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1972
Abingdon Press
Nashville New York
Part IV
The Consistently Historical Approach to the New Testament

1.
David Friedrich Strauss and Ferdinand Christian Baur

During the years between 1770 and 1790 two scholars, J. S. Semler and J. D. Michaelis had given the decisive stimuli for a historical investigation of the New Testament. Half a century later, during the decade 1833 to 1842, the decisive works appeared that first presented a consistently historical view of the New Testament, and once again two men contributed the greatest share: D. F. Strauss and F. C. Baur. And once more it was the criticism of the person and history of Jesus that brought this viewpoint to the fore. David Friedrich Strauss, at the time still an instructor in the Theological Preparatory School [proseminar] at Maulbronn, raised the urgent question, in basic agreement with Hegel’s distinction between “form,” “notion,” and “idea” in religion, whether “the historical constituents of the Bible, especially of the Gospels,” also belong to the “idea” of religion and are therefore to be held fast, or can fall away as mere form. On a visit to Berlin in 1831-32 Strauss had become acquainted with a transcript of Schleiermacher’s “Life of Jesus” lectures but had been “repelled by them at almost every point” because Schleiermacher construed the person of Jesus from the Christian consciousness, preferred the Fourth Gospel, and gave a “natural” explanation of numerous events of Jesus’ life.‡ So Strauss, who in the meantime had been called to the seminar at Tübingen as a private tutor, took up the task of shedding light on the historical basis of the Christian faith by a critical treatment of the tradition about Jesus in taking into account all of contemporary research. Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet [The life of Jesus critically examined] appeared in 1835-36 in two volumes, and even the first aroused such a storm of criticism that Strauss was relieved of his tutorial post as a consequence. Numerous refutations were published.† Strauss first answered them with three volumes of Streitschriften [Polemical writings] (1837), then moderated his criticism of the Gospel of John in the third edition of his Life of Jesus (1838-39), and then finally in the fourth edition (1840) restored the original text. But these developments are primarily of biographical interest. In the history of New Testament research it is only the original Life of Jesus that is of importance, and it was of such epoch-making significance that it has been said that “because of it the year 1835 has been properly called the great revolutionary year of modern theology.”†‡ What made this comprehensive and strictly historical work so revolutionary? It was first and foremost the radical criticism with which Strauss at every point of the gospel story plays off rationalist over against conservative interpretation in truly absorbing debate, only to show that both interpretations are untenable and to put the “mythical” in their stead. Strauss guarded himself against maintaining that nothing at all had happened. It is quite possible to put together an outline of the historical figure of Jesus from Strauss’s suggestions.†.§ But these suggestions are scattered hither and yon, and the reader gets the impression on the whole that hardly anything is left of the story of Jesus. Strauss himself insists that he possesses the freedom to exercise his criticism because by philosophical reconstruction he “restores the dogmatic significance” of the eternal verities of the Christian faith, though, to be sure, “instead of an individual an idea, but a real one . . . is set as subject of the predicates which the Church accords to Christ.”†¶ This, however, does not alter the fact that Strauss regards the bulk of the gospel material as “mythical.” He took over this idea from the mythical school of Eichhorn, Gabler, Bauer, and de Wette,†§ but he charges his predecessors with having failed to understand the idea of myth purely as the investiture of primitive Christian ideas or as unintentionally poeticizing sagas, and with failing to extend the idea to all the gospel material.†‖ Strauss regards the Old Testament as the main source of saga formation, but also contends that the messianic expectation among the Israelite people was simply transferred to Jesus.†¶ In this critical work it is apparent that Strauss not only lacks a clear understanding of the literary relationship of the Synoptics to one another, but also that he extends the bounds of the mythical much too far.†‖ At the same time, however, it is also clear that New Testament research was brought once and for all face to face with the task of developing a methodical critical analysis that would include all the material. And it is further notable that throughout all his sharp critical work Strauss holds fast at one essential point to the reliability of the tradition. That Jesus knew himself to be Messiah seems to him to be indisputable, although, to be sure, he assumes that Jesus arrived at this idea only gradually, and that Jesus anticipated his return he believes also to be probable.†‡
It appeared to the author of the work, the first half of which is herewith submitted to the public, that it was time to substitute a new mode of considering the life of Jesus, in the place of the antiquated systems of supernaturalism and naturalism. . . .

The new point of view, which must take the place of the ones indicated above, is the mythical. This theory is not brought to bear on the gospel history for the first time in the present work: It has long been applied to particular parts of that history, and is here only extended to its entire compass. It is not by any means meant that the whole history of Jesus is to be represented as mythical, but only that every part of it is to be subjected to a critical examination, to ascertain whether it have not some admixture of the mythical. The exegesis of the ancient church set out from the double proposition: first, that the Gospels contained a history, and, second, that this history was a supernatural one. Rationalism rejected the latter of these presuppositions, but only to cling the more tenaciously to the former, maintaining that these books present unadulterated, though only natural, history. Science cannot rest satisfied with this half-measure: the other presupposition also must be relinquished, and the inquiry must first be made whether in fact, and to what extent, the ground on which we stand in the Gospels is in any way historical. . . .

The majority of the most learned and acute theologians of the present day fall in the main requirement for such a work, a requirement without which no amount of learning will suffice to achieve anything in the domain of criticism, namely, the internal liberation of the feelings and intellects from certain religious and dogmatical presuppositions; and this the author early attained by means of philosophical studies. If theologians regard this absence of presupposition from his work, as unchristian: he regards the believing presuppositions of theirs as unscientific. . . .

The author is aware that the essence of the Christian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts. The certainty of this can alone give calmness and dignity to our critical work. . . .

If anyone should wish to maintain that the historical times within which the public life of Jesus falls make the formation of myths about it unthinkable, there is a ready answer, viz., that early, even in the most arid historical era, an unhistorical cycle of legendary glorification forms about a great individual, especially when a far-reaching revolution in the life of men is associated with him. Imagine a young Church which reverences its founder all the more enthusiastically, the more unexpectedly and the more tragically his life course was ended; a Church impregnated with a mass of new ideas that were to re-create the world; a Church of Orientals, for the most part uneducated people, which consequently was able to adopt and express those ideas only in concrete ways of fantasy, as pictures and as stories, not in the abstract form of rational understanding or concepts; imagine such a Church and you are driven to conclude that under such circumstances that which emerged had to emerge: a series of sacred narratives by which the whole mass of new ideas aroused by Jesus, as well as of old ideas transferred to him, was brought to light as individual elements of his life story. The simple historical framework of the life of Jesus—that he grew up in Nazareth, was baptized by John, gathered disciples, moved about as a teacher in the land of the Jews, was opposed especially to Pharisaism, and issued a call to the kingdom of God; that in the end, however, he succumbed to the hate and envy of the Pharisaic party and died on the Cross—this framework was elaborated with the most varied and most meaningful skeins of pious reflections and fantasies, and in the process all the ideas which primitive Christianity had concerning its Master who had been torn from it were transformed into facts and woven into the account of his life's course. It was the Old Testament, in which the earliest congregation of Christians, drawn predominantly from Judaism, moved and had its being, that provided the richest material for this mythical embellishment. . . .

Taking all this into consideration, little any longer stands in the way of the assumption of myths in all parts of the gospel narratives. Furthermore, the term "mythos" itself will give an intelligent man no more offence than a mere word should give such a person at any time, for everything of double meaning that clings to that word because of the recollection of pagan mythology disappears as a result of the argument to this point, viz., that by New Testament myths nothing else is to be understood than the expression of primitive Christian ideas formulated in unintentionally poetizing sagas and looking very like history.

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 accustomed itself by reading the least determinant objects with precision; and at all events the author of this work, wishing 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.

Thus here [in connection with the story of the Transfiguration], as in every former instance, after having run through the circle of natural explanations, we are led back to the supernatural; in which however we are precluded from resting by difficulties equally decisive. Since then the text forbids a natural interpretation, while it is impossible to maintain as historical the supernatural interpretation which it sanctions, we must apply ourselves to a critical examination of its statements. . . .

It appears here as in some former cases, that two narratives proceeding from quite different presuppositions, and having arisen also in different times, have been awkwardly enough combined: the passage containing the conversation [Mark 9:9-15] proceeding from the probably earlier opinion, that the prophecy concerning Elias had its fulfillment in John; whereas the narrative of the Transfiguration doubtless originated at a later period, when it was not held sufficient that, in the messianic time of Jesus, Elias should only have appeared figuratively in the person of the Baptist, when it was thought fitting that he should also have shown himself personally and literally, if in no more than a transient appearance before a few witnesses. . . .

According to this, we have here a "mythos," the tendency of which is twofold: first, to exhibit in the life of Jesus an enhanced repetition of the glorification of Moses; and second, to bring Jesus as the Messiah into contact with his two forerunners: by this appearance of the lawgiver and the prophet, of the founder and the reformer of the theocracy, to represent Jesus as the perfecter of the
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David Friedrich Strauss and Ferdinand Christian Baur

that he is the Messiah; in the Synoptic Gospels there is a vacillation discernible—the previously expressed persuasion on the part of the disciples and the people that Jesus was the Messiah, sometimes vanishes and gives place to a much lower view of him, and even Jesus himself becomes more reserved in his declarations. . .

Thus, on the point under discussion the synoptic statement is contradictory, not only to that of John, but to itself; it appears therefore that it ought to be unconditionally surrendered before that of John, which is consistent with itself. . . But here again we must not lose sight of our demonstrated rule, that when analyzing narratives concerned with glorification such as our Gospels, in questionable cases that statement is the least probable which most closely corresponds to the objective of glorification. Now this is the case with John’s statement; according to which, from the beginning to the close of the public life of Jesus, his messiahship shines forth in unchanging splendor, while, according to the synoptic writers, it is liable to variation in its light. But though this criterion of probability is in favor of the first three evangelists, it is impossible that the order can be correct in which they make ignorance and concealment follow on plain declarations and recognitions of the messiahship of Jesus, and we must suppose that they have mingled and confounded two separate periods of the life of Jesus, in the latter of which alone he presented himself as the Messiah. . .

The most natural supposition is that Jesus, first the disciple of the Baptist, and afterward his successor, in preaching repentance and the approach of the kingdom of heaven, took originally the same position as his former master in relation to the messianic kingdom, notwithstanding the greater sublimity and liberality of his mind, and only gradually rose to the point of thinking himself the Messiah.

Since in the other Gospels Jesus speaks in a thoroughly different tone and style, it would follow, if he really spoke as he is represented to have done by John, that the manner attributed to him by the synoptists is fictitious. Now, that this manner did not originate with the evangelists is plain from the fact that each of them is so little master of his matter. Neither could the bulk of the discourses have been the work of tradition, not only because they have a highly original cast, but because they bear the impress of the alleged time and locality. On the contrary, the Fourth Evangelist, by the ease with which he controls his materials, awakens the suspicion that they are of his own production; and some of his favorite ideas and phrases, such as, “The Father shows the Son all that he himself does [John 5:20],” . . . seem to have sprung from a Hellenistic source, rather than from Palestine. But the chief point in the argument is, that in this Gospel John the Baptist speaks, as we have seen, in precisely the same strain as the author of the Gospels, and his Jesus. It cannot be supposed, that besides the evangelist, the Baptist, whose public career was prior to that of Jesus, and whose character was strongly marked, modeled his expressions with verbal minuteness on those of Jesus. Hence only two cases are possible: either the Baptist determined the style of Jesus and the evangelist (who indeed appears to have been the Baptist’s disciple); or the evangelist determined the style of the Baptist and Jesus. The former alternative will be rejected by the orthodox, on the ground of the higher nature that dwelt in Christ; and we are equally disinclined to adopt it, for the reason that Jesus, even though he may have been excited to activity by the Baptist, yet appears as a character essentially distinct from him, and original; and for the still more

While . . . in John, Jesus remains throughout true to his assertion, and the disciples and his followers among the populace remain true to their conviction.

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weighty consideration, that the style of the evangelist is much too delicate for the rude Baptist—too mystical for his practical mind. There remains, then, but the latter alternative, namely, that the evangelist has given his own style both to Jesus and to the Baptist: an explanation in itself more natural than the former, and supported by a multitude of examples from all kinds of historical writers.

After the assurance of already achieved victory expressed in the farewell discourses [John 14–17], and especially in the final prayer, for Jesus to sink into such a state of mind as that described by the synoptists [Matt. 26:36 ff.], would have been a very humiliating reverse, which he could not have foreseen, otherwise he would not have expressed himself with so much confidence; and which, therefore, would prove that he was deceived in himself, that he held himself to be stronger than he actually found himself, and that he had given utterance to this too high self-valuation, not without a degree of presumption. Those who regard this as inconsistent with the equally judicious and modest character which Jesus manifests on other occasions, will find themselves driven to the dilemma, that either the farewell discourses in John, at least the final prayer, or else the events in Gethsemane, cannot be historical . . .

The motive also for heightening the prescience into a real presentiment, and thus for creating the scene in Gethsemane, is easy of discovery. On the one hand, there cannot be a more obvious proof that a foreknowledge of an event or condition has existed, than its having risen to the vividness of a presentiment; on the other hand, the suffering must appear the more awful, if the mere presentiment extorted from him who was destined to that suffering, anguish even to bloody sweat, and prayer for deliverance. Further, the sufferings of Jesus were exhibited in a higher sense, as voluntary, if before they came upon him externally, he had resigned himself to them internally, and lastly, it must have gratified primitive Christian devotion, to withdraw the real crisis of these sufferings from the profane eyes to which he was exposed on the Cross, and to enshrine it as a mystery only witnessed by a narrow circle of the initiated . . .

Herewith the dilemma above stated falls to the ground, since we must pronounce unhistorical not only one of the two, but both representations of the last hours of Jesus before his arrest. The only gradation of distinction between the historical value of the synoptic account and that of John is, that the former is a mythical product of traditional formation in the first degree, the latter is in the second degree—or more correctly, the one is a product in the second degree, the other in the third. Common to the synoptists and to John is their presentation of Jesus as foreseeing sufferings even to the day and hour of their arrival. Then comes the first modication which the pious legend gave to the real history of Jesus; the statement of the synoptists, that he even had an antecedent experience of his sufferings, is the second step of the mythical; while, that although he foreknew them, and also in one instance had a foretaste of them (John 12:27ff.), he had yet long beforehand completely triumphed over them, and when they stood immediately before him, looked them in the face with unperturbed serenity—this representation of the Fourth Gospel is the third and highest grade of devotional, but unhistorical embellishment.

Though Strauss by his clear and radical criticism compelled New Testament research to undertake the historical examination of the New Testament, whatever its consequence, nevertheless his negatively oriented work lacked on the one hand a basis in source criticism, and on the other the purpose of arriving at a positive presentation of the history of primitive Christianity from the critical study of the gospel narratives. Ferdinand Christian Baur deliberately undertook both these tasks, although he was able to reach results that proved of permanent value only with respect to that of presenting a critical history of primitive Christianity. In the seminary at Maulbronn, where D. F. Strauss—as later also at Tübingen—was his pupil, Baur through B. G. Niebuhr's Römische Geschichte [Roman history] had already developed enthusiasm for historical scholarship employing critical source analysis, and when in 1826 he accepted the post as professor of the historical branches of theology at Tübingen, in studies in the history of religion, [Symbolik und Mythologie, oder die Naturreligion des Al tertums [Symbolism and mythology; or the nature religion of antiquity] (1824-25), he had already won through from the supernatural viewpoint of his first publication to an approach that treated Christianity on the same basis as other religions. To begin with Baur took a thoroughly conservative attitude with reference to the primitive Christian sources. In an address on the speech of Stephen in the book of Acts delivered in 1829 there is not a trace of doubt about the historicity of the speeches in Acts or of the book as a whole, though even in this paper Baur observes that there are two kinds of apologetic speeches in Acts, of which the one believes that Christianity is to be reconciled with the Jews (Peter), and the other doubts that the Jews can be converted to Jesus (Stephen). While it is true that J. S. Semler had already indicated that there were these two opposed groups within early Christianity, it is Baur who, in his celebrated article on "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde" [The Christ party in the Corinthian church] (1831), first made a systematic study of this grouping and, as he himself reports twenty years later, was led from this position step by step to a fundamental view concerning the history of early Christianity.

Long ago, before Strauss's Life of Jesus appeared—a book, of course, that was concerned with critical analysis of the Gospels—my own critical investigations of the Pauline letters, the other main point of departure from which a new groundwork for New Testament criticism must be won, were already underway. It was my study of the two Corinthian letters that first caused me to concentrate my attention more directly on the relation of the apostle Paul to the older apostles. I became convinced that enough data are to be found in the letters of the apostle to enable us to see that this relationship was one quite other than is ordinarily assumed; that where it is taken for granted that there existed a complete harmony between all the apostles, there was actually an opposition, one which even went so far that the very authority of the apostle Paul was brought into question by Jewish Christians. Further research in church history made it possible for me to look more deeply into the significance
of this opposition during postapostolic times, and it became ever more clear to me that the opposition between the two parties that are to be distinguished more strictly and precisely in apostolic and postapostolic times than has so far been the case, the opposition between the Paulinists and Petrinists, or Judaizers, had a significant influence not only on the different formulations of the Petrine legend, but also on the composition of the book of Acts and of such canonical letters as, in particular, the Second Letter of Peter. I presented the first results of my research in an essay in the "Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie" [Journal of theology] of 1831... entitled, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des paulinischen und petrinischen Christentums in [in ältesten Kirche]..." [The Christ party in the Corinthian church; the opposition of Pauline and Petrine Christianity (in the ancient church)]. My investigations with respect to Gnosis led me to the Pastoral Letters and resulted in the conclusion that I supported in my book of 1835 concerning these letters, namely, that the Pastors cannot have been written by the apostle Paul, but that their origin is to be explained by the same party tendencies that in the course of the second century were the moving principle of the Christian churches that were taking form. My continued preoccupation with the Pauline letters and my deeper penetration of the spirit of the apostle Paul and of Pauline Christianity increasingly confirmed me in the conviction that there is a very essential difference between the four main letters of the apostle and the shorter ones in the collection of his letters and that the Authenticity of several of the latter, if not of all, can be very seriously doubted. What I summed up in my book on the apostle Paul of the year 1845 and presented in further detail as a unit includes, with the exception of my book on the Pastoral Epistles, all my investigations in the book of Acts, a book which stands in such a close relationship to them. The question of the Gospels, which was raised anew by Strauss's Life of Jesus, only aroused my acute interest after I had attained an independent view of the relation of the Johannine Gospel to the Synoptics. The basic difference of this Gospel to the Synoptics impressed me so much that at once the view of its character and origin came to me which I developed in the Theologischen Jahrbüchern [Theological yearbooks] of 1844. That view furnished a new standpoint both for New Testament criticism and for the study of the gospel history. If the Gospel of John is not, as the others, a historical account, if it actually is not intended to be a historical account, if it has undoubtedly an ideological tendency, then it can no longer stand vis-à-vis the Synoptics in a historical opposition. It is therefore no longer possible to employ Strauss's tactics and methodolgy with which he now opposes the Johannine account to the synoptic and now the synoptic to the Johannine, and from which only the conclusion can be drawn that we no longer have any idea of what can be retained of the gospel story. To the degree that the historical value of John sinks, that of the Synoptics rises, since there is now no reason to raise doubts of the latter's reliability because of the Johannine Gospel. Since we are able to acknowledge the clear and evident difference and to do so without reserve, we have the key to its very simple explanation. Not by any means do I intend to say by this that in the Synoptic Gospels we have a purely historical account, but only that a definite point of view now emerges by which this whole relationship can be understood. By this route I was led further in my investigations in the Gospel of Luke and summed them up in the Theologischen Jahrbüchern [Theological yearbooks] of 1846 and then expanded this summary in my second main book on the criticism of the New Testament, my Kritischen Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien [Critical investigations of the canonical Gospels] of 1847.

The article on "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde"... [The Christ party in the Corinthian church] maintained, on the basis of both the Corinthian letters, that Paul at Corinth was charged by the Judaizing adherents of Peter with not having been a disciple of the earthly Jesus, and Baur then also discovered the opposition of these Petrine Christians to Paul in other Pauline letters and in the primitive church, but also drew attention to later tendencies to gloss over the differences between the two directions.177

Now a large part of the content of both letters consists of an assertion of the apostolic authority that the opponents of the apostle Paul did not wish to recognize to the full extent. Why is this, if not for the reason that they did not wish to recognize him as a genuine and legitimate apostle because he was not one in the same sense as Peter, James, and the other apostles of Christ [1 Cor. 1:12], not one who like these had stood in the same immediate relationship to Jesus during his life on earth? Peter himself had no part in the faction at Corinth that bore his name, as indeed we may infer from the fact that Peter himself had not come to Corinth. However, everything points to the conclusion that itinerant pseudoapostles who invoked the name of Peter had also come to Corinth... The same Judaizing opponents against whom the apostle declares himself in both the letters addressed to the Corinthian congregation meet us also in other letters of the same apostle in several passages in which, partly indirectly and partly directly, he believed himself compelled to take them into account. One of the more certain of the passages of this sort is Phil. 3:1-2, where the apostle attacks false teachers who laid great weight on circumcision and all else that belonged to hereditary Judaism, and in this sense put a confidence in the flesh that stood in conflict with the faith in the death of Christ on the cross. Though, as in II Cor. 12:12, the apostle compared himself with them with the assertion of the same advantages with reference to his person, he did so only because he wished thereby all the more emphatically to express his contempt for these externals in the connection under review. But it is the Letter to the Galatians that offers us the choicest parallel to the polemical tendency of both Letters to the Corinthians and which throws further light on the nature of the attacks against which the apostle had to defend himself. The opponents whom the apostle attacks in the Letter to the Galatians belong wholly in the same class with those with whom he had to do in the Letters to the Corinthians... The attack on these Judaizing false teachers makes up a large part of the Letter to the Galatians, and here there can be no doubt about the matter. However, it is usually less frequently observed that these very false teachers combined with their Judaism attacks on the apostolic authority of the apostle Paul that can have had no other tendency than those against which the apostle had to defend himself vis-à-vis the Corinthian congregation... After this fashion two opposing parties with a very distinct difference of views had come into being as early as those early times in which Christianity had yet hardly begun to break through the narrow bounds of Judaism and to
open up for itself a successful field of work in the pagan world. The party that set itself against the apostle Paul had its beginnings in Jerusalem, where the younger James, the brother of the Lord, stood in high esteem as the leader of the Christian congregation. The party's Jerusalem origin is what we might have expected and is also explicitly noted by the apostle Paul in Gal. 2:12, a passage in which we see the party appear first in Antioch with the tendency that it thereafter pursued assiduously. As they spread their teachings the pseudoapostles of this party appealed above all to the authority of James and of Peter, though we can scarcely believe that the [real] Jewish apostles themselves approved them and could give recognition to sham emissaries of this sort.

If the conflict of the Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian parties affected the relationships of the most ancient church as deeply as I believe I have shown, it is then very natural that... attempts at mediation and settlement... were also made very early. It cannot be denied that the Letter of James has... such a tendency. However, should not both Petrine letters also be viewed in the same light? The observation has already often been made that First Peter has striking points of agreement in language and ideas with the Pauline letters (de Wette). Since this phenomenon does not support any doubt of the letter's authenticity, it can then only be explained on the assumption that the apostle Peter saw himself impelled by means of the whole thrust of his letter to lay his agreement with the apostle Paul before the congregations in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Among whom, as might be expected, the conflict of these two parties and directions must have emerged with especial acuteness. Second Peter betrays a mediating tendency of this sort even more strikingly, a tendency which, by making all the more understandable the special purpose of the author in wanting his letter to be regarded as one written by the apostle Peter himself, adds further weight to the already overwhelming suspicion that it is unauthentic. Finally, at the end of his letter (3:15), where he refers to the apostle Paul as his beloved brother, praises the wisdom given to him, appeals to his letters, and warns against the misunderstandings his letters can occasion, as well as against the misinterpretations wrested from them, the author expresses his letter's conciliatory purpose most unambiguously, a purpose that not without reason he puts into the mouth of Peter as he approaches his death (1:13-15), in order to make it, as the apostle's last will and testament, all the more worthy of consideration. How is it possible to overlook the fact that in the whole letter the author's main purpose was to counter every doubt of the complete harmony of the two apostles, in order thereby to remove everything that seemed able to justify the persisting conflict?

Accordingly, by purely exegetical means Baur had demonstrated that the history of primitive Christianity, like all human history, was determined by the interplay of human conflict and actually took place within the nexus of such an interplay. However, in the article from which the above excerpts were taken Baur still betrays no doubt of the authenticity of the letters he was later to attack (Philippians, James, 1 Peter) and has nothing to say about the place of the book of the Acts within the conflict he describes. A few years later (1835), however, in his book on
J. D. Michaelis, this requires of historical criticism that it answer the theological question of the canonical validity of the New Testament writings as the Word of God, with the consequence that the negative result of such criticism carries with it a denial of the canonical worth of a New Testament book.\textsuperscript{180} And over against this, naturally, the defense of the traditional ascriptions of authorship must become at the same time a preservation of the canonical worth of the New Testament books.

If all this shows a rationalistic heritage in Baur, yet during the same years (after 1833) the philosophy of Hegel won predominant influence over him. Hegel's view of history as a dialectic process of the resolution of the "being-in-itself" and the "being-for-itself" in the "being-in-and-for-itself" combined in Baur's thought with the opposition of Petrine and Pauline Christianity which he had observed by historical method and which was settled in postapostolic Christendom, and this triple beat of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis now becomes the clue to the understanding of the history of early Christianity. And history for him becomes the self-unfolding of the spirit in which the particular has to retire behind the general; "critical method in positive terms means: speculative method, understanding of history as the process of the idea of history."\textsuperscript{181}

These philosophical tendencies now reveal themselves increasingly in Baur's more massive works on the history of primitive Christianity, works that followed one another in rapid succession. To begin with, the critical judgments in connection with the question of the place of the individual New Testament writings in the course of the altercation between Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity became sharper. The insight that the chronologically earlier First Letter to the Corinthians is a more reliable source for our understanding of the phenomenon of "speaking with tongues" than the later Acts of the Apostles appeared in 1838,\textsuperscript{182} and in a study of the origin of the bishop's office that appeared in the same year it is established that "all Jewish Christians of earliest times exhibit a more or less Ebionite character," i.e., that they correspond to the later heretical Christianity that was opposed to Paul. On the other hand, not only the Pastoral Letters, but also the Epistle to the Philippians and the Epistle to the Hebrews appear as attempts of the Pauline party to overcome the conflict with the Jewish Christians by a rapprochement, and the Acts of the Apostles is interpreted as the apologetic effort of a group interested in establishing harmonious relations.\textsuperscript{183}

The Paulinists by their very nature and as a consequence of their basic beliefs had to be more tractable and more inclined to establish cordial relations with the opposition party. What other alternative was open to them? On the one hand they saw before them a very determined opposition, one that pursued a fixed direction with utmost consistency, but on the other hand they wanted to have nothing to do with an extreme of Paulinism such as developed from Gnosticism and reached its fruition in Marcionism. This in and by itself is most probable, but documentary historical proof is not lacking if we do not shut our eyes to evidence which in every case can only be perceived by critical insight. This is the place where my investigation of the Pastoral Letters makes its special contribution, for all that I have said that explains the origin of these letters is also a moment in the history of the Christian Church as a catholic institution. However, the Pastoralas by themselves are by no means the only phenomenon of this kind in our Canon. Close to them, as it seems ever more probable to me, stands the Letter to the Philippians, in which, in addition to those "bishops" and "deacons" in the letter's salutation, and in addition to so much else into which this is not the place to enter in detail, also Peter's pupil Clement is introduced (4:3) as the foremost of the "fellow-laborers" of the apostle Paul.\ldots

Indeed, in terms of its basic idea and most inward predisposition, even the Acts of the Apostles, however in other respects we may estimate its historical reliability, is the apologetic attempt of a Paulinist to facilitate and bring about the rapprochement and union of the two opposing parties by representing Paul as Petrine as possible and, on the other hand, Peter as Pauline as possible. Over the differences which, according to the apostle Paul's own unambiguous declaration in the Letter to the Galatians, had undoubtedly really arisen, it seeks so far as possible to throw a reconciling veil, and the hate of Judaism on the part of the Gentile Christians and of paganism on the part of Jewish Christians—a hate that disturbed the relationship of the two parties—is forgotten in the common hate on the part of both of the unbelieving Jews, who made the apostle Paul the constant object of their irreconcilable hate.\ldots

Of these ieratic writings which form a class of their own, and which belong to a definite period, the Letter to the Hebrews is perhaps to be regarded as the first member. In all its peculiarity\ldots it appears perhaps to be regarded as the first attempt, though one still made with a certain ambiguity, to pursue the business of bringing both parties into harmony and of establishing peace by this literary means, by letters put into circulation in the name of the apostle.

This understanding of the Acts of the Apostles as governed by an "ierenic tendency" was taken up soon thereafter by Baur's pupil Matthias Schneckenburger, who tried to demonstrate that the author of the Book of the Acts wished by parallel accounts of Peter and Paul to equate Paul with Peter. "The picture of Paul and his activity that emerges is a onesided one, one that does not conform throughout and in detail with the apostle's own account in his letters, and one that a Paulinist could not sketch without a secondary apologetic purpose." Schneckenburger, to be sure, wished in spite of this to hold fast to the tradition of Lucan authorship of the book of the Acts and by demonstrating its ieristic tendency to protect it "against threatening dangers from the side of criticism."\textsuperscript{184} F. C. Baur himself, however, reached more critical results in his book on Paul (1845) that summed up all his previous studies. With respect to the history of the apostolic age he regards it as an important task to recognize that a choice must be made between the
two divergent presentations of the book of the Acts and of Paul and seeks to prove by careful analysis of the book of the Acts that this book exhibits the conscious tendency to set aside the differences between Paul and Peter and in the interests of this tendency has altered the history. With special reference to the divergent accounts of the Apostolic Council by Paul and the Acts of the Apostles, he reaches the conclusion that only Paul’s account can be regarded as authentic. And, because of its “apologetic and irenic tendency,” he dismisses the book of the Acts entirely as a reliable source for the history of the apostolic age. Thereby not only is a clear understanding won of the fact that there are primary and secondary sources for the history of primitive Christianity, but also the proper methodological requirement is raised, namely, that the values of the sources and also the meaning of a document can be properly determined only by taking its purpose into consideration. This “tendency-criticism,” while basically fully justified, is, to be sure, misused by Baur, even in connection with the book of the Acts, in that every deviation of the secondary source is traced back to a conscious alteration of the historical facts.

[For Paul], as in the gospel story, historical criticism has before it two divergent accounts that must be evaluated vis-à-vis one another if we are to derive pure history from them, the report of the book of the Acts and the historical data contained in the apostle’s own letters. One might think that, in all those cases in which the narrative of the book of the Acts does not wholly agree with the apostle’s own statements, the latter have such a decided claim to authentic truth that the contradiction of the book of the Acts can warrant no consideration, but this rule, however evident it must appear from the very nature of the case, has so far not been followed as it deserves to have been. By commencing with the assumption of the thoroughgoing identity of the presentation of the book of the Acts and the apostle’s own statements in his letters, the differences that occur, even when they cannot be denied, are regarded as too few and inconsequential to be given any further weight. In fact, interpreters have not infrequently sided with the book of the Acts against the clear assertions of the apostle. Consequently, not only has the historical truth been obscured, but also the fairness and impartiality to which the apostle is entitled in any judgment of his apostolic life and work are imperiled. In order to allow no appearance of a serious difference in his relationship with the other apostles, some have had no hesitation in ascribing to him in many instances a way of acting which, if it were true as represented, would cast serious reflections on his character. An account of this part of the primitive history of Christianity, therefore, if undertaken in accordance with the more rigorous axioms of historical criticism, can only be at the same time an apology for the apostle.

Between the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistles, as far as the historical contents of the latter can be compared with the Acts of the Apostles, there will be found in general the same relation as between the Gospel of John and the Synoptic Gospels. The comparison of both these sources must lead to the conclusion that, considering the great difference between the two statements, historical truth can belong to only one of them. To which it does belong can only be decided by the undisputed historical rule that the statement which has the greatest claim to historical truth is that which appears most unprejudiced and nowhere betrays a desire to subordinate its historical material to any special subjective aim. For the history of the apostolic age the Pauline epistles take precedence over all the other New Testament writings, as an authentic source. On this account the Acts must fill a secondary place; but there is also the further critical point that the same rule which defines the relation of the Synoptic Gospels to the Gospel of John, finds its application in the Acts of the Apostles; while I am at this place, and in order to indicate the standpoint of the following inquiry, I must express this opinion on the Acts of the Apostles, that I can find in it no purely objective statement, but only one which is arranged on subjective grounds: and I must also express a great wish to refer to a critical work [Schneckenburger] which I venture to follow all the more, as it afforded me important results when I devoted myself to a quite different line of work some time ago. . .

The first two chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians form a historical document of the greatest importance for our investigations into the true standpoint of the apostle and his relations to the elder apostles. But if these chapters are to be of any value in the interest of the truth of the history, we must first of all free ourselves from the common arbitrary suppositions which generally attend this inquiry, by which the most complete harmony is established between the author of the Acts of the Apostles and the apostle Paul, and one narrative is used as a confirmation of the other. It is self-evident that as the apostle appears as an eyewitness and individual actor in his own affairs, his statement alone ought to be held as authentic. Then again an unfavorable light is thus shed on the Acts of the Apostles, the statements in which can only be looked at as intentional deviations from historical truth in the interest of the special tendency which they possess.

Baur now assumes exactly the same critical attitude toward the Pauline letters as to the book of the Acts, and concludes with reference to the former that only the four great letters (Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians) can be regarded as genuine letters of the apostle, while all the other letters belong to the time in which the conflict between Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity is beginning to be resolved. And it is apparent that the thrust of the dialectical theory of history had to lead to this result, for in fact the smaller letters of Paul cannot be accounted for as products of the conflict of the two parties.

The foregoing inquiry shows what a false picture of the individual character of the apostle Paul we should obtain if we had no other source than the Acts of the Apostles from which to derive our knowledge of it. The epistles of the apostle are then the only authentic documents for the history of his apostolic labors, and of the whole relation in which he stood to his age, and in proportion as the spirit that breathes through them is great and original, so do they present the most true and most faithful mirror of the time. The more we study the epistles the more we perceive that a rich and peculiar life is summed up in
them, as the most direct testimony to it. Only in the epistles is that shadow, whose false image the Acts of the Apostles brings forward in the place of the real apostle, placed in direct contrast with him.

What, then, we have still to ask, is the true object of these epistles, if they be not by Paul, and can only be understood in the light of the features of that later age from which they sprang? The central idea around which everything else revolves in them is to be found in their Christology; but it is impossible to assume that the object for which they were written was the purely theoretical one of setting forth those higher views of the person of Christ. The occasion out of which they arose must have been some practical need in the circumstances of the time; and even the idea of the person of Christ is at once brought into a certain definite point of view. Christ, it is manifest, is taken here as the center of the unity of all opposites. These opposites embrace the entire universe; heaven and earth, the visible and the invisible, and everything that exists has in Christ the basis of its existence; in him, therefore, all oppositions and distinctions disappear; even up to the highest spirit-world there is nothing that has not its highest and absolute principle in him. This metaphysical height is sought, however, only in order to descend from it to the immediate present and its practical necessities; for here also there are opposites of which only Christ can be the reconciling and atoning unity. Here, accordingly, we find the standpoint from which the object and the contents of the epistles can be satisfactorily comprehended. It is obvious that they point to the distinction of Gentile and Jew Christians; and thus they clearly belong to a time when these two parties were still, to some extent, opposed to each other, and when the removal of their mutual opposition was the only road to the unity of the Christian Church.

Although this central result of Baur’s with respect to the briefer letters of Paul cannot be maintained, yet his demand that every single writing be arranged in a total historical perspective is a permanent legacy of his work. And Baur himself is aware that there “can be unending debate” about detail: “what alone in the final analysis can tip the scales in favor of a view put forward in a wider perspective is, indeed, only the general, on which also the detail is again and again dependent, the consequence of the whole, the convincing inner probability and necessity of the matter which comes to the fore of itself and before which sooner or later the party interests of the day must be struck dumb.”

This recognition by Baur of the fundamental significance of a total historical perspective, in connection with the influence of Hegelian philosophy has the effect in the concluding account of “The Doctrinal System of the Apostle” that Pauline theology is constrained into a distinction of the doctrine of justification as “the representation of the subjective consciousness” from “the view of the objective relation in which . . . Christianity stands to paganism and Judaism.” In this way the significance of Christ is reduced to “the principle . . . of self-consciousness relieved of all finite limitations and freed of all disturbing conventions,” and “the doctrine of Christ” emerges in connection with the “special discussion of secondary dogmatic questions.” In this account of the Pauline theology as the doctrine of the unity of the subjective and the objective spirit, it is not so much the historian as the disciple of Hegel who has the last word, but in spite of this objection it must be admitted: “It might indeed be easier to dispute the results than the method, and even still easier to dispute the method than to undertake the task in a really better way.”

The same methodological interest of Baur’s appears in his second main work on the New Testament, one that was published shortly after his book on Paul, his Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonische Evangelien [Critical studies of the canonical Gospels] (1847). Now for the first time Baur opened a debate with Strauss, in order to substitute the “historical” view of Jesus for the “negatively critical” view of Strauss and his opponents. Vis-à-vis the Gospels, also, Baur raises the question of the tendency of the evangelists and demonstrates first of all by a careful analysis of the Gospel of John that in relation to the Synoptics it possesses no special historical tradition, but that probably its historical matter is conrived out of the idea of the divine dignity and glory of Jesus. This shows that John has no desire at all to give a historical report, but wants to express an idea. And the ideal “of a Christian Church consisting equally of Gentiles and Jews” which John supports (John 10:16) points to a time “when Christianity in the course of its development had already left the conflicts of the early period far behind.” Consequently the Gospel of John is not only denied the authority of an eyewitness, but is also dismissed as a source of no consequence for the history of Jesus, without thereby ceasing to be the “witness of a genuine evangelical spirit.”

Since it is true that everything historical reaches us only through the medium of the writer of the narrative, it follows that also in connection with the gospel story the first question is not, what objective reality this or that narrative has in itself, but rather, in what relation what is narrated stands to the consciousness of the writer of the narrative, by whose mediation it is for us an object of historical knowledge. Historical criticism must take its stand here. Only from this bastion can it hope to arrive at an at least better motivated view of the determination of the boundary line between the historical and the unhistorical, “this most difficult problem in the domain of criticism.”

The first question that criticism has to ask of these Gospels can therefore only be: What did each respective author wish and have in mind? and only with this question do we reach the firm ground of concrete historical truth.

Once we have the proof before us, even with respect only to one Gospel, that a Gospel is not merely a simple historical account but can also be a tendency writing, this is then the general point of view from which criticism has to regard the Gospels, and from this the rule formulates itself, viz., that to the degree to which a definite tendential character is revealed in a historical presentation of this sort, to that degree it falls short of being what it is usually held

to be, namely, an authentic historical report. But such writings can only be
tendency writings to the extent that they are products of their time. The
criticism that views them in this light, and can recognize by means of it alone
a new moment of the critical consciousness, is properly called historical, because
it makes it its essential task to put itself into the whole complex of temporal
relationships from which these writings issued. However, unless it wishes to take
its departure from an arbitrary presupposition, it must not limit the circle of
these relationships just to the time within which its alleged apostolic origin
would fall, but must extend as far as it can be extended on the basis of the
actual data about its historical existence.

The very systematic character of the tendency, this thoroughgoing relation
of the detail to an idea that governs everything, prevents us from accepting any
of the Synoptic Gospels as a different, independent, historical report. Only the
tendency differs. If we leave this tendency out of consideration, together with
the modifications that derive from it, which necessarily affect the historical
account, what content is left to us as something independent of the tradition of
the synoptic evangelists? Accordingly, even here the view commends itself to
us, the view that alone can enable us to reach a critically historical comprehen-
sion of the Johannine Gospel, viz., that the Gospel derives its historical elements
from the same evangelical tradition which constitutes the content of our
Synoptic Gospels, or from our Synoptic Gospels themselves, but it does not intend to
be an strictly historical Gospel. It subordinates its historical content to an
overriding idea. In accordance with its basic idea, it has regarded the
historical matter it has taken eclectically from the gospel tradition in a different
light, brought it into new combinations, and, as could not have happened
otherwise, more or less reworked it so that vis-à-vis the Synoptic Gospels it seems
to be in part parallel to them, in part divergent from them, but just because of
that a new and independent Gospel. The fact is that only its idea and
tendency are different. The historical content itself, so far as we know how to
analyze it and trace it back to its elements, remains the same.

Even in the investigations that have been undertaken heretofore, the relation
of our Gospel to the Synoptics could not remain unobserved, and consequently
in the studies that have been made to this point the main data have emerged
that go to make up the view that is to be advanced regarding this relationship.
It rests on the certainly undisputed rule that when two different reports con-
cerned with the same subject are so related to one another in their difference
that only one of the two—not both at the same time and in the same way—
can be historically true, it is to be assumed that the overwhelming historical
probability lies on the side of that report which least of all betrays any interest,
beyond the purpose of purely historical narration, that could have an influence
on the historical record. The more apparent it is, then, that such an interest
lies at the base of the Johannine Gospel, in that from beginning to end it has no
concern for a purely historical account, but for the presentation of an idea
which has run its ideal course in the march of events of the gospel story, all
the less should it be possible to entertain any doubt about how the two reports
are related to each other, if our concern is only for the purely historical question
of which of the two is to be regarded as the historically more reliable in all
those instances in which the historical difference is not to be denied.

With these observations Baur gained the same insight for the Gospels
as for the relationship between Paul and the Acts of the Apostles. And

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while Strauss posed the alternative for the study of Jesus, "Synoptics or
John," but then, despite his insight into the advanced mythical character
of John, proceeded to devaluate both sources, Baur recognized unequiv-
ically that the Synoptics are superior as historical sources to John, and
this recognition belongs to the abiding results of New Testament
research. To be sure, Baur now directed toward the Synoptic Gospels the
question concerning the tendency of the author and sought to prove that
the Gospel of Luke, dependent on Matthew, shows the same ironic
tendency as does the Book of the Acts, and that Mark, dependent on
Matthew and Luke, likewise betrays the point of view of neutrality.
Only Matthew is basically historically reliable and has no tendency, and
its account of Jesus as the fulfiller of the Jewish Law enables us to under-
stand the origin of Christianity from within Judaism. Although Baur
knew of the proofs recently published of the greater age of Mark's
Gospel, he arrived at his evaluation of the relationship of the Synoptic
Gospels to one another by way of the method of tendency criticism, since
it was only in Matthew that he could recognize a "Judaizing character."
It is certain that this judgment about the sources of the gospel story is
wrong, but that does not detract in any way from the extremely
important fact that Baur basically recognized the greater historical value
of the Synoptics and therefore, over against Strauss's criticism, which
played John against the Synoptics and the Synoptics against John, won
a sure historical footing for research in the tradition about Jesus.

To be sure, even here Baur does not free himself of his rationalistic
heritage. Wherever Matthew reports that Jesus anticipates his speedy
return Baur denies the Gospel any worth as a historical source, for "Jesus
cannot possibly have spoken in this way." And, just as in the investiga-
tion of the Pastoral Letters he had intruded the irrelevant question
of their canonical status in case of their nonapostolic authorship, so
Baur now, in a work on the nature of the science of New Testament
introduction, declared that historical criticism of the traditional ascrip-
tions of authorship was concerned with the principle of the canonical
authority of these writings. In doing so, however, Baur, by the rational-
istic equation of historical-critical and dogmatic judgments, had aban-
doned his own insight that the Gospel of John is "a witness of a genuinly
evangelical spirit," even though it does not come from the apostle
John.

Now, if the biblical books are made at all the object of detailed reflection, as
the concept of introduction in any case assumes they will be, what other ques-
tion could have greater importance than whether, be they considered in their
unity as a whole or each separately, they actually are as they are presumed to
be according to the traditional idea of the Canon? And if the question as we
have raised it also implies the possibility that the investigation of this or that

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book will lead to a result that must make its canonical authority, to say the least, very doubtful, what importance is accorded to the science of theology, which has to decide in the end which books of the Canon are canonical or not, what right each book of the Canon has to its place in it, and whether all those ideas we are accustomed to associate with the Canon can also be historically justified? The higher and more peculiar the attributes which the books that make up the Canon receive by virtue of their canonical authority, the more important the degree of certainty with which they are properly to be regarded as canonical or not.

The canonical writings are the subject of the science of introduction; not as they are in themselves, but with all those ideas and presuppositions that make them canonical. As canonical writings they are writings with which the concept of a definite dogmatic authority is linked. The dogma that they are divinely inspired writings applies to them, that they are the documentary expression and aggregate of divinely revealed truth which is to be the determining norm of all the theoretical and practical behavior of men. Now, the actual object of criticism is just this dogmatic element associated with them, the principle of their canonical authority. The science of introduction, therefore, has to investigate whether these writings are also by their own right what they are said to be by virtue of the dogmatic idea that is held of them, and, since the first presupposition of such a dogmatic view is that they are actually written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, it follows that the first task is to answer the question, by what right they represent themselves as apostolic writings.

To be sure, Baur did not stop with criticism of the sources, but went on to a history of primitive Christianity, though he was not able to complete a comprehensive account. However, the basic elements of his view can be clearly discerned. In it, on the one hand, the picture of history that had hitherto only been suggested is fully worked out; the conflict between Hebrews and Hellenists marks the life even of the primitive church: after the Apostolic Council the conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christianity reaches the stage of a complete separation; the Judaistic side is represented in ancient times by the "Revelation" that was the work of the apostle John and later by the Clementine Homilies, while the Pauline side is defended by the four main letters of Paul and later by Marcion; a harmonious agreement between both parties is pursued from the Jewish Christian side by the Letter of James and from the Pauline by the briefer letters of Paul, Hebrews, the Pastors, and I Peter, while the Gospel of John stands on the threshold of the Catholic Church. But in addition to this historical reconstruction that is the outcome of tendency criticism there is also, on the other hand, the description of the New Testament world of thought as of something that had become historical: "If New Testament theology is treated strictly in accordance with historical concepts, it is not enough to distinguish several doctrines and set them ... side by side, but progress of development must be shown," and consequently New Testament theology is defined as "the history of Christian dogma in its movement through the New Testa-

David Friedrich Strauss and Ferdinand Christian Baur ment. Thus the idea that the New Testament exhibits a development of thought is taken seriously for the first time, and, in addition to this, Baur correctly recognizes that the Pauline view of Christ forms the bridge between the Synoptic and Johannine Christology.

First, we have the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels, and here it cannot be contended on any sufficient grounds that they give us the slightest justification for advancing beyond the idea of a purely human Messiah. The idea of pre-existence lies completely outside the synoptic sphere of view. ... The synoptic Christology has for its substantial foundation the notion of the Messiah, designated and conceived as the τέρας θεοῦ [Son of God]; and all the points in the working out of the notion rest on the same supposition of a nature essentially human. ... The highest enunciation concerning Christ in the synoptic Christology is, that all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28: 18); or that he sits at the right hand of God—an expression which denotes his immediate share in the divine power and the divine government of the world. He is exalted to this point by his death and resurrection. The connecting link between these two points which join heaven and earth is the Ascension, in which he is even seen to float from earth to heaven in visible form.

It is obvious, that in this Christology the general point of view is the elevation of the human to the divine, and that in the conception of the Messiah the second of these steps always implies the first. In contrast to this point of view stands that of the Johannine Logos-idea. According to this, the substantial conception of the person of Christ is the conception of his essence as divine in itself. Here the thought travels, not from below upwards, but from above downwards, and the human is therefore only a secondary thing, and added afterwards.

Between these two opposing points of view, the Christology of Paul occupies a place of its own, and we cannot fail to see that it gives us the key of the transition from the one to the other. On one side Christ is essentially man, on the other he is more than man; and his humanity is already so enhanced and idealized, that the sense in which he is man is certainly inconsistent with the synoptic mode of view, which stands on the firm basis of his historical and human appearance.

With this insight Baur now combines as well the first attempt to represent the teaching of Jesus as "the basis and presupposition of all that belongs in the history of the development of the Christian consciousness," as "the primal period that still lies outside the sphere of historical development," because the teaching of Jesus is "not theology at all, but religion." The Sermon on the Mount shows, then, that "Christianity as it is represented in its original form as the teaching of Jesus is a religion that breathes the purest moral spirit"; that Jesus wished to be Messiah only in the spiritual sense; and that "in this emphasis on attitude as the only thing in which the absolute moral worth of man consists, Christianity is something essentially new." Now, after this moral teaching of Jesus there comes, in contrast, the theological doctrine of the apostle concerning the person of Jesus that for the first time takes over the center of the stage.

When we compare the teaching of Jesus and that of the apostle Paul, we are struck at once with the great difference which here exists between a teaching that is expressed still in the form of a general principle, and a doctrine that has already taken on the definiteness of a dogma. But there lies between much also that is the necessary presupposition without which this progress would not have been possible! Above all, this is the death of Jesus, together with all that belongs with it, the most important moment of the process of development through which Christianity received a character essentially different from that of its original form. By it the person of Jesus first won the great significance that it has for the Christian consciousness. While it is true that, from the standpoint of Jesus' teaching, everything that he teaches receives its particular significance only because it was he who taught it, nevertheless he never makes his person the immediate object of his teaching—at least, not if we take our departure, as here we must, from the representation of the gospel story. It is not so much on the significance of his person that all depends, as on the truth of his teaching. He has only come in order, by the moral demands he made on men, to introduce the "kingship of God," to invite them to enter it, and thereby to open it. The "Gospel" as such, the proclamation of the "kingship of God" as a morally religious community based on the teaching of Jesus, is here all that counts. From the standpoint of the apostle, on the other hand, the actual center of gravity of the Christian consciousness, the basis on which everything rests, is not the teaching of Jesus but his person; everything depends on the absolute significance of his person; the central question does not concern what Jesus taught, in order by his teaching to lead men to blessedness, but what he did and suffered to become their redeemer. In this way, then, the simple moral content of Jesus' teaching first became a doctrine that had been formulated and developed by theology. The main facts of the story of Jesus, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and his celestial activity, are the content in similar fashion of many dogmas to which, as to the substantial elements, all else has been subjoined.

It was fateful that in this first historical presentation Baur, by reason of his presuppositions in the realm of philosophy of religion, reduced Jesus' proclamation to a "purely moral element" and therefore overlooked the significance of Jesus' person in his proclamation, just as he pushed aside the expectation of the end. Consequently the understanding of the transition from Jesus to the early church was put for long on the wrong track, and the possibility of reaching a really theological understanding of the historical Jesus in this direction was excluded. Nevertheless, whatever objections may be raised to Baur's results—the overly rigorous critical judgments concerning the New Testament writings and the conflict of Jewish and Gentile Christianity, the spiritualization of the proclamation of Jesus and of Paul, the misinterpretation of the critical task vis-à-vis research in the New Testament canon—all this does not alter the fact that Baur recognized two problems to whose clarification New Testament research continues to devote itself: the arrangement of the New Testament writings in a total historical perspective, and the understanding of the sequence and of the historical development of the

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New Testament world of ideas. And more than that, Baur recognized the fundamental significance of the historical understanding of the person and proclamation of Jesus and the importance for the historical evaluation of the New Testament writings of the question concerning the object in view ("tendency") of every single book. Since Baur's time, scientific work on the New Testament has been possible only when the fundamental methodological principles he indicated have been followed and his overall historical view has been superseded or improved.
2.
The Dispute with Strauss and Baur in Light of a Basic Solution of the Problem of Sources

By disputing the critical results achieved by Strauss and Baur but by continuing their methodological procedures, further research might have undertaken a genuine historical exploration of primitive Christianity in order to reach a solution of the theological task of understanding the New Testament. To begin with, however, traditional theology made a real debate difficult by challenging the right of Baur and his pupils (as D. F. Strauss once was) to a place within the discipline of theology and, accordingly, on the theological faculties. Shortly before his death Baur himself was forced to complain bitterly that the "Tübingen School" that had followed his lead had been dissolved by compelling its main representatives to transfer to other faculties. And the fact only serves to support this complaint that in his memorial address on Baur soon after the latter's death a colleague of his on the same faculty—M. A. Landerer—declared: "Since Baur in his last book called Paul's conversion a miracle whose mystery could not be explained, it follows that Baur's whole conception of primitive Christianity and its history must be reformulated." If the theological legitimacy of Baur's research was utterly denied after this fashion, it has to be admitted that even Baur's most loyal pupils contributed to this unfortuante development by their radical elaboration of Baur's views. In an almost inquisitional examination of the Acts of the Apostles (1854), Eduard Zeller sought to prove that this largely unhistorical book had been written with the tendency of "obtaining the recognition of Gentile Christianity in its independence and its freedom from the Law by means of concessions to the Judaistic party." Accordingly, for him the book of the Acts ceases to be "an ostensibly historical report on the apostolic age" and becomes a "primary document of the ecclesiastical situation at the beginning of the second century," and this also shows how the schema of the conflict of opposing primitive Christian parties compels the researcher to suspect at once a conciliatory tendency on the part of the author of the Acts of the Apostles behind every factual difference in the sources or every historical difficulty and to overlook completely the driving religious motives. In his comprehensive account of the Nachapostolischen Zeitalters [Post-apostolic age] (1845), Albert Schweger went still further. Here Baur's reconstruction of history is so far systematized that the conflict between Jewish Christianity and Paulinism is assumed to have continued from the time of the primitive church to the end of the second century, and the postapostolic age is described as "the development of Ebionitism to Catholicism, of Judaism to Christianity." In the course of Schweger's account primitive Christianity appears as a Jewish sect with which Paul is "everywhere engaged in a courageous and vigorous but unfortunately usually unsuccessful struggle," and "the Jewish element still" prevailed "decisively over the Christian" until the end of the second century. Only the four great letters of Paul and the Revelation to John belong to the apostolic age. All other early Christian literature comes from the second century, and every individual writing belongs to the Jewish Christian or Pauline sequence of development, either in the time of the original conflict of these two antagonists, or in that of their later irenical reconciliation, or, finally, in that of Catholic neutralism. In all this not only is "Baur's view of the original conflict and the gradual reconciliation of the primitive Christian parties . . . exaggerated into a caricature," but the role of Paul and of Gentile Christianity in the origin of the post-apostolic church is completely underestimated and the variety of primitive Christianity is overlooked. And because no attempt is made to give an account of Jesus, on the grounds that the sources do not permit us "to undertake a completely sure and inclusive characterization of his personality," there is no longer any discernible path of development from Jesus by way of the primitive church to Paul and into the post-apostolic age, and Baur's attempt to overcome the negative criticism of Strauss is again abandoned.

On the other hand, the countless efforts to counteract this perverse development of the historical method by a simple defense of the traditional New Testament ascriptions of authorship and to save the traditional historical picture by postulating the unity of the primitive Christian world of thought were unsuccessful. Let us give one example. The Teutian Theological Society in Holland asserted: "It is a known fact that the so-called 'Tübingen School' seeks above all to ground its enmity to Christianity on the assumption of an absolute difference between the teaching and thrust of the apostle Paul and the other apostles." In 1848, against this background, Gotthard Victor Lecler, one of Baur’s former pupils, attempted to give a new overall account of primitive Christianity. However, his insight was valid that the primitive church already stood somewhat apart from Judaism and differed in many respects from the later heretical Jewish Christians, while on the Pauline
side as a rule there were not only Gentile Christian but also mixed congregations. But his reconstruction failed in its effect because he regarded all New Testament writings as genuine, accepted the book of the Acts as a historical document, and denied any essential difference between Paul and the early apostles. Any real advance of historical knowledge on the basis of Baur's methodological principles was impossible until a more certain answer could be given to questions of sources and consequently a more reliable historical picture could emerge.

Even before Baur's most important works had appeared, a non-theologian had undertaken from two sides to provide that presupposition of further progress in research. Under the stimulus of Schleiermacher, the philologist Karl Lachmann, known for his editions of classical and Old German texts, had set himself the task of defining the presuppositions for the production of a really critical text of the New Testament. Even Griesbach, the first who dared to touch "the received text," still had taken his departure from that text and had improved it with great caution, but Lachmann's edition of the Greek and Latin New Testament, which first appeared in 1831 without detailed argumentation, but then in 1842-50 with an extensive apparatus, was the first text to be based exclusively on the most ancient manuscripts.²⁰⁷

In this Lachmann's express intention, as he notes in a "rendering of account" that he published before the appearance of his first edition, was not to offer the true reading, but, by a strictly mechanical application of critical principles, to recover the text of the fourth century, and to do this by a purely objective method so that subjective interpretation could make use of a text that had been determined objectively.²⁰⁸

As soon as I surveyed the field of New Testament criticism it became clear to me that, if I wished to make a significant contribution, Griesbach could not be my guide. Not that I doubt Griesbach's independence and thoroughness, or the great and timely contribution he made. His criticism, however, is too incomplete and, because he wants to be cautious, too incautious. No one knew as well as he how accidentally the common reading, the so-called "received text," had come into being, and yet he made it basic. "Is there reason to depart from the usual reading?" was his question, whereas the natural one can only be, "Is there reason to depart from the best authenticated reading? . . ." Shall we not then preferably regard the reputation of the text that the Church has employed for three hundred years as unfounded, when it is possible to obtain one that is fourteen hundred years old and to approach one that is sixteen hundred years old? Is it not worthier of a critic to assume responsibility both for what he allows to stand, as for what he changes?

The determination of a text according to the tradition is a strictly historical task . . . . On the other hand, the criticism which breaks through the bonds of tradition and affords conjecture its right is unfettered and increases in extent and assurance with growing knowledge and spiritual freedom. It is an invaluable jewel of our Church, but, like the latter, also capable of infinite development.

Therefore, that we may never lose firm historical footing, it seems best to me to determine the text unalterably according to tradition alone, as soon as this will be possible. Such determination will certainly not hinder the progress of criticism . . . . And, as has been said, I have not established the true text, a text that no doubt is often preserved in a single source, though just as often wholly lost, but only the oldest among those that can be proved to have been in circulation.

Since Lachmann therefore took his departure from the manuscripts instead of the printed text, he made it possible for the first time to discover the oldest and consequently the most reliable text of the New Testament, and so all work on the text of the New Testament since his time is built on the foundation he laid. To be sure, the method Lachmann followed could not yet really achieve its goal. On the one hand, the manuscript material at Lachmann's disposal was not yet adequate to achieve, by means of the mechanical method he had chosen, a sure determination of the text that was in circulation everywhere in the fourth century, and this same mechanical method of determining the text compelled Lachmann more than once to adopt, without any notation, a form of the text that he regarded as spurious (e.g., the Marcan ending, 16:9 ff).²⁰⁹ Mainly, however, Lachmann erred when he thought it was possible and necessary to reconstruct a text "without interpretation."²¹⁰ for in this way errors in and alterations of the original text in the manuscripts cannot possibly be observed.

However important it was that Lachmann by his edition now gave the impulse to the decisive work on the restoration of the original New Testament text, a restoration that got underway later in the nineteenth century, it is still more important that in this occupation with the New Testament he also reached a conclusion that was to be basic for further gospel research. As early as his report in which he rendered an account of his edition of the text, Lachmann had mentioned that he had not been able to persuade himself that "Mark had used our Matthew and Luke."²¹¹ In an article on "The Order of the Narratives in the Synoptic Gospels" published shortly thereafter (1835) he demonstrated that the agreement of the three Synoptics in the order of the narratives extends only so far as Matthew and Luke agree with the order of Mark; where they depart from this order they also depart from one another. In addition, Matthew's deviations from Mark's order can be explained by the Matthaean evangelist's insertion of Marcan material into a collection of Jesus' sayings that lay before him.²¹²

I want now to consider only the order: since that is the simplest procedure of all and—so far as I see—has not been attempted by anyone, it must be apparent what success one can achieve from this point of departure.

But the difference in the order of the narratives of the Gospels is not as
ex-plain-ed by the proof of the priority of Mark, and it is to the credit of the philosopher Christian Hermann Weisse that, in a work that appeared contemporaneously with Wilke’s book, he resumed Lachmann’s observations of Strauss’s Life of Jesus “as something to be welcomed, a contribution by no means prejudicial . . . to true Christian knowledge and insight, but rather beneficial,” he saw himself driven by the challenge of Strauss’s criticism to an attempt at the “reconstruction of the historical picture of Christ.” In the course of his work, however, he recognized that for its purpose the relationship of the Synoptic Gospels to one another had first to be explained, and as a consequence of his investigations he achieved a twofold insight. The Gospel of Mark, as the one most primitive in order and in diction, is the oldest of the Synoptics; the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke, however, have combined with Mark’s Gospel a collection of Jesus’ sayings that goes back to the apostle Matthew. Thus not only was the priority of Mark proved from a new angle, but also the need was revealed of assuming a second source, for whose existence Weisse already also treated the double tradition (doublets) in Matthew and Luke as important proof. These observations provided adequate support for the first time to “the two-source hypothesis,” and Weisse now drew from it also historical conclusions by attempting a sketch of the historical picture of Jesus on the basis of a criticism of the tradition of Mark and of the second source. Into this, however (as had happened in connection with Baur’s picture of Jesus), Weisse’s philosophical presuppositions intruded disturbingly. He not only eliminated the realistic expectation of the imminent end on the part of Jesus as unworthy of “a spirit of such stature” and watered down the judgment Jesus preached into an inward, subjective experience, but also, after the “flash of the higher consciousness” that came to Jesus at his baptism, inserted quite arbitrarily a lengthy “period during which the idea . . . implanted in him by the birth from above underwent a fermentation and was finally suppressed.” So the image of Jesus that had been erected on a secure historical foundation had from the beginning a patina compounded of a spiritualization of the message and a psychological interpretation of the person of Jesus. Nevertheless, these false conclusions do not undermine the fact that only the firm support that Weisse gave to the differentiation of the oldest sources of the gospel tradition made it possible at all to gain any sure knowledge of the historical Jesus and consequently of the origin of primitive Christianity.

It is generally agreed that in his Greek style Mark is the most Hebraizing of the evangelists. We scarcely need to remind ourselves how much easier it is to assume a paraphrase from a Hebraizing source into pure Greek than the
This leads us to reflect briefly on the mutual relationship of the two other Synoptics to one another in those places where they are not both dependent on Mark. We have already noted that we regard this relationship as an independent one, independent, that is to say, in the use of the common sources by each of the two, but not in the sense that each of them, throughout or for the most part, had used sources that the other had not used. It is our most certain conviction that not only Mark but also Matthew's collection of sayings is a source common to both.

While the theory of the priority of Mark now gradually won a few supporters, at least outside the Tübingen School, almost two decades after the appearance of his Evangelischen Geschichte [Gospel history] (1856) Weisse felt it necessary to complain with justification that no successor to himself "had trodden the path that had been blazed by the investigations of Schleiermacher and Lachmann." A few years later (1863), however, Heinrich Julius Holtzmann redressed the balance in his work on Die Synoptischen Evangelien [The Synoptic Gospels], a study that summed up all previous research in magnificent fashion. He not only demonstrated most convincingly, by an appeal to the primitive character of its narrative style and diction, that Mark's Gospel was a source of the two other Synoptics, but also showed just as convincingly that we must assume a second source back of Matthew and Luke, one that consisted mainly of discourses. By basing this proof mainly on the linguistic peculiarities of the sources and on the connection of the accounts, Holtzmann grounded the two source hypothesis so carefully that the study of Jesus henceforth could not again dispense with this firm base. In these source investigations Holtzmann differentiated a source back of Mark (that he called "A") and tried to prove that Mark had abbreviated this source by deleting the discourses it contained, but all this was not an essential part of his argument, especially in view of the fact that he himself later discarded this hypothesis of a "primal Mark" [Urmarkus]. It was actually more important that he refrained from assuming further literary sources of the Synoptics, on the ground that we have to presuppose an oral tradition prior to and contemporaneous with the composition of Mark's Gospel, and with this the task of recovering this oral tradition, a task that was taken up by Herder, was once more envisaged. Most important of all in its consequences, however, was the fact that Holtzmann, following Weisse, regarded the report in Mark, which he had shown to be the earliest, and in like manner the information from the second source, in the order in which Luke gives it, as harmonious and reliable records of the course of history. From this point of view he now drew a picture of the historical Jesus that portrayed a progressive development of the messianic consciousness that first came to Jesus at the time of his baptism, and a progressive revelation of his
messianic dignity until the confession of his messiahship at Caesarea Philippi, after which time Jesus marched to meet his tragic end. With this thesis of two stages in Jesus’ activity, Holtzmann now combined an absolute denial of the expectation on Jesus’ part of a second advent and of a visible manifestation of the rule of God. On the contrary, Jesus wanted to found a kingdom of God in the ideal sense (“to wish to found a theocracy in the midst of the Roman Empire would have been the fantasy of a fanatic”). All this meant, however, that the methodologically incontestable surmounting of the Tübingen tendency criticism by a clarification of the sources for the study of the history of Jesus was encumbered from the beginning with a psychologically oriented understanding of Jesus influenced by idealistic philosophy, and the importance for Jesus, and so for the early church, of the expectation of the end, an importance which D. F. Strauss had stressed, was denied on the strength of this spiritualizing interpretation of history. “The victory, therefore, belonged, not to the Marcan hypothesis pure and simple, but to the Markan hypothesis as psychologically interpreted by a liberal theology,” 218 and this liberal picture of Jesus in one form or another dominated and interfered with research for almost four decades. 219 But that does not detract from the significance of the service Holtzmann rendered by building a firm source foundation for further study of the tradition about Jesus. 220

We are quite aware that the investigations here presented will impress many a theological reader as a project remote from all religious interests. Indeed, at more than one point even inimical to them to undertake and complete these investigations apart from being an exercise in ingenuity possessing doubtful worth, has nothing further to contribute. And yet we are convinced that it is only by the way we have taken here that it will be possible to stir up a debate on the historical beginnings of Christianity, a debate that no longer must inevitably lead, as has usually been the case since the publication of Strauss’s work, to discussions at the very outset of more general content and to an area that puts almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of understanding the historical object as such.

To be more precise, we are concerned here only with the question, whether it is now possible to recover the historical figure of him to whom Christianity not only traces its name and state, but whose person it has also made central to its special religious outlook, in a way that will satisfy all proper demands of the advanced historic-critical sciences; whether it will be possible, by the use of a conscientious historical criticism which is the only legitimate methodology to recapture what the founder of our religion really was—the genuine and untouched image of his essential being—or whether we have to abandon once and for all the hope of attaining such a goal.

It is the Synoptics’ common plan . . . which always will form the main barrier to the direct attribution of all three of them to an oral source, quite apart from the fact that this oral source was certainly Aramaic, not in Greek, and that the mode of its transition from the Aramaic tradition into a Greek form that is marked by an equally stereotyped character can never be made conceivable.

Now that we have shown the importance of the hypothesis [of a primoral (oral) gospel] in the concrete form in which it has won its place and its name, the general truth that lies back of it must be emphasized all the more decidedly. Both facts are established, viz., both that the common content of our Gospels was first handed down orally, and that individual fragments of our Synoptic Gospels derive directly from this source. So then we will be permitted to advance it as at least inherently possible that, if the whole Second Gospel should turn out to rest in the first instance on oral tradition, also a series of peculiarities of Matthew on the one hand, and of Luke on the other, are to be explained by the same source, a source that still flowed fresh, even after its main content had already been fixed in literary form.

There can be no doubt that both Matthew and Luke must have found already in a literary precursor, those parts that their respective discourses have in common, and in a precursor that not merely assembled fragments of speeches, but also narrated facts.

Indeed, not merely in relation to Matthew, but also vis-à-vis Luke, Mark “A” shows itself to be a thoroughly coherent whole, with no interpolation spoiling the arrangement.

But the most striking evidence of all for the credibility of both sources lies in the artless congruence of the material content of Jesus’ discourses.

Finally, attention must be drawn to how perfectly homogeneous are the two sources with respect to the material that in general they offer for a more searching attempt to define the moral character of Jesus. In each of them a harmoniously constructed spiritual picture is unfolded, whose basic feature consists in the robustness of the divine consciousness that manifests itself at all times and at all places; a manifold and progressive development of a life whose driving principle is shaped by the religio-moral factor that operates with a power that completely divests itself of all the theological disquisitions and scholastic opinions of his day; that, avoiding all attempt to achieve knowledge that can be formulated scientifically produces instead eternal moral truth, free from and devoid of historical limitation, to such an extent that no one any more will wish to seek for a second example in history of the progressive consciousness of the divine.

We may perhaps characterize it as the most precious result of our investigations that by them we are enabled to draw a rather definite picture of the historical character of the person of Jesus and of the activity that filled his span of life. At the same time we see in it the most assured advance by which, without having to resort to the blunted weapons of an apologetic that rests on dogmatic presuppositions, we leave behind us, once and for all, the results of the Tübingen School.

It is undeniable that in “A” and in Mark, respectively, we are noticeably closer to the person of the Lord than in Matthew or Luke. The historically conditioned, the humanly individual, retreats least before the general and divine. On the contrary, so much of more finely applied detail, painted with earthy colors whose texture is determined by temporal and local, even individual conditions, is offered the eye of the research scholar that we can say: Nowhere does what the man Jesus was stand out so clearly as in “A” and in the Gospel of Mark, respectively.

In Mark, on the other hand, the peculiar, the extraordinary, begins with the
act of baptism, when the Holy Spirit, with whom, accordingly, Jesus is not thought of as having had originally any relation, "comes upon him" (1:10). While what actually happened can no longer be clearly determined from Mark's account of the miraculous occurrence (1:10) and the divine announcement (1:11), nevertheless this account, which rests perhaps on a report given of it by Jesus himself, is to be regarded as more original than those of the other Synoptics, which more or less objectify the event. In any case it is the view of the source book that an actual heightening of Jesus' self-consciousness took place on that occasion: "a great clarification of his divine calling came to him, that struck the eye of his spirit as a flood of light from heaven, the ear of his spirit as the voice of God." So, from this time on his whole person and being, at least in one specific respect, has something that lies beyond our ken. It makes effective his power, he for whose understanding no comparison of ordinary observations affords us the key. Indeed, according to our reporter, from the moment of the baptism a mighty urgent inworking of the Spirit takes place that leaves the bearer of the Spirit no rest until his work is in full process.

If we now inquire concerning the outlines within which is sketched the external course of Jesus' public ministry, so energetically inaugurated, we find them among all Synoptics only in our Second Gospel. It is almost universally admitted that there is chronological and geographical disorder in the Third Gospel, at least in the great insertion, 9:51–18:14. In this respect the First Gospel also suffers from the... defects that even in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks as Messiah, and yet continues to withhold a declaration of his messianic identity as early as 14:35 the disciples save that Jesus is Lord and God, and yet only in 16:16 does Jesus' messianic status on Peter. And so forth. Furthermore, it is impossible to plot the course of this, as it were, ever-present Messiah on any map, while in the Second Gospel we know almost always at what point we are, for the circles the Lord describes in his journeys are enlarged very gradually and deliberately. The same progress prevails in this external part of the account as in that of the inner development and the gradual emergence of the messianic idea... The public activity, however, is presented in terms of seven ever-expanding circles that can be drawn quite definitely, although the author need not always have been aware of the transition.

If we glance back at these seven stages of the public ministry of Jesus, the result is confirmed for us that it was only gradually, and only at the very end, with clarity that the disciples confidently recognized in Jesus the Messiah, a recognition he did not compel them to make. It is quite compatible with this if a certain minimum of confidence that they had found the Messiah in him was present in their hearts from the beginning. At the same time on the other hand, the mistrust with which the Pharisees followed him who was becoming Messiah is made amply apparent by the fact that even in Galilee, whither they had followed him, they keep a most careful watch over him and seek to restrict his activity (2:6; 5:6, 22).... Consequently his opponents quickly reach the decision to bring about his death (3:6).

So the life course of Jesus quickly drew on towards its tragic end, an end that Jesus himself with ever-increasing clarity foresaw as divinely necessary and predicted as the only possible one, but also as the only one worthy of him. From the beginning the hatred of the Pharisees and the indifference of the people permitted no other prospect. The former could not help but be exceedingly provoked by the uncompromising severity with which Jesus uncovered all that they were, their loveless hearts, their morality which in its innermost being was full of holes and tattered, their outward appearance of virtue, their hypocritical pride. A calamitous break had soon to come as a consequence of an inflexible opposition of this sort between one who, by all appearance, was intent on representing himself as the fulfillment of the messianic hopes of the people, on the one hand, and the toughest, most easily offended hierarchy that ever was. But it was easy to foresee that even in Galilee only the minority of the people would dare to face with him the danger of such a break. For only one circumstance could have blunted the force of the capital judgment that had early been determined: a series of unmistakable and energetic demonstrations on the part of the people. But to ensure that such should take place, Jesus, though only temporarily, would have had to adopt the popular, potent, quickly kindled messianic idea, or rather, would have had to put himself at its disposal. Judged by all other human political standards, this path would be free of risk, because it alone would have been practicable; but he took not a single step in that direction. His refusal to follow this path in spite of the extraordinary means that were at his disposal is the only adequate basis for explaining his downfall.

So the Second Gospel, in a narrative block cast in a single mold, beginning with 10:1, gives an account of the final destiny, a destiny, as we have seen, that had been prepared in advance. Apart from a few aberrations, the other Synoptics have therefore stayed close here also to the course of events as Mark narrates it. But it is only in Mark that the passion story bears especially clearly that impression of originality that is characteristic of most sections. It is necessary only to compare the reports of the agony of Gethsemane, of the involuntary and painful silence before spiritual and secular judgment, of the fierce struggle on the Cross, to reach the conclusion that the later reports have added more to the completeness than to the intensive likeliness of the picture of Jesus.

Eduard Reuss of Strassburg initiated for the rest of the New Testament the same methodological surmounting of the Tübingen tendency criticism by furnishing a more appropriate answer to the question of sources than Holtzmann had accomplished for the Synoptic Gospels. Even before Baur's larger works appeared, Reuss had published the first edition of his Geschichte der heiligen Schriften Neuen Testaments [History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament] (1842). This study differed from previous "New Testament introductions" in that the discussion of the various books was set within the framework of the history of the early church, and thus it anticipated Baur's demand that the individual writings should be explained in light of the whole course of early history. As an alternative to Baur's first study of the parties in Corinth, Reuss also immediately suggested the thesis that "the strict Judaism" should be distinguished from "the moderate Jewish Christians," of whom only the second group could recognize Paul.221 But it was only in his History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age, a two-volume work that appeared in French ten years later, and in the editions subsequent to that of his History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament, that he
raised really far-reaching objections to Baur’s total view. He acknowledges that it is proper to emphasize the conflict between Jewish Christianity and Paulinism, but shows that there was also a mediating group within Jewish Christianity, a group to which the original apostles belonged. He draws the right conclusion from this observation, namely, that the different groups and views do not need to be placed after one another in a historical sequence, but that they obviously existed side by side almost from the beginning. And therefore he recognizes the dubity of the reasons that lead to rejection of the authenticity of the briefers letters of Paul and to the late dating of the other writings of the New Testament. Reuss was correct in his insight that the conflict of radical Jewish Christianity and Paulinism was not the only historically powerful reality of the apostolic age, and that therefore writings that do not reflect this conflict can be sources of this age. But it is still more important that, having fully recognized the historical difference between the Synoptics and John, Reuss now, in opposition to Baur and his pupils and even earlier than Holtzmann, made an account of Jesus’ proclamation a prolegomenon to his history of the apostolic age and thereby demonstrated that even the preaching of Jesus reveals the fundamental opposition to contemporary Judaism that Paul later debated in theological terms. And it was also of great significance that Reuss, while fully stressing the strictly historical character of the discipline of New Testament introduction and the understanding of biblical theology as the beginning of the Christian history of dogma, by this very means endeavored to emphasize the theological character of this branch of learning and consequently to take into account “the religio-ecclesiastical point of view,” thereby restating the vexed problem of New Testament science as a theological undertaking. Reuss’s work on the New Testament was of undoubted value, though this fact has not always been adequately recognized, and it detracts little from it that his judgments on the circumstances of origin of the individual New Testament books were largely conservative, or at least wavering, though they became more definite as edition succeeded edition. It was a matter for concern, however, that even Reuss utterly failed to recognize the importance for early Christianity of the expectation of the end. He not only denied that Jesus expected the imminent introduction of the kingdom of God and held that this expectation was due to a misunderstanding on the part of the primitive church, but also made ineptual the recognition that Paul expected the end in the immediate future by terming it unessential and by holding that Paul took the first steps, though only the first steps, toward a spiritualization of the expectation of the end. In this respect Reuss also was guilty of the same error of spiritualizing the New Testament as was H. J. Holtzmann.232

From a methodological and practical point of view our science is connected with theology, and belongs to the circle of theological sciences; in the first place, as one of the sciences auxiliary to biblical exegesis, which to Protestant theologians at least, has ever been the foundation and point of departure for the apprehension and presentation of Christian doctrine. It stands in the same relation to it as do biblical philology, archaeology, and hermeneutics. But it is especially when it does not content itself with treating its material on its purely literary side, but considers it in close and constant connection with the development of doctrine and life, that it appears also as a special division, distinct in itself, of the history of the Christian Church. In no other sense does it lay claim to a theological character.

The form which we here give the science of introduction is a natural consequence of the historical point of view to which we adhere. Aside from the greater extent of the material, this history is distinguished from the ordinary introductions in that here the facts are arranged immediately as the result of preliminary critical analysis, while elsewhere criticism adapts itself to the ordering of the facts determined by convention. Our work is not intended as an introduction to something else, but as an independent portion of history, ennobled by the dignity of the subject matter, given coherence by a ruling idea, limited by its own aim, and complete, if not in knowledge and judgment, of which indeed none may boast of the highest degree, yet complete with respect to the idea which combines the miscellaneous and which inspires the dry and dead with life and motion.

The idea of such a treatment of the material is doubtless not new, yet the carrying out of it is contrary to the current method.

When, however, from a different point of view, Baur ... defines “introduction” as the science of the criticism of the Canon, ... we have only to say that his own numerous attempts are the best proof that criticism is everywhere simply the preparatory work for history, not history itself; that a historical science, like criticism, approaches perfection only when it ventures to pass over from the form of inquiry to that of narration; ... and above all that so long as the conception and form of the science are under discussion the particular views of a single critic on the special questions relating thereto cannot furnish an absolute standard. [In addition, the present account is far too indebted to what he has learned from the famous Tübingen historian to want to dispute about which in it cannot follow him.]

That the church was by no means purely Pauline after the death of the apostle, indeed even less so than during his lifetime, has been proved incontestably by the school of Baur from the history of the second century and from the later apostolic literature.

We have already seen that at the beginning there were formed in the apostolic church two parties, of which the one, the more numerous, consisted of strict Judaists, who neither could conceive nor would endure the renunciation of the ancestral Law of Israel; the other, much smaller, but spiritually superior, the Pauline, in theory had broken with the Law and in practice ignored it. It has also been intimated that matters were not allowed to rest in this state of simple disagreement, but that an attempt was made to bring about an adjustment, both in doctrine and life, and which should insure peace, and especially should satisfy those who from mere lack of spiritual energy were unwilling to renounce the old, yet in their dawning discernment were unable to reject the new. To this number belonged especially the heads of the church at
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Jerusalem. But their formula in reality produced, in the first place, not peace, but a third party, and as respects doctrine only a clearer sense of the necessity of advancing beyond a position which proved itself to be a mere palliative.

The clear light which the researches of Baur have shed upon the history of the early church has more than once been gratefully acknowledged in this book, and oftener still been used in silence. The emphatic dissent which has been or is yet to be expressed from some of his principles or conclusions does not alter this fact. After our declaration that the arguments urged by him against the genuineness of the Pauline epistles seem to us altogether inconclusive, we come here upon a second point in which we differ essentially from him.

We distinguish the strict Judaists, against whom Paul’s polemic (especially Galatians) is directed, and who are also condemned in Acts 11; 15; from the moderate Jewish Christians, who wished to lay upon the Gentiles the Noachian precepts, . . . but for the Jews made “observing the customs” (21:21) and “living in observance of the law” (vs. 24) a matter of conscience, because the opposite would have been a formal ἀποστασία (“apostasy”) (vs. 21). Such Christians and Paul could mutually recognize each other (Gal. 2:7), but could not work well together (vs. 9). There existed between no division or schism, but it was quite necessary that their fields of labor should be distinct, and, to avoid treading on each other’s toes, even some tension.

This moderate party may have been very few in number and without influence; the Epistle to the Galatians proves indisputably that the στήλαι (“pillars”) at Jerusalem belonged to it.

When once the impulse of an intellectual development has been given and the soil prepared for it, no long time is needed to bring forth the most varied growths of thought. And when have the germs of religious speculation, both true and false, been more abundantly scattered in all lands and amid all classes of the civilized world than in the apostolic age? There is certainly no necessity, then, that we should distribute over a longer period the results of such a development which meet us here at the outset, or regard them as intelligible only in case they belong to some much later generation. Taken as they are, they are still, even on the judgment of the ancient church, which everywhere exaggerated them, imperfect enough to be recognized as their fruits. Therefore, even should the names and personality of the writers remain once and again doubtful or altogether unknown to us, yet the majority of their works ought ever to maintain even their traditional claims as monuments of the primitive days of Christianity.

This is the third and most essential difference between the views of Baur and our own: he eagerly and expressly regards the proved differences as successive, developed one out of another, and adduces later traces of the use or currency of any principle or formula as direct proofs of its later origin. Both conclusions are much too hasty. The manifold, the merely similar, even the derived, may easily be simultaneous; and every century has seen illustrations of the fact that ideas and systems, often immediately upon their entrance into the world, are accepted by some unconditionally, by many are altered, mutilated, extended, developed. Even were we obliged to explain everything in the New Testament literature which Baur regards as polemical or ironic in precisely his sense, there would be no necessity of bringing it down fifty to eighty years. For such a conclusion there have been adduced only very doubtful arguments, not a single conclusive one.

STRAUSS-BAUR DISPUTE: THE PROBLEM OF SOURCES

Special mention is due here only to the completely altered view of the early history of Christianity and its literature advocated and established by Ferdinand Christian Baur and his followers of the Tübingen School. According to this view the peculiar doctrinal content of each writing gives the key to its origin; so that the idea of the development of the apostolic doctrine appears essentially complete before the investigation of the New Testament documents with respect to the time of their origin has properly begun. Now inasmuch as this system at the same time assumes a much more gradual progress of this development than is usually assumed, on the one side in the direction of higher speculation, on the other toward the fusion of Jewish Christian and Pauline elements, a later date results for the origin of most of the books found in our present canon, the majority of which consequently fall in the postapostolic period, and even in the second century.

The prevailingly negative results of the criticism of Baur and his school are in themselves no proof of error, as apologetics has only too often represented it; but the system has its weak points, in which it must be essentially changed or fall. We have already pointed out in this connection the studiously obscure reserve of judgment respecting Jesus; the gulf between him and Paul; the altogether too harsh intensification of the opposition between the latter and the other apostles; the failure to recognize the germs of organization even in the earliest Jewish Christianity, and their propulsive power; the assumption, never yet justified, of so very late a date for most of the N.T. writings; the rashness of judgment by which the genuineness of many of them is denied—often sacrificed rather to the logic of the system than to sufficient proof; the character of the process of development as it is represented, which is throughout rather eternal and mechanical than internal and dynamic, etc. Not even in the light of the most recent discoveries, by which many things have been altered or modified, should we be able wholly to retrace any of these criticisms. But the system will never be effectively combated when it is rejected as a package.

Biblical theology is then essentially a historical science. It does not demonstrate, it narrates. It is the first chapter in the history of Christian doctrine.

Let us only contrast the spirit of the Gospel with the tendency of Jewish teaching, as manifested in two striking phases. The former appeals first of all to the soul of man, to his religious feeling, to the inner yearnings of his heart; it seeks to regenerate and to bring him thus to God, the sole source of all happiness. Now this end and the means which lead to it are the same for all men; all are found in the same condition of estrangement from good, in the same state of misery and peril; the Gospel is then equally needful for and equally within the reach of all. The case is altogether reversed with the theology and philosophy of Judaism. The very terms thus used indicate that we have here a privileged class, claiming to rise to a higher degree of light and knowledge than can be shared by the common world—illuminati who will naturally be prone to look with contempt on the masses. Then this teaching addresses itself preferentially, and often exclusively, to the intellect, to speculative reason, or to remembrance alone, and makes religious knowledge consist either in hollow forms which mould the outer without nourishing the inner life, or in cold, dazzling abstractions, lofty but insubstantial. Thus the Gospel prevailed to establish the Church and change the face of the world, while Jewish theology allowed the synagogue to perish, and produced only the Talmud and the Kabbala—a code for monks, and a philosophy for dreamers or magicians.

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It was not homogeneous with any aspect of Judaism; new and specific elements kept it radically distinct from all existing Jewish systems and schools. Whatever of truth and goodness these possessed by inheritance through tradition, the Gospel sanctified, spiritualized, raised into a higher sphere; and nothing is a stronger proof of its originality than the powerlessness of Judaism to follow an impulse which could not have failed to lead it on to perfection, if there had not been a radical incongruity between the two.

The Gospel was not to the first disciples a new religion opposed to Judaism; it was the fulfillment of the old . . .

We may give in a word the substance of Judaeo-Christian theology. In its primitive simplicity it is summed up . . . in the confession, Jesus is the Messiah . . . At the commencement . . . the hopes of the young Christian community were closely akin to those of the synagogue. The remarks we have made with reference to the messianic beliefs among the Jews, may therefore help us to understand those of the apostles and their disciples, and all we have to do is prove the fact of this identity.

We must bear in mind, however, that the preaching of the apostles, based as it was on experiences peculiar to the disciples, and on convictions derived directly from their individual relations with the Savior, contained a germ of divergence and of progress, the importance of which was felt more and more, and which in the end broke the bond between the Church and the synagogue. The disciples believed and knew that Messiah had already been personally revealed . . . and his resurrection, while it raised their drooping courage, reawakened in new force the hopes of the future, which they had previously fixed on his person. Now this fact of a twofold messianic revelation, this idea of two appearances of the promised Christ—the one in humiliation, the other in glory, the one past, the other future—did not present itself as a mere chronological modification of the theory of the schools, but introduced a radical change into its constituent elements.

It is, in truth, an opinion, very imperfectly justified by history, that Judaeo-Christianity rejected the idea of the divinity of the Savior . . . The very utmost that can be said is that this idea did not form the basis of the religious convictions of that school in regard to Christ, and that it was content without arriving by reflection at any exact and final conception on the subject. It must even be admitted that many Christians of this class remained complete strangers to any spiritual or speculative development of faith in this direction. But it is equally true of the language used by Paul, that it was adapted to meet the requirements of religious feeling rather than those of speculative thought . . . We cannot, then, contrast the teaching of Paul with the ideas dominant among the first Christians in Palestine, as though it embodied a perfectly distinct system of doctrine.

It may be said that the difference between Paulinism and Judaeo-Christianity is reduced to one single principle. Both sides recognize salvation by Christ; in both we find faith, hope, and charity; both speak of duty and reward. But in Judaeo-Christianity all this is a matter of knowledge, instruction, understanding, of memory even, of imagination often, and, lastly, of conscience, which is permeated with it, and adopts it on the faith of a teaching supported by tradition, and established by the written word. To Paul, and according to his view, all these facts, all these convictions, are the direct results of the religious feeling. He finds them in himself, not as the creations or inventions of a spontaneous act of his reason, but placed within him by the Holy Spirit of God, and by him vitalized and rendered fruitful. In both schools a knowledge of Christ and his Gospel might have been gained through the preaching of a missionary, or by the study of a book. In the one, however, Jesus would have remained primarily a historical personage, having his place, indeed, not only in the past, but also in the present and the future, and standing always at the summit of the scale of beings, exalted to the right hand of God, having given commandments to his disciples to be observed, and promised blessings by them to be obtained. In the second or Pauline school, Christ reveals himself preeminently in the individual himself; it is in his own spiritual nature that the man feels and finds Christ; his death and resurrection become phases in the life of every Christian; and that life itself is derived purely from the ultimate union of the two personalities, the individual existence being renewed, fashioned, sanctified by and according to the ideal and normal existence of the Savior.

The adversaries of Paul were not content, therefore, with opposing him merely in the arena of word and doctrine. They soon reached open hostilities, and labored ardently to destroy a work which on conviction they detested. While Paul, with a prudent and honorable reserve, carefully avoided encroaching on what he considered to be the ground of his colleagues . . . the opposing party organized a regular countermission, with the avowed object of bringing back those who had received only the Gospel according to Paul, to the Gospel preached by them of Jerusalem.

At a very early time in the history of the Church, long before there was any question of theological literature, we already see dawning on the horizon a certain spirit of conciliation that, at first almost instinctively, settled in the midst of the parties and controversies, occupied the terrain that had served them as an arena, and endeavored to calm their ardor by covering them with its flag of peace and concord. At the conference in Jerusalem, at this first and solemn theological debate, we already see the need for peace and the practical views carrying off the victory over the principles. Indeed, while on the one hand the maintenance of the Mosaic Law was demanded of all those who wanted to enter the Church, and while on the other hand its abrogation was proclaimed even for those who had hitherto observed it, in view of these two diametrically opposed opinions, which, however, were both based on axioms that permitted no exception, what attitude seized the apostolic assembly? It composed a resolution that was a slap in the face both to the one and to the other axiom; it composed a decree that was not based on any absolute principle, and that consequently ought to have had no chance of success. And yet, for a time at any rate, it was the only practicable expedient, and consequently justified by the circumstances. The Jews were to remain Jews; the Gentiles were not to be compelled to Judaize; all customs were to be respected, all repugnances treated with deference: that is what was proposed and adopted; in the last analysis, that is what had to happen of itself, if it had not been ordered. A naive, inconsequential decision, if you will, but admirably wise, especially because, without being conscious of it, it demonstrated this great truth, that men are not made for theories, but theories ought to be made for men.

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