculty and Protestant Seminary in Tübingen] fearful of a successful competitor as well as a personal animosity and hatred of a critic of Tübingen philosophy and the followers of the new [Hegelian] teaching." Ziegler I: 121.

3. Strauß' biographer, Theobald Ziegler, describes the threat that Strauß quickly posed for the Philosophical Faculty and the conservative, 'Supranaturalist Tübingen School' already with his appointment to tutor in May, 1832. Ziegler writes of the intellectual pettiness present in the 'Academy' (but, of course, not limited to Tübingen): "Already on 9 November 1832, the Philosophy Faculty [...] complained of Strauß that he used every opportunity with intention and zeal in order to cultivate followers for himself and, especially, his philosophical perspective (that is, his Hegelian perspective) and that in the course of it all [...] conducted himself to the highest degree unfittingly according to recognized, educated standards but appealingly to young people." (Ziegler, I: 119)

4. Ziegler, I: 123.

the defense, not the destruction, Christianity contrary to his opponents in Tübingen and as the populist Christians of Zurich (documented in the 'Historical Reader' documents in Part II) violently maintained. He certainly did not issue a call for humanity to leave Christianity on the trash heap of history. Rather, he believed that history is the greatest source of instruction for the improvement of Christianity. In 1841 in his *Glaubenslehre* he wrote:

The crucible or boiling flask in which dogma has been smelted and distilled, all reagents by which it is decomposed, all vessels in which it must be fermented and skimmed off are not made and put into operation by us. Rather, we are able only to take them as they have been given to us in church factions and conflicts, as heresies and synods, as Rationalism, and philosophy etc. *The true criticism of dogma is its history.* In its impartial and vague form, this dogma is present in the scriptures; with analysis and closer examination of it, the church falls apart in antitheses, which, doubtless, led also to heretical extremes. Immediately followed the fixation of church teaching in a creed, the creeds were processed as Church Doctrine. However, shortly but gradually criticism was awakened. Spirit differentiated itself from reality as it was presented in church teaching. The subject extracted itself from the substance of its faith in church teaching up to that point [from mere belief in objective accounts of things and agents] and negated that substance as its truth. This it was able to do because another truth arose – if at first only in itself and undeveloped. *Everything hinges now on the question whether this new, speculative truth [of the Hegelian meta-narrative concerned with the 'kernel' at the core of the gospels' 'husks'] is itself the same as ancient church truth or foreign and opposed to it – or whether there is a middle pathway<sup>5</sup> between the two?<sup>6</sup> (emphasis added)*

The key to the metaphysics of the 'new speculative truth' for Strauß was precisely this issue of the relationship between 'spiritual' content (*Inhalt*) and 'sensuous' form. Ironically, though, this very 'truth' is at the core of Personal Theism's own, Logos metaphysics! The 'new speculative truth' of Hegelianism preserves with the Concept (in the form of the Second Negation in consciousness to think Spirit as Absolute Spirit) what Personal Theism gives in perceptual representations as the historical 'fact' of Jesus as the God/Man Incarnation of the Logos. Both Speculative Metaphysics and Personal Theism make 'Spirit' the core claim of their notions of God.<sup>7</sup> Although Hegel

5. In the *LJ*, Strauß takes a 'third way' to be a question of Christology. Strauß' 'third way' is a *universal* Christology a *universally inclusive* Christology distinct from the *exclusive* Christology of the ancient church and (possibly Hegel) and the *partially inclusive* Christologies of the Hegelians, Schleiermacher, and F.C. Baur.

6. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 71–72.

7. *Personal Theism's God places God outside of history as the origin and goal of history. The 'new' Speculative Metaphysics finds God in history as the World Soul/World Spirit* (see *Glaubenslehre* I: 390–391; *Glaubenslehre* II: 217). Although Ziegler calls Spinoza, Hegel, Schleiermacher, and Strauß 'Pantheists' (See Ziegler II: 352), the more appropriate label for Strauß is Immanentist or Pan-en-theist (not Pantheist or Panlogist) (see the footnote above: 214, n. 1). F.C. Bauer prefers the label "Immanentism" for both Hegel and Strauß. For Hegel, this World Soul is the source out of which all things have emerged, and it is the goal to which all things return. It remains ambiguous in Hegel just what the

is an Immanentist, his theology is as Athanasian (divinization of humanity) as the teaching the ancient church. Consequently, neither Hegel nor Strauß are making a radical claim that signals the death knell of Christianity. Strauß wrote in 1839:

[...] [D]o not fear that Christ [God, as well] might be lost to us if we find ourselves compelled to abandon some of what has hitherto been called Christianity! He remains all the more certain to us, and for everyone, the less we fearfully hold on to doctrines and opinions that can become an impulse to the mind to abandon Christ. However, if Christ remains for us, and if he remains for us as the highest thing that we know and are able to think in religious terms, as the one without whose presence in the mind no perfect piety is possible, then the essence of Christianity remains for us in him.<sup>8</sup>

Ziegler reports that the issue of this 'mediation between the speculative, 'true' content [*Inhalt*] that is the 'Idea'/Concept and the historical representation [*Form*] from Hegel's *Phenomenology* is what Strauß in the 1830s "placed at the center of his thought [...]: ,what Religion has in the form of representation, philosophy has in the form of the Concept."<sup>9</sup> Ziegler writes:

Hegel wrote in the Introduction to his *Philosophy of Religion* [*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, Bd. I, S. 3f (elfter Band der Werke)] that [...] [r]eligion is "the region in which all the puzzles of the world are solved, all contradictions of profound thought are exposed, all emotional pains fall silent. It is the region of eternal truth and eternal peace. Engagement of religion disburdens the Spirit of all finitude."<sup>10</sup> This engagement grants satisfaction and liberation. It is absolutely free consciousness as consciousness of absolute truth and, therefore, itself truly conscious. As *feeling*, it is the pleasure of blessedness. As *activity*, it is concerned with nothing other than displaying the honor of God in revealing God's glory. Those peoples possessing this religious consciousness as their truth dignity are taken to be the Sunday of life. All sorrows, all cares, the sand dunes of temporality float away in this ether whether in a feeling of devotion or in hope. In this region of the Spirit float the floods of Lethe from which Psyche drinks, in which she submerges all pain, shapes all

---

nature of this 'return' is. Is it a return in the sense of an awareness that occurs only in those few minds who have learned to grasp it, or is it a metaphysical return back to Absolute Spirit by all things? Strauß' Immanentism knows no beginning nor end to history. The goal of history is humanity and the spiritual capacity that humanity possesses to 'rise above' its material conditions to grasp 'Spirit.' This is not a capacity or an experience of only the 'few' philosophers who grasp it, Strauß maintained in his universal Christology, but it is the concrete condition of all human beings.

8. Strauß, "Vergängliches und Bleibendes:" 132. Here already in 1838, though, Strauß' 'highest thing' that we can think in religious terms 'without whose presence in the mind no perfect piety is possible' is (Platonic) reason, not the Hegelian meta-narrative of Absolute Spirit, the door to which for Strauß was slammed shut by Feuerbach just prior to Strauß' publication of the *Glaubenslehre*. See Chapter 5: "1838 'On the Transient and Permanent in Christianity':" 566 ff.

9. Ziegler, I: 131.

10. F.C. Baur echoes this Hegelian definition of religion with the more succinct form: Religion is "[...] essentially a relationship of spirit to Spirit (*ihrem Wesen nach nur ein Verhältnis des Geistes zum Geist*). Baur, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung*: 287, 690.

*hardships and the darkness of time into a dream image, and transfigures them into the light glow of the eternal.*"<sup>11</sup> (emphasis added)

Nonetheless, the true content of dogma must be distinguished from the representations of religion:

Ziegler continues:

Dogma is [...] truth and gives us truth, but by means of the inadequate form of representation. Dogma is identical with philosophy in content [*inhaltlich*] [...] It is distinguished from philosophy only in form. Consequently, [religious] dogma remains more or less far behind philosophy.<sup>12</sup>

Ziegler comments: "One can place the emphasis here either on the certification of the identical truth *content* of both [dogma and philosophy] (on the speculative kernel of dogma) or on the pointing out of the inadequacy of the form of *representation* [in dogma], in other words, on the un-philosophical of this representation of husks and shells."<sup>13</sup> (emphasis added) Ziegler claims that during his service year as vicar in Klein-Ingersheim (Fall of 1830 – Fall of 1831), as required for becoming a pastor, Strauß emphasized the first option that stressed the identical truth between philosophy and Dogma, which is made clear in a sermon from November 1830.<sup>14</sup> However, as tutor in the Protestant Seminary in Tübingen, he emphasized the second option, the inadequacy of representations for dogma<sup>15</sup> – nevertheless, this is far from championing the destruction of Christianity!

Three years after the controversy over his teaching of Hegel in Tübingen a second letter was sent to the Ministry of Education in Stuttgart. Within four days of the publication on June 6, 1835, of a one paragraph summary of the *Life of Jesus*<sup>16</sup> in the

---

11. Ziegler, II: 338. Ziegler, inadvertently to be sure, is proclaiming the anthropomorphic foundation of all religion.

12. Ziegler, I: 132.

13. Ziegler, I: 132.

14. See Ziegler, I: 63 ff.

15. See Ziegler, I: 132.

16. [June 6, 1835, in the *Schwäbischer Merkur*].

"Tübingen. From C[hristian]F[riedrich] Osiander has just now appeared:

The Life of Jesus:

Critically Examined

From

David Friedr[ich] Strauß

Dr. of Philos. and Lecturer at the

Protestant Theological

Seminary in Tübingen.

With royal Württemberger Copyright.

1835.

gr. 8S. XVI 730 S. 5 fl. 24 fr.

"The author of this book thinks it is now time to put in place of the obsolete supernatural and natural

*Schwäbische Chronik. Zweite Abtheilung des Schwäbischen Merkurs* that announced the pending publication by C.F. Osiander of the first volume of the *LJ*, a letter calling for Strauß' removal from the Tübingen faculty was sent by the chief academic officer of the Protestant Seminary, Johann Christian Flatt,<sup>17</sup> to the *Inspectoriat* in Stuttgart. Obviously, in light of its length alone (the first volume in German is 731 pages), it was not possible for Flatt, who is taken to be a "Rationalist Kantian," to have acquired and read it within four days. In short, driving Flatt's objections to Strauß is not simply Strauß, the author of the *LJ*, who is talking about gospel stories (*mythoi*), but Strauß, the Hegelian from 1832, who viewed all of conscious experience as distinguishable in terms of external, material 'husks' (stories, particular perceptions) but universal as their internal, spiritual 'kernel' (the true content that is imperceptible, Absolute Spirit). Strauß, the threat to the university Faculty in 1832, was now an even more formidable opponent to the conservative Tübingen Theological School because he had the temerity to view the gospels as a particular example of universal consciousness – to be sure, for Strauß, with the God/Man being the ultimate aim of all finite consciousness.

To this day, Strauß as Gospel critic and Strauß as an Hegelian constitute the central foci that frame Strauß' reception – although that reception has focused more on the perceptible 'representations' (*Form*) than on the actual 'content' (*Inhalt*) of both Strauß' 'gospel criticism' and his 'Hegelianism.' In other words, even this limited reception was simplistic and superficial: As gospel critic, Strauß was charged with destroying the historical foundation of Christianity. When it came to Hegelianism, Traditional Theists accused him, of substituting an elitist philosophy of religion inaccessible to the pious Christian in the pew, which, combined with his Gospel criticism,

---

approaches to the history of Jesus a new, namely the mythical (i.e., not that the entire history of Jesus should be taken to be mythic but only that everything be regarded critically whether it contains anything mythical). If early church exegesis proceeded on the basis of a double assumption: that the gospels contain, first, history and, second, a miraculous history; if in light of these assumptions the Rationalists dispense with the second only to cling all the more strongly to the first because in these books bona fide, natural history is found, so can scholarship not remain halfway stuck, but it must drop the other assumption and first be investigated whether and how far we stand on historical ground in the gospels?; an investigation from which, by the way, a concluding statement will demonstrate that the kernel of Christian faith is entirely independent. By the present text taking the path to an un-mythic perspective for each individual element by going through the supranatural and rationalistic readings and their respective refutation, it can serve simultaneously as a review of the most distinguished perspectives and examinations of all aspects of the gospel history and as such is recommended also for students.

"The second volume that concludes the work is already in press and will appear before the end of this year." (Trans. McG)

17. See Erik Linstrum, "Strauss's 'Life of Jesus:' Publication and the Politics of the German Public Sphere" in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (October 2010): 593–616. Linstrum confuses the two brothers. He reports that Carl [*sic.*] Christian [von (*sic.*) Flatt was the chief academic officer (*Studienratsdirektor*, see Ziegler, I: 229) in the Tübingen Protestant Seminary in 1835 who called for Strauß' dismissal (596). However, Karl Christian von Flatt left Tübingen in 1812. It was his brother, Johann Friedrich Flatt who called for Strauß' dismissal. Karl Christian von Flatt was a member (chair?) of the Inspectorat in Stuttgart to whom Johann Friedrich Flatt wrote.

was taken to mean the destruction of Traditional Christian Theism – regardless of his claim to preserve the core doctrine of Christianity: the Incarnation.

### Academic Controversy Based on Criticism (*diairesis*)

The academy depends upon the dialectic that is identities and differences. In other words, academics do not only distinguish between and among particular things (*di-airesis*), but they also seek what unites them, synthesis (*συνείδησις*), as the key to understanding/knowledge. Plato called those who engage this method "dialecticians" (*Phaedrus* 266b) . The Liddell and Scott Greek dictionary defines *diairesus/dihairesis* as "dividing, division, esp. of a class into its constituent parts; διαίρετος: divided: divisible: hence, distinguishable; from διαίρέω: to divide, part or cleave in twain [...] III. to define, interpret." Distinguishing between and among things by *diairesis* is described already by Plato as a bottom-up dialectic grounded in 'the logic of negation' (that 'this' IS NOT 'that').

Distinguishing between identity and difference is often called 'critical thinking' because it is a process that can only consciously occur in the mind. Plato wrote in the *Phaedrus* 266b: "[...] whenever I deem another man able to discern an objective unity and plurality, I follow 'in his footsteps where he leadeth as a god' [a reference to *Odyssey* 5.193]."

Understanding and knowledge consist of recognizing sameness (*σύνθεσις*) as an 'idea'/'form'<sup>18</sup> of a set of phenomena if not (ultimately) a grasp of the absolute unity of all things (Plato's amoral Good in the Simile of the Line of Book VI in the *Republic*). When it comes to 'ultimate unity,' the key question is, then: Are visible, actual things merely a chance aggregate, or are they united a) by a common, ultimate origin (e.g., Plato), b) by 'matter' as concealed possibilities (e.g., Aristotle<sup>19</sup> and Heidegger<sup>20</sup>), c) by

---

18. Plato spoke of 'ideas' whereas Aristotle of 'forms' and Kant distinguishes between concepts of the understanding (theoretical and practical reason) and 'pure' ideas of reason . The 'pure' ideas of reason are Kant's answer to the question: "How are *a priori* synthetic judgments possible? The *Critique of Pure Reason* is Kant's answer. See B 193 ff.: How are pure synthetic judgments possible? Analytic judgment is concerned with concepts whereas synthetic judgments are 'something entirely different'. In other words, categories alone cannot make a synthetic judgment (see B 289, 291, 295) because experience alone is not sufficient although there is no experience of synthetic judgment without a world of experience (B 288–289). In fact, the highest principle of all synthetic judgment and experience is their givenness under the conditions of 'necessary conditions' (B 197–198). The three ideas of 'pure' reason that make 'pure' synthetic judgments possible are: God, the enduring identity of the soul, and the condition of freedom in cosmology (see B xxx and B 699–700).

19. See Heins Happ, *Hyle. Studien zum Aristotelischen Materie-Begriff*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971.

20. See Otto Willmann, *Geschichte des Idealismus. Band 1. Vorgeschichte und Geschichte des antiken Idealismus* (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1973 <1894>), 188–189, Paul Natorp, *Philosophische Systematik*

matter/substance (e.g., Material Reductionism), or d) by energy (e.g., contemporary physics)?<sup>21</sup> As I pointed out above, (*Phaedrus* 266b), the answers to these questions have shaped the discussion of metaphysics throughout the Western tradition, to be sure, with the exception of Kant.

By its very task, then, the academy is threatened by dis-agreement over 'identity' and 'difference:' distinguishing between and among its concepts, to be sure, but also distinguishing between and among its practitioners. Consequently, no one is surprised that Strauß' work was viewed as controversial given the subject matter of its *diairesis* ('myth'). Furthermore, he, too, 'attacked' others; notably, Friedrich Schleiermacher, to whom I will return below and in Chapter 4, "Why Schleiermacher was not an Option," but, especially, Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus. Paulus, whom Strauß took as the primary representative of Rationalism, was the object of Strauß' derision in the *LJ*. Strauß himself by no means maintained the line between a logical and an *ad hominem* criticism of Paulus. However, after Paulus had written a letter in support of Strauß' appointment to the chair for Biblical Theology, Church History, and Dogmatics at the University of Zurich in 1839 specifically *on the basis of encouraging academic freedom and rigorous scholarship*, Strauß limits, dramatically, his criticism of him.

As a given that the academy thrives on controversy, the fire storm is imaginable but the depth of the negative effect on minds and hearts is beyond the imaginable that swept over Strauß with the publication of the *LJ* (and his other, in some respects more important writings in theology). The attack on his person was so vituperative that the criticism took center stage rather than a serious engagement of Strauß' staggering scholarship.

I present examples of the manner in which Strauß was personally attacked in Part II of this Volume I's 'Historical Reader.' Bruno Bauer (not to be confused with Ferdinand Christian Baur, Strauß' professor), the Right-Wing Hegelian,<sup>22</sup> was a leading voice among the Hegelians who attacked Strauß.<sup>23</sup> With a cheap shot, Friedrich Nietzsche in his "David Strauss: the Confessor and the Writer" in his *Untimely Meditations* of 1873 attacked Strauß as a 'classic, education Philistine' (a self-righteous conformist)

---

(Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2000): 376, and Heidegger's discussion of truth as 'concealment' in Paragraph 44 of *Being and Time*.

21. NOTE: This list intentionally ignores the elephant in the room in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> C that was Kant for whom the question was not that regarding an objective truth claim with respect to the chance aggregate of phenomena but the question of the necessary, subjective conditions that make it possible for drawing anything remotely like an objective truth claim.

22. Strauß used the labels "Right-Wing," "Centrist," and "Left-Wing" Hegelians in his "Verschiedene Richtungen innerhalb der Hegel'schen Schule in Betreff der Christologie" ("The Different Schools of Thought on Christology among the Hegelians") in *Streitschriften* III: 95-126.

23. See Ziegler II: 356-357.

for his *The Old and the New Faith*.<sup>24</sup> His opponents made life hell for him, and they made life hell for those few friends who stood by him.<sup>25</sup>

A common strategy of his adversaries was to focus on Strauß' associates as somehow being contaminated by a heretical infection because of their association with him. For example, Ferdinand Christian Baur, criticized for his personal friendship with Strauß after the publication of the *LJ*, was accused of "the professor being influenced by his student." These charges were a key element that led Baur to write his response to the Hengstenberg article in the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*.<sup>26</sup> Even Strauß' visits with his pastoral friends (and attending of their worship services) led to public criticism of his friends by church authorities.<sup>27</sup> One of those public attacks on Strauß and those who dared to be associated with him is the reaction published in the *Schwäbische Merkur* following Strauß' funeral on February 11, 1874.<sup>28</sup> On March 12, 1874, the following declaration appeared in the *Schwäbischer Merkur* accompanied by 214 signatures of pastors:

According to the *Schwäbischer Merkur* of February 12<sup>th</sup> at the grave side of Dr. Strauß, this unequivocal atheist, Director [Gustav] v. Binder, who is at the head of our learned school system and supervisor of our Protestant theological seminaries, made a speech glorifying this man and concluded with the following words:

"The German people will remember you: the German youth will not forget you."

We feel compelled in our conscience to declare that, by such an appearance, a grave offence is given to the Christian faith of our people, and also call attention to the fact that the

---

24. See Ziegler II: 734, 759–760. That Strauß defended the Monarchy in *The Old and the New Faith* should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with his treatment at the hands of the Christian populists in Zurich or the incessant attacks and haranguing by his legion of opponents. He favored a republic but did not view the general populous as ready for the task in his day. See Strauß, *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1872): 261–265.

25. Ziegler names, especially, Märklin, Binder, and Friedrich Theodor Vischer (see Ziegler I: 211 ff.). These three were friends of Strauß since the Blaubeuren years. (See Ziegler I: 107).

26. Baur warned against a 'heretic hunt' and responded vehemently against the charge of 'guilt by association.' See, Baur, "Abgenötigte Erklärung." 220–221.

27. Other examples of friends who faced pressure and the loss of their professional positions: Strauß felt he couldn't visit his friend Märklin when he was pastoring in Calw for fear that the Pietists would revolt against Märklin. (See Ziegler I: 260). On the surface trivial, but lives were at stake: Strauß' theologian friend, Märhlen, with whom he frequently ate lunch in Stuttgart, had to terminate a relationship with a woman because of resistance from her family in light of the fact that Märhlen associated with a "freethinker" (*Freigeist*). (See Ziegler I: 260–261. His Pastor friend, Rapp, in Unter-Münkheim where Strauß summer-vacationed with his children in 1857 and 1858 and whose Sunday services Strauß attended every week, was placed under massive pressure and threats by his church superiors. (See Ziegler II: 556–557, 560–563) His Pastor friend Fischer by whom Strauß' children did their Confirmations was told not to associate with Strauß. (See Ziegler II: 559; 571–572).

28. Strauß died on February 8, 1874.

Straussian teachings ultimately lead to the destruction of the only true foundations of state, family and morality, and consequently only play into the hands of socialism.<sup>29</sup>

What had to have been shattering for Strauß is that very few, not even those whom we would have expected to do so, came to his defense. Most disappointing of all had to be the cool reception of the *LJ* by Ferdinand Christian Baur,<sup>30</sup> his beloved teacher from Blaubeuren and later his professor in Tübingen. Yet, a close second source of disappointment had to be the universal rejection of his Hegelianism by the Hegelians. Ziegler reports: All the Hegelians even those on the left-side with whom Strauß identified himself<sup>31</sup> viewed Strauß as a "[...] renegade and an apostate and sought to eliminate any connection with him and brusquely rejected any cooperation with him."<sup>32</sup> I will return to the relationship between Strauß and the Hegelians below.

### Ferdinand Christian Baur's Criticism of Strauß<sup>33</sup>

Baur is perhaps the most surprising and most disappointing of those reacting to the *LJ*. Strauß was his prize student. It is safe to say that no one influenced Strauß more thoroughly than Baur. A careful examination not only of what Baur said but also from within the framework of Baur's own 'historical' scholarship does not justify his coolness with respect to the *LJ*, but it does provide an understanding of Baur's reluctance to embrace the *LJ*.

Up to the time of Strauß' *LJ*, Baur was focused on the Pauline letters, and, in the same year as Strauß' *LJ*, he produced his masterpiece on Gnosticism that continues,

---

29. Ziegler II: 744–745.

30. By the end of Baur's life there had been a reconciliation even if the wounds were not entirely healed.

31. Strauß self-identification as a Left-Wing Hegelian is expressed in terms of disappointment at their rejection of him, but also accompanied with defiance. See Strauß, *Streitschriften* II: 126). In this respect, Ziegler is correct, Strauß remained a kind of Hegelian (see Ziegler II: 352), at least down to the end of the 1830s. However, contrary to Ziegler, Strauß was not a Pantheist but an Immanentist/Pan-en-theist. Strauß' Hegelian 'confession' couldn't be more clearly formulated than in "Hegel's Perspective on the Historical Value of Gospel History" ["Hegel's Ansicht über den historischen Werth der evangelischen Geschichte"] in *Streitschriften* III: 126: "With this [...] that the truth of the evangelical history is not to be left to philosophy, neither in whole nor in part, but the examination of it is to be left to historical criticism [Strauß called the criticism of theology its own doctrinal history], I would stand with [...] the Left-side of the Hegelian school did they not prefer to exclude me from their midst and to throw me into another school of thought – only to have them throw me back like a ball."

32. Ziegler, I: 210.

33. For a thematic summary of Baur's *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung* itself, see Chapter 5: "Traces of an Intellectual Crisis:" 592 ff.

if only silently, to influence profoundly Gnostic studies to this day.<sup>34</sup> In other words, Baur did not work on the gospels. Baur's son-in-law, who was Strauß' student in Maulbronn<sup>35</sup> between Strauß' vicariate in Klein-Ingersheim and his trip to Berlin (from 1830–1831) and later in the Protestant Seminary in Tübingen,<sup>36</sup> and good friend, Eduard Zeller, writes in his article "Ferdinand Christian Baur":

For [... Strauß] the first task was simply to remove the unhistorical elements of the gospel narratives, to liberate the portrayal of Jesus from the appearance of the miraculous, which the narratives had wrapped around him, and the retrieval of the historically natural point of view by destroying the dogmatic-supernaturalistic view. He could be satisfied with the mythic explanation of the gospel accounts, which ascribed the unhistorical in the accounts to the religious motives and Old Testament paradigms that guided folk legend. However, Baur, the historical scholar, found missing in this explanation a more exact proof of the relationships and tendencies from which those reports had emerged. He faulted such relationships and tendencies as incapable of establishing the actual course of events in place of what was recognized as unhistorical. He believed, however, that establishing the actual course of events was only possible were one not to begin with the storied events but with a criticism of the texts themselves by, first, orienting oneself with respect to the tendency and character of the texts and, then, constructing a determined judgment whether and to what extent the texts can be taken to be historical, whatsoever. Furthermore, he called for attention to the extent that the relationships, perceptions, and interests of their epoch are reflected with adequate obviousness in them in order to determine the point in time of their origination in order to use them as immediate sources for knowledge of their epoch. Baur had articulated the difference in this respect between himself and Strauß in the "Introduction" to his *Kritischen Untersuchungen über die Evangelien*. He called the most unique characteristic of Strauß' work, and at the same time the greatest one-sidedness, is that it gave a criticism of the gospel story without a criticism of the gospels.<sup>37</sup> (emphasis added)

Zeller repeats this last criticism by Baur of Strauß in "Strauß and Renan" and suggests that, particularly on the basis of this sentence, the common perception of Baur's reaction to the *LJ* of 1835 was outright rejection:

Baur identified the fundamental limitation of Strauß' [...] *Life of Jesus* [1835] that it consisted of a critique of gospel history without a critique of the gospels, and since then his remark is not only incessantly repeated but also is taken so one-sidedly that his [Strauß'] critic was virtually asked to renounce his [*sic.*] entire enterprise until he was perfectly clear how the

---

34. See, for example, Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (1958), 2d ed. 1958. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963, and Kurt Rudolph, *Die Gnosis. Wesen und Geschichte einer Spätantiken Religion*, 2d ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980.

35. See Ziegler, I: 84. Zeller was "Primus der Maulbronner Promotion."

36. See Ziegler, I: 116.

37. Eduard Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur" in *Vorträgen und Abhandlungen geschichtlichen Inhalts* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reisland], 1875): 462–463.

gospels were created, who of the evangelists was first and who copied, which sources each had used, to which decade each gospel belonged, etc. [...].<sup>38</sup> (emphasis added)

In his article "Ferdinand Christian Baur," Zeller reported, in addition:

In a word [*Baur demanded*] that the negative conclusions of the mythic explanation be augmented with a positive reconstruction of the historical development of earliest Christianity [...] [H]e found that not enough of a constructive critique was established next to the destructive critique and that, namely, the meaning of the Person Jesus was not adequately recognized.<sup>39</sup> (emphasis added)

Zeller immediately proceeds to report with respect to Baur's criticism of the 'mythic' reading of the text, generally:

Much earlier [...] in a letter of 1826, he criticized [Wilhelm Martin Leberecht] de Wette, saying that his criticism of the Jewish history was too negative, merely trying to show the inner untenability, improbability, and contradictions with the story itself, without putting something positive in the place of what had been destroyed, which would keep the criticism within the right bounds.<sup>40</sup>

It is clear that Zeller viewed Baur's reaction to Strauß to rest on the 'destruction' of history involved in the mythic reading.

What Zeller overlooks, though, is Baur's own 'constructive criticism' that viewed the 'historical' character of Christian incarnation of the God/man to apply not to the individual and temporally located Jesus of Nazareth but to the entire sweep of subsequent Christian history of the church community, which Baur viewed as 'the body of Christ.' Here is where Baur's work on Paul influences his own Philosophy of Religion (see for example, where Paul speaks of the Church as the 'body of Christ:' I Corinthians 12:12 ff.: Ephesians 2:15–16 [to create a New Humanity], 3:3–6 [pagans included in the new body], and 5:30, and Colossians 1:15–18; and which is precisely the key to the Eucharist for Paul in I Corinthians 10:16–17). It is apparent that *what Baur missed in Strauß' LJ in 1835 was Baur's own Christology* that was a version of Left-wing Hegelianism, which did not limit the inclusiveness of incarnation to merely the philosophers as the case with Philipp Konrad Marheineke. Rather, for Baur the inclusiveness of incarnation was applied to those with proper spiritual understanding

38. Eduard Zeller, "Strauß und Renan" in *Vorträgen und Abhandlungen*: 487–488.

39. Zeller reports this from a letter of Baur's of February 10, 1836, in "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 464. Baur's criticism of Strauß here is reminiscent of Moses Mendelssohn's criticism of Kant: "I know the writings of the great authors who have distinguished themselves in metaphysics, the works of Lambert, Tetten, Plattner, and even *the all pulverizing Kant*, only from inadequate reports from my friends or from academic notifications, which are rarely more valuable." From the "Vorbericht" zu *Morgenstunden. Vorlesungen über das Dasein Gottes* (Berlin: Verlag der Contumax GmbH & Co. KG, 2014) 1785: 3. (emphasis added)

40. Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 464.

in the Christian Church. Baur says in his "Die Hegel'sche Religionsphilosophie" ["Hegel's Philosophy of Religion"] in *Gnosis*, a text to which Strauß refers in the *LJ* of 1835:

"If the God/man is the unity of the divine and human that unifies God and humanity, the historical Christ consists of all those persons who seek unification with God as all the bodily parts, which together constitute the living body of Christ and realizes the concept of religion as striving toward heaven from earth. In this humanity, which consists of Christ's constantly growing community [*Gemeinde*] and the fullness of the Spirit, the eternal victory of life over death, is celebrated as the eternal resurrecting and ascending to heaven of Christ's body, as history's living truth and actuality in the [now] present God/man Christ."<sup>41</sup>

In light of Zeller's formulation and without Baur's personal Christological formulations in *Gnosis*, one can understand how it could be concluded that Baur's criticism of Strauß' destruction of the historical foundation to Christianity referred to Strauß' mythic analysis of the text that is taken to be concerned only with what is historically untenable in the gospels.

Before examining more closely this criticism that Strauß only offered 'negative conclusions of mythic explanation,' it is helpful to look at what Baur himself said in defending himself from the charge that he was a 'Straußian:'

"Characteristic of Strauß' critique is the mythic explanation<sup>42</sup> of the events in the gospel account supposedly resulting, in part, from the character of the gospel narratives and, in part, from the untenability of the Supernaturalist and Rationalist viewpoints. However, I would like to know: Where even one place [in my writings on Paul], is my critique based on the mythic point of view? Where do I throw out even a single historical fact that is important for a critical judgment of Paul's letters because it is a miracle, or where do I argue exclusively on the basis of an internal contradiction of its content? Throughout, I proceed on the basis of specific, historically determined facts and seek to combine them into a single whole on the grounds of having first determined historically the different threads. This adherence to the historically given is what is unique in my critique, and it seems to me to meet the standards of our age not only to place the principles of historical criticism over against not only the historical practice up to now, whose limitations are no more obvious than in New Testament criticism than with the example of Paul's pastoral letters, but also *over against the Straußian practice (in which, by-the-way, already characteristically, when it comes to its subject matter [the gospels], there is no completely adequate comparison with my subject matter [the Pauline letters])*. Whoever has read carefully my text must be convinced how important it is to me, not only that nothing is claimed without a clearly established,

41. Ferdinand Christian Baur, "Die Hegel'sche Religions-Philosophie" in F.C. Baur, *Gnosis*: 721, See as well, *ibid.*, 685, 696, 706, n. 30 (actually 709–710), and 734–735.

42. Strauß offered no mythic explanation of objective events. His accounting for myth in the gospels was concerned with treating the individual mythic accounts as 'representations' of their respective 'content,' not an explanation of the causal origin of myths. His *genetic mythic principle* is no causal explanation but a description of how the Evangelists/Early Church came to portray their respective understandings of Jesus of Nazareth.

historical proof but also, and above all, it is my aim to achieve a historical impression that governs the whole. On the basis of this objective, critical perspective, I pointed out clearly and distinctly in the preface to my text that, in fact, *it takes a huge blind spot, when not a pernicious will, to fail to take this historical obligation into consideration*. Without self-praise, I can justifiably claim that no critic of Paul's pastoral letters has undertaken with such rigor the thorough investigation of the literary sources that is required to solve this critical question.<sup>43</sup> (emphasis added)

Baur asks, further:

[...] [W]ill the entire objective foundation of Christianity be placed in question on the basis of my research in the same way as on the basis of Strauß', or can one leave untouched my research in its complete integrity and, nevertheless, be convinced that, when it comes to the authenticity of one or the other of our canonical letters, it is otherwise than one has generally assumed? As much as there has grown more and more agreement concerning the question and it is learned how little is worrying in such an admission, one can just as well also nullify the authenticity of not merely the pastoral letters but also some others of the smaller letters of our canon, should it be necessary, and *no danger will arise with respect to the historical foundation of Christianity*.<sup>44</sup> (emphasis added)

Specifically, when accused of having questioned the authority of the gospel of John as Strauß did already in his *LJ* of 1835,<sup>45</sup> Baur neither accepted nor rejected the historicity of the gospel of John:

"[...] neither in my text on the pastoral letters nor in any of my other writings was I drawn to make any judgment about the historical authority of the gospel of John [...] because I had no interest in denying its historical authority or to make a claim about something that I am unable to prove in that it is by no means my way of doing business to raise critical doubts but, rather, only to allow doubt when it is objectively required. [...] *I have said absolutely nothing concerning the historical authority of the gospel of John; not anything that raised even the suggestion that the charge could be made that I, like Strauß, have already thrown it overboard*.<sup>46</sup> (emphasis added)

In fact, Zeller claims that Baur was so focused on what he identified as the 'authentic' Pauline letters (Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians) as key to disharmony in the early church that he viewed the gospels as secondary.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, Zeller helps us to understand more adequately why Baur wrote about Strauß as he did:

43. Baur, "Abgenötigten Erklärung:" 206–207.

44. Baur, "Abgenötigten Erklärung:" 207–208.

45. Strauß' 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the *LJ* was an attempt to mollify his critics by granting historical authenticity to the gospel of John. He regretted that almost immediately, and the 4<sup>th</sup> edition retracted the amendments. (See Ziegler II: 330 and 331.)

46. Baur, "Abgenötigten Erklärung:" 201–202.

47. See Zeller, "Die Tübinger historische Schule" in *Vorträge und Abhandlungen* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [R. Reisland], 1875): 311–312.

Whereas Strauß came from philosophy to his work, Baur came to his from history;<sup>48</sup> whereas for Strauß the first task was to free himself from the indefensible assumptions that came from the incomprehensibilities of Supernaturalism and from the tortures of Rationalist interpretation, Baur's concern was to achieve a satisfactory judgment with respect to the origin and the initial development of Christianity. Of course, Baur's aim is impossible without a prior or simultaneous examination of the tradition so that his 'historical construction' is in this respect conditioned by the Straußian critique and couldn't achieve fulfilment until this critique had paved the way. However, there always remained a difference between them in method that for one [Baur] the critical contesting of the tradition is only a means for determination of the historical circumstances; for the other [Strauß] the positive in his historical perspective is only the sediment and almost a by-product of his critical analysis.

This difference in method is obvious in a typical fashion already in their respective starting points. In his critique, Strauß turns immediately against those scriptures in which the miraculous and the unlikely disturbed him the most; in part because this material is most frequent; in part because this material is at the center of the Christian religion and affects the history of Christ himself. [In contrast,] Baur sought, above all, a defensible, [historical] base in order to establish further historical combinations; he preferred to concern himself with those New Testament books that are particularly suitable for this purpose as *the most immediate and oldest records of early Christianity, the authentic Pauline letters*. Having first established solid footing with them, he became convinced that almost universally a false understanding of the apostolic age arises in that, as is commonly supposed, it could not have been a golden period of undisturbed harmony. Rather, *he believed to have discovered in Paul's own statements evidence of deep differences and vigorous conflicts that he had to endure with the Jewish-Christian party, and also with the older apostles themselves [...]* [H]e [...] discovered prior to Strauß the foundation upon which he later constructed his far-reaching [historical] combinations [...] as he simultaneously in his writing on the pastoral letters and his investigation of Romans began to distinguish between the authentic and inauthentic Pauline letters, which in the end left *only the four primary letters to the Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians as authentic*. As a consequence, *the question of the historicity of the gospels remained unexamined by him for years [...]*<sup>49</sup> (emphasis added)

*Only in 1853, eighteen years after Strauß' LJ, with his Christenthum der drei ersten Jahrhunderte* did the question of the historicity of the gospels become actual for Baur.<sup>50</sup>

---

48. Strauß and Hegel, as 'philosophers' could just as well have written what Baur writes in his article, "Abgenötigte Erklärung:" 213: "[...] Faith ought never to be passive and convinced of its certitude but always be growing and gaining strength [... in order] that faith distinguishes ever better between the essential and the less essential, between content [*Inhalt*] and representations [*Form*], and separates the inner core, as the essence of the thing, ever more sharply from the outer shell and covering. The more that it [faith] has to give up and drop even in detail, the more it learns to hold on to what remains to it in its unity, with all intimacy and firmness." Nonetheless, Baur qualifies in his "Abgenötigte Erklärung:" 225\*: "I am no adherent of some philosophical system because I know full well, how fallible it is to make oneself dependent on a human authority. However, at the same time, I am convinced that for the theologian there is much to be learned from Hegel [...]"

49. Zeller, "Die Tübinger Schule:" 310–312.

50. Zeller, "Die Tübinger Schule:" 312.

Baur pointed out that no one questions that Paul's letters are earlier than the gospels and that Paul maintained his authority as an apostle even though he never experienced Jesus in person. Indirectly, he is making a criticism of Strauß here for making the gospels the sole foundation of the Christian faith.

Who developed the entire depth and completeness of Christian faith more superbly than the Apostle Paul in his letters? Did he fixate on the details of Jesus' life, [did he] prize particular miracles and incidents, when he looked back at Jesus' historical life, was it not the completely, general events of the gospel story, which everyone must presuppose and recognize in some fashion and which are established without the gospels, that he presupposed and from which he exclusively builds upon? How much is to be learned from the Pauline conception of the gospel in this respect, altogether; from that Apostle, who never saw the Lord sensorily and in life, but, nonetheless, claimed emphatically the independence of his apostolic call over against the Apostles! [For Paul and me (Baur)] it is of least importance whether one holds this in the gospel stories for less historically certain and, thereby, as traditional, or that, which has long since been taken by theologians to be unquestionably given. What matters is only the plus and minus with respect to the relationship between the historical and traditional in the gospel story, and it would be good were this to be grasped and the conflict with 'contemporary' criticism over it reduced so that one can wrestle with what one can successfully fight over.<sup>51</sup> (emphasis added)

Zeller summarizes Baur's judgment of Strauß' LJ:

Baur demanded [...] in a word that the negative results of the mythic explanation be supplemented by a positive construction of the historical development of ancient Christianity [...] [T]he constructive criticism was articulated too little in comparison to the destructive, and the meaning of the person Jesus was not adequately acknowledged.<sup>52</sup> (emphasis added)

There are two threads running through Zeller's portrayal of the relationship between Baur and Strauß: 1) the obvious rebuke of Strauß' focus on the 'incorrectness' of the gospels' and mythic narratives grounded in a 'correct' philosophy and 2) Baur's own focus on the 'authentic' Pauline letters grounded in history. Zeller emphasizes on more than one occasion that both are required for anything like an adequate understanding of ancient Christianity, but he doesn't present why they both are required.

One way of portraying the relationship between Strauß (correct philosophy) and Baur (empirical facts) is to take their claims as leaving only a choice between already possessed *a priori* understanding or *a posteriori* 'facts.' Strauß' understanding in the LJ begins with *a priori* 'speculative philosophy' whereas Baur's begins with *a posteriori* 'facts.'

*A priori* understanding, though, leaves no obvious defense against a vicious hermeneutical circle. If understanding always and already involves *a priori* commit-

51. Baur, "Abgenötigten Erklärung:" 214–215.

52. Zeller, Eduard. "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 464. This is essentially the criticism leveled against Strauß by Paulus in his reference letter in support of Strauß' appointment to the university in Zurich. See Paulus' letter in the "Historical Reader."

ments (either to abstractions or to facts), what protects one from the fallacies of circular logic?

The alternative epistemology to reductionist *a priori* understanding is that a *posteriori* 'facts drive understanding.' All of understanding's content is contained in the experienced representations or facts. We have to determine exactly what the 'facts' are before we can establish understanding. A *posteriori* understanding *appears to have the advantage that it can determine if a claimed content is 'empty' because it doesn't appear in the facts.*

On the basis of these two formulations of understanding, then, we can say that Strauß and Baur stand on opposite sides of this tension. Strauß' 'philosophy' in the *LJ* places the emphasis on an *a priori* 'understanding' of Absolute Knowledge whereas Baur's 'history' places the emphasis on 'facts.'<sup>53</sup> However, to the extent that both embrace the Hegelian epistemology of 'true' content and 'actual' representations, their difference is only an appearance because both place 'truth' as Spirit 'above' appearances. Their difference is only relative and rhetorical.

One may dogmatically claim, as does Hegel, that the 'true' content governs both the idea and its representations, but even Hegel has to add that it is only the philosopher who can recognize, on the basis of her/his grasp of ideas, that the 'truth' of literally false representations is their concealed kernel graspable only as their imperceptible content.<sup>54</sup>

The genuine alternative between *a priori* ideas and *a posteriori* facts is that epistemology of dialectical *synthesis*, which abandons the claim to grasp objective content either *a priori* (Platonism/Hegelianism) or *a posteriori* (Scientism). Yet, *synthesis* here means far more than identifying the *causal* unity between *a priori* understanding and *a posteriori* facts.

Rather, for a *posteriori* experience of appearances (either 'true' or 'false') to occur, it requires that there be a form of consciousness that can *add to* the appearances certain elements that cannot appear directly in the appearances. This 'adding to external *a posteriori* appearances requires a *synthesis* with internal, *a priori* transcendental capacities that by definition cannot appear in external appearances.

The genuine epistemological alternative to *a priori* Absolute Idealism and a *posteriori* empiricism begins with the acknowledgement that *what the a priori and a posteriori dimensions have in common is no substance but appearances.* Without a world of

---

53. I would not question that Baur viewed himself as a 'historian' rather than a 'philosopher,' and he explicitly denied that he belongs to a philosophical school. (See above: 227, n. 48.) However, Baur (as does Strauß) embraces Hegel's epistemology based on the distinction between 'true' content (*Inhalt*) and representation (*Form*), which allowed him to prioritize Spirit (*Geist*) over literalism (*Buchstäblichkeit*), which serves as the basis for distinguishing between 'kernel' and 'husk' in the text – exactly the distinction that Strauß employed to classify the 'mythic' narratives in the gospels. The alternative epistemology was Kant's system of *a priori* synthetic judgment. See Chapters 6: "Theoretical Reason" and 7: "Practical Reason," which, for want of an adequate reading of Kant, all three rejected.

54. On the recognition of truth by the philosopher, see; 148.

appearances, which can be experienced only *a posteriori*, there can be (to the extent that we have ever experienced) no *a priori* experience of *adding to* perceptions. However, *this acknowledgement comes with the corollary that there can be no a posteriori certainties because we can only experience appearances, not the 'things-in-themselves'*

Nonetheless, this synthesis of *a posteriori* 'external' and *a priori* 'internal' elements is no crass bridging of a dualistic subjective substance and objective substance. The 'internal' and 'external' are *a continuum of appearances (not substances)* with each contributing distinct elements that can only be symbiotically related. There is no scalpel fine enough to cut apart their 'differences' in the midst of their inseparability.

Furthermore, this requirement of both the *a posteriori* appearances and *a priori* synthetic judgments is what makes possible the *avoiding of any and all vicious hermeneutical circles of systematic distortion and any and all empty ideas.*

Any and all *vicious hermeneutical circles are avoided* not because this epistemological option denies 'knowledge' of *a priori* synthetic elements to insist on the merely empirical data as arbitrator of judgment, which may provide a limited test for discerning empty ideas but can never be achieved because the empirical is 'only' appearances. Rather, the vicious hermeneutical circle is avoided by focusing on the *universally required, a priori* transcendental elements/capacities that make possible any and all *a posteriori* experience.

In addition, *empty ideas are avoided* not because every idea must be manifest in appearances but because those ideas are empty that are neither given *a posteriori* in the appearances nor (!) required by those appearances *a priori*.

In the "Preface" to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant distinguishes logic from metaphysics precisely with respect to elements that must be *added to* phenomena because they are not directly given by the phenomena:

"One can call empirical all philosophy in so far as it is based on grounds of experience; one can call philosophy that presents its doctrines solely from *a priori* principles *pure* philosophy. The latter, if it is merely formal, is called logic; but if it is limited to determinate objects of the understanding it is called metaphysics."<sup>55</sup>

Clearly, according to Kant, metaphysics is concerned with *understanding* phenomena, not with speculative, ultimate, logical, *causal* explanations of the origin and/or goal of reality. These imperceptible 'things' of *pure metaphysics* are a schema of unchanging concepts (a 'canon') that we are capable of 'properly' applying to appearances (e.g., the realm of science) because in addition to 'logic' transcendental consciousness is also governed by moral principles of the organon that includes phenomena.<sup>56</sup>

Unlike logic, mathematics, according to Kant, is a system of *a priori* synthetic judgments (a 'canon') inseparable from *a posteriori* perceptions. Logic is a 'canon'

55. Kant, *Groundwork* AA IV: 388.

56. On Kant's notions of 'canon' and 'organon,' see: 49.

(system of rules) that applies to thought, generally, but is independent of perception and invokes no 'organon' of moral principles.<sup>57</sup> Kant compares logic to grammar in this respect.

The most rigorous strategy of a canon devoted to understanding an organon is mathematics, which is a system of *a priori* synthetic judgments (a 'canon') inseparable from *a posteriori* perceptions (the 'organon'). In contrast, logic is a 'canon' (system of rules) that applies to thought, generally, but are independent upon an 'organon' of perception.<sup>58</sup> Kant compares logic to grammar in this respect.

What is exceptional in metaphysics is that one is able to perfectly complete it; one can survey the capacities of reason according to their sources, comprehensiveness, and limits. Metaphysics is not able to hope to make discoveries in the nature of things, but reason must teach all things. I can discern which concepts are found in reason independent of experience – *It is as with grammar*,<sup>59</sup> *which can be exhaustive but is not a lexicon because as an author writes new words are being generated.*<sup>60</sup>

---

57. On the understanding of mathematics as dependent upon an 'organon' and logic as independent of an 'organon,' see Kant's "The Concept of Logic" in *Logic* AA IX: 11–16. On logic and grammar, see especially, *ibid.* AA IX: 11–12, 15–16.

58. On the understanding of mathematics as dependent upon an 'organon' and logic as independent of an 'organon,' see Kant's "The Concept of Logic" in *Logic* AA IX: 11–16. On logic and grammar, see especially, *ibid.* AA IX: 11–12, 15–16.

59. It is not difficult to hear an echo in this passage of Noam Chomsky's notion of "generative grammar," which is a canon open to any and all languages analogous to logic open to any and all thought. See Noam Chomsky, "Methodological Preliminaries §1. Generative Grammars as Theories of Linguistic Competence" in *The Essential Chomsky*, Anthony Arnone ed. (New York: The New Press, 2008): 33–38. Chomsky attributes this understanding to Wilhelm von Humboldt – who surely (?) had it from Kant. With Kant's notions of logic and grammar as well as Chomsky's "generative grammar" we are concerned with *a priori*, imperceptible elements that make experience, understanding, and, in the case of grammar, communication possible.

60. Kant, *Metaphysik Mrongovius* AA XXIX: 785. In Kant's account of logic (*Logic* AA IX: 12–15), he calls logic an *a priori* analytical 'canon' (set of rules for thought, generally), not an *a priori* synthetic system of judgment as is mathematics, which is inseparable from a world of perceptions (see page 49, n. 36 and "Speculative Metaphysics and Science" in Chapter 1: nts. 175, 176, and 177), so that grammar here can be taken to be a foreshadowing of Chomsky's 'generative grammar'. Kant employed the analogy to grammar in his *Logic* as an example of an *a priori* analytical system analogous to logic itself (that is, as constituting the conditions for the application of understanding, generally, irrespective of particular objects): "When we set aside all knowledge that we take from objects and merely contemplate our application of understanding generally, *we discover those rules of the understanding that are absolutely necessary for our attention irrespective of all particular objects because without these we cannot think at all.* For this reason, these rules can be taken to be *a priori* (that is, independent of all experience) because they constitute merely the conditions for the application of the understanding generally – whether pure or empirical. From this follows that *the universal and necessary rules of thought, generally, are concerned merely with the form, by no means the matter, of these universal and necessary rules. Thus, the science concerned with these universal and necessary rules is merely a science of the form of our understanding knowledge or thought.* We can construct an idea of the possibility of such a science as if of general grammar that contains nothing more than the mere 'form' of language without words, which belong to the matter [*Materie*] of language." Kant, *Logik* AA LX: 12 (emphasis added)

In other words, theoretical reason understands appearances because it employs abstract 'canons' (rule systems and *a priori* capacities) in order to sort out the phenomena so that it can understand them. If the 'canon' is ignored or not adequately grasped, the understanding of phenomena will be inadequate.

We can apply this understanding of theoretical reason to Strauß' philosophical approach to the gospel narratives. The 'canon' (for Strauß in 1835) was Hegel's dialectical logic that insisted on a causal relationship between logic and the world/universe of phenomena. The 'truth' of the scriptures for Hegel was their ideational 'content' (Absolute Spirit's dialectical logic of negation) not their factual/actual 'representations'.

Nonetheless, Baur's emphasis on 'history' is equally important. There is no experience without phenomena, and proper understanding requires paying attention to the phenomena as well as the imperceptible *a priori* conditions that make possible consciousness of phenomena. A 'canon' without an 'organon' is equivalent to having a concept without any empirical content: it is empty! Whereas an 'organon' without a 'canon' is equivalent to having empirical content without a concept: it is blind.<sup>61</sup> Analogously, a grammar without a sound system is like a 'canon' without an 'organon': it is silent. A sound system without a grammar is like an 'organon' without a 'canon': it is a meaningless cacophony. Understanding requires both 'philosophical understanding' and 'historical facts,' and that philosophical understanding is most adequate, I will propose below, that is the most comprehensive system possible.

Strauß proposes that Personal Theism has a too narrow, philosophical understanding (an *a priori* canon), which shaped Personal Theism's understanding of the narratives. Consequently, the tradition took the gospel stories to be historical accounts of factual events. Baur is charging Strauß of ignoring the historical circumstances that stimulated the gospel authors to create their narratives, in the first place.

In the *LJ*, Strauß' placed an, Immanentism/Pan-en-theism on the theological throne to replace Personal Theism's, Personal God and Rationalism's Christian Platonism – all of which make claims for objective, ultimate causal agency as the ground of religion. To be sure, with the *Life of Jesus Examined for the German People* (1864) Strauß has commenced a turn to an even broader theism/morality with emphasis on the significance of the particulars of history at the core of a 'religion of humanity' (*Humanitätsreligion*) that replaces the objective 'Christ religion' (*Christusreligion*)<sup>62</sup> of Personal Theism, Rationalism, and Hegelian Absolute Spirit's Double Negation. Nonetheless, there is much more to be said than Strauß said about the nature of the Kantian Copernican Turn.<sup>63</sup> However, first a look at how Strauß reacted to Baur's criticism as reported by Strauß' biographer, Ziegler:

61. See Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* B 75 (see as well, B 165–166 and 178). On canon and organon, see "Preface": 49, n. 36.

62. See Strauß, *LJEGP*: 625–626.

63. On Kant's 'Copernican Turn,' see the "Preface": 47, n. 35.

[Particularly, Baur's charge that Strauß had thrown the gospel of John over board without proper historical grounding] [...] was experienced as a stab-in-the-back [...]: at a critical moment, his professor and friend had publicly renounced him as well as his project with a cutting rebuke [...] He wrote [to his friend, Adolf Rapp]: "[...] he [Baur] denies any commonality to our cause and supports this with a reproach that he expressed against my critical principles. Under the present circumstances no friend should rebuke me publicly to his personal advantage, even if the rebuke was justified." [...Strauß] then turns to Baur's accusation itself and continues: "However, Baur's reproach is by no means justified. He charges that I for the most part determine the incorrectness of the gospel narratives on the basis of internal contradictions of the narratives with one another or between them and reason without, just as he also external witnesses, that is, without, like him, also taking external testimonies, i.e. contradictory data of the otherwise authenticated history, to help, – as if such parallels could be found for the greater part of the evangelical history from elsewhere!" He did not refrain from expressing his displeasure to Baur. In a letter of August 19, 1836, he spoke openly to him thus: 'especially because I know myself to be deeply united with you by friendship and gratitude, I believe that I need not remain silent or conceal that [...] your paper belongs among the most saddening that I have had to endure with respect to my book. By enduring things such as I have, one becomes steeled and indifferent against harshness from strangers but, when it comes to wounds from friends, no matter how light, one is all the more sensitive. Please excuse my sensitivity and, therefore, do not revoke your benevolence from your most devoted D. Fr. Strauß.'<sup>64</sup>

However, it is important to point out that Strauß offered not merely a negative criticism of the gospels, as Baur suggested.<sup>65</sup> Strauß acknowledged that there was history in the gospels not only with respect to a 'history' of the mythic formation of early Christian theology but also factual information, in all likelihood, with respect to Jesus of Nazareth. To be sure, that factual information was only a fraction of what the gospel authors portrayed as the history of Jesus.

Having learned from the Göttingen School the differences among historical, philosophical, and symbolic myths,<sup>66</sup> it is a serious mistake to claim that Strauß ignored the historical elements in the gospels. Strauß wrote in the *LJ*:

[...] [W]hen we undertake to extract the historical contents which may possibly exist in narratives recognized as mythical, *we shall be equally careful neither, on the one side, to place ourselves on the same ground with the natural interpreter by a rude and mechanical separation; nor, on the other side, to lose sight of the history by a hypercritical refusal to recognize such contents where they actually exist.*<sup>67</sup>

64. Ziegler I: 219–221.

65. Again, in the letter of February 10, 1836, as reported in Zeller, Eduard. "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 464.

66. See § 8 "Rise of the Mythical Mode of Interpretating the Sacred History in Reference First to the Old Testament" in the *LJ*: 52–57 and § 9 "The Mythical Mode of Interpretation in Reference to the new Testament" in the *LJ*: 57–59, as well as § 15 "Definition of the Evangelical Mythos and its Distinctive Characteristics" in the *LJ*: 86–87. See as well, Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs, *Der Ursprung des Mythosbegriffes in der modernen Bibelwissenschaft* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1952).

67. Strauß, *LJ*: 63.

Equally significant, however, is Strauß' observation that

[...] *the pure historic idea was never developed among the Hebrews during the whole of their political existence; their latest historical works, such as the Books of the Maccabees, and even the writings of Josephus, are not free from marvelous and extravagant tales. Indeed, no just notion of the true nature of history is possible, without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite causes, and of the impossibility of miracles. This perception which is wanting to so many minds of our own day was still more deficient in Palestine, and indeed throughout the Roman empire.*<sup>68</sup>

It is not to be denied that Strauß' emphasis is on the unhistorical nature of the text because the unhistorical is what dominates given the limited material that one can legitimately recognize as historical. However, quite in contrast to Baur's suggestion that Strauß only took a negative hammer to destroy the gospels, Strauß concludes here by asking "[...] what is the precise boundary line between the historical and the unhistorical?—the most difficult question in the whole province of criticism."<sup>69</sup> He proposes the following rule:

Where not merely the particular narrative and manner of an occurrence is critically suspicious, its external circumstances represented as miraculous and the like; but where likewise the essential substance and groundwork is either inconceivable in itself or is in striking harmony with some Messianic idea of the Jews of that age, then not the particular alleged course and mode of the transaction only, but the entire occurrence must be regarded as unhistorical. *Where on the contrary, the form [the representation] only, and not the general contents of the narration, exhibits the characteristics of the unhistorical, it is at least possible to suppose a kernel of historical fact; although we can never confidently decide whether this kernel of fact actually exists, or in what it consists; unless, indeed, it be discoverable from other sources. In legendary narratives, or narratives embellished by the writer, it is less difficult, – by divesting them of all that betrays itself as fictitious imagery, exaggeration, etc. – by endeavouring to abstract from them every extraneous adjunct and to fill up every hiatus – to succeed, proximately at least, in separating the historical groundwork.*

The boundary line, however, between the historical and the unhistorical, in records, in which as in our Gospels this latter element is incorporated, will ever remain fluctuating and unsusceptible of precise attainment. Least of all can it be expected that the first comprehensive attempt to treat these records from a critical point of view should be successful in drawing a sharply defined line of demarcation. In the obscurity which criticism has produced, by the extinction of all lights hitherto held historical, the eye must accustom itself by degrees to discriminate objects with precision; and at all events *the author of this work, wishes especially to guard himself in those places where he declares he knows not what happened, from the imputation of asserting that he knows that nothing happened.*<sup>70</sup> (emphasis added)

68. Strauß, *LJ*: 74–75. See as well, Ziegler I: 225–226.

69. Strauß, *LJ*: 90.

70. Strauß, *LJ*: 91–92.

In *LJEGP* (*Life of Jesus Examined for the German People*), Strauß indicates some of the likely 'historical' elements of Jesus' life as preserved in the Gospels. The summary is found in Appendix I: "Likely 'Historical' Elements of Jesus' Life"<sup>71</sup> to Volume II of this project. For whatever reason, though, Baur misrepresented the positive, constructive historical contribution of Strauß' gospel exegesis.

### A Voice out of France: Edgar Quinet's Criticism of Strauß

In a lengthy review of Strauß' *LJ* originally published in 1838, French Edgar Quinet, Professor at the University of Paris, not only dismisses Strauß but sweepingly dismisses 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> C 'German' biblical scholarship, generally, for depressively destroying 'life' and reducing everything to 'cold facts' that stifles feeling in reality, impoverishes nature and thought, and restricts the heart by demanding that the past conform to ideas of the present<sup>72</sup>. This German destructiveness Quinet contrasts with the 'French' who elevate humanity with poetry and rhetoric to defend the orthodoxy of "established belief" in face "[...] of the immense void which [*sic.*] the absence of Christ will leave in the memory of the human race [...]" if the gospels are reduced to myth as 'false' history.<sup>73</sup>

Quinet accuses German Idealism of "killing of the letter" in order to give "Spirit life."<sup>74</sup> Quinet's claim assumes that 'everyone knows' what Christianity's 'established belief' is. Yet, if there is anything that Strauß' 1841 *Glaubenslehre* demonstrates,<sup>75</sup> it is that there is not a single teaching in Christianity over which there is common agreement with respect to 'established belief'. Nonetheless, even the rejection of the notion of an 'established belief' does not mean that 'life' has been sucked out of the scriptures. Yet, one can ask him, "What is life without Spirit?" Quinet claims that according to 'established belief' without the material there is no life, so that German Idealism by 'killing the letter' (literalism), one is 'killing the body'. Spiritual elevation (either in this life or the next) alone is insufficient for the elevation of humanity, according to Quinet.

Especially with respect to Strauß's universal, *inclusive* Christology, Quinet claims that by elevation of all of humanity into the Spirit *in history*

71. See Appendix I: "Likely 'Historical' Elements of Jesus' Life" 985 ff.

72. See Edgar Quinet, "Review of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus,' from the French" in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Dr. D.F. Strauss, Comprising Essays in Defence of Christianity* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Col, 1845): 18.

73. Quinet, "Review of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus,:"" 13.

74. See Quinet, "Review of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus,:"" 6.

75. Demonstrated, as well, by F.C. Baur's 1838, *Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung*.

[... despoils] the individual, in order to enrich the species. The individual is diminished, to enlarge humanity: that which none would dare say of himself is put to the account of all. Self-love is at the same time lowered and deified [...] If the individual cannot himself [*sic.*] be the supremely just, the holy,— if he is incapable of raising himself to the supreme idea of virtue, beauty, liberty, and love,— what is said? And how will these attributes become those of the species? Tell me, how many men will make up humanity? [...] What matters the number, will the many succeed better than the individual? Heap up as much as you please of these empty unities, will the result be less empty than they? Is it not evident, that we labor at a senseless work?— that, if the human individual is but a nothing, alienated from God [...], it is in gain to multiply the zeros? The product of them all will still be zero; and, always aiming at the infinite, we really do nothing but embrace in humanity a more perfect nothing [...] The noblest work of Christianity is to have consecrated the individual in the highest manner;<sup>76</sup> for, if the life of the God-made-Man has a sense comprehensible to all unexceptionable to all, it is because it evinces that the infinite dwells in each [finite] conscience, as well as in the soul of the human race [...]<sup>77</sup>

In other words, Strauß' *inclusive* Christology that takes the God/Man to be the *historical improvement of all of humanity* eradicates the exclusive, salvific role of the particular, historical individual, Jesus, claimed by 'established belief.' However, if 'established belief' is sustained only by rhetoric and poetry, what privileges the resurrection of Jesus as the key to his role as exclusive Messiah over against accounts of others whom rhetoric and poetry speak of elevation to heaven (e.g., Mary, Elijah, Caesar Augustus)? *A rhetorical and poetic resurrection knows no differences among examples except that the theological meaning attributed to the rhetoric and poetry in one case, Christianity, promises the fulfilment of eternal self-interest of the particular believer. Surely, individual, relative, self-interest is a questionable motive for a so-called universal religion.*

Quinet seeks to retain miracles within the framework of his universal self-interest. In order to give credence to the notion of 'miracle,' Quinet tells a personal story of his close call with the capsizing of a boat at nightfall near Malta. As the sailors gave up hope in the 'tempest,'

[...] the captain, who held an oar, suddenly arose [...] Inspired by the danger, he breathed mysteriously over the waters, and cried out, while pointing with his fingers to the ebbing billows, "Children! Look! See the demons are flying away!" The rowers looked around them with an air of stupefaction and then began again to struggle with the wind. A little after, the vessel which we pursued, was seen through the darkness. We were saved.—Is it not evident, that, from the recesses of a library, nothing would be easier than to convert this narration into a myth, borrowed from the Acts of the Apostles? The place of the scene is the same as that of the shipwreck of St. Paul. The demons which fled belong to the mythology of the Pharisees, who themselves have borrowed it from the religion of the Magi. It is impossible that the principle of evil should have appeared under a personal

76. Quinet is affirming Christianity as a religion furthering eternal self-interest. The question: what kind of 'justice' is this?

77. Quinet, "Review of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus':" 26.

form. Have demons wings? Do they inhabit the seas? How many questions are those of this simple incident, not to be solved by reason! It is much easier to admit, that all has been instinctively imitated from the recital of St. Luke [author of the Acts of the Apostles]. On the other hand, it is probable that the rowers, on arriving at their homes, would relate that they have seen marine demons, with wave-coloured wings. Who is to be believed? – the philosopher or the people? And can pure science be so near the borders of ignorance?<sup>78</sup>

The reader can supplement this account, surely, with her/his own experiences or the reports of others of 'providence' that 'saved' one and/or one's group in the midst of certain calamity. Of course, we remain silent about those occasions where others were not granted succor in their terror.

The 'philosopher' calmly answers: We do not have direct access to causes. The 'good news' is that any causal 'explanation' that we propose (e.g., fleeing demons, divine providence, the fates, chance, a causal sequence whose lawfulness escapes us in the moment, etc.) is defensible, especially if we have support of others with our 'explanation' because there is no way to disprove, unequivocally our 'explanation' in light of the fact that we have access directly only to appearances, not causes. The 'bad news' is that, for the very same reason, there is also no unequivocal proof! However, if we accept the 'explanation,' which is really no explanation just a wish, that a miracle occurred, then there is an irreparable tear in the fabric of reality and not only are all our efforts at understanding fruitless, but also our confidence in lawful, causal systems would mean that we could not hold ourselves culpable for our creative, autonomous freedom. A supernatural power could be the direct cause of our agency, and we would not be responsible any more than we can be held responsible for our agency if we were exhaustively determined by physical causality. Between Quinet and his 'German' opponents, as he portrays them, we are determined either by a supernatural or a natural power. Furthermore, if the laws of nature are not trustworthy and events are dependent upon the capriciousness of a miracle worker who conducts her-/himself willfully, then that miracle worker is elevating her-/himself to the throne of God. However, there is no more dangerous placement of humanity on the throne of God than such anthropomorphic projections which defy all calm reflection and understanding.

With respect to Strauß' Christology, Quinet claims that Strauß has erased the full significance of the Christ because he denies eminent causality or the notion that the cause can be greater than its effect: "It is said, that the first term of a series cannot be greater than that which terminates it, which would be in effect contrary to all the laws of development; from whence it is inferred, that Jesus, being the first in the progression of Christian ideas, must necessarily have remained inferior to the thought and the type of succeeding generations."<sup>79</sup> However, Strauß' claim with respect to eminent causality is not that it is false, which, of course, would be to deny not only

78. Quinet, "Review of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus':" 22.

79. Quinet, "Review of Strauss's 'Life of Jesus':" 25.

humanity's ability to create new things. Strauß' point is that it is not 'necessary' that finite effects have an infinitely perfect cause.<sup>80</sup>

Yet, *narrow focus on Strauß' so-called destructiveness ignores Strauß' concern in the LJ to 'positively' preserve the heart of Christian doctrine: the incarnation of the God/Man.* In Hegelian terms, he establishes the 'true' content of the God/Man rather than the 'factual' or 'non-factual' status of the 'actual' representations in the gospels of the God/Man, Jesus. In other words, rather than a concern for poetry and rhetoric to elevate humanity, in the *LJ* Strauß is concerned with the historical character of the gospels in two respects: 1) to account for the formulation of the gospel narratives on the basis of the 'genetic mythical principle' that drew on *pre-figured* stories in the 'First' Testament as prototypes for the 'New' and 2) to account for the 'truth' of the core Christian doctrine of the incarnation of the God/Man in all of history.

### Biblical 'Criticism' Does Not Mean Negative Destruction

The title of Strauß' controversial text in German is *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet*, which is translated as *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. The term '*kritisch*' itself is not unambiguous. 'Critical' frequently means a presuppositionless, rigorous analysis of or the negative dismissal of something, but it can also mean 'critique' as the identification of the transcendental conditions of possibility for experience, understanding, and responsible agency that, precisely, are *not* accessible by analysis of phenomena. When speaking of 'criticism,' Strauß never means transcendental 'critique' but employs the term *kritisch* exclusively in terms of 'criticism' in the sense of *diairesis*.<sup>81</sup>

Strauß' Hegelian epistemology calls for a *Kritik* both in the sense of diaretic 'criticism' and in the sense of a positive/negative 'critical' evaluation of the status of the

80. See Strauß, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History*, Leander E. Keck, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977): 30–31. See as well, Strauß' *Glaubenslehre* where Strauß writes: "I experience Christ as the promoter of the unity of my lower with my higher self-consciousness or promoter of my piety. – Tant mieux pour vous [Good for you!] – This cannot come from me myself. – Why not? – Because only restraints in my religious life come from me. How do you know that, you modern 'I'? The old faith, of course, knew how it knew because it can know nothing true and nothing good can come from the 'I,' which it knows out of the fundamental presupposition of the alienation and externalization of its spirit. However, with your self-certain and powerful modern 'I,' who gives it the means to make such a separation on the basis of pure psychology?" *Glaubenslehre* II: 181 Strauß then adds that Schleiermacher's Christology of an eminent, infinite causality of 'perfect God-consciousness' is 'built on sand:" "[...][T]his is no more than saying that: [the possibility of a sinless human development] must be possible because [in Jesus] it really occurred. Acceptance of this actuality, though, depends according to Schleiermacher on the supposed necessity for the explanation of the internal experience of the Christian[...], which as we saw above is the sole basis for the sinlessness of Jesus. This is indefensible. Furthermore, because Schleiermacher's entire Christology depends upon this necessity [for explaining the internal experience of the Christian], it is built on sand [...]." *Glaubenslehre* II: 193.

81. See the discussion of "Academic Controversy Based on Criticism (*diairesis*):" 219 ff.

'actual' representations of experience. 'True' knowledge is of the concept (*Inhalt*) and must be 'wrested' from the 'actual' representations in a struggle that frees the concept from the capriciousness of 'actual' representations.

In a passage rebuking Wolfgang Menzel's obvious lack of understanding of Hegel in Pamphlet II of his *Streitschriften*, Strauß responds to Wolfgang Menzel's assertion that Hegel claimed "Everything that is, is reasonable." Strauß makes clear here that Hegel does not maintain that all representations (*Form/Representations*) are reasonable. Rather, it is their imperceptible 'content' (*Inhalt*) that is reasonable. Strauß' statement, though, claims that the reasonable is 'actual' (*das Wirkliche*), whereas Hegel speaks of the 'actual' (*das Wirkliche*) as representations, not their 'true' content (*Inhalt*).<sup>82</sup> Although Strauß' statement that dismisses the 'barbarian' Menzel is clear to what Strauß wishes to say, Strauß would have been more clear had he said that the 'true' (ideal content) is the reasonable, not that the 'actual' (*das Wirkliche*) as representations, regardless of their content, are reasonable.

"[Hegel said] that what is reasonable is also real/actual (*wirklich*), and what is real/actual (*wirklich*) is reasonable. [Wolfgang Menzel] [...] renders this "infamous" sentence thus: "Everything that is, is reasonable." The barbarian<sup>83</sup> [Menzel] does not know that there is a great difference between being (*Sein*), preeminent existing, and real [actual] (*Wirklichem*), in Hegel? that Hegel by no means calls everything that exists as such already real? that *the real* [*das Wirkliche*] is for him only the essential core [McG: this is the confusing assertion] of being, wrapped in a wide-layered shell of the merely appearing? whereby in the attacked sentence, which sanctions only the essential in that which exists at any given time as reasonable, everything favorable to the principle of stability disappears.<sup>84</sup>

Strauß' claim here with respect to Hegel's distinguishing between 'content' (*Inhalt*) and 'form' (*Form/representations*) is correct, but his terminology here is equating 'content' (*Inhalt*) with actuality (*Wirklichkeit*, etc.) whereas Hegel calls 'content' (*Inhalt*) true being and *distinguishes* 'content' from actuality (*Wirklichkeit*), which is experienced by and through 'form' (representations).<sup>85</sup>

82. On the difference between content (*Inhalt*) as 'ideas' (*Ideelle*) and representations (*Form*) as actuality (*Realität, Reale, Reelle, Wirklichkeit*), see the "Preface:" 46, n. 31.

83. Strauß' use of 'barbarian' here surely echoes, if unintentionally (?), Hegel's employing the contrast between 'external' phenomena and 'internal' Spirit to dismiss Kant as a 'barbarian' in *Glauben und Wissen*: GW II: 287–288.

84. Strauß, "Die Herren Eschenmayer und Menzel" (1837) in *Streitschriften* II: 214.

85. One can only speculate why this 'short-circuit' occurred. Was it a slip of the moment, or does it indicate something deeper about Strauß' opinion? Clearly, the distinction between 'content' and 'form' is crucial to Strauß' understanding of the significance of 'myths' in the gospels. The mythic refers to the actual 'form' of the text, its 'husk,' whereas the true content of the mythic husks are their ideational 'content'.

One might conclude that Strauß is only concerned to maintain the 'spiritual,' ideal content of the gospels/Christology and dismisses the significance of the 'historical' form/representations in themselves with respect to the spiritual truth. Strauß wrote in the *Streitschriften*: "Give up the non-essential but retain the essential of faith; science changes nothing of faith, *properly understood*." Strauß, *Stre-*

When it comes to the biblical text, though, Strauß maintains the distinction between what the texts 'actually' say (their *Formen*, representations) and what the 'true' content (*Inhalt*) of the representations is. The 'actual' representations of perception present a series of events as if they were historical facts. However, for Strauß of the *LJ* and the Hegelians the 'true' content of those 'actual' representations is a grand, meta-narrative 'above' history that consists of Absolute Spirit coming to awareness of Itself. Consequently, when it comes to a *Kritik* of the 'actual' representations (*Formen*) of events in the bible, Strauß' question is: *Are the gospel accounts merely 'actual' representations of events (Formen), or do those accounts confront the reader with a 'true' content (Inhalt) of humanity's divinization, the union of infinite and finite Spirit?*

Shortly after the publication of the *LJ* in his *Streitschriften* Strauß emphasizes in agreement with Hegel<sup>86</sup> that, when it comes to the miracles, one can only draw a 'negative critical' conclusion with respect to them in the sense that one can only say *what could not have happened* in light of what we now know about physical laws, *not what did happen*. He wrote in *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History* (1865): "[...] one certainly can reach a clear decision about what must be necessarily untrue [violations of physical laws], while, about what in itself might well be true but still might not be, there will always remain an uncertainty."<sup>87</sup>

Clearly, Strauß acknowledges that *his Kritik in the LJ is 'negative,' but the negation is not 'destructive.'* In other words, "[...] no just notion of the true nature of history is possible, without a perception of the inviolability of the chain of finite causes [...]"<sup>88</sup> The 'negative' criticism is not that there is no factual history regarding the details of Jesus' ministry. It is simply that whenever a story violates the laws of nature, it cannot be historical.

[...] [W]hen we undertake to extract the historical contents which may possibly exist in narratives recognized as mythical, we shall be equally careful neither, on the one side, to place ourselves on the same ground with the natural interpreter by a rude and mechanical

---

*itschriften* I: 20. In other words, one might conclude that Strauß was proposing that the 'truth' of the gospels is not influenced by the conundrums raised by their 'form'. However, in *Streitschriften* II, Strauß criticizes Eschenmayer for using the distinction between 'husk' and 'kernel' to claim that, once one has grasped the 'good news' as the kernel of the gospels, one can ignore all of the conundrums and contradictions of their historical details. See Strauß, *Streitschriften* II: 11, 41, and 61. Nonetheless, *if anything is clear, it is that the historical veracity or falsity of the text matters for Strauß when it comes to the text's spiritual content*. See Strauß, *Streitschriften*: I: 36, 53, 76, and Pamphlet II of *ibid.*: 24 It is precisely this tension with respect to the weight of the 'actual' form of the gospels (their history) and the 'true' content (their spiritual truth) along with the circularity of Hegel's meta-narrative of Double Negation that resulted in Strauß' break with the Hegelians.

86. See Strauß, "Hegel's Perspective on the Historical Value of Gospel History" ["Hegel's Ansicht über den historischen Werth der evangelischen Geschichte"] in *Streitschriften* III: 90–91.

87. David Friedrich Strauß, *The Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History: A Critique of Schleiermacher's The Life of Jesus*, Leander E. Keck, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977): 128.

88. Strauß, *LJ*: 74.

separation; nor, on the other side, to lose sight of the history by a hypercritical refusal to recognize such contents where they actually exist.<sup>89</sup>

Strauß proposes four criteria for discerning what is historical in the gospels<sup>90</sup> and acknowledges that "[...]the precise boundary line between the historical and the unhistorical? [...] is] the most difficult question in the whole province of criticism."<sup>91</sup> Clearly, then, to conclude that by treating the gospels as myths means that Strauß believes them to be entirely unhistorical and false and that his aim was to destroy the historical foundation of Christianity is too simplistic. Once acknowledged that we're dealing with a story (myth) rather than a rational, factual account, the critical scholar has yet to decide just what about the story is grounded in a historical fact, or what about the story is grounded in a philosophical or theological truth, or what about the story is legitimately tied to a significant symbol.

Admittedly for Strauß, then, it is especially difficult to distinguish historical fact from stories (myths). Factual history and myths are both discerned in and through 'representations' (perceptions), not on the basis of direct and immediate access to 'what really happened.' However, for Hegelian epistemology, though, what is 'true' is not determined by the 'representations' but by the 'concept.' All knowledge involves an indirect discernment stimulated by 'representations,' but knowledge is impossible of being achieved merely by 'representations' alone.

The claim by Strauß' critics that he is *critically* 'destroying' any and all history in the gospels is not unlike the same kind of blanket (and superficial) dismissal of Immanuel Kant by Moses Mendelssohn, who, after having readily acknowledged that he knew of Kant's work only through the report of his friends, refers to Kant's work as "the complete shattering" (*alles zermalmenden*) of metaphysics and hopes that Kant "will rebuild with the same profound spirit that which he has torn down."<sup>92</sup>

Even in his letter of recommendation in favor of Strauß' appointment to the university faculty in Zurich, H.E.G. Paulus<sup>93</sup> employs the same logic to Strauß as Mendelssohn had to Kant. Paulus expresses the wish that Strauß, *having broadly drawn negative conclusions with respect to the gospels*, "[...] would narrow his position,

89. Strauß, *LJ*: 63.

90. On Strauß' four criteria for establishing historical elements in the gospels, see: 37.

91. Strauß, *LJ*: 90.

92. See Moses Mendelssohn's "Preface" in *the Morgenstunden oder Vorlesungen über das Daseyn Gottes* (Berlin: Christian Friedrich Boß und Sohn, 2014): 3–4.

93. It is quite remarkable that Paulus, who as the quintessential "Rationalist" suffered the brunt of Strauß' ridicule in the *LJ*, should write a letter in support of Strauß' appointment at the University of Zurich. Surely his letter played a role in the subsequent absence of negative criticism of Paulus in Strauß' writing. Paulus' letter is included below in "Part II: A Historical Reader for the Zurich Revolution."

with the same agency and conviction, without holding himself bound to that which he has questioned."<sup>94</sup>

### Strauß' Ambivalent Relationship to the Hegelians

Not only did Strauß not ignore a 'factual,' 'positive portrayal of Jesus,' as Baur and so many others charged, but Strauß also was concerned with far more than a mere aggregate of likely 'factual' elements that one can draw out of the gospel stories.<sup>95</sup> In fact, Strauß satisfies Baur's own requirement of discernment of an 'organic history' that establishes the coherence of the text. I will demonstrate below that Strauß' 'inclusive' Christology, which Strauß articulated already in the first edition of the *LJ*, satisfies this insistence by Baur that history be governed by an Idea, not simply an aggregation of facts. For Strauß, as a Hegelian, Christology (the God/Man) is the central Idea of all history.

Eduard Zeller describes Baur's notion of 'organic history' as follows:

In a word, Baur was consistently concerned in each period of Church History to bring to awareness the driving powers and interests, which internally unify the multiplicities of the phenomena and to explain historical events by and large by means of these, their internal foundation [...] *The idea of an organic approach to history, which governed his entire work from the very beginning [...] is [...] entirely fused with historical empiricism: It is nothing external to the historical account but permeates it from within as the spirit that fills the whole. The organic coherence of facts emerges from out of themselves unsought, and the reader has no reason to be concerned that the historical account for that reason is any less rigorous because philosophy has opened the eyes of the historian to the internal connection of the phenomena.*<sup>96</sup> (emphasis added)

---

94. See Paulus' letter in "Part II: A Historical Reader for the Zurich Revolution" of Volume I of this project: "Paulus – On Theological Academic Freedom:" 387 ff.

95. On the notion of 'mere aggregation' and the 'architectonic' of reason, see the "Introduction" to the Historical Reader of this volume: 325, n. 2. I demonstrate the difference in strategy between Hegel/ Strauß and Kant for avoiding a mere 'aggregate' of moral principles. Hegel and Strauß subordinate 'moral specialties' to the teleological goal of the self-awareness of Absolute Spirit. Rather than treating the moral canon as a set of 'empty' abstract demands as Hegel and Strauß claims he does, Kant insists on the inseparability of form (*Form*) and content (*Inhalt*) – although he means exactly the reverse of the meaning of form and content as understood by Hegel and Strauß. Kant's solution to an aggregation of moral principles is the third step of the methodology of reason: the 'architectonic' of reason that anchors morality both in the transcendental capacity (*Anlage*) of autonomous freedom with its 'canon' that is the *a priori* synthetic foundation of practical reason and in the possibilities, demands, and limits of the concrete world of appearances (*sinnliche Anschauungen*), as 'organon'. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* B 735–884 and 49.

96. Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 476.

Zeller had written earlier of Baur's methodology:

[...] [A] history of external facts [...] is unworthy of its name to the extent that it only lines up facts in a row without going further into the inner coherence of what happened [precisely Kant's definition of an 'aggregate'] [...] [T]his claim must be placed on a historical discipline that has as its intuitive object not what occurred but thought, not external but *internal, the articulated thoughts of Spirit* [Kant would say finite, transcendental consciousness, not Spirit]. History is not merely a random aggregate but a coherent whole. However, recognition of the lawful coherence in history and the skill to reproduce it scientifically is precisely what Baur found missing in his predecessors.<sup>97</sup> (emphasis added)

It was precisely Hegel and Schelling (as well as Schleiermacher, perhaps surprisingly for those who view Schleiermacher and Hegel as antagonistic<sup>98</sup>) from whom Baur derived his notion of history as governed by an 'internal,' coherence of Spirit. Zeller summarizes this attraction to the 'new' Speculative Metaphysics:

What attracted him [Baur] in [...] [Hegel] was, above all, the monumental conception of history with which his own attempts agreed: The idea of an inwardly necessary development of mankind, taking place by means of an immanent dialectic that brings all moments to manifestation according to a fixed law, which lies in the essence of the spirit.<sup>99</sup>

It was precisely this "immanent dialectic" of Spirit that constitutes Strauß' 'positive portrayal of Jesus' through the *Glaubenslehre* of 1841 as no 'random aggregate' of 'facts lined up in a row' but, rather, as a far more radical and *inclusive* Christology than the *limited, exclusive* Christology of Personal Theism or the *limited, inclusive* Christology of the Left-Wing Hegelians. In short, *Strauß did not renounce or 'leave' Hegelianism,*<sup>100</sup> *the Hegelians left him!*

Strauß begins his examination of the historical value of gospel history in the (*Streitschriften*) by pointing out that *for Hegel the central point of gospel history is the incarnation of Christ.*<sup>101</sup> Everything of importance in gospel history, then, depends upon the meaning and purpose of the God/Man incarnation. Exactly this is the question that led the Hegelians to leave Strauß out in the cold.

Strauß insisted in the *LJ*, the *Streitschriften*, and the *Glaubenslehre* that religion gives in representations (*Form*) what philosophy has with its content (the infinite

97. Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 446–447.

98. Zeller claims that Baur viewed Schleiermacher's notion of "absolute dependence" and Hegel's Spirit as identical. See Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 398, 431.

99. Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur:" 402.

100. In this respect, Ziegler is correct, Strauß remained a Hegelian (see and Ziegler II: 352), but contrary to Ziegler, Strauß was not a Pantheist but an Immanentist/Pan-en-theist/Panlogist." See above footnote 31.

101. See Strauß, "Hegel's Perspective on the Historical Value of Gospel History" in *Streitschriften* III: 76.

*Inhalt* of the Concept/Absolute Spirit).<sup>102</sup> For that reason, he developed what turns out to be his own (unique among Hegelians) "inclusive" Christology that the God/Man is not simply represented by the "exclusive" Christology of a particular individual at a particular point in history but realized only in the totality of the human species. Strauß articulated this inclusive Christology already in the first edition of the *LJ*:<sup>103</sup>

[...] [G]od as spirit implies that God does not remain as a fixed and immutable Infinite encompassing the Finite, but enters into it, produces the Finite, Nature, and the human mind, merely as a limited manifestation of Himself, from which He eternally returns into unity. Because man, considered as a finite spirit, limited to his finite nature, has not truth; so God, considered exclusively as an infinite spirit, shut up in His infinitude, has no reality (*Wirklichkeit*). The infinite spirit is real only when it discloses itself in finite spirits; as the finite spirit is true only when it merges itself in the infinite. The true and real existence of spirit, therefore, is neither in God by Himself, nor in the finite alone, but in the interchange of impartation and withdrawal between the two, which on the part of God is revelation, on the part of man religion.

If God and man are in themselves *one* and if religion is the human side of this unity: then this unity must be made evident to man in religion and become in him consciousness and reality (*Wirklichkeit*). Certainly, so long as man doesn't know that he is a spirit, he cannot know that God is man: while he is under the guidance of nature only, he will deify nature; when he has learned to submit himself to law, and thus to regulate his natural tendencies by external means, he will set God before him as a lawgiver. However, when, in the vicissitudes of the world's history, the natural state discloses its corruptions, the legal its misery; the former will experience the need of a God who elevates it above itself, the latter, of a God who descends to its level. Man being once mature enough to receive as his religion the truth that God is man, and man of a divine race, it necessarily follows, because religion is the form in which the truth presents itself to the popular mind, that this truth must appear in an intelligible form to all, as a fact obvious to the senses: in other words, there must appear a human individual who is recognized as the visible God. Of this God/Man, uniting in a single being the divine essence and the human personality, it may be said that he had the Divine Spirit for a father and a woman for his mother. His personality reflecting itself not in himself, but in the absolute substance, having the will to exist only for God, and not at all for itself, he is sinless and perfect. As a man of Divine essence, he is the power that subdues nature, a worker of miracles; but as God in a human manifestation, he is dependent on nature, subject to its necessities and sufferings—is in a state of abasement. Must he even pay the last tribute to nature? does not the fact that the human nature is subject to death preclude the idea that that nature is one with the divine? NO: *the God/Man dies, and thus proves that the incarnation of God is real, that the infinite spirit does not scorn to descend into the lowest depths of the finite, because He knows how to find a way of return into Himself, because in the most entire alienation of Himself, He can retain His identity.* Further, the God/Man, in so far as he is a spirit reflected in his infinity, stands contrasted with men, in so far as they are limited to their finiteness: hence opposition and contest result, and the death of the God/Man becomes a violent one, inflicted by the hands of sinners; so that to physical degradation is added the moral

102. See Ziegler I: 131–132.

103. In the first edition of the *LJ*, this passage is in Vol. II, § 146, whereas in the fourth edition on which the English translation is based, it is in § 150.

degradation of ignominy and accusation of crime. If God then finds a passage from heaven to the grave, so must a way be discoverable for man from the grave to heaven: the death of the prince of life is the life of mortals. By His entrance into the world as God/Man God showed Himself reconciled to man; by His dying, in which act he cast off the limitations of mortality, He showed moreover the way in which He perpetually effects that reconciliation: namely, by remaining, throughout His manifestation of Himself under the limitations of a natural existence, and His suppression of that existence, identical with Himself. Inasmuch as the death of the God/Man is merely the cessation of his state of alienation from the infinite, it is in fact an exaltation and return to God, and thus the death is necessarily followed by the resurrection and ascension.

The God/Man, who during his life stood before his contemporaries as an individual distinct from themselves, and perceptible by the senses, is by death taken out of their sight; he enters into their imagination and memory: the unity of the divine and human in him, becomes a part of the general consciousness; and the church must repeat spiritually, in the souls of its members, those events of his life which he experienced externally. *The believer, finding himself environed with the conditions of nature, must, like Christ, die to nature—but only inwardly, as Christ did outwardly, – must spiritually crucify himself and be buried with Christ, that by the virtual suppression of his own sensible existence, he may become, in so far as he is a spirit, identical with himself, and participate in the bliss and glory of Christ.*<sup>104</sup> (emphasis added) (Eliot trans. modified by McG)

Strauß formulates his inclusive Christology in the *Glaubenslehre* so: "[...] *God's Personhood must not be thought as a single personhood but as universal personhood; rather than on our part personify the Absolute, we must learn to conceive the Absolute as endless personification.*"<sup>105</sup> (emphasis added)

Yet, Strauß now states in the *Glaubenslehre* that in India the claim of divine incarnation in humanity would cause no surprise because it happens all the time and occurs in all persons. The surprise was the language of an exclusive incarnation (avatar) in a God/Man or even a limited, inclusive incarnation (avatar) of the God/Man by those who possess the proper Gnosis because in India such an incarnation happens all the time.<sup>106</sup>

Having summarized the Christological formulations by the Hegelians Marheineke, Daub, as well as Rosenkranz, and presented a 'half-step' formulation by Blasche, Strauß frustratedly asserts in the *Glaubenslehre*:

---

104. Strauß, *LJ*: 777–778. See as well, *Glaubenslehre* I: 515–518. It is important for the later evaluation of Strauß' work and, therefore, not tangential to point out that even Strauß' inclusive Christology, like Hegelian Christology in general, is constructed on an *anthropomorphic* analogy to human consciousness. In the end, it is not the concrete details that have significance but the 'return' to the unity of Spirit. Strauß asks: "This work [of negation], can it be other than the (development of nature) and world history, which the world spirit assumes for itself because it is unachievable by any lesser consciousness? In this respect, the Absolute is essentially a consequence [*Resultat*], is only at the end [of history] what it truly is. This is what constitutes its nature, actuality, subjectivity, or its self-development." *Glaubenslehre* I: 513–514 (Strauß Footnotes to Hegel's *Phänomenologie* S. 16. Vgl. *Logik*, I, 2, S. 195).

105. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* I: 524.

106. See Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II, 208.

The 'Concluding Dissertation' of my *Life of Jesus* should have terminated this lack of clarity and confusion [with respect to incarnation]. *If there is any reality to the unity of God and human nature – it was observed there, this does not mean so much that it must have become actual, like no time before or after, in a single individual. Emptying its entire fullness in a single exemplar is simply not the manner by which the Idea cultivates itself so that, in contrast, being stingy against all other exemplars, it would express itself always and only imperfectly. Rather, it [the Idea] loves to share its riches in a manifold of exemplars that complement one another by means of an alternating establishment and elimination of individuals. The God/Man as presented [in the 'Concluding Dissertation'] and declared to be the key to the entirety of Christology is that, rather than to an individual, an Idea in the sense of a real, generic term is the subject of the predicates that the Church attributes to Christ.*<sup>107</sup> (emphasis added)

The level of Strauß' frustration is palpable when he declares: "After all this, it may be lack of understanding, but it is certainly not conceit if I finally express the conviction here that in order to take Christology beyond the point of view of my "Concluding Dissertation" in the *LJ*, the first intelligible word still has to be brought forward."<sup>108</sup> In other words, Strauß' 'positive portrayal of Jesus' places Christology at the core of the Christian gospel and, in fact, stands shoulder to shoulder with Baur's thesis of 'organic history' even as Strauß expresses his disappointment over the Hegelians' failure to grasp the implications of their own understanding of *incarnation with respect to the human species as a whole* – rather than exclusively and only appropriately to the Christ (Right-Wing Hegelians) or inclusively, for 'mystics'<sup>109</sup> and for those few 'philosophers' who intellectually grasped the 'true' content (*Inhalt*) of incarnation of the God/Man (Left-Wing Hegelians).

Given that Strauß' full articulation of his inclusive Christology, the key to his grasp of the 'organic history' of Christianity, consists of only a few paragraphs at the end of volume II of the first edition after some 1,400 pages, one might grant to Baur that Strauß had in fact 'neglected' a 'positive portrayal of Jesus' because, in a 'quantitative' comparison with his 'negative' criticism, Strauß one can conclude that the 'positive' 'principle that drives his organic history in the *LJ* is only tangential.

Ziegler reports that it was Strauß' original intent to write a 'Hegelian' Part III on the "Separation of the Philosophical Conception from all Doctrinal, Fantasy Representations," which surely would have devoted far more attention to the 'organic history' informed by Hegelianism. In a letter of February 6, 1832, to his friend, Christian Märklin, Strauß outlined the plan for a book consisting of three parts: 1) Traditional Theology (objective Life of Jesus); 2) Critical Theology (subjective truths of the objective account in the pious Christian); and 3) Dogmatic Theology (the

107. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 214–215.

108. Strauß, *Glaubenslehre* II: 240.

109. Strauß called Johann Karl Friedrich Rosenkranz the sole Centrist Hegelian, who defended a Schleiermachiian, exclusive Christology as the condition for *an inclusive mystical union of the 'lower' with the 'higher' consciousness* of those in the church. See Strauß, *Streitschriften* III: 120 and 122.

identity of the Traditional and the Critical).<sup>110</sup> As tutor in the Protestant Seminary in Tübingen, the structure of the work was modified. It still consisted of three parts and *was to be constructed on a Hegelian foundation*:<sup>111</sup> 1) Biblical Teaching; 2) Historical Development of Dogma; and 3) Separation of the Philosophical Conceptual from all Doctrinal, Fantasy Representations.<sup>112</sup> The actual 1,400 page work that became the *LJ* was written between the summer of 1832 and the beginning of June of 1835. It consisted of an interweaving of the first two sections of his original outline. However, his plan for a section on the subjective truths of the pious Christian in harmony with philosophy was never written. In other words, part three, the 'dogmatic section,' was reduced to the "Concluding Dissertation."<sup>113</sup>

Nonetheless, cumulatively the negative judgments of Strauß' work, especially by Baur and the Hegelians, were painful for Strauß and contributed significantly to the cutting short of Strauß' opportunities for an academic career. With his 'friends' finding such fault, his enemies were left unchecked in their heresy hunt against him.

Yet, Strauß had a third concern (beyond gospel criticism and Hegelianism): His work on the history and dissolution of Christian doctrine. This two volume (1,500 page) tome has been ignored to this day. An off-print edition of his *Christian Doctrine in Its Historical Development and in Conflict with Modern Science* (1841) was published by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (2009), but the text has never been translated into English.

The central thesis of the *Christian Doctrine* [*Glaubenslehre*] is that Christianity has always been plagued not only with theological controversy but also, and more devastatingly, internal inconsistencies. The edifice of Personal Theism as absolute doctrine had collapsed long before his *LJ*. Furthermore, there is no better source for 'sorting out' Strauß' relationship to Hegel than this text because Strauß never wrote a text devoted exclusively to his Hegelian theology.

My thesis is not that Strauß was always correct in his reading of the gospels, metaphysics, or church history but, rather, that his work is incredibly rigorous, marvelously informative, and worthy of attention in and for itself. Nevertheless, Strauß was more a product of his time than, perhaps, even he wished to acknowledge. Hegelianism with its promise of Absolute Knowledge was the fashion of the day, especially for young, clever minds. Yet, Strauß was unaware of how Hegel himself had cleverly distorted and eclipsed Immanuel Kant's Critical Idealism.

By 1864 and the publication of his *Life of Jesus Examined for the German People*, a certain, yet still extremely limited, interpretation of Kant's moral theory has taken center stage in Strauß' reflections. Strauß' own 'Immanentism' and his attempt to 'return to Kant' (influenced by a movement among his friends) pushes Hegelian Speculative

---

110. Ziegler, I: 126–127.

111. See Ziegler, I: 132–133.

112. Ziegler, I: 132–133.

113. See Ziegler, I: 148.

Metaphysics to the side. Nonetheless, the lack of anything close to an adequate interpretation of Kant's Critical Idealism and the fact that Strauß' own convictions were rooted in subreption<sup>114</sup> (the ignoring of all that consciousness must *add to* phenomena in order to understanding them and act responsibly in the world) combined with the distortions by his opponents and defenders of the content of his gospel criticism and subsequent scholars' ignoring of his criticism of historical theology makes him an, unfortunately, ignored opportunity for illuminating the foundation required for adequate understanding of the natural sciences as well as religion in general, not simply Christianity. I attempt to demonstrate in what follows what I take to be the incredible, as yet untapped potential of the pathway Strauß was walking at the end of his life.

---

114. All too glaring in the 'materialism' of his *The Old and the New Faith* of 1872, thirty-seven years after the publication of the *LJ*.