

Douglas R. McGaughey

David Friedrich Strauß: A Reading of His Gospel Criticism and Metaphysics

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Frontispiece

“Philosophy cannot be learned, because every philosopher erects his [*sic.*] own edifice on the ruins of another, and if I were really given a system so clear that it always contained irrefutable propositions, I would still not be a philosopher if I learned all its propositions by heart. I would not have learned to philosophize but only possess historical knowledge without knowing the wellsprings from which it was ladled.”¹

Immanuel Kant, *Wiener Logik*
AA XXIV: 799

"One must distinguish between two types of study: There is ruminative (*grüblerische*) scholarship that is of no use to humanity, and there were once philosophers whose whole scholarship consisted in outdoing each other in brilliance. These are called *scholastici*. Their art was scholarship for the academy, but one could not gain enlightenment for common life from it. One can have a great reputation in the academy without the world benefiting from one's knowledge. A second kind of scholarship consists in not only gaining respect from one's fellow guildsmen in the academy but also in extending knowledge beyond the academy and seeking to spread one's knowledge for the common good. This is scholarship for the world. Proper scholarship for the academy is in accordance with academic standards. This is a perfection that should not be despised because all scholarship must be exemplary. Only then can it also be popularized in order to be accepted and used by mere amateurs. At first, student training should engage enough manual skills that we can see how knowledge can best be applied to ordinary people. A person who makes a scholastic use of her/his knowledge is a pedant; s/he knows only how to describe her/his concepts with the technical terms of the school and speaks only in learned phrases. S/he merely applies purely scholastic knowledge in worldly affairs, but here in worldly affairs one must always know how to apply one's knowledge in a popular way so that others, not just scholars by profession, can understand us.

Immanuel Kant, *Menschenkunde*
AA XXV,2: 853;
Olms ed. 1

1. The 'wellsprings' of philosophy are neither merely perceptible nature nor the writings of others but, above all, the imperceptible, transcendental conditions of finite consciousness that make any and all experience, understanding, and responsible agency in the world possible, in the first place. On the challenges and need to discern the 'well-springs' of humanity, see Kant, *The Study of Humanity or Philosophical Anthropology (Menschenkunde oder philosophische Anthropologie)* AA XXV,2: 857; Olms ed.: 6-7.

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