

THE BATTLE FOR THE HISTORICITY OF THE BIBLE:

German Idealism, Theological Romanticism, Biblical Criticism & Postmodern Fascism

Thesis Introduction

While it is true skepticism toward the Bible as an authentic revelation from God began in England with the meteoric rise of the scientific revolution during the 1600's and 1700's which gave birth to the Enlightenment and the secular religion of Deism that tried to outlaw God's miraculous intervention into providence and history, it was the German response and reaction to the Age of Reason that led to an all-out assault against the historicity of the Scriptures. English Deism only went so far, but Germany took it to heart, and then even worse, assuming its scientific conclusions were relatively true concerning the biblical record, tried to fix it – but not by returning to the Protestant Reformation. Instead, German scholars of the 1700's and 1800's came up their own semi-secularized natural theology that rivalled and later replaced Deism with what is known today as Theological Liberalism. German philosophers and theologians gutted the historical, biblical, and theological truths of the Scriptures and replaced them with a secularized form of Germanic Theological Liberalism based on a curious mixture of rationalism, idealism, subjectivity, feelings, Romanticism, and existentialism – all of which was hostile to classic Protestant Christianity that grew up during the Reformation in continental Europe. More to the point, it was not deistic rationalism that proved to be so fatal to historic Protestant Orthodoxy in Germany, but the subjective irrational elements that covered over the reason of the Enlightenment with Idealism and Romanticism at first, before then bottoming out with the madness of Existentialism and Postmodernism. With bitter irony, the great battle against the historical truth of the Bible in modern times thus was largely carried out by German theology and philosophy, the very heartland of Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation that originally gave to the western world the critical concept of *Sola Scriptura*, i.e., the Bible alone, as its most important motto.

The Protestant Reformation led to many great blessings in the West as Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from the works of the law opened up God's grace and salvation to countless souls as it was increasingly made available to many different people through the translation of the Bible into the common vernacular. Over time, however, such gracious blessings were transposed into presumption of divine blessing and arrogance, particularly with regard to western academia that benefitted greatly from both the scientific and industrial revolutions that seemed to gradually lift Europe out of the dregs of feudalism into a brand new era of Enlightenment and secular progress that far surpassed the backward times of the Christian Middle Ages. As is so often the case, what started out or originated as something very positive, dovetailed into a spiritual disaster after two to three centuries. Even the Old Testament presents to its readers similar results as the history of Israel demonstrated time and time again on how positive beginnings quickly fell into sin, unbelief, disrepute and finally national disaster. Such historical lessons were especially clear in the cases of both the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles, but the end of the book of Judges gets an honorable mention too. However, such historical realities were increasingly ignored during the 1700's and 1800's as German theological and philosophical teachers and their students, all of whom usually grew up in dry state churches financed by government taxes, began attacking the sober history of the Bible in favor of the cult of modern progress and secular mysticism.

In the same way the worship of Baal reaped destruction in Israel, so too German secular mysticism eventually reaped the apocalypse of both world wars in in the 20th century.¹ The fact that the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles in the Old Testament were hundreds of years in the

¹ See *Nazi Oaks: The Green Sacrifice of the Judeo-Christian Worldview in the Holocaust*, by Mark Musser.

making also demonstrates historically how such national disasters do not occur overnight, but require a long haul of continual rebellion and disobedience against God's authority. Moreover, much in the same way that Judah only demonstrated a temporary and half-hearted repentance away from her Baalism after watching Assyria destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel, so too, Germany's repentance after World War II was/is greatly wanting. After the smoke cleared from the ghastly battlefields of World War II, German secular mysticism and its twin sister, Theological Liberalism, was not abandoned, but was transmuted into Postmodernism - another brainchild of Germany that almost revels in its veritable nihilism. 'Nihil' or 'nil' means nothing, and so nihilism means belief in nothing. Rather than reverse course, they doubled down after the war and dug deeper into the abyss of nothingness that continues in the vein of God's judgment where the apostle Paul tells his Greek readers in Corinth, "For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.'" (1 Corinthians 1:19)

While reason and technology ran circles around the many social ills that a burgeoning population growth exacerbated throughout the 1700's and 1800's, many academics and elites became frustrated by the lack of political and/or social progress they expected coming out of the feudalism of the Christian Middle Ages. Such results seemed to demonstrate the problem facing the human condition was not necessarily a rational one, but something much deeper than mere reason. Reason was only a part of the whole man. His spiritual nature, emotions, intuition, willpower, instincts, and physical health also needed to be examined and ameliorated in order to rectify the great concerns facing western elites during the times of the great upheavals of the Industrial Revolution. Scientific progress thus had to be carried over into other fields of human inquiry that became a very German affair as philosophical subjectivity, Theological Romanticism, and existentialism became all mixed up with the Age of Reason. Such a remedy promoted and upheld a syncretism of rationalism and irrationalism that began using rational means to bring about irrational goals. Since the human being is much more than reason, reason should thus be used to serve the whole human being, especially with regard to his spiritual, emotional and irrational needs that go far beyond the limits of rational inquiry. The Enlightenment in Germany placed limits on reason, and then promulgated philosophical mysticism and Theological Liberalism to get beyond it.

In order to accomplish this grand idealistic odyssey, which later became an existential triumph of the will under the tyranny of National Socialism, the German Enlightenment² began attacking the relationship between the primacy of the mind (rationalism) and the reality of creation that was designed by God to inform that mind (empiricism) - a rich heritage bequeathed upon them from the Judeo-Christian tradition inherited from the natural theology of the Christian Middle Ages that kicked off both the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. Running parallel to the attack on the reason-reality relationship was an all-out assault against the historicity of the Bible that proved to be the main event by the 1800's. In truth, the German Enlightenment wanted to free itself from both the divine constraints of the natural theology and biblical history of the Judeo-Christian worldview. As such, the divine authority of both creation and biblical history was assaulted by a grandiose pincer movement between German philosophy and theology. The lines of divine communication between creation and the mind, and then between biblical history and faith, had to be severed in a complicated scheme of semi-secularization. Firstly, it was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in the late 1700's who conquered the presumed objective primacy of Judeo-Christian natural theology through his subjectivist philosophy called Transcendental Idealism. Secondly, once Kant subjugated Judeo-Christian natural theology under the subjectivity of the German mind, theological liberals and bible critics attacked the revelatory authority of biblical history by blowing up the relationship between faith and history. Furthermore, the mental gymnastics employed to get this done through a curious mixture of rationalism and irrationalism was/is truly mind-numbing indeed.³ Yet, all this mental energy was expended for a purpose, i.e.,

² The label "German Enlightenment" is a misnomer. It is better characterized as the "Counter Enlightenment.

³ This by itself almost proves the veracity of the Bible and the Judeo-Christian worldview.

to promote their own other religious and political goals based on secular mysticism that betrayed the very rationalism it was all purportedly based upon in the first place. Such mysticism dominated Germany throughout the 1800's as it became increasingly politicized and nationalized. Needless to say, this did not lead to secular salvation in the 20th century. Instead, it reaped great destruction – the exact opposite of what was intended.

The Germanized mystical cult of modern progress not only ran into the political-socialistic bloodbath that comprised the first half of the 20th century with well over 100 million deaths by the late 1960's, but has since also passed over into the nihilistic madness of what is otherwise known today as Postmodernism. Thanks to its nihilism, Postmodernism has dulled the intellect with just enough irrationalism to prevent people in the latter half of the 20th century from recognizing the obvious truth of how the secular-mystical West reached rock bottom during the heights of World War II starring Nazi Germany as the final grave stone of this mad odyssey. Worse, the catastrophic fallout of both world wars has left the modern West deeply tarnished by what perhaps should be understood better as the Post-Auschwitz age that has hidden itself under the unintelligible vagueness and veritable nihilism of Postmodernism that managed to assuage western academic elites of any serious soul-searching and academic culpability for all that transpired under their watch since the late 1700's.

Nevertheless, this this is not to say that Germany was/is more evil than other western countries. This is far from the truth. However, it is to say that this German odyssey which spent an inordinate amount of time and energy debunking the historical foundations of the Bible is a warning to the rest of the West. If such tragic events occurred in Protestant Germany, they can occur anywhere. This is a history lesson that needs to be taught and understood, largely because the West has absorbed too much of Germany's skepticism toward the historicity of the Bible. They have enthusiastically followed in the same footsteps. The upshot of Germany's long and sustained attack against the truths of the Bible has left the modern West in a world dominated by subjective feelings, secular mysticism, godlessness, agnosticism, and the relativity of progressive truth that was not able to academically resist or combat the doomsday of either world war in the first half of the twentieth century – two wars that were inextricably linked together with the nation of Germany sitting at their foundations.

Summarizing the Road from the Enlightenment to German Theological Liberalism

All too many unfortunately presume “philosophers sit in ivory towers that spin theories that have little to do with the life of the ordinary, hardworking citizen. But in point of fact, philosophers have often ruled entire countries. What is taught in philosophy class rooms today is believed by the man on the street tomorrow.”⁴ The modern West's freefall into the abyss of feelings, entertainment, mindlessness, lawlessness, and thoughtless immoral behavior was largely learned in the academic halls of the 1800's, with the lion's share of such attitudes coming out of Germany that fostered an unwarranted amount of skepticism toward the historical truths of the Bible. In particular, the German Enlightenment disregarded the Jewish foundations of the Bible. They sought to separate biblical history from both Jews and Christians because they saw the Bible not only as too superstitious with too many miracles, but also and closely connected, as too limiting, exclusionary, and particularistic. In a word, a religion based on the Bible was and could never be universal enough for the Enlightenment, nor its followers. The authority of biblical history, which was very particularistic, had to be gutted in order to provide a more general basis for truth based on man's autonomous or self-sufficient reason. As such, the historicity of the Bible as God's revealed will codified in the written Scriptures had to be replaced with Enlightenment reason:

⁴ Lutzer, *Hitler's Cross*, p. 31.

Religion in an Enlightenment perspective was no longer dependent on, or bound to, historical events, but became supra-historical. Since religion was 'natural,' it was intrinsic to all humans. Religion thus became integrated into the individual's self-understanding: 'each individual can attain truth by the free exercise of his private judgment.' At the same time, no particular religion was true, and part and parcel of this outlook was that the hegemony of revelation had to be broken. Jews and Judaism were linked to that precise biblical revelation that the Enlightenment wanted to free itself of, and the ethnic and religious particularity that was typical of the Abrahamic Covenant and Judaism - and then Christianity - went out of fashion. Rationality being the ruling principle of this changing intellectual condition, theology and philosophy began to express profound criticism of the miraculous, or mysterious, element of religion, and thus of the Bible.⁵

In truth, Enlightenment reason was a form of natural theology based strictly on nature alone which had sprung up during the Christian Middle Ages that had finally divorced itself from the Bible to produce what is known as Naturalism. While Christian Middle Age scholars used both natural and biblical theology side by side using the Scriptures as their primary guide to interpret the great significance of the created world, the enlightened scholars jettisoned the Bible so they could be left alone to use their own reason to interpret nature or the world around them without any divine revelation to assist them. Thus the Enlightenment became a natural theology without biblical history. While Deism flourished in England along such lines in the late 1600's and 1700's, it was German Theological Liberalism that went amuck in the 1800's. While accepting many tenets from Deism, German scholars viewed its virtual worship of reason as too extreme that needed to be curbed by other concerns of the whole person, including his passions, feelings, and religious sympathies. Yet this interest in the religious side of man was not going to be associated with a return back to historic Protestantism and/or biblical Christianity, but a strong spiritual thrust away from it that even managed to far outdo Deism in terms of spiritual and cultural carnage. As Deism's influence waned, German Theological Liberalism replaced it with a vengeance.

It was Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) who first popularized the Enlightenment in Germany for the express purpose of promoting skepticism relative to the miraculous history of the Bible. In a more roundabout way, such skepticism was then reinforced by Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) critique of Enlightenment rationality that not only questioned many of the classical arguments on the existence of God that were postulated under the auspices of Christian natural theology, but ended up placing much doubt on the possibility of using reason for metaphysics in general. In his famous work *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant greatly limited reason's ability to grapple with the great metaphysical questions of this life and the beyond. Yet, Kant was also looking to protect the religious side of man from Deism's rationalistic excesses, but in so doing, he managed to place metaphysics, including the truths of the Bible as well, into an irrational world of faith that went beyond the limits of reason, nor could be truly accessed by reason. While Kant's philosophy placed a healthy check onto the worship of rationality that the Enlightenment had imbibed too deeply from, he limited reason too much so that the search for truth became too subjective, and thus for all practical purposes, unknowable, if not irrational.

After Kant, religious subjectivism has ruled Germany and the West ever since with Theological Romanticism and/or Liberalism that emphasizes religious feelings and practical social concerns over a doctrinal belief system that was at the heart of the original Protestant Reformation. Thanks to Kant's philosophical failure to unite reason with metaphysics, Christian and/or Bible doctrine has been increasingly devalued ever since. While this was not Kant's primary objective, the upshot of his prodigious efforts was that all too many began presuming doctrinal theology rationally derived from the Bible led to false restrictive truths and religious speculations rather

⁵ Gerdmar, Anders. *Roots of Theological Anti-Semitism: German Biblical Interpretation and the Jews, from Herder and Semler to Kittel and Bultmann*, p. 25.

than anything of substance because reason itself could not pierce through the barrier between this world and the spiritual or metaphysical world. Worse, as the Person of God became increasingly unknowable, this led to a separation between the mind of man and the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures. While there is no doubt the mind of man is finite, this does not mean that God or metaphysics cannot be rationally known or understood by man to some extent, especially if God chooses to reveal Himself through His created world and the Bible.

With all rational roads cut off to metaphysics, Theological Romanticism and/or Liberalism grew rapidly as it doubted the miraculous history of the Bible that was at the heart of Christian doctrine. The transcendental and miraculous truths of the Bible wrapped around historical events like the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ were demythologized and subjected to the presumed rigors of the historical sciences of the Enlightenment. Freed from doctrinal restraints of anti-progressive superstition and backwater beliefs, a movement that became known as German higher criticism then vehemently attacked biblical history during the mid-1800's. So-called higher critics like Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), together with their followers, re-drew the history of the entire Bible to fit their own form of Germanic religious mysticism.

Needless to say, such schemes were not based on empirical facts of the ancient world or their respective texts, much less upon the archaeological record (which was virtually non-existent at the time) but according to German religious philosophy with no small thanks to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's (1770-1831) philosophy of history that foisted an evolutionary progressive pantheism upon the historical gridiron that was anything but objective. Hegel not only taught that history itself was an evolutionary struggle in which the World Spirit progressively develops man through historical contradictions between ideas, religions, and states, but also arrogantly placed Germany on top of the philosophical and religious totem pole.

As such, while German philosophers and theologians were mocking the Judeo-Christian apocalypse as an unfulfilled fairy tale based on myth, they were propounding their own Teutonic eschatology. Such Germanic pride would not only dominate the academic halls of Germany throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th century, but was used with great exuberance to show how advanced the nation had become. In the process, German scholars secularized the Bible by removing its miracles and converting religious doctrines, verities, and prophecies, particularly Old Testament Zionist prophecies, into profane philosophical truths that were then applied politically and socially in order to show that Germany had become the primary repository of the World Spirit's progressive blessing. The Jewish-Christian apocalypse in both the Old and New Testaments was profaned and secularized into a liberal eschatology with Germany serving as the revolutionary vanguard of semi-pantheistic world progressivism. This was not what the English Deists were originally looking for in the 1700's, but became the heart of theological, philosophical, and socialistic liberalism in Germany in the 1800's up until the First World War.

Dr. Gary Dorrien of both Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary summarizes this entire German caper quite succinctly with much irony:

Liberal theology was born in largely illiberal contexts in the 18th century Germany and England, a fact that helps explain why much of it was far from liberal. Most of the great thinkers in this story were Germans, the key founding fathers were Germans, and there was a vital intellectual movement of liberal theology in Germany for a century before a similar movement existed in Britain For better and for worse, German thinkers dominated modern theology right up to the point that liberal theology crashed and burned, after which the field was still dominated by the intellectual legacies of Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and the Ritschlian School.⁶

⁶ Dorrien, Gary. *Kantian Idealism and Hegelian Spirit*, p. 1.

In other words, while England and North American theologians and philosophers held more firm to Protestant biblical and theological traditions during the 1700's and 1800's in spite of the great hubris of the Enlightenment, German professors did not. "The modern departure in religious thought had to wait for the later Enlightenment, biblical criticism, the liberalizing of German universities, Kant, an upsurge of Romantic and Absolute Idealism, and Schleiermacher's determination to liberalize Christian theology within the context of the Christian Church and tradition."⁷ The fact of the matter is that German theologians and philosophers took the Enlightenment too seriously as they worked overtime in order to fix what they deemed to be its deficiencies. In the process, it was largely they who sowed theological and philosophical modernity in the 1700's and 1800's only to reap barbarism in the 20th century. It was a false form of progress in name only that actually interrupted and redirected the Age of Reason away from its Enlightenment foundations and instead was shrewdly used to serve the irrational mysticism that became the hallmark of German Theological Liberalism.

As such, this Germanic odyssey that attacked the historicity of the Bible unabated without mercy for well over 100 years, did not lead to more liberalism as German liberals originally envisaged, but to its opposite. If such energies had been directed at their own self-criticism, perhaps they would have reaped much better results than the socialist and nationalist slaughterhouse that was the 20th century together with copious amounts of Anti-Semitism:

Perhaps more than in any other modern country, the nation's (Germany) destiny was intertwined with the destiny of Christianity. In contrast what most modern scholars experience, living their lives on academic islands, German professors of theology and exegesis were no unimportant figures in the life of the nation. In fact, German Protestant theology often saw itself as part of, and key to, the development of Germany. At times it was successful in exerting its influence, not only on theology, but also on politics and cultural life. However, at the same time, the so-called Jewish problem hung as a dark shadow between the Enlightenment and the Holocaust. In the great project of shaping the German nation-state, a project that several leading theologians were involved in, the Jewish minority, whether assimilated or maintaining its integrity, was often regarded as a disturbing phenomenon.⁸

German theologians and philosophers presumed their secularization project to make the Bible palatable to the modern mindset for the sake of contemporary application to society was all done in the name of religion. However, it never occurred to them that in the process of secularization, they were unleashing the forces of profanization that became much more deadly and lethal, particularly with regard to the Jews. Age old Christian Anti-Semitism, which Martin Luther imported into Protestant Germany at the very outset, was secularized into a profane world that was left with few divine restraints to check the baser instincts, cruelty, and passions of men. Anti-Semitism became godless, and as such, became a far more serious problem than heretofore envisaged – particularly after German Theological Liberalism crashed and burned in the trench warfare of World War I. As bad as the old Christian pogroms were dating back to the Catholicism of Augustine, there was not a holocaust until the 20th century, and it was German philosophy and theology in response and reaction to the Enlightenment that played no small role in secularizing Anti-Semitism into this deep darkness that has no parallels in history.

⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸ Gerdmar, p. 23.

From Medieval Natural Theology to Scientific Naturalism

While Protestantism clashed sharply with Catholicism during the early years of the Reformation with regard to its biblical views and church traditions, it accepted Roman Catholic medieval natural theology developed during the Scholastic period that began in the 1100's and really did not die out until the early 1700's. Natural theology is distinct from the Bible. Natural theology is the study of God as the Creator whose wisdom can be observed, understood, and appreciated through the research of nature (Psalm 19:1-5; Romans 1:19-20). God reveals Himself not only through the Bible, but also through nature. In fact, nature was specifically created by God to communicate His revelatory wisdom to man as He intelligently designed it for that very purpose (Proverbs 8:22-31). Generally speaking, nature reveals the mind and providential will of God to all people everywhere since man's experience of the natural world is universal. Everyone experiences God through nature, and this without exception. However, this experience of God through nature is not to be confused with salvation. Salvation requires faith in Christ and His crosswork, which is not revealed through nature, but only through the Scriptures, i.e., God's special and written revelation, rooted in prophecy and history. In other words, nature clearly reveals the existence of God to all men, but believing in His existence does not save anyone, but only faith in the historical Person and work of Christ on the cross and in His resurrection - all of which was prophesied in the special revelation of the written Scriptures. As such, since both Protestants and Catholics believed in the existence of God, and that the biblical God was clearly the Creator of the universe and the world, there were few outstanding quarrels between them relative to natural theology. In fact, Protestantism easily absorbed medieval natural theology and even expanded it through the rise of the scientific revolution.

Natural theology was the foundation stone for the scientific revolution. Since science revolves around the study of nature, the scientific revolution was an integral consequence of taking natural theology seriously as men used their God-given reason to research the created world. Just as critical, men of the Middle Ages presumed the world to be maintained by rational laws governed by the Creator and that such natural laws were discoverable by man since nature itself is a revelation from God. Contrary to popular opinion, modern science was solidly built upon a Judeo-Christian theological foundation, with Catholic Scholastic monks leading the way at first, after which the Lutherans took over.⁹ While Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) was Catholic, his theories were largely promoted by Lutherans. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) was also a Lutheran, while Galileo (1564-1642) was Catholic - even though he was opposed by his fellow Catholics.

Yet, it must be remembered that Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo challenged the semi-pantheistic Aristotelian view of the universe, not the biblical one, something which is almost always completely misunderstood and misrepresented with regard to the Copernican revolution. All too many have naively presumed that Christianity stood against the scientific revolution by pointing out how much grief Galileo faced from the courts of Catholicism. While it is true that at the beginning of the Middle Ages, the Catholic Scholastics often gave too much deference to Aristotle, the progress of research over the centuries under the umbrella of natural theology finally led to the scientific revolution with the Copernican Revolution being the linchpin that initially launched it, which led the way to Galileo's research that finally secured it. Earlier, even the great Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519) was also a strong Catholic. Later, Isaac Newton (1642-1727) performed his scientific studies for the glory of God. With such a crew of Christian scientists coming out of the academic halls in Europe for several centuries, British philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) concluded, "Faith in the possibility of science is an unconscious derivative from medieval theology." Austrian Physicist Ernst Mach (1838-1916) chimed in as well, "Every unbiased mind must admit that the age in which the chief development of the science of mechanics took place was an age of predominantly theological cast."

⁹ See especially *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization*, by Alvin Schmidt, pp. 218-47.

Indeed, the famous dictum of modern science, that "knowledge is power," was coined by the Protestant Francis Bacon (1561-1626) in England. This idea of knowledge as power runs completely counter to the classical Greek conception of knowledge as contemplation,¹⁰ being strongly based upon the Judeo-Christian ideal where knowledge must be applied. The new Baconian science demanded experimentation and verification that went above and beyond mere theoretical knowledge. Medieval scholar Lynn White Jr. (1907-1987), pointed out that such assumptions were much more pronounced in Western Christianity than in Eastern Christianity, "The Greek saint contemplates; the western saints acts. The implications of Christianity for the conquest of nature would emerge more easily in the western atmosphere."¹¹ Under western Christianity in particular, therefore, the natural theology of the Middle Ages gave birth to modern science precisely because it became very interested in discovering how creation actually works.

Lovers of philosophy, the ancient Greeks had very little interest in developing applied modern science as is practiced today. It was the Old and New Testaments, which time and time again stresses the practical import and value of applied knowledge, which helped form the basis for modern science. Moreover, since people believed that God created the universe, this made nature not only tangibly real and rational, but also something worthy of serious investigation. In other words, the Christian scientist expected to learn from nature precisely because he assumed that God intelligently designed it.

However, once the assumption of God's intelligent design is removed from nature, it becomes very difficult to understand just exactly what scientists are intending to learn these days? Modern scientists who deny the universe is intelligently designed thus can no longer explain why it is that they have indeed learned so much from nature. The Darwinian descent of man fully submerged into a purposeless natural world of unintelligent outcomes has only compounded this problem further. Contrary to popular opinion, a mixed up post-Christian, postmodern world is anything but a good foundation upon which to build an epistemological basis for scientific knowledge. The truth of the matter is that science cannot live under such a mindless umbrella, and with exception to the physical sciences, has already largely devolved into scientism.

Furthermore, the Judeo-Christian God is also separate from world which He created. This is extremely critical. Since God is transcendent above the natural world, to study nature and tinker with her secrets is therefore not an act of irreverence. As such, surprisingly enough, it was the Judeo-Christian worldview which removed the superstitions of the pagan universe and opened wide the door of scientific investigation. The fact that man was made in God's image additionally established the inherent connection between Christianity and modern science. Man's reasoning capacity was assumed to be one of the primary characteristics of being made in God's image that sharply separated him from brute nature. The fact that God commanded Adam and Eve in the opening chapters of Genesis to have dominion over the natural world and subdue nature also fit in perfectly with the essential goals of the scientific revolution. In short, modern science was born under a Judeo-Christian milieu precisely because it celebrated man's dominion over nature. The scientific technology employed in the industrial revolution brought about a mastery over nature on a scale never seen before in human history.

However, as God-granted truths began to bless the West with many scientific advances together with the explosion of the Industrial Revolution, men began to congratulate themselves for being so smart to usher in such human progress. In particular, western man became proud of his reason and began to glorify the great scientific progress of western civilization. At this juncture, the Enlightenment was born, an age that glorified itself above the natural theology of the Medieval period, but also above the Reformation as well. The religious practices of the so-called Dark Ages of the Catholic Church also helped feed into the Enlightenment's self-congratulation over everything it deemed to be superstitious and backward. As such, the Enlightenment proudly and

¹⁰ Gruner, Rolf. *Theory and Power: On the Character of the Modern Sciences*, pp. 11-25.

¹¹ White, Lynn Jr., "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis," *Science*, Vol. 155, No. 3767, March 10, 1967, p. 1206.

increasingly separated itself from its Judeo-Christian theological underpinnings that it presumed had become outdated.

During the 1700's, the zenith of the Enlightenment's influence was reached under a secular religion called Deism, which was a belief in God as the Creator, but which rejected the possibility of His miraculous supernatural intervention in either nature or human history. In conjunction with this, the Bible was viewed less and less as a sacred book. In its place was substituted a secular religion based on nature, human reason, and science without reference to any supernatural revelation from God. Thus, during the Enlightenment the pillars of the Protestant Reformation, i.e., the Scriptures alone, faith alone, and grace alone,¹² were replaced by reason alone. The medieval natural theology of the Christian Middle Ages was thus secularized and profaned – both of which was viewed as a form of scientific progress. Deism thus became a very strict natural theology based purely on nature and reason alone that viewed God as the Creator, but eschewed more and more His providential rule over creation, particularly with regard to the possibility of miracles which science had shown to be impossible.

Under Deism, the Enlightenment thus secularized and profaned Christianity. The deists did not believe God interfered “with His creation. Rather He designed it to run independent of him by immutable natural laws.”¹³ Furthermore, these natural laws were described in rationalistic terms so that the created world was compared to a working machine without any reference to God. This particular view of the universe became known as Naturalism where a strict scientific empiricism became the litmus test for all truth. If a given proposition could not be scientifically or empirically verifiable, then it belonged to the realm of speculation, religion, and superstition – things which western man had now become too clever to naively accept any longer. As such, while the original scientific empiricism was squarely founded upon the natural theology of the late Christian Middle Ages, the new empiricism was based strictly on nature alone with less and less reference to the biblical God as the intelligent Creator of all things, much less with regard to His providential rule over the natural world. What escaped the notice of the new empiricists, however, is that if the world is not created and/or maintained by the wisdom of the biblical God (Job 38-39; Psalm 8; 104; Proverbs 3:19; 8:12-36), what happens to the epistemological foundations of science if nature is no longer intelligently designed? This will later lead to profound consequences together with rampant confusion and delusion that is at the heart of the modernism, particularly now with regard to the postmodern world of today. In effect, sound reason and sober judgment in science will be replaced with rationalized passion, instincts, and willpower – all of which will later become politicized thanks to the effects of secularism. Such a concoction leads only to madness, not reason informed decision making.

Yet from the 1700's onward, the naturalistic sciences increasingly opposed the Judeo-Christian worldview, relegating it to the ash heap of irrationality like ancient superstitions of the religious past. Modern secular progress and the scientific revolution showed that even basic presumed truths of the Fall of mankind and nature that informed medieval natural theology was considered no longer relevant. Such antiquated ideas out of touch with the new spirit of the age allegedly hung on the necks of men like an oppressive albatross. Faith in the physical sciences that engineered the Industrial Revolution became so strong that the social, political, and later, the psychological sciences, were born to bring about social, political, and psychological progress as well – a strange kind of secular salvation, which is a contradiction in terms. Thus, with the biblical doctrine of the Fall of mankind (Genesis 2-4; Romans 5:12-14) left behind, the Industrial Revolution and scientific human progress jettisoned the religious past in favor of an almost utopian millenarian society this side of the grave – which, of course, never materialized in spite of the incredible growth of technology – but instead gave birth to the political horrors of Marxism and communism that dominated the later 1800's and most of the twentieth century. National Socialism also promoted its own 1,000 year Millennial Reich of glory which lasted only 12 years and ushered

¹² *Sola Scriptura, sola fide, and sola gratia.*

¹³ *The Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p. 191.

in the most destructive time of human history yet to date. That Marxism and National Socialism were both born in Germany is not an insignificant fact which is a reflection of the great problems that developed there in the 1800's. In truth, both political movements were rooted in controversial crucible surrounding the Enlightenment together with its many controversies over the Bible and the Judeo-Christian worldview that had a particularly unique history in Germany.

Lessing's Ditch Divided Faith from History

While it was primarily England that spawned Deism under the rise of the scientific revolution during the 1600's, it was the German critic, writer, and dramatist, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who ended up driving the West into the ditch of destructive historical criticism of the Bible in the 1700's. Lessing became famous for rejecting the possibility of divine revelation based on history even though this is precisely what the biblical record presents. Lessing insisted the historicity of the Bible cannot be used as proof for what he called the "necessary truths of reason." According to Lessing, such truths must be universal, and so cannot be historical since history is particularistic by nature. Lessing thus divided faith from history. This divide became known as "Lessing's Ditch" in which he asserted it was impossible to demonstrate eternal certainties on the basis of mere historical truths. From this time forward in both German theology and philosophy, Lessing's ditch only became deeper and wider. While Lessing originally dug the ditch in order to cast doubts on the possibility of divine revelation in history, it became a deep chasm, if not an abyss in which the entire German academy would soon find itself trapped in. This was the very ditch that Dutch theologian Soren Kierkegaard leaped across in the 1800's, which was later re-invigorated by neo-orthodox Swiss theologian Karl Barth in the 1900's. Such a ditch, however, was dug in great prejudice based on a very narrow view of scientific naturalism that doubted all truth that was not scientifically verifiable. It was also shoveled at a time long before archaeology later overturned the arbitrary skepticism that Enlightenment thinkers foolishly imposed upon the historicity of the Bible. Worse, by the time this German farce was exposed, few people cared anymore. The damage had already been done.

Not surprisingly, Lessing's original attacks against the historicity of the New Testament actually began on fictitious claims that created a huge firestorm in German academia in the 1770's. In 1770, Lessing was placed in charge of the Duke of Brunswick library at Wolfelbittel. While serving at the library, Lessing published fragments from an unpublished manuscript written by an earlier Deist by the name of H.S. Reimarus (1694-1768). For many years, Reimarus taught philosophy at the university of Wittenburg - the home university of Martin Luther. In great contrast to Martin Luther's teaching, Reimarus believed there was a big discrepancy between the historical Jesus that is depicted in the Gospels, and the Jesus that is seen in the New Testament epistles. Rather than expect such differences as the natural outgrowth of the development of New Testament theology and doctrine relative to the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Messiah that changed history from B.C. to A.D., and distinguished Israel from the Church, Reimarus believed that such great changes were manufactured by Paul and others to remake Jesus into a supra-historical heroic god figure. In this way, they could keep their ministry going by theologizing about the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

According to Reimarus, such theologizing was a distortion of who Jesus really was in real life. Paul, Peter, and John theologized about Jesus by attributing to Him great miracles that never occurred. The scientific revolution has demonstrated that miracles simply do not happen. Therefore the theology wrapped around New Testament miracles had to be stripped away in order to find the real historical Jesus. Here is seen perhaps the original search for the so-called historical Jesus - a search that presumes in advance the New Testament is not a reliable historical document precisely because the later theology of Paul, Peter, and John after the Gospel period fabricated a new Jesus far removed from the actual history of His Person. Reimarus believed Jesus was a simple religious teacher. It was this simple religious teacher that Reimarus wanted to recover.

Reimarus used his progressive mind to simplify Jesus that left Him hanging on the cross until He died, stripped naked of any miraculous theology and spiritual significance.

Reimarus thus presumed Christianity was built upon falsified historical reports. Bible History was presumed to be theologized into myth like a Greek legend. As such, Reimarus did not believe Jesus was God, nor did he accept His historical resurrection from the dead. According to Reimarus, Jesus was promising his followers the Kingdom of God was imminent and that it would indeed be soon coming apocalyptically upon this world. As such, after He was crucified and the kingdom myth did not materialize, "the disciples had cunningly postponed it indefinitely – claiming that Jesus had risen from the dead and had gone to heaven."¹⁴ At this critical juncture, the doctrines of Dispensationalism together with its teaching on the Jewish Messianic Kingdom in great contrast to the replacement theology of the Reformation rooted in Augustine's *City of God* Catholic eschatology, would have undercut Reimarus's assertions from the outset.

Reimarus decided to write a book entitled *An Apology for the Rational Worshiper of God*. In this work, Reimarus subjected the entire Bible to intense historical, rationalistic, and deistic criticism, but he was very hesitant to publish it precisely because he knew it would create a tremendous controversy in the very homeland of the Reformation. Reimarus's book therefore remained in manuscript form and was never published – until Lessing got his hands on it. In 1774, Lessing published the book, but did not originally attribute the authorship to Reimarus. Lessing said the document was from fragments of some unknown author he found at the library. Needless to say, such a publication created quite a stir, and Lessing artfully kept the fires of this controversy going until he was "silenced by the Brunswick censor in 1778."¹⁵

Lessing's trickery was done in the name of academic freedom. He also claimed to be in the cautionary middle of the controversy, which helped keep it ongoing. What Lessing truly believed about Reimarus's work is not known precisely because he could not have stated publicly what those views were. More than likely, however, Lessing undoubtedly used Reimarus's work as a surrogate or proxy to promote his own views in relative safety. This also suggests the enlightened thinkers of the 1700's in Germany were undoubtedly more radical in their views than is really understood even today. They had to be coy about their books and ideas if they wanted to have a teaching job, or even if they desired to have their works published. Furthermore, such restraints only caused thinkers like Lessing, Goethe, Kant, and others to thirst for Enlightenment freedom even more and rebel against what they considered to be the hypocritical legalism of their backward feudal society – which for the most part, was unfortunately a true caricature. However, they had to be wise in disguising their rebellion. Such shrewdness inherited more rewards as time wore on and radicalism became more and more mainstream.

In 1780, Lessing published his own book called *The Education of the Human Race* that laid out a progressivist view of the Enlightenment that was leading mankind away from religion and superstition into true education, reason, and secularity. In particular, Lessing was not only suspicious of the miracles recorded in the Bible, but he asserted that faith itself cannot be based on historical events in the first place. Historical evidence could not be used as an epistemological foundation for faith, even though that it is precisely what the Bible does from cover to cover. Lessing thus rejected the idea of revelation in history. It is this controversy, i.e., the idea of divine revelation in history that became the heart of German Theological Liberalism in the 1800's. While Lessing's views on the Bible were apparently not as extreme as Reimarus's were (at least in his writings), his skepticism toward the idea of a fixed revelation of God in history, will not only open the door to modern progressivism, but will also lead to radical biblical criticism that will dominate the theological halls of Germany throughout the 1800's. If progressivism was to become the new vanguard of evolutionary advancement, then the fixed history of the Bible had to be frozen in an irrelevant ancient past in order to get beyond it. The freezing process used was the secularization and profanization of the Bible to demonstrate it was a product of the childlike times of ancient

¹⁴ *New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, p. 593.

¹⁵ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 629.

bygone years that are no longer relevant to today's modern scientific age of reason in which man is now all grown up.

Lessing's influences were enormous in spite of his polemical approach. Like so many of the German critics of the Bible during the heady days of the Enlightenment, Lessing was the son of a Lutheran pastor. He understood Protestantism from the inside out and was thus able to undermine its foundations very effectively. Lessing knew that biblical history was the foundation of Protestant doctrine and theology. He knew that if biblical history was removed, Protestant Orthodoxy would topple with it, and in the case of Lessing, this steered him toward Deism at first, but then pantheism later. Thus, Lessing's own personal history was in fact a veritable type of things to come in Germany.¹⁶ Lessing grew up in a Protestant home, adopted Deism in his college days, but died a pantheist. Thus, his own private history foreshadowed and prefigured the entire Germanic anti-biblical odyssey that reached its peak in the pantheism of the 1800's before crashing and burning in the conflagration of the First World War.

Lessing quickly adopted the growing juggernaut of the philosophy of the Enlightenment that was taught at Leipzig University under the wide ranging influences of Christian Wolfe (1679-1754). Wolfe had students coming from all over Europe listen to his lectures. In his rationalism, Wolfe attempted to base theology on the certainty of mathematical evidence that was not uncommon at the time and can be attributed to Cartesian natural theology.¹⁷ The New Testament, on the other hand, roots its veracity in the eyewitness accounts of the apostles, which invariably means its evidences are based on the facts of history, not mathematical equations. Needless to say, a theology based on math will produce generic results, which is not bad by itself. However, Wolfe's god was not the God of the Bible, but the god of Deism. That Wolfe relativized the distinctions between ancient Chinese philosophy, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam in order to demonstrate how similar all religions actually were is thus hardly surprising.

In 1783, along similar lines, Lessing wrote a provocative play entitled "Nathan the Wise" set in Jerusalem during the time of the Crusades that pleaded for religious toleration between Jews, Christians, and Muslims according to Enlightenment ideals that included a relativistic approach to truth and a rejection of miracles, coupled with a strong appeal for all three groups to simply communicate more earnestly with each other. Thus, using the crusades and drama to communicate anti-biblical peace loving liberalism is not unique to modern Hollywood, but was foreshadowed long ago by Lessing. More recent in everyone's memory at the time was the brutality of the Thirty Years War (1618-48) fought largely between Protestants and Catholics that ripped apart much of Germany. A growing religious toleration that was attempting to separate religion from the state also became more and more popular, particularly for Deists who attributed the cruelties of war to antiquated religious ideas and dogmatic truth claims.

For most of his life, Lessing promoted Deism. Lessing was a Deist precisely because he wanted a religion based strictly on the natural world that was universally available to all people without any outside interference or intervention coming from God and the historical revelation of Himself found in the Bible. Deists simply did not believe that truth dogmatically came down from heaven into history. Such views were considered too naïve and immature. The idea of divine revelation within history that fixed truth for all time was an insult to man's coming of age in the Enlightenment era of reason. According to Lessing, truth based on the Bible is very shaky at best since much of history cannot be empirically trusted or scientifically verified. The fact the Bible entertained miracles made its historical truth claims even more suspect.

In truth, however, the great crisis in life with regard to the Bible is that all too many simply cannot accept that faith in history, not to mention prophecy as well since prophecy is future history predicted in advance, is precisely the way in which God reveals Himself to man. History is the last place most people look for faith. Even Christians struggle with this. Believers must learn to apply

¹⁶ Geisler, Norman. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p. 419.

¹⁷ Celebrated modern mathematician Kurt Godel (1906-78) claimed he has proven Anselm's and Descartes ontological argument for God's existence using very complex math equations.

and expect past historical truths and lessons to be spiritually relevant today (Psalm 78; Hebrews 3:7-4:16). This is not easy. Moreover, both religionists and philosophers of the ancient past often looked outside of history into a timeless nether world for truth. The meaning of life was not to be found in the ups and downs of history, but outside of all time zones. Worldly philosophers and scholars in modern times, with no small thanks to Lessing and his great influences, have reduced their search for truth to present processes, current observations, and scientific experimentation that is just as anti-historical as their ancient counterparts were – just on the opposite side of the spectrum.

Yet it was the Hebrews who gave to the world a spiritual concentration on history thanks to God's revelatory interference into their lives that was recorded and written down. The Hebrew Bible is essentially one gigantic history lesson that the eyes of faith are supposed to learn from. The constant reminder to "remember" by faith is at the heart of Old Testament spirituality. More to the point, the Hebrew interest in history preceded the Greeks by almost an entire millennium or more if one includes Abraham, the founding father of Israel. While the Hebrews were writing history, the ancient Greeks were writing mythology dominated by legends, gods, and heroes far removed from biblical thinking and practice. What is seen on the pages of the Old Testament stood in sharp contrast with the rest of the world at that time as faith and history were integrally related to each other all the way from Genesis to Malachi. Even the historical foundations for the Mosaic Law were provided in the book of Genesis and the early parts of Exodus. Only a very prejudiced mind would see the history of the Hebrew Bible as coinciding side by side with Greek legends.

Yet the deeper and darker presentation of sober historical realities as depicted in the Hebrew Bible in spite of the miracles should have caused much more soul searching relative to divine revelation in history than the enlightened thinkers of Lessing's day exhibited. Even more remarkable is that the heroes of the faith are all painted with their sins and shortcomings – something which is carried on into the New Testament as well. Yet, such historical true-to-life empiricism was conveniently overlooked largely because the theology of the Fall of mankind cannot be placed into a deistic test tube, but can only become known via revelatory truth that occurred in the ancient past far removed from today's experience of presumed progress. Yet, the results of the Fall are an experience that is everywhere heard, seen, and observed in real life in spite of all technological growth that has mesmerized the modern world. That philosophers are usually very pessimistic about the world and mankind in general is just another nail in man's coffin that should better inform them and blunt their own enthusiasm about human progress. Many enlightenment philosophers like Lessing were fond of comparing their own enlightened generation to past eons of darkness, especially with regard to what they considered to be the superstitious and religious dark ages of the past that Christianity overcame, but was still only marginally better than ancient Paganism.

A large part of this blindness to the possibility of a fallen world is directly related to the doctrine of philosophical naturalism that considerably limited and narrowed truth down to the level of scientific empiricism and experimentation – which was/is great for technology and the physical sciences – but often of little use relative to some of the gravest difficulties facing mankind. Perhaps even more significant, even if the Enlightenment was able to bring about a truly enlightened age of progress politically run by the free use of reason, what of the past of those who have long been dead? How will the Enlightenment help them? The idea of progress actually demands the resurrection of the dead in order to make any sense. That enlightened thinkers simply secularized and profaned the progressive revelation of the Bible revealed historically in both the Old and New Testaments is a truth they need to be reminded of. Indeed, the casualties of history should have placed a healthy check on the worship of reason that begs for a real and historic Fall every time an obituary is recorded in the newspapers. Even more critical with regard to the Enlightenment, if the world is fallen, then what of man's reason itself? Needless to say, such questions were not taken seriously enough.

As such, Lessing asserted Enlightenment truth can only be sought and found through man's free use of reason and scientific empiricism that regularly shows God does not violate the natural laws he made to govern creation. For the Deist, this also meant that God made the world, wound it up like a watch, let it begin ticking, and then walked away in order to give man his freedom. As such, man's purpose in life was to use his freedom to discover God's natural laws through reason and scientific empiricism that govern the universe – not look to the Bible for immature dogmatism of ancient bygone days, particularly with regard to religious miracles that modern science has already disproven. Thus, the essence of Deistic theology, if it can be called that, was that God created the world, and then left man to be autonomously on his own. For a variety of reasons, such a view is a first-rate fantasy of both rational and unempirical proportions, especially with regard to the historical record itself that has demonstrated over the millennia time and time again the world is largely run by everything but reason, and that man, left to himself, is for the most part, foolish, superstitious, oppressive, warlike, suicidal, destructive, and chock full of obituaries.

First of all, if the God of the Bible was powerful enough to create the world, as Deists believed, it is not unreasonable to also believe that He could easily intervene into human history with powerful miracles. In fact, more than likely, miracles should actually be expected. Higher critic Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) of Tubingen University surprisingly acknowledged that while rationalism certainly tried to deny the authenticity of biblical miracles, Deism's theistic basis "was not capable of cutting the roots of the miracle concept. The miracle is the direct consequence of traditional theism. If God is once thought of as an other-worldly absolute Will, then one must concede an activity of this Will in the world; but this activity as the intervention of a transcendent principle into the course of the world can only be supernatural, a miracle. From its supernatural presuppositions concerning the relationship of God to the world, rationalism has, therefore, no right to dispute the consequence of theism."¹⁸ Well stated. This also strongly demonstrates that with regard to undermining the miraculous testimony of the Bible, what was needed was not rationalism per se, but something else.

Part of the problem was that foolish religious fanaticism wrapped around false miracles pushed the Deists away from the miraculous historical testimony of the Bible. Thanks to the poor testimony of many a religious fanatic, Deists unfortunately presumed the miracles of the Bible were one in the same with the very silly and superstitious ones being bandied around in the Christian Middle Ages – and even today as well. However, John 5 sharply distinguishes the healing power of Jesus from superstition by using as an illustration the man who often sat beside Pool of Bethesda over the course of many years, credulously waiting for the stirring of the waters to heal him if he can only jump in at the right time. Perhaps more critical, both Deists and Christians often fail to appreciate that even in the Bible, overt miracles were rare, and if they were rare in the Scriptures, then they will also be uncommon today, if at all. Miracles, by definition are rare. Otherwise they cannot be miracles. There are only three major times recorded in Scripture in which miracles were prolific. Miracles recorded in between those three times were rare. Such miraculous times also came in doublets – the Exodus generation together with the conquest of Joshua, the ministries of Elijah and Elisha that overlapped with each other, and then finally in the Gospels with Jesus at first followed up quickly with the New Testament apostles.

Furthermore, such miracles that broke regular natural law were done for special divine purposes that had great theological and historical significance that Israel was commanded to remember (Deuteronomy; Psalm 106). The great miracles of the Exodus generation and the conquest of the promised land not only were designed to distinguish the great distinction between the infinite God of Israel who grants religious liberty vs. the petty-tyrannical gods of both the Egyptian and Canaanite pantheon, but also to provide private property for each Hebrew family that was to be regulated by God under the auspices of the Mosaic Law. In other words, it took great miracles to give birth to the idea of freedom under the rule of Law and the notion of

¹⁸ Harris, Horton. *The Tubingen School: A Historical and Theological Investigation of the School of F.C. Baur*, p. 150.

widespread private property that was first practiced on a large scale by the nation of Israel when the promised-land was taken over. Freedom and private property were hard to come by in a fallen world dominated by paganism, fate, kings, princes, superstition, idolatry, and nature worship. Furthermore, as fallen creatures still related to Adam, Israel could not live up to its divine responsibilities to live freely under the rule of Law, but needed God's miraculous and gracious intervention into their history to keep them afloat. In short, miracles in the Bible had great meaning and tremendous salvific import. The fact that miracles of the Bible had such significance and weighty import that led to such positive longstanding results strongly suggests they were in fact real. In a word, biblical miracles speak for themselves.

Miracles in the Bible teach and illustrate the critical theme of grace and its relationship to salvation. Throughout its entire history, Israel needed God's grace and miraculous intervention in order to survive in the sea of paganism that surrounded them and outflanked them from every side, not only geographically, but also culturally and spiritually as well. The Mosaic Law, Psalms, Proverbs, Old Testament historical books, and the ministries of all the prophets were specifically given to Israel by God to protect them from this sea of paganism. Even the laws of the Mosaic Code were/are often characterized as "testimonies." The Old Testament Law was so far advanced compared to ancient paganism that it was a divine testimony to everyone at the time that the God of the Bible did indeed exist. Just look at the Law! The fact that such a small country as Israel survived for so long in such a hostile environment is in itself a miraculous testimony of God's gracious interventions into the nation's history, especially when one considers how often Israel compromised with their pagan neighbors. Israel survived Egypt, the surrounding Canaanite countries, the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and then finally the Greeks up until the time of the Roman period when Jesus walked the earth.

Many of the healing miracles that Jesus did illustrated and taught salvation by grace. When the paralytic was healed, Jesus questioned those who opposed the meaning of His great healing powers, "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Arise, and take up your pallet and walk'?" (Mark 2:9) Jesus often healed on the Sabbath to contrast His gospel message of grace with the legalists of the day who turned the Jewish day of rest into a day of misery. Even the ten lepers and Bartimaeus understood how grace was connected to Jesus's healing when they cried out, "Lord, have mercy." (Luke 17:13; 18:38-39) In the book of Galatians, the apostle Paul followed the same pattern by questioning his readers who wanted to return to religious legalism, "Does He then, who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?" (Galatians 3:5) That the miracles of the New Testament laid the foundation for the building of hospitals and the practical ministry care for others is seldom acknowledged or even known.¹⁹

Furthermore, the whole point of many of the miracles at that particular time was to actually provide empirical evidence to authenticate the divine authority of the New Testament (2 Corinthians 12:12-13; Hebrews 2:3-4). Even the great miracle of Tongues was given to teach the Jewish people that God was soon going to establish the Church International comprised of all the various Gentile tongues spread out across the Roman Empire in contrast to Old Testament times that was limited to the promised land of Israel (Acts 2:11; 1 Corinthians 14:20-22). In order to establish something as significant as the New Testament built upon Old Testament Jewish foundations, such miracles were necessary, without which, the church could have never been born.

Even doubting Thomas was given empirical evidence of the resurrection of Christ in spite of his original disbelief (John 20:24-29). Moreover, though limited to eyewitnesses, more than 500 people still saw the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8). Modern historiography has confirmed the tomb of Jesus was indeed empty on Easter morning. This greatly limits the possibilities as to what could have happened to the body of Jesus, and surprisingly enough, the best answer that can explain the most amount of facts surrounding the empty tomb is that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead. In fact, it is highly doubtful the very existence of the New

¹⁹ See *Under the Influence* by Alvin Schmidt, pp. 151-69.

Testament church can be explained without the resurrection of Jesus as Lee Strobel's *Case for Christ* had made so clear in more recent years.

American Law Professor Simon Greenleaf (1783-1853), whose scholarly acumen helped Harvard University become internationally famous, strongly argued for the historicity of the resurrection of Christ based on the law of evidence related to ancient documents. Dr. W. Griffith Thomas followed suit in the 20th century as well with his seminal work entitled *Christianity is Christ*. John Warwick Montgomery, Josh McDowell, Gary Habermas, William Craig, and Lee Strobel have since piled on so much evidence related to the empty tomb and the resurrection of Christ that it can now rather easily be argued that many refuse to accept the resurrection of Christ based on philosophical prejudices, not because of the historical evidences surrounding the event. More to the point, such philosophical prejudices were inherited from the Enlightenment itself, particularly with regard to the German version of it that began with Lessing, but then incubated into a strange form of Transcendental Idealism under Kant's tutelage before being disseminated into semi-panteism or panteism in the 1800's - all of which was hostile to both the doctrine and the historicity of the resurrection of the dead, including much of the biblical record together with the miracles and theology connected to them.

Yet the doctrine of the historicity of the resurrection of the dead, along with the rest of the miraculous testimony of the Bible, presumes the transcendental nature of God who still stands outside of time. Based on His eternal transcendence and unlimited power as the Creator of all things, God broke/breaks into history from the outside in order to provide miraculous answers to fallen man, and this was especially true with regard to the one time historical revelation of Jesus Christ in His death, resurrection, and ascension. From the biblical standpoint, humanity is imprisoned in a fallen world governed by the laws of sin and death (Genesis 2:16; Romans 5:12-14; 7:8-24; 8:4; Galatians 3:22) that cannot be humanly overcome. Moreover, the law(s) of sin and death are also certainly connected to the scientific laws empirically observed by scientists - just secularized and unfortunately presumed normative for all time (Ecclesiastes 3:18-22). In this way, the natural world that revolves around the cycles of death becomes a naturalistic scientific fact(s) that the scientist presumes cannot be overcome through childlike religions, nefarious cults, or abstract philosophies out of step with scientific empiricism. Yet both the first and second laws of thermodynamics, perhaps the two most substantiated scientific laws observed in the natural world, i.e., the law of conservation and the law of entropy or increasing disorder, are better supported by the biblical view of Creation and the Fall, than the scientific evolutionary worldview that really cannot account for both at the same time. In the Judeo-Christian worldview of the Bible, an all-powerful transcendental God who stands outside the universe He created, and then subjects it to futility through the fall of mankind and nature because of sin, can easily explain both laws of thermodynamics in spite of its essential religious character. The problem here is not one of science vs. religion. In this particular instance, religion goes beyond the limitations of science, and yet in so doing, can still accommodate scientific facts under its worldview without compromising the laws of science.

Kantian Idealism Divided Subjectivity from Objectivity into Anti-Semitic Autonomy

What was to be done as the Enlightenment continued to progress beyond ancient religions and philosophies, particularly with regard to the unrelenting pressure that modernism was bearing down upon the Judeo-Christian worldview rooted in the fixed historical revelation of the Bible? Lessing's younger contemporary from Konigsberg, Prussia, Immanuel Kant, will be the philosopher who tries to tackle this particular conundrum. Kant will concoct a radical philosophy that many today call Transcendental Idealism in order to save both religion and science from each other.

Kant understood that some principle of transcendence had to be applied in order to resolve the growing modern crisis of science vs. religion, between scientific empiricism and metaphysics. The English philosopher David Hume (1711-76) had emphasized empiricism so

much that he diminished basic philosophical principles like cause and effect into probabilities based on experience alone. During the Christian Middle Ages, cause and effect were important philosophical principles of logic that were used to establish the classical arguments for God's existence based on natural revelation. As such, what Kant desired was to have reason still be transcendental over reality and empiricism, not the other way around, but at the same time, without having to appeal to some transcendental God or metaphysical order beyond this world in the process. This means at once that Kant's transcendental idealism was not propounded to save the transcendence of the biblical God deep-seated in a historical revelation of a bygone era. Rather, Kant wanted to protect what he considered to be pure and/or transcendental reason from being sullied by the implacability of the real material world – an all too real empirical reality that seems to be play any number of different mind games on a routine basis with many a religionist and philosopher over the millennia. The real empirical world always seems to have a field day easily trumping reason, philosophy, and metaphysics with unforgiving realities, and this problem was becoming especially acute with the rapid growth of the scientific revolution based on a very naturalistic empiricism that was poised to dethrone both religion and philosophy. Kant constructed his transcendental idealism in order to keep reason free or autonomous or transcendent over reality. Kant feared that even scientific empiricism, let alone dogmatic metaphysical religious doctrines, was a real threat to freedom and the autonomous reason that was necessary to uphold it. Kant thus moved in to save the day with his transcendental idealism as proposed in his famous Critique of Pure Reason (1781) and Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics (1783).

While Kant accepted many of the heady and empirical conclusions of the Enlightenment sciences, he also strove to limit scientific empiricism from dominating philosophy, religion, and metaphysics. Kant's major personal concern was that scientific materialism would lead to determinism and undermine the free use of reason and autonomy. Kant foresaw the coming determinism of scientific materialism, and thus moved in to set limits on empiricism. Kant accomplished this by pointing out there are some critical categories of the mind which are *a priori*, i.e., pure and/or transcendental, that are not determined by either experience or empiricism, and are also, more troublesome, subjective to the observer. This invariably brings up many caveats in epistemology, even with regard to empiricism and science, let alone philosophy and religion. With regard to the study of the greater metaphysical questions, and even to a lesser extent to empirical realities as well, Kant divided the subject from the object by asserting the subjective knower cannot truly know the object or thing in itself, but only its appearance or form or representation as subjectively interpreted by the mind. In other words, there is no one to one relationship between the subject and object, between man and the natural material world, between the subjective knower and the objective world he studies. Kant's sharp distinction between the subject and the object leads to a great problem in Kant's epistemology that strongly suggests knowledge is largely subjective to the knower, even with regard to scientific knowledge. While Kant did argue that the subjective knower could come to an objective unity with his object, it was based on many mental constructions, intuition, and principled judgments that still limit the possibility of objectivity, which became ever more acute when applied to greater metaphysical questions. However, in Kant's mind, he thought he had saved philosophical deduction from the tyranny of empiricism by making deduction transcendental – but with the caveat that deduction was inherently a subjective process that required the application of critical principles of judgment in order to arrive at a limited and cautious objective understanding.

In Kant's transcendental idealism, presumed objectivity derived solely from either the natural world or heaven's gate always seemed to carry with it the whiff of repression. Kant thus held that if rational man is to remain free, knowledge must remain largely subjective. It seems that according to Kant, those who preach the pure objectivity of knowledge, whether scientist or clergyman, invariably remove the free autonomy of reason in the process. While clergymen demand people from their congregations not to argue but only believe, scientific materialism was

reducing man down to the level of a machine.²⁰ In either case, man was not free or autonomous, but became controlled by an artificial heteronomy from the outside swayed by either nature's empirical machinery or by metaphysical dogmatism. Kant thus desired to protect his autonomous reason from being artificially controlled by outside forces like nature or metaphysics, but in the process of so doing, he made absolute objective truth largely unknowable, particularly in the area of metaphysics and theology.

With such philosophical moves, Kant set aside not only many truth claims stemming from the Bible, but also from the natural theology that the empiricism of the scientific revolution was originally based upon. Kant saw both natural and biblical revelation as taught by Christendom as restrictive forces of heteronomy that worked against individual or autonomous freedom. Kant thus wanted to set aside traditional Christianity together with its natural theology in order to replace it with a more secular and progressive morality based on what he considered to be autonomous reason that could be morally applied to help the state become truly progressive as enlightened men use individually their inner freedom to create a moral society based on rationality, not coercion. Thus, Kant was not advocating autonomous freedom for the purpose of moral chaos, but on the contrary. Kant postulated that only rational autonomy free from any kind of an outside controlling heteronomy could be truly moral. Coerced morality based on either religion or the state was artificial morality.

From a Biblical point of view, it is true that man as the subjective knower is made in God's image, and thus is necessarily separate to some extent from the created world which he is governor over. However, the Bible also teaches the real created world, i.e., the object, reveals God's character to man (Acts 17:24-25; Romans 1:18-20). This means, at once, that the natural world is not as objectively unknowable as Kant seems to suggest. Since God is the Creator of both man and nature, they are most certainly distinct from each other as the subject and object. However, because both man and nature are intelligently created by the same Creator, they are thus not at odds with each other. However, Kant radicalized the distinction between subject and object, between man and nature, in order to free the subject from what he considered to be an empirical tyranny of the object over the subject that led to either theological dogmatism or scientific determinism. Kant demanded his subject be subjectively free from the object so that he could advocate a more autonomous use of reason not derived from theological dogmatism nor scientific materialism and/or determinism. In other words, in Kantian thought, if the object had no objective knowledge associated with it per se, whether that object be metaphysical or something in the natural world, then it no longer holds sway over the autonomy of reason. Reason, in turn, was then free to be autonomously used to control the object. Jewish historian Michael Mack illuminates, "The human inability both to understand the meaning of the empirical world and to ascertain the existence of a supernatural one, instead enthroned 'reason itself' as 'the source of natural laws.'"²¹ Kant wanted to liberate reason from reliance on "both the natural and supernatural worlds."²² Herein is the real motive of Kant's transcendental idealism. Kant wanted to have his own philosophical idealism be transcendent or autonomous over the object of study, whether that be a metaphysical or empirical object. Never mind that in the process of so doing, he turned the whole idea of transcendence on its head, and reduced age old objective truths into subjective interpretations of such truths.

Yet man as God's image bearer possesses transcendental characteristics that are above nature that already demand a sharp distinction between humans and the natural world they live in – including his reasoning capacities as he deduces principles from the natural revelation of the empirical world he lives in that is to be directed by biblical revelation that contains much historical empiricism to prevent fanciful and imaginary thoughts that are so destructive. Man should thus never be seen as a creature that sinks into the mire of a deterministic natural world dominated by

²⁰ Kant, *What is Enlightenment?*

²¹ Mack, Michael. *German Idealism and the Jew*, p. 27.

²² Ibid.

complete empiricism or experience that his reason cannot rise above to some extent or attempt to correct. Neither as God's image bearer should man merge himself with nature that was so strongly emphasized by the growing Romantic movement of Kant's day that destroyed the distinction between the subject and object by unifying them both into a holistic but murky oneness. Kant, however, wanted to be more than just being made in God's image. Kant was going for broke as he wanted to be autonomously free from both the natural and supernatural worlds. Yet in the Bible, let alone in the real world, such autonomous reason was never granted by God to His creatures. Even though man is made in God's image, he is not God or divine or some godlike hybrid of some sort. Both the Bible and nature strongly teach under no uncertain conditions the cruciality of the Creator-creature distinction that the Enlightenment increasingly ignored.

This means man is dependent upon both the supernatural revelation of the Bible and the natural revelation of nature, both of which objectively teach him about the glory of God in one way or another to keep him humble. Kant, however, considered such truths to be forms of outdated compulsion that grant undue deference to naïve religious traditions together with dogmatic theologies and philosophies, only to be outflanked in the end by scientific determinism too dependent upon the controlling influences of empiricism and experience. Kant wanted to be free from such perils together with their legalistic traditions that promoted hypocrisy and immaturity through privileged authority figures like kings, princes, lords, barons, doctors - and yes, even theologians and pastors.

Kant himself suffered a cultural hangover from what he considered to be the unbearable Pietistic legalism of his college days, "For the rest of his life he expressed incredulity that the Pietists thought they could punish children into being saved. How could they know which students were really converted and which ones were just trying to avoid another beating? Kant's best biographer, Manfred Kuehn, argues persuasively that Kant's melding of true morality to autonomy had its genesis in his repugnance at Pietist education."²³ Perhaps the great master himself needed to take a good look in the mirror relative to his own philosophy? Perhaps Kant learned too much from his own bad experiences? Perhaps his own bad experiences in college under Pietism and feudalism led to grave misjudgments in his philosophy? Just as bad cases make bad laws, so bad experiences often make bad doctrines. It seems that Kant knew only the appearances of the biblical worldview distorted through feudalism and legalism, and not the objective truth of the Bible in itself which has much to say about the relationship between truth and freedom as Jesus said, "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Even St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians is the Magna Carta of Christian liberty.

Nonetheless, Kant believed, as many of his followers likewise seem to always advocate, that his form of Transcendental Idealism was a cautionary middle ground forged between scientific empiricism and speculative metaphysical rationalism. In truth, however, since Kant was fearful of scientific materialism and skeptical of classical metaphysics controlled by Christian natural theology as interpreted through the Bible, Kant managed to sully both science and Christianity by removing objective truth from both parties. Kant's division of the subjective knower from the objective world was actually a very radical move. His legacy later devolved into rampant subjectivism on both sides of the aisle that has made the western world less religious, less moral, and less scientific in spite of the plethora of technology.

Kant distrusted the biblical notion the created world was specifically made by God for man in such a way that man could objectively know something about the Creator and His creation. In Kant's system, the natural world itself, i.e., the thing in itself, was not a revelation from God, but was barren of meaning. It therefore could not inform man about anything objective. While it is true Kant never doubted the reality of the real world as some radical idealists taught, he still held that what gave meaning to the object was the autonomous reason of the subjective knower, and not the object of knowledge itself. This sharp distinction, not only divided the subject from the object

²³ Dorrien, p. 27.

epistemologically speaking, but also finally and completely severed biblical theology from natural theology that was the very serendipity that launched the scientific revolution in the first place.

Kant seemed to think that if he divided the subjective knower from the objective object, he could keep both science and religion functioning side by side without contradicting each other since empiricism was now limited and could not criticize religion – as long as religion did not place its faith in the real empirical world as Christianity did with its emphasis upon divine revelation in history, not to mention its natural theology that epistemologically argued for God’s existence based on creation. If they behaved in such a manner, they would then run into the same problem the scientist runs into when he tries to understand the thing in itself, but only subjectively intellectualizes the object instead, and hence makes unsubstantiated conclusions about realities that cannot be truly known. For this reason, Kant criticized the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments for God’s existence, while barely holding onto the moral argument which he called the “categorical imperative.”

While Kant was not an atheist, he was certainly an agnostic of sorts. Such agnosticism prevented him from seeing the possibility that since God created both man and nature, the empirical object, i.e., nature, could teach man because, first of all, He intelligently designed the material world so that it reflected the wise mind of God (Proverbs 8:12-31), and secondly, since man as subject was made in His image with a mind to process such information, man could therefore learn as he converts his experience with nature into objective knowledge of the real world (Genesis 1:1-31; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:3). This relationship between the Creator, the creature, and the created, WAS/IS specifically intended by God to lead all men to an objective and metaphysical knowledge of Himself and the created world in which he lives in (Psalm 19:1-6) – even though such knowledge is not exhaustive (Job 38-42). Man may be finite, but finiteness by itself never excludes the possibility of coming to know objective metaphysical knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 2 Corinthians 4:3-7).

The great crisis of life, however, biblically speaking, is that man is a fallen creature, and sin always yields to faulty and foolish thinking (Psalm 14; Proverbs; 1 Corinthians 1:19-21). As such, man sinfully and naturally excludes the biblical God as the Creator. As such, man goes on to distort and suppress objective divine knowledge of the created world given by God into various speculations that wind up opposing Him instead (John 1:1-5; Romans 1:18-25). In other words, the problem is not merely that man is subjective in his knowledge of metaphysics and the world around him as Kant would have it, but that he is also a rebellious sinner incapable of thinking correctly about God and the world apart from his revealed will in the Scriptures (Acts 14:11-18; 17:16-29; 1 Corinthians 2:8-16). Moreover, man’s rebellion against God also entails a rebellion against the created order of the world as well. As man rebels against God, he invariably rebels against the meaning of the created world that was specifically designed to teach him objective knowledge about the Creator and the Creation. Contrary to Kantian philosophy, left to his own autonomous reason, man cannot make the right choice (Ecclesiastes 9:3). His depraved nature darkens his reasoning skills and thought patterns (Ephesians 4:18-19) – something called hardness of heart that often leads to insanity in more extreme cases (Exodus 8:16-19).

Kant, however, rejected these assumptions of the Judeo-Christian biblical worldview that was poorly reflected to him through the legalism and feudalism of his own day. He rejected metaphysics stemming from biblical and natural theology by dividing the subject and object into two and denying any truly objective correlation between the natural world and the subjective knower. Down the road, this subject-object division would become especially pronounced in the field of hermeneutics. What does the interpretation of the text mean if there is no correlation between the subjective knower and the objective text he reads? In a word, subjectivism, with no small thanks to Immanuel Kant, casts a giant shadow over the entire modern and postmodern world today. As such, after Kant, modern man now largely lives in a subjective and unknowable world that leaves much to be desired in grappling with the great metaphysical questions of life. In short, Kant’s agnosticism toward God and nature led to a sharp division between subject and object that may have given him freedom and autonomy over both in a divide and conquer

operation, but then left the modern world sinking in the sands of subjectivism in spite of all of his later scholarly acumen to posit otherwise with a more limited type of 'objective' knowledge.

While there is no small amount of controversy over how subjective Kant's philosophy actually was/is, and there is no question he made attempts to curtail radical subjectivism that many of his followers later ignored, Kant's basic approach was still nonetheless very subjective reflecting the skeptical spirit of his day to Pilate's question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38) Moreover, while Kant's skepticism toward truth cut against both empiricism and metaphysics, his strict limits placed on reason relative to metaphysical questions was perhaps a much more severe blow to modern theology than his criticism of the science department. While Kant upheld reason in order to pursue the advances of science, even though the scientist really cannot objectively know the essence or true significance of the object he is studying, he was even more skeptical of philosophical and theological reasoning concerning the possibility of metaphysics.

Kant's division between the subject and the object also managed to create a complicated division between this world of scientific empiricism and the metaphysical world of faith and religion - which henceforth was now deemed to be beyond reason. This, in turn, left religion and metaphysics in a largely irrational world of deep subjectivity where mindless feelings and passions dictate what was/is believed. This is far removed from what the Bible teaches about faith, but has become standard in the minds of many today in the postmodern west.

Kant's critique of reason with regard to empiricism has also left the modern science department in the lurch without a truly objective epistemological foundation upon which to build its knowledge upon. In the post-Kantian world, science - and not just religion - is also now largely subjective. That science was increasingly politicized throughout the 1800's up until this very day is thus hardly surprising. When one sees the rabid politicization of the science department these days, such fruits were originally sown by Kant's Transcendental Idealism.²⁴ It is bad enough when mindlessness dominates Christianity. It is just as bad when mindless passions, feelings, politics, and instincts dominate science. It has been long forgotten that the Social Darwinism, racism, and eugenics concocted in the middle to late 1800's was considered a biological, environmental, and ecological scientific fact up until the onslaught of World War II.²⁵ Furthermore, much of this distortion of science occurred in Germany where strong romantic and existentialist influences built upon Kant's subjective Transcendental Idealism infiltrated the German scientific departments²⁶ with much fanfare and passion, yet the outcome was not science, but scientism.

How is that few consider the possibility that Kantian subjectivist philosophy, which dominates the mindset of the West today, invariably lead to various forms of scientism rather than true science precisely because the objective reality the scientist needs and observes as the basis for his experiments has been largely taken away from him? On this severe epistemological difficulty, Dr. Stephen Hicks points out, "With Kant, then, external reality thus drops almost totally out of the picture, and we are trapped inescapably in subjectivity - and that is why Kant is a landmark. Once reason is in principle severed from reality, one then enters a different philosophical universe altogether."²⁷ Can objective science survive in such a subjective philosophical worldview?

Theology fares even worse. When the Judeo-Christian worldview and the Bible is separated from empirical reality, it only leads to theological chaos, if not madness. What could be worse than a legalistic and dogmatic objective theology? Try subjective theology. Indeed, German Jewish Enlightenment scholar Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86) complained that Kant's philosophy "destroys everything."²⁸ Mendelssohn protested further that Kant's division between the

²⁴ For the relationship between Kant's Idealism and modern science, see *Theory and Power: On the Character of Modern Sciences*, by Rolf Gruner, pp. 151-60.

²⁵ See *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism* by Daniel Gasman.

²⁶ In terms of his philosophical views, zoologist Ernst Haeckel, the father of German Social Darwinism and ecology, was a Romantic Idealist. See the section on "Idealism as White Supremacist Ordering," pp. 542-549 by Gary Dorrien in *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit: The Idealist Logic of Modern Theology*.

²⁷ Hicks, Stephen, *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, p. 40.

²⁸ Mack, p. 79.

empirical and spiritual led to superstitious idolatry²⁹ rather than true Enlightenment reason. More than a few scholars since have pointed out that Kant's subjectivism did much to promote mysticism in Germany after his Transcendental Idealism became more widely digested. Dr. Stephen Hicks strongly argues that Kant does not even belong in the Enlightenment, but to the Counter Enlightenment.³⁰

Kant himself believed his Transcendent Idealism would save both metaphysics and religion from destroying themselves. In the preface of his second edition to his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant clarified how he would accomplish this, "I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge, in order to make room for faith. The dogmatism of metaphysics, that is, the preconception that it is possible to make headway in metaphysics without a previous criticism of pure reason, is the source of all that unbelief, always very dogmatic, which wars against morality."³¹ In this very revealing remark Kant was denying "knowledge, in order to make room for faith," not for the sake of defending biblical Christianity, much less natural theology - but for the sake of morality. The second sentence then demonstrates how Kant's critique of pure reason, which he considered to be the rationalism of the Middle Ages based on natural theology, had to be limited. In Kant's mind, rationalists using natural theology to draw people to religion using dogmatic arguments on God's existence were in fact argued so poorly and on false grounds they were actually playing into the hands of the skeptics instead. In other words, Christian apologetics based on rationalism, cognition, and/or reason is a waste of time. If apologists ignore his critique of reason, they will foment more skepticism instead of encouraging faith. This, in turn, was provoking "wars against morality" that would inevitably lead to moral anarchy as men increasingly rejected religion and metaphysics in a modern world dominated by science. In short, Kant's secular program was a half-way house between rationalism and mysticism in order to save both.

While there is certainly a truth in the fact that one cannot argue another person into faith (Ecclesiastes 3:21; Acts 26:28), and that even the best arguments can still be easily rejected and remain unconvincing, this does not mean that Christians should abandon apologetics - far from it. Just because apologetics has limits does not mean that persuasive arguments should not be argued,³² much less that believers should retreat into Kant's subjective cocoon of irrationality to keep from being publicly embarrassed. The apostle Paul himself confronted the Greco-Roman philosophers of his own day (Acts 17:18). Paul often apologetically used nature itself, i.e., natural theology, as a witness or testimony of the biblical God's existence in order to give him a platform to present the gospel. In Romans 1:18-20 Paul presumes the validity of both the cosmological and teleological arguments for God's existence as part of his discussion that lays the theological foundation for perhaps the greatest letter even written in human history. By tracing Paul's argument all the way through to 1:32, Paul then launches into his own version of the moral argument for God's existence. Neither is it coincidental that Paul quotes from Psalm 14 (or Psalm 53) in Romans 3 where David writes in the opening verse, "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." In truth, by Romans 3:9-19, Paul is finishing off his moral argument for God's existence began in Romans 1 by using Scriptural support. Indeed, the book of Romans is Paul's defense of the gospel in direct confrontation of the Greco-Roman world and its philosophies and religions. Even the fisherman Peter, right before he died, wrote, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope

²⁹ Ibid., p. 80.

³⁰ Hicks, pp. 27-29.

³¹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 29-30, Bxxx.

³² The entire book of Job is presentation of various arguments that men five men gave, all largely based on natural theology, as they tried to come to grips with Job's predicament. Natural revelation is thus limited, of course, and could not and did not have the proper answers to address Job's suffering, but it was still used and played an important role in one of the most important books in the Old Testament that shows from special revelation why good men are sometimes exposed to extreme suffering. The natural theology of Job's three friends could not resolve this dilemma. While Job's three friends were rebuked, Elihu was not.

that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence (1 Peter 3:15).” The entire book of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament is an apology that concludes, “The words of wise men are like goads, and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd. But beyond this, my son, be warned: the writing of many books is endless, and excessive devotion to books is wearying to the body. The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil (Ecclesiastes 12:11-14).”

While it is true Paul pointed out the “Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:22-23),” this does not mean that Paul did not use apologetic arguments when he first presented the gospel to those in Corinth. There is no question that he most certainly did (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) as Paul’s speech in Athens (Acts 17:16-34) also makes so very clear. Athens was not far from Corinth. While the response to Paul’s gospel left much to be desired coming from the reputed wisest city in the world, yet Luke still noted, “Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, ‘We shall hear you again concerning this.’ So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them (Acts 17:32-34).” In short, some in Athens did come to faith in Christ, and Paul used both philosophy and history in his famous Mars Hill speech to draw men to the Savior.

In truth, Kant’s subjectivist philosophy actually undermines the entire foundation for Christian apologetics in general. Apologetics demands objectivity by definition, but thanks to Kant’s philosophy, this was no longer really possible. Such “knowledge” was denied by Kant “to make room for faith” in order to avoid an all-out attack on religion that would in the end destroy “morality.” Thus, Kant’s subjectivist philosophy was originally intended to save religion and metaphysics from the onslaught of modern science. In order to accomplish this great feat, Kant placed religion and metaphysics into an unknown world that really could not be criticized as long as the religionist or philosopher did not apologetically appeal to the empirical world to substantiate his faith or metaphysical contentions. Thus, Kant ostensibly saved religion and metaphysics by placing them into the arena of faith and irrational speculation that was severed from criticism and scientific empiricism. One of Kant’s main goals was to keep religion and metaphysics somewhat impervious to criticism as long as they did not demand empirical proofs connected to the real world.

Needless to say, this complicated scheme on the part of Kant did not save religion or metaphysics, but wound up essentially gutting theological and metaphysical content out of religious and philosophical thinking. Too many began to presume that issues of faith or religion were separate from the empirical world and thus belonged into an irrational nether world that really cannot be understood or rationally discussed. True spirituality degenerated into a matter of feelings as doctrine and orthodoxy was increasingly ignored. This was particularly true in the case of Friedrich Schleiermacher who applied Kantian metaphysics to theology that became the foundation stone for Theological Liberalism in the early 1800’s. Dutch theologian Soren Kierkegaard (1813-55) then jumped across the Kantian divide between subject and object by a leap of irrational faith. Kierkegaard and others began leaping away from the modern scientific world into a fuzzy and unintelligible world of faith and mystery in order to maintain the Christian faith all the while bible critics began attacking the historical foundations of the Scriptures without mercy according to modern empirical standards that rewrote the entire history of the Bible as traditionally understood. As such, theologians and pastors became less and less concerned with Christian doctrine. They replaced content and orthodoxy with undefined feelings of empathy together with many other anti-doctrinal practical concerns that did not require much thought. Worse, this was all then increasingly politicized during the 1800’s as the social gospel replaced justification by faith, the original gospel of the Reformation.

Incredibly, what Kant somehow did not consider nearly enough is that in denying reason’s access to Christian metaphysical knowledge, he wound up creating an empty theological

landscape devoid of any meaning that did nothing to promote morality, but instead led to a superficial theological romanticism at first, only then to be followed by a much more hardened existentialism, nihilism, hopelessness, and despair later on. In the process of using limited reason as his guide that secularized Christian metaphysical truths into subjective interpretations and applications, Kant's Transcendental Idealism managed to do the opposite of what he desired. Kant's basic secular approach emptied metaphysics of important religious and spiritual content that was deemed unknowable. The very title of Kant's book *Religion Within the Bound of Bare Reason* is actually very telling indeed. Kant's goal was to strip religious or metaphysical knowledge into bare reason.

Rather than stop the "wars against morality" Kant's philosophy instead left both religion and metaphysics completely exposed relentless attack. Since Kant presumed that objective rational knowledge about God was not possible to obtain, his 'theological' concentration became more practical. While Kant viewed God as necessary for the sake of human morality to help prevent social anarchy - theology and religious content was largely ignored since it belonged to another sphere far above human knowledge. In other words, practical morality trumped the importance of religious knowledge, especially when it came to divine revelation and biblical history. Practical moral considerations coupled with Kant's natural limits to reason thus gutted the whole possibility of theological and religious knowledge from the outset. This invariably contributed to a growing mindlessness regarding theology that was emptied of biblical meaning and replaced with secularity, subjectivity, and spiritual romanticism rooted in natural experience rather than the text of the Bible. While reason does have its limits, Kant placed too many restrictions on it. This helped pave the way for the counter Enlightenment in which Romanticism, Existentialism, Liberalism, and eventually Post-Modernism, replaced rationalism and reason in the modern world of philosophy.³³

As such, instead of producing a thoughtful and reasoned morality as expected, Kant's subjectivist philosophy degenerated into romantic sentimentalism, unbridled feelings, passionate instincts, and the will to power after later German theologians and philosophers began applying his divided Transcendental Idealism into their respective fields of study. In other words, the genius of Kant did the opposite of what he presumed his Transcendental Idealism would accomplish. Instead of making "room for faith" and "morality" based on a limited or cautionary reason, Kant's anti-rational stance on religious and metaphysical "knowledge" allowed biblical criticism to run roughshod over the Bible for well over a century at precisely the time when Christian apologetics was needed most.³⁴ After the critics got done critiquing the historical record of the Bible throughout the 1800's, all that was left was a hollow theology divided too sharply between faith and reason that fewer and fewer people believed was worth pursuing.

Thanks largely to Kant's subjectivist philosophy that surprisingly had such wide ranging influences, today the western world sits in an immoral spiritual wasteland without access to metaphysical truth.³⁵ In a word, Kant limited reason too much. As Kant himself admitted in his *Critique of Reason*, he was denying "knowledge." Denying knowledge is not a way to move forward, but an emptying of the mind. It does not lead to enlightenment, but exactly the opposite. The major thrust of Kant's prodigious work was to critique and limit reason. Such an approach should have/be raising many more eyebrows than it has/does. Is it possible that perhaps the most important genius in the last 250 years did more to dumb down religion, metaphysics, philosophy, and science than any scholastic-legalistic monk or priest of the Christian Middle Ages could have ever contemplated?

Indeed, the final outcome of Kant's subjectivist philosophy left Christianity divided between a Bible that was full of historical mistakes coupled with an amorphous spirituality and faith that was increasingly devoid of doctrinal content but still was to be lived out anyway in spite of all the mental gymnastics that was required in the process. This became the theological world of

³³ See *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault* by Dr. Stephen Hicks.

³⁴ See especially *The God Who is There* by Francis Schaeffer.

³⁵ See especially *Whatever Happened to Truth?* and *God in the Wasteland* by David Wells.

Soren Kierkegaard in the 19th century and then Karl Barth in the 20th century (1886-1968). Yet this absurd predicament was in fact a reflection of Kant's own confusion. Kant himself debunked the classical arguments for God's existence - the ontological, the cosmological, and teleological arguments³⁶ - but in a tortured roundabout way still accepted the moral argument for God's existence called the categorical imperative. Since morality was universal and required a Higher Good and an afterlife that either rewarded or punished good or bad behavior practiced in this life, Kant argued his categorical imperative demanded a belief in God. In other words, for all practical purposes God must exist, but His existence cannot be objectively known rationally or metaphysically. So even though philosophically speaking from a rational point of view God really does not exist, people should still believe He exists anyway to keep them from destroying one another.

Is Kant's position on this rational, reasonable or even sane? Kant's division between epistemology and morality actually borders on madness, particularly as it deals with the most important questions facing humanity. If God must exist morally, then why can He not objectively exist ontologically, cosmologically, or teleologically as Kant denied? Such a position has its own problems that are perhaps even more inconsistent and problematic than the classical arguments for God's existence in the first place. Kant's subjectivist philosophy did not relieve the difficulties between science, religion, and metaphysics, but only compounded everything by dumbing them down into scientism, spiritual sentimentalism, and theological existentialism precisely because proper objective knowledge was denied them. A house divided between subjectivity and objectivity cannot stand. Kant's division between the subject and object, between the subjective knower and the objective world, is a house of cards. Neither did his philosophy save morality, but made it far worse because there was no longer any objective basis for morality to stand on in the first place. In truth, what Kant accomplished was not the salvation of religion, metaphysics, morality or science, but in fact sowed the seeds of their gradual destruction by removing from them objective knowledge that is so necessary for their vitality and growth. Kant's subjectivist philosophy did the opposite of what he presumed it would do. At the end of the day, even western morality was trashed anyway, and this happened largely because of Kant's philosophy, not in spite of it.

Yet, Kant himself was well aware of man's innate propensity toward sin as his "radical evil" doctrine demonstrated. However, Kant yet believed his Transcendental Idealism, based on pure reason, was the pathway to moral purity. In the mind of Kant, subjectivity was pure and unsullied from the dregs of empirical reality, human experience and/or the artificial coercion that was based on dogmatism falsely dressed up as objectivity. Thus, in spite of Kant's "radical evil" doctrine, his Transcendental Idealism together with the practice of what he considered to be moral reason - which did not exclude God and acknowledged that men need His divine grace³⁷ - could still be progressively applied that would eventuate a secular Kingdom of God this side of the grave where the afterlife and this world would merge into a positive outcome.³⁸ Kant thus held to a potential political millenarianism based on the inward application of his Transcendental Idealism to realm of morality. Rather than call it the Kingdom of God, Kant profaned it by naming it "the kingdom of ends." Kant thus held to a Judeo-Christian philosophy of history based on biblical eschatology, but he secularized it as he believed primitive Christianity only began the process of

³⁶ The arguments for God's existence were weakened by Kant largely because he deemed cause and effect to be pure or *a priori* categories of the mind that were at once subjective and thus could not objectively cross over into the realm of metaphysics.

³⁷ Kant's version of divine grace was/is perhaps the most refined version found anywhere in print of the idea that God helps those who help themselves. Kant secularized the grace doctrines of the Bible, denuded them of their supernatural content, and secularly applied it to his system of morality in which man's autonomous use of reason without outside coercion or interference would create responsible men based on the inward application of what he called "practical reason." In the eyes of Kant, this was the only true morality that would deliver man from religious and legalistic bondage.

³⁸ It is important to note here that Kantian eschatology is a secular version of Pre-Millennialism and/or Dispensationalism concerning the coming Messianic Kingdom predicted in Revelation 20.

revealing freedom and the inner reason of true religion that the Enlightenment had latched onto and was potentially leading mankind to his final destination. Thus Kant's "radical evil" doctrine was not as radical as he trumpeted it to be. His Transcendental Idealism, if applied, would remove the bondage of outside heteronomy, determinism, and fatalism that kept mankind shackled up in chains. While Kant nowhere suggested his "kingdom of ends" was inevitable, he still held out hope the Enlightenment would enlighten men's minds enough to the point where they could live free and/or morally independent lives.³⁹ Such a progressive view of history, secularized from biblical eschatology through Kant's Transcendental Idealism, became the heart of German liberal theology for the next century.

The true major thrust of Kant's Transcendental Idealism was to distinguish what he considered to be pure reason from empiricism and experience that could be autonomously relied on in order to live morally free without any outside coercion coming from nature, history, or even the outer limits of metaphysics. In so doing, Kant not only established a radical subjectivism, but also divorced his philosophy from the ugliness of the objective world by placing pure reason into its own insular realm that could no longer really be rationally criticized or contradicted since Kantian epistemology was/is largely subjectivist by definition. In other words, reality, nature, and history often tarnish pure reason and all too easily muddy the proverbial waters of religion, metaphysics, and philosophy.

Thus, the primary point of Kant's transcendental idealism was to establish enough personal freedom and autonomy from the corruptness of the world as it is, based on self-sufficient reason, in order to help inaugurate a new, enlightened, and progressive world of one's own making - something which biblical metaphysics and scientific determinism would deny if left unchecked by Kant's Idealism. Kant perceived that both natural and biblical theology together with scientific materialism would interfere with the critical importance of freedom and autonomy in order to kick off a true Enlightenment that was only just beginning in his day. While Augustinianism and/or Calvinism were theologically fatalistic, scientific naturalism was increasingly becoming deterministic turning man into a machine. As such, neither of them could provide Enlightenment freedom nor be truly objective from a Kantian point of view. Kant held that theologians, pastors, philosophers, and scientists who hubristically presume they objectively know their object of study or research inevitably leads to a stifling dogmatism that robs people of their autonomy or freedom. Such dogmatic truth claims only prevented people from growing up as they lazily and slavishly rely on being told what to believe and do rather than use their autonomous reason to rationally come to proper judgments and conclusions based on genuine freedom.

For Kant, truth or knowledge cannot be forced on anyone. Man must use his autonomous reason freely if he wants to mature, behave responsibly, and become enlightened. Kant thus believed his cautious Transcendental Idealism would limit theological fatalism and scientific determinism so that a true enlightenment based on freedom and autonomy would gradually prevail and perhaps evolve into a positive final destiny for the human race where his "kingdom of ends" would bring about a true Kingdom of God on earth. In Kant's profane eschatology, he hoped that the superficial externalism of religion and the coercion of politics would one day disappear in the face of a deep-reasoned inner morality of autonomous men who freely choose to live rational lives in peace with one another.

Thus, in reality, even Kant's "radical evil" doctrine is a secularized version of the Fall of humanity and nature as described in the opening chapters of Genesis. Kant seemed to think that the process of secularization was the way forward, particularly if his Transcendental Idealism was the profane filter used to sort through experience, empiricism, religion, philosophy and metaphysics. As such, as the Fall of mankind was secularized, it was therefore also limited to "radical evil" rather than viewed as the "total depravity" of man presented in the Bible. Herein lies the subjectivist distinction that Kantian philosophy illustrates when it secularizes biblical

³⁹ Kant was an original fan of the French Revolution in spite of the aristocracy's censorship of it in Prussia.

truths. In Kantian epistemology, to teach the “total depravity” of man is not only a subjective interpretation, but cannot be truly known in the first place. Moreover, such a theological deduction, if presumed to be objectively true and then applied as such, would invariably restrict the autonomous freedom of man and artificially prevent him from maturing into an enlightened adulthood of true morality and responsibility.

Kant’s fondness of secularizing the Bible from beginning to end, i.e., from original sin to eschatology, begs the question that if the Judeo-Christian worldview can so bless the world with secular progress when profaned, how much more will it be bless the world if presumed to be objectively true and applied more consistently? Perhaps the problem is not that Christianity needs to be secularized, but that man is so radically evil, i.e., fallen, that the failures of Christendom experienced in real life by so many, are much more of a problem about sin than it is about propounding the right kind of philosophy. Meaning that if the Bible does not prevent the everyday practice of sin even among its own converts, then how can it be that Transcendental Idealism will fare any better with anyone else? Maybe what the Bible says about man’s depraved sin nature is objectively true after all? History is literally full of sin, evil, and violence from any empirical point of view. Yet such empirical truths do not call into question the objectivity of the Bible, but actually prove otherwise. Contrary to popular opinion, the Bible is not afraid of empiricism, particularly of the historical variety that is at the heart of God’s revelation of Himself as recorded in the Scriptures.

Kant himself, who was fond of distinguishing the thinking self from the objective world he lives in by saying people really only have a subjective understanding of the appearances of the world, and not a true interpretation of the world itself as it truly is, never seemed to ask himself the question why this was the case. In other words, if thought through more seriously, Transcendental Idealism itself begs for a fallen world. Indeed, after Kant “explored the territory of pure understanding, and carefully observed every part of it” in his *Critique or Pure Reason* and also “measured its extent, and assigned in its rightful place,” he then compares the domain of understanding to an “island enclosed by nature itself within unalterable limits. It is the land of truth – enchanting name! – surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer ever anew with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion.”⁴⁰ Here Kant posits a closed world sealed up in some epistemological prison of some sort – yet all coming from a philosopher who made autonomous freedom and reason his battle cry and motto. He then goes on to console himself to be satisfied with this little island as “there may be no other territory upon which we can settle.”⁴¹

Kant’s image is a not only another secularized illustration of the Fall, but also not that far removed from Plato’s famous cave illustration where people in the world see only the shadows of reality, not reality itself.⁴² While the Old Testament sometimes speaks about the shadow of death, in the New Testament, St. Paul’s imagery was that of seeing in a mirror dimly with no small thanks to God’s miraculous revelation in history (1 Corinthians 13:9-12). In the New Testament, God opens the eyes to enlighten the mind through the granted wisdom of divine revelation so that it can partially see through the veil of the fallen world into the true nature of things on the other side of Lessing’s ditch (Acts 26:18; 2 Corinthians 3; Hebrews 6:4; 10:26, 32).⁴³

⁴⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 257

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² The difference between Kant and Plato, however, is that while Kant may have believed man’s perception of reality was shadowy, he did not believe there was anything beyond the object of consciousness in the metaphysical realm as Plato’s Realism demanded.

⁴³ The Greek word *epignosis*, which means “full experiential knowledge” is often used by Paul that gives believers true knowledge of God and His plan even though such knowledge is not exhaustive. *Epignosis* speaks of applied knowledge in contrast to mere *gnosis* which simply means knowledge in a more generic sense. By faith, Christians are expected to convert *gnosis* into *epignosis* through the grace of God’s word and His supernatural power. This makes the knowledge of

Whatever the exact case may be, while Kant was familiar with the appearance of death as subjectively interpreted through his own Transcendental Idealism, he did not understand the true nature of death or man's fallen condition thanks to the fact he sealed himself off from divine revelation in history. Kant did not want biblical empirical history to spoil his pure Transcendental Idealism. As such, thanks to his aversion toward theology and true biblical supernaturalism, Kant seemed to revel in his own little offshore island, hiding from God in what can only be best described as a philosophical prison. Rather than take advantage of all the information available to him, particularly with regard to the Bible objectively understood, he rationalized his unbelief using autonomous freedom and reason as his guide to excuse his true responsibility to Satan's original questioning of Eve, "Indeed, has God said?"

Contrary to Kant's philosophy, the Bible categorically asserts that personal autonomy is at the heart of man's rebellion against God as evidenced in the Garden of Eden. Personal autonomy as defined by Kant extinguishes the Creator-creature distinction that is so important in biblical ethics - whether in the Old or New Testaments. In truth, Adam and Eve already practiced a version of Kant's transcendental idealism when they autonomously used their own freedom to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - the only divine restriction that God originally gave to the first human parents. Such a choice on their part did not lead to a better world, but exactly the opposite.

It has never been established that subjective self-sufficient reason is a good thing, or that it stands on better grounds than faith in the historical facts of the Bible. In fact, as Kant's Transcendental Idealism was applied on an ever wider scale in Germany, the historical facts on the ground demonstrated the exact opposite of what Kant anticipated. Yet Kant himself tried to make his Transcendental Idealism insulated from the destructive tendencies of the real empirical world. What Kant was postulating was a form of intellectual autarky that would protect his philosophy from getting dirtied by foreign, i.e., empirical outside forces. This, of course, is a transcendental fantasy of the highest metaphysical order. The attempt to smuggle in transcendence into the subjective mind that has no objective transcendental source in the metaphysical or heavenly realm is a contradiction in terms.

Autarky means self-sufficiency. Kant's autonomous reason can thus be easily characterized as a form of intellectual autarky as he tries to insulate his doctrine from outside forces like rampant scientific empiricism, metaphysics, natural theology together with biblical history and supernaturalism. In his Transcendental Idealism Kant constructed the shell of inward subjectivity as a bulwark against impure alien forces within which German Romanticism, Existentialism, and later Postmodernism, flourished. Did Kant's intellectual autarky have any relationship to the political autarky that later became the isolationist bread and butter of National Socialism? While Kant would have been aghast at what transpired under the tyrannical banner of National Socialism, it must be pointed out that he was indeed a white supremacist.⁴⁴ While Kant considered the whites to be a race, in addition, he also believed "they had progressed so far beyond the other races that they were no longer a race in the ordinary sense of the term. The white race, by advancing in the direction of enlightened cosmopolitan perfection, was moving beyond race. It was expanding globally to bring the world to perfection, recreating the world in its image. Kant assured his students that no race on earth stood a chance of thwarting the global domination of race-transcending white people."⁴⁵

When it came to Jews, Kant blew a gasket. In Kant's telling, the only moral principle to which Jews subscribed in dealing with their European protectors was "buyer beware."⁴⁶ Not only did Kant call Jews "cowards, liars, and cheaters"⁴⁷ in his lectures, but even espoused common

the Bible supernaturally and existentially real in the life of a believer (Ephesians 1:17-19; 4:11-16; Philipians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-11; 2:2-3; 3:10-11; 2 Tim 2:25; Philemon 1:6; 2 Peter 1:2-8

⁴⁴ Dorrien, p. 25, pp. 545-47.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 546.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 548.

⁴⁷ Mack, p. 5.

Anti-Semitic tropes like – Judaism was really not a religion but a political entity,⁴⁸ that the Jews were too attached to this world’s goods,⁴⁹ that Hebrew laws were materialistic rather than spiritual, that Christianity did not really have Jewish foundations,⁵⁰ and that Judaist national character stubbornly rooted in the ancient past left them in a backward state as modern progress raced by them. In fact, Kant considered the Jews so tied to their empirical and/or material history in the Old Testament that he considered them to be non-modern precisely because they were not transcendental idealists like himself.⁵¹ Incredibly, Kant labelled the Jews superstitious because they subjected themselves to the empirical facts of their backward non-changing Old Testament history.⁵²

Worst of all, Kant’s moral system of autonomous freedom was blatantly hostile to Jewish ethics. Kant considered Judaism as heteronomous and slave-like rather than autonomous and free. Jews took commands from outside sources like the Old Testament, the Mosaic Law, and Jehovah, and then slavishly obeyed them without any concern about the proper inner autonomy and responsibility to freely carry out those orders. In fact, Kant went so far so as to target “the Jews as the empirical obstacle to the establishment of a rational order in which heteronomy would be overcome.”⁵³ Here, Kant’s Transcendental Idealism casts its shadow over the dark murky waters of an Anti-Semitic pro-European secular eschatology. According to Kant, the money grubbing ways of the Jews provided them security throughout many places in Europe, and such success “threatened to subvert the European hope of an enlightened civil society devoted to the autonomy of life. Jewish aliens, by sneering at the norms of decent society, represented a kind of contagion that contaminated European societies.”⁵⁴

In his *Religion and Rational Theology* written in 1798, Kant spoke on how the practice of his Transcendental Idealism would bring about “the euthanasia of Jewishness” with regard to ethics that would lead to moral purity, “The euthanasia of Judaism IS pure moral religion, freed from all the ancient statutory teachings.”⁵⁵ Here is a clear example where Kant’s secularization methods did not lead to progress, but rather to destruction instead. Kant profaned the Christian spirit-grace opposition to Jewish law-legalism found in the New Testament and converted that antinomy into “euthanasia of Jewishness.”

Kant was strangely blind to the fact that secularization more often than not leads to godlessness rather than progress. That the Nazis employed euthanasia experts, specialists, and practitioners as the primary agents of destruction of European Jewry during the heights of World War II is a bitter irony that Kant himself could have never imagined when he spoke of the “euthanasia of Jewishness.” Yet Kant’s secularization program did more to promote godlessness in Germany than any other thinker of the modern era. Germany thus took age old Christian Anti-Semitism that had a penchant for pogroms, and secularized it into the holocaust that was about 150 years in the making. Hitler remarked that Kant’s “complete refutation of the teachings which were a heritage from the Middle Ages, and of the dogmatic philosophy of the Church, is the greatest of the services which Kant has rendered to us.”⁵⁶ Hitler then pointed out it was “on the foundation of Kant’s theory of knowledge that Schopenhauer built the edifice of his philosophy.” During the exact same conversation, Hitler extolled Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche as the greatest of Germany’s philosophers, “in comparison with whom the British, the French and the Americans have nothing to offer.” Heil Hitler.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 23

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 32

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 39.

⁵² Ibid., p. 40.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Dorrien, p. 548.

⁵⁵ Mack, p. 35.

⁵⁶ *Hitler’s Table Talk*, evening of May 16, 1944, p.546.

Friedrich Schleiermacher's Theological Romanticism & Liberal Anti-Judaism

There is some debate in philosophical circles on the relationship between German Idealism and Romanticism. While Idealism and Romanticism are not necessarily connected, in practice they greatly overlapped in Germany during the late 1700's and early 1800's. In fact, many of the German Romantics were Idealists and vice versa as they mixed each other's ingredients together that often defies simple labels. Idealism postulates that known reality is immaterial, spiritual, and/or mentally constructed. For Irish philosopher George Berkeley (1685-1753), Idealism was connected to the natural theology of the Middle Ages in that humans are looking at the very handwriting of God when they perceive the world or nature around them. His theoretical motto was "to be is to be perceived," otherwise known as Subjective Idealism. For Berkeley, reality only exists primarily as a reflection of the mind of God, and then secondarily as a mental construct of the human mind. While this strange speculative theory devalues the physical and/or empirical creation of God, it was Kant who converted Berkeley's Subjective Idealism into Transcendental Idealism, i.e., otherwise known as German Idealism. With good reason, Kant rejected Berkeley's spiritual immaterialism, but then replaced it with his own speculation that while the non-mental world does really exist, it can only be subjectively understood since the object of study has no meaning per se. Of itself it is incognizant of itself. In other words, objects do not necessarily mean anything of themselves until they are given meaning by the observer as he subjectively filters his own experience of the object of inquiry according to certain *a priori* or transcendental categories of the mind that provide the interpretation. Thus Kant secularized Berkeley's Idealism. Many other German thinkers like Johann Fichte (1762-1814) and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854) then followed suit.

Schelling, in particular, had a strong Romantic bent to his Idealism that was exported to England and America through Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834). Before Schelling, Romanticism was largely born in Germany with the likes of the Schlegel brothers, August (1767-1845) and Friedrich (1772-1829) together with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). Romanticism stressed subjectivity, individualism, aesthetics, artistry, and the natural world, not reason since reality is full of paradoxes, antinomies, and contradictions. Thus both German Idealism and Romanticism shared subjectivity as their foundation stone. Kant also developed an idealistic sense of aesthetics that was matured by later Idealists and Romantics. As such, both German Idealism and Romanticism grew up side by side as they cross pollinated one another. Romantics dedicated themselves to individual commitment, striving, and resolute choice in the midst of dramatic conflict aided by strong feelings. As church orthodoxy increasingly lost more and more of its influence in Germany over the course of the 1700's, Romanticism filled in the spiritual vacuum left behind. Along with Romanticism came an emotional glorification of the indigenous at one with nature in contrast to the industrialized cosmopolitanism of the cities which artificially divided man from nature with cold rationality that supposedly robbed man of his true spirituality. Here is where German nationalism was born, which was otherwise known as the *volkisch* movement. The German word *volk* means people with certain racial-indigenous connotations that were inherited from their natural surroundings and the soil of the homeland - a veritable counterfeit natural theology suited just for Germans. *Volksisch* ideology was also extremely Anti-Semitic.

Just as many other German thinkers began to incorporate Kant's Transcendental Idealism into their worldview, so also did Friedrich Schleiermacher, the father of Theological Romanticism and/or Theological Liberalism. Schleiermacher was personal friends with Schelling, and so as Schelling adapted Kant's idealism into his Romanticism, so Schleiermacher will adjust Christianity to suit both Kantian Idealism and the growing Romantic Movement that was flowering all over Germany at the time. As such, Schleiermacher, already presuming biblical criticism against the historicity of the Bible was true, will take Kant's idealistic subjectivism/morality and then fill it with religious feelings in order save Christianity from the worship of reason that had become too endemic during the Enlightenment. Since religious feeling went beyond the limited realm of reason that Kant prescribed, and was subjectively embedded deep within the human spirit,

Schleiermacher believed he could present a positive form of Christianity in keeping step with modernity without violating the critical importance of religion. As such, in spite of his Romanticism, Schleiermacher purposefully attempted to modernize Christianity to be more acceptable to the new progressive world of science. Even though Schleiermacher disliked Protestant Orthodoxy, he wrote his own systematic theology called *The Christian Faith* which he asserted was a form of scientific theology geared for the modern audience, "Like so many after him, Schleiermacher wanted to be both a Christian and a modern man, both a modern man and a Christian."⁵⁷ This being the case, Schleiermacher used the reason of the German Enlightenment to attack Protestant Orthodox doctrine, only to then replace it with a subjective form of mysticism borrowed from Kantian Idealism and Romanticism.

While the growth of Romanticism was slow to develop in North America and England, and was even kept in check by its strong Protestant values, it was much more robust in Germany. In Germany, Romanticism "became a conservative protest against modernity which was linked to a Romantic celebration of wildness."⁵⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, often considered one of the very pioneers of Romanticism, is perhaps the greatest titan of German literature. He was especially interested in nature, biology, and art. He also considered himself to be a natural scientist as Goethe presumed Romanticism was actually a better form of empiricism since its desire was to merge with its natural subject rather than be isolated and detached from it like so many scientists had done before him. In fact, Goethe will be the very first to imbue biology with Romanticism that later will become regularly featured not only in Darwinian evolutionary theory, but also with regard to modern ecology as well.⁵⁹ In 1866, the very word ecology itself was coined by German zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919). Haeckel essentially modernized Goethe's Romantic biology by converting it into what he called Monism. Mono means one. Monism was a blatantly anti-theistic nature based ideology that attempted to explain the world, including its political and social structures, from a strict monistic innerworldly Darwinian point of view that was presumed to be scientific as it enthusiastically excluded any mention of God or the Bible. Monism is today better known as Social Darwinism. The Nazis later called it politically applied biology.

In Goethe's youth, he was very involved in a Romantic group called *Sturm und Drang* or "Storm and Stress." This group radically opposed the Enlightenment's emphasis upon logic, reason, and objectivity. In place of these values, *Sturm und Drang* advocated subjective experience, emotions, spirituality, and the natural world. As Goethe grew older, he moved away from his youthful leanings, but his interest in Romanticism did not fade away, nor did his opposition to Christian orthodoxy and/or organized religion diminish. Goethe characterized the spirit of Christianity as evil and damningly unnatural.⁶⁰ In fact, Goethe's later fascination with the classics and the classical world can easily be understood as a deepening of his Romanticism. At one point in his career, after complaining about "Jewish nonsense" derived from the Old Testament, Goethe opined, "Had Homer remained our Bible, how different a form would mankind have achieved!"⁶¹ Goethe's great emphasis throughout much of his writings was upon holism and the oneness of the natural world and the reconciliation of opposites. In the poem entitled "*Epirrhena*" Goethe wrote, "Separateness is illusion, one and many are the same." Goethe's natural holism, in great contrast to the dualistic nature of the Judeo-Christian worldview that transcendently separated God and man from nature,⁶² would anchor German Romanticism for decades to come. In truth, Romantic holism was a form of nature mysticism.

⁵⁷ Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, p. 138.

⁵⁸ Sax, Boria. *Animals in the Third Reich: Pets, Scapegoats, and the Holocaust*, p. 40.

⁵⁹ See *The Romantic Conception of Life* by Robert Richards, pp. 407-502.

⁶⁰ Stern, J.P. *Hitler: The Fuhrer and the People*, p. 39.

⁶¹ Lowith, Karl. *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in 19th Century Thought*, p. 22.

⁶² While God's transcendence above the universe is absolute, man's is not. Man is the governor of nature, but is still a created being, and thus a part of the creation (Genesis 1, Psalm 8).

Goethe was one of the primary authors Schleiermacher and his fellow students were forbidden to read during their days at a Moravian seminary in Barby.⁶³ Schleiermacher and his fellow seminarians, of course, rebelled against the seminary and devoured Goethe. They even began reading the works of J.S. Semler's (1725-1791), who established a school of historical biblical criticism at Halle. Semler too was considered *verboten* by the seminary. Christian legalism thus helped steer Schleiermacher toward Goethe's Romanticism and then toward Semler's historical criticism of the Bible. In 1779, Semler inserted himself into the controversy that roiled around Lessing's publishing of Reimarus's deistic attack on the Bible. While Semler was not as rabid as Reimarus, his approach to biblical criticism will be adopted by F.C. Baur. Baur gave much credit to Semler for what later became known as higher criticism that finally ruptured faith from history for good in the German academy with few exceptions. Yet Baur was not only deeply indebted to Semler, but also to Schelling and Schleiermacher as well. This strange, but very real connection between Romanticism and historical biblical criticism is at the heart of the German blitzkrieg against the historicity of the Bible.

In particular, the great problem with Schleiermacher's revisionism of Protestant Orthodoxy was on the issue of biblical authority.⁶⁴ For Schleiermacher, in keeping with modern sentiments of the Enlightenment, Idealism, and Romanticism, "no external authority – whether it be Scripture or Church or historic creedal statement – takes precedence over the immediate experience of believers."⁶⁵ Thanks to Schleiermacher, religious experience based on feelings and intuition became more important than the Bible, doctrine, and/or theological orthodoxy. Personal subjective experience thus became the arbiter of religious truth, and also the foundation stone for Existentialism that values the experience of existence over the mind, reason, and rationalism.

In the same way the Protestants originally attacked the external authority of the Catholic Church, the Enlightenment together now with much added ammunition coming from both German Idealism and Romanticism, would attack the external authority of the Bible itself. As enlightened historiographers no longer believed in any kind of external authority, except for their own autonomous reason, they no longer accepted what the Bible said as being authoritative. Furthermore, armed with presumed true enlightenment relative to a new critical historical outlook, they would begin to subject the entire Bible to extreme historical criticism. More to the point, since real objective truth cannot be a matter of reason as Kant demonstrated, but only a question of subjective feelings determined by faith that Schleiermacher propounded, there was no real harm done in the process. In this way, man's fallen reason, armed with an emotional rebellion against both the miracles and theological truths rooted in the history of the Old Testament that led up to the ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, became an anathema to the new enlightened mindset together with its subjectivist mysticism developed through Idealism and Romanticism. Moreover, the often crude primitive historical narratives of the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, often defied modern progressive sentiments and Romantic aesthetics. In truth, such ribald Scriptures represented a dagger pointed directly at the perfectibility of man that many Enlightenment philosophers, Idealists and/or Romantics were beginning to absorb into their own imaginations. As biblical miracles were increasingly considered to be mythological imports into the biblical text that was unhistorical and viewed as outright childish, incredibly, German Idealism and Romanticism replaced them with their own forms of subjectivist mysticism that was all hailed as the way of progress. In this way, belief in modern progress replaced belief in biblical miracles.

Schleiermacher himself was also in hearty agreement with such attitudes. As such, since Enlightenment reason had dethroned orthodox theology that was too dependent upon reason, doctrine, and cold rationalism, Schleiermacher believed Christianity could only be subjectively recaptured in modern hearts through a merging of Kantian Idealism and spiritual Romanticism. According to Schleiermacher, true religion was never about believing impersonal objects of faith

⁶³ Dorrien, p. 86.

⁶⁴ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 982.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

rationally described as orthodox lifeless doctrines, but a life changing direct spiritual experience of God imbued deeply with religious feeling – something which he vaguely called God-consciousness. For Schleiermacher, true religion was not to be found in mere cognition based on either biblical history and/or doctrine described by rational categories which only provided an indirect, and hence very deficient, knowledge of God. Rather it was religious feeling that brought oneself close to God through experiential knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge. Reason only indirectly apprehended the Person of God. As such, authentic spiritual progress with God must get beyond rational categories and reason.

Along Idealist lines, Schleiermacher claimed that “piety arises from the experience of God (the Infinite) through our experience of the world (the finite), not from rational metaphysics or doctrinal reflection.”⁶⁶ Along both Idealist and Romantic lines, Schleiermacher believed “people understood the world in which they live more through the imagination and intuitive experiences in nature than by studying it through rational analysis or scientific method.”⁶⁷ Needless, to say, this experience with nature was not characterized as an empirical one rooted in Judeo-Christian natural theology that celebrated the Creator-creature distinction, but on the contrary, was seen as a merging with nature as men blended with his creation in a monistic oneness. Not surprisingly, throughout Schleiermacher’s entire teaching, preaching, and writing ministry, which was prodigious, he was often accused of Christianizing pantheism because he so strongly emphasized holism and the immanence of God rather than His transcendence.⁶⁸

Schleiermacher believed traditional orthodoxy was not only legalistic, but also mythological as well since he “argued that myth reduces God to an object of thought by separating God from the world. Any perspective that conceives God as an outside being that interferes in history or natural events reduces religion to ‘vain mythology.’”⁶⁹ Furthermore, traditional orthodox “theological statements do not describe God in any objective manner but rather are ways in which the Christian feeling of absolute dependence is related to God.”⁷⁰ Schleiermacher thus inverted traditional orthodoxy. His masterpiece *The Christian Faith* (1821) used the same theological labels that his fellow orthodox Protestants used, but systematically interpreted them from “non-supernatural premises.”⁷¹ Concerning Schleiermacher, F.C. Baur, who infamously converted Tubingen University into a radical school of higher biblical criticism, remarked, “No other Dogmatics has – partly though its critical analyses of the individual doctrines – so methodically loosened and undermined the basis of the orthodox view as Schleiermacher’s, and none will so little admit it and allow it to come to an open break with the traditional doctrines of the Church. Whoever does not let himself be deceived by this orthodox exterior and the artful play with traditional sounding statements and phrases, which are always used in another sense, sees clearly enough that everything here is quite different from what it seems to be. One must recognize this peculiar character of the Schleiermacherian Dogmatics, this artful endeavor to conceal the modern philosophical view under the cover of the old orthodox faith.”⁷²

Through his Idealism and Romanticism, Schleiermacher converted otherworldly Protestant orthodox theological statements into subjective inner-worldly meanings. “Rather than religious experience growing out of doctrinal expressions or ecclesiastical life, religion itself was posited as the unique, primal experience of human experience.”⁷³ This made Schleiermacher’s theology not only both subjective and Romantic, but also existential as well since he rejected cardinal orthodox doctrines like the Trinity, the Fall of mankind, and inherited sin. Closely related, Schleiermacher despised the satisfaction theory of the atonement, and was extremely vague

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Dorrien, p. 92-93, 103.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 93.

⁷⁰ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 982.

⁷¹ Harris, p. 151.

⁷² Ibid., p. 154.

⁷³ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 982.

concerning the resurrection of Christ. Like Reimarus and others before him, he also sharply separated the presumed theological speculation about Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension from what he considered to be the real historical Jesus. Rather than describe sin as a form of lawlessness defined by the Old Testament Law, Schleiermacher said it was "anything that arrests or impedes God-consciousness. Evil is a state of God-forgetfulness, not a state of disobedience to God. To be saved is to be transformed from a state of arrested God-consciousness to a state of potent God-consciousness through the redeeming example of Jesus."⁷⁴ Schleiermacher thus taught a strange example theory of the atonement, not based on morality as even Kant taught, but on religious feeling. Perhaps Schleiermacher's view here should be called the Romantic example theory of the atonement? Indeed, "Schleiermacher sees the spirit of religion as neither thought nor deed, but as feeling, with an openness to the infinite."⁷⁵

Schleiermacher's Romantic openness to the Infinite would have significant consequences with regard to the interpretation of the Bible largely because he was the very father modern hermeneutics. Schleiermacher spent much time in teaching his students about the critical importance of interpretation, so much so that later on, his work on the subject led to hermeneutics being established as its own field of inquiry. When the Protestant Reformation steered away from Catholic mysticism, they did so by trying to recover the original historical meaning of the New Testament that had not been distorted by ecclesiastical legalism. This meant the Reformers went back to the Antiochene School of interpretation that had been largely ignored since the time of Augustine. However, the original Protestant Reformers did not develop a separate system of hermeneutics, but rather kept it under the realm of theology and exegesis. Such practical sentiments held sway until Schleiermacher, which partly explains the great controversies surrounding hermeneutics ever since.

What Schleiermacher did was to mix together the Antiochene School of interpretation with German Idealism and Romanticism.⁷⁶ More importantly, this new Schleiermachian hermeneutics will be used against Protestant Orthodoxy in a very subtle way because the attempt to recover the historical meaning of the biblical text will be first of all based on deistic historiography that cut out miracles from the history of the Bible. In so doing, rather than recover the true historical meaning of the Scriptures, deists instead essentially re-interpreted the Bible along Enlightenment historiographical lines precisely because there is so much theological significance wrapped up in miracles. Theologically speaking, a Bible robbed of its historical miracles is not much of a Bible. Secondly, this problem only became ever more acute as the deistic interpretation of the Bible was later overrun by Kantian Idealism and German Romanticism that Schleiermacher foisted upon the biblical text in his newly promulgated system of hermeneutics. Thus while deistic sentiments removed the miraculous, Schleiermacher's subjective idealism and Romantic aesthetic feelings would determine what was the 'real' historical experience the biblical text that lay somewhere in the convoluted mythological text of the Bible that needs to be cleansed both of its miracles and its claims to historicity.

Much of Schleiermacher's system of hermeneutics is taken for granted in modern biblical hermeneutics. In fact, many hermeneutical concerns Schleiermacher taught are sound as he gave much impetus to the critical importance of history, context, original languages, linguistics, and grammar with regard to interpretation, particularly in his earlier works. Schleiermacher essentially coined the hermeneutical circle that a given text cannot be understood without understanding its constituent parts, nor can the constituent parts be understood without understanding the whole. While all this by itself was fine as far it went, much of the problem with Schleiermacher, particularly later on, is that he increasingly separated language from thought.⁷⁷ Worse, he filled in the separation between language and thought with idealistic subjectivity on the

⁷⁴ Dorrien, p. 101.

⁷⁵ Gerdmar, p. 63.

⁷⁶ For all practical purposes, however, by bringing German Idealism and Romanticism back into his hermeneutical circle, Schleiermacher essentially returns back to Origen's Alexandrian mystical hermeneutics in some very critical areas.

⁷⁷ Palmer, Richard. *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, p. 88-94.

one hand and Romantic aesthetics on other hand. In this way, the 'art' of hermeneutics indeed became subjective artwork with a vengeance. The individual parts of the text became aesthetic building blocks in producing holistic and/or artistic pieces of writing that became less and less concerned with a dispassionate analysis of the text. In other words, thanks to Schleiermacher's penchant for Romanticism, ancient writers became artists of sorts. Schleiermacher's view of the whole was no less problematic in that it became willfully confused with Idealistic and Romantic ideas about holism that invariably gave a monistic interpretation to texts that became especially acute in biblical interpretation precisely because the transcendence of God was removed from the picture, pun intended. As such, Schleiermacher became increasingly interested in understanding the alleged 'spirit' (*Geist*) of the age that became increasingly psychological rather than text based, particularly as the 'spirit' of a given age was understood in a vital pantheistic sense as he presumed God's divine immanence in the world imbued all natural religion with truth - except, of course, the Bible and the excessive rationalism of natural theology during the Christian Middle Ages.

Furthermore, not only did Schleiermacher want to replicate the author's process of understanding, which gets murky, but he also sought to reconstruct his mental experiences as well, which, of course, were idealistically, romantically, and existentially understood. While Schleiermacher shied away from psychoanalyzing or divining the feelings of a given author,⁷⁸ there was a Romantic and/or mystical desire to merge with the writer in "order to grasp his individuality directly."⁷⁹ In the practice of hermeneutics, therefore, Schleiermacher wanted the interpreter to "go out of himself and transform himself into the author so that he can grasp in full immediacy the latter's mental process."⁸⁰ Here, the presumption was that in order to understand a text, a merger or melding of the minds was necessary. While it is true an interpreter needs to carefully read a given text(s) over and over again to interpret/understand it better and better, and should try to put himself in the shoes of the author as much as possible, the suggestion of a merging with the author's mind to fully understand him is not only an impossible standard, but is simply not true. It is an unnecessary addition into the field of hermeneutics that does not belong which is hopelessly and blatantly dependent on a false Romantic worldview rather than based on truth or fact. In addition to being a form of communication, language IS a form of mediation, and the reason why it is used is precisely because people cannot merge their minds with one another. The attempt to merge with another without mediation is to do away with language and the thought tied to it. It manages to do the exact opposite of what hermeneutics was/is set out to do in the first place.

As Schleiermacher became older, in addition to his Romanticism, he increasingly understood language itself through the lens of Kant's transcendental philosophy. Meaning that Schleiermacher began to see the construction of written language as a restrictive outside and/or empirical force that only gave the appearance of thought, rather than the true nature of thought itself. Language was thus not only subjective, but also inherently restrictive as well. In other words, the subjectivity of language itself necessarily subjectively interprets empirical realities along Kantian idealistic lines. In the same way a subjective knower cannot objectively know the objects of experience, but only subjectively interpret them, so too with regard to reading the biblical text itself. Schleiermacher thus "saw as his task the mediation between the innerness of transcendental speculative philosophy and the externalness of positive, empirical science. He presupposed a discrepancy between the ideal, inner essence and the outer appearance. Thus the text could not be seen as the direct manifestation of inner mental process but something given up to the empirical exigencies of language. Ultimately, then, the task of hermeneutics came to be that of transcending language in order to get at the inner process. It is still necessary to go through language, but

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

language is no longer seen as fully equivalent to thought.”⁸¹ In this way, Kant’s subjective idealism not only becomes transcendent over empirical and metaphysical realities, but now over language as well. At this juncture, Kant’s mastery of German philosophy and theology together with much of western thought is now virtually complete.

For all of Schleiermacher’s substantial interpretive acumen being the very father of hermeneutics, Karl Barth pointed out he had a penchant for over-interpreting biblical texts.⁸² Not surprisingly, 2 Corinthians 3:6 was Schleiermacher’s favorite verse where the apostle Paul famously writes, “who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”⁸³ Not only did Schleiermacher impregnate this verse with strong Anti-Semitic sentiments, but along Kantian idealistic lines, also interpreted it to mean autonomous freedom apart from any outside religious authority like Judaism or even from the biblical text itself, especially if it was from the Old Testament. Even though Barth criticized Schleiermacher for abusing Kant’s philosophy,⁸⁴ Schleiermacher still incorporated the master’s subjective idealism into his Romanticism and used it as his interpretive grid to interpret 2 Corinthians 3:6 together with many other biblical texts so he could transcend them. Since Schleiermacher presumed the biblical text was externally and slavishly rooted in a particularistic and legalistic history, it needed to be transcended in order to promote his idealistic Romanticism about spiritual holism and oneness that was universally available to all without any borders, specificity, or restraints. Schleiermacher thus exchanged the eternal, transcendent, unchanging God of the Bible with an immanent god of this world by trying to make the transitory transcendent. He conflated humanity’s experience with nature and natural revelation to become a vehicle of universal salvation holistically, romantically, and idealistically understood. Conversely, he then deflated biblical revelation and/or theology to renounce its exclusivist soteriology that required faith in objective historical facts like the death and resurrection of Christ. Natural revelation was thus used to subvert biblical revelation, all the while using Christian language in the process to cull in the unsuspecting.

According to Schleiermacher, written texts, if not even language itself, “kills,” and thus must be transcended into “spirit” in order to obtain true Romantic freedom from externalism, legalism, empirical reason, and history. Schleiermacher even interpreted Jesus words to the Samaritan Woman about worshiping God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24) along similar lines.”⁸⁵ Schleiermacher accused stalwart biblicists like Ernst Hengstenberg (1802-69) of ‘clutching’ onto words as if their specificity was a truth claim that needed to be believed. In so doing, Schleiermacher complained biblicists rob words of their “multiplicity and vitality and comparative irrelevance, by clinging to it and asserting it, they freeze it into externality, into ‘doctrine,’ into ‘letter.’”⁸⁶ As such, according to Karl Barth, “Schleiermacher had no time for the ‘letter.’”⁸⁷ In fact, Schleiermacher went so far to preach that Christians get closer to Christ and become better Christians the more they “eliminate this power of the dead letter.”⁸⁸ Armed with such views, Schleiermacher essentially posits all biblicists as Old Testament legalists for taking too seriously the “letter” of God’s word.⁸⁹ Schleiermacher thus believed natural revelation, idealistically and subjectively understood through theological romanticism, was spiritual. On the other hand,

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 92-93.

⁸² Barth, p. 19

⁸³ The Old Testament Law itself is holy, just, and good (Romans 7:12). The Law is therefore not legalistic by itself. The Law not only defines the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20; 7:7), but also clearly taught the Hebrews to love God and their neighbors as themselves, which was fairly widely understood during the times of Jesus when He was on the earth. The problem with legalism is never because of the Law itself, but with the flesh, with fallen people and how they relate to God on the basis of the Law apart from God’s grace (Romans 3:20; 7:7-25).

⁸⁴ Barth, p. 213.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 46.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 45

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 46.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 240.

biblical revelation, as understood by biblicists, was relegated to legalism. This is a false and egregious characterization of the heresy of legalism, which is also warned of in many Old Testament passages (Psalm 40; Isaiah 1:11-15), let alone in the New Testament (Galatians 2-3; Colossians 2). Schleiermacher thus used his idealism and theological Romanticism to transcend the presumed dead letter of the written text of the Bible. In this way, rather than use the Bible to interpret natural revelation, Schleiermacher used his Romantic natural revelation to interpret the Bible, but then to jettison beyond the limitations of the written text. Schleiermacher's semi-secularization program proved to be even more insidious than Kant's Transcendental Idealism because of its basic religious character that captivated the theological halls of Germany all the way up until World War I.

Schleiermacher laid the groundwork for what later became known as German Theological Liberalism. Schleiermacher's emphasis on natural theology universally available to all pried German Christianity away from the exclusivism and/or the particularism of the Bible into an ostensibly more open, liberal, and progressive theology. While some of Schleiermacher's later followers will criticize him on certain points with different theological nuances and directions, the basic structure of using Kant's idealism together with a romanticized natural theology that debunked the historical revelation of the Bible as myth will become the unholy trinity that undergirded the movement until Karl Barth's revolt⁹⁰ in the early 1900's. Karl Barth underwent a spiritual nervous breakdown at the outbreak of World War I when he witnessed all of his liberal theological professors enthusiastically side with Kaiser Wilhelm II in Germany's declaration of war. In fact, Dr. Adolf Harnack (1851-1930), the quintessential theologian that constituted the climax of German theological liberalism,⁹¹ actually wrote the Kaiser's declaration of war speech in August of 1914. Many of Harnack's theological friends were very supportive of the war effort. Barth was shocked with incredulity as he came to the realization that German Theological Liberalism was not liberal, but in truth, very nationalistic.

Harnack presumed that all Germans had an "obligation to support and maintain the glorious legacy of German civilization, which rested on superior armed forces and a tradition of scholarly and artistic excellence. He believed that the war had been forced upon Germany and that Western Christian civilization was at stake in Germany's fate. He signed numerous public declarations that said it defiantly."⁹² Harnack went so far to sign a document declaring to all Protestants outside of the Second Reich denying any responsibility for the war as the world had conspired against Germany, "We are deeply convinced that we have to lay the blame on those who for a long time have woven the net of conspiracy against Germany and who have now thrown it on us in order to suffocate us."⁹³ On October 3, 1914, Harnack double-downed on what he considered to be the critical importance of showing support for the war effort by garnering further backing from almost 100 of his 'liberal' colleagues, theological and otherwise. It was proudly entitled the "Manifesto of Ninety Three German Intellectuals to the Civilized World." In this document, some of the most important prodigies of the Second Reich "denied that Germany caused the war, denied that Belgium was neutral when Germany invaded it, dismissed the militarism verses the culture argument, and fervently concluded: 'Believe us! Believe, that we shall carry on this war to the end as a people of culture to whom the legacy of a Goethe, a Beethoven, and a Kant is as holy as its own hearths and homes."⁹⁴ For well over 150 years, German philosophers and theologians were virtually mocking Christians for having faith in the miraculous history of the Bible, but toward the end of this misadventure, Harnack and his geniuses declare a holy war of faith in the name of Goethe, Beethoven, and Kant.

Barth called this day a very "black day" in which these "German intellectuals came out with a manifesto supporting the war policy of Kaiser William II and his counsellors, and among

⁹⁰ Dorrien, pp. 454-89.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 456.

⁹² Ibid., p. 332.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

them I found to my horror the names of nearly all my theological teachers whom up to then I religiously honored. Disillusioned by their conduct, I perceived that I should not be able any longer to accept their ethics and dogmatics, their biblical exegesis, their interpretation of history, that at least for me the theology of the 19th century had no future."⁹⁵ While German philosophy and theology had spent well over 150 years in dividing subject from object, subjectivity and objectivity, faith from history, natural theology from biblical theology, Barth witnessed its dissolution into the trenches of World War I. For Barth, German Theological Liberalism together with its progressive political socialism effectively died in the nationalistic bloodbath of the First World War – the most destructive war to date in all the annals of human history. This, was then followed up by World War II in which nationalism and socialism once again came together to generate an even bigger catastrophe that was virtually apocalyptic. That Barth was one of the few outspoken theological professors to stand up against the *Fuhrer* is testament to the fact that his repentance away from Theological Liberalism was well grounded. Barth smelled a rat, and that rat was Schleiermacher, and his ratline was his romanticized natural theology.

In truth, the very label, Theological Liberalism is somewhat of a misnomer. German theological liberalism should much better be understood as a deepening of Schleiermacher's Theological Romanticism. For all of Schleiermacher's presumed liberal sentiments for theological openness and progressivism, in reality, his Theological Romanticism otherwise betrayed his liberalism. German Romanticism imbibed deeply from nationalism and Anti-Semitic xenophobia that irrationally blamed rationalism and the Jews for corrupting their indigenous natural way of life with alien values subversive to both the German *volk* (people's racial community indigenous to the soil of the homeland) and its landscape. Romanticism laid the groundwork for what was later called the *volkisch* movement that glorified pan-Germanism, Anti-Semitism, and nature mysticism that found a sizable representation in the Nazi Party, particularly in the early to mid 1930's. It was this indigenous tribalism at the very roots of German Romanticism that betrayed Schleiermacher's liberal theology, something which afterwards manifested itself time and time again, especially as Theological Liberalism invested much scholarship in the rabid attempt to de-Judaize the New Testament. They foolishly believed it was the Jewish historical particularism and exclusivism that was keeping Christianity from becoming liberal, progressive, and universal.

Thus, the historical attacks against the Bible had a strong Anti-Semitic ring to them. Schleiermacher himself characterized the institutional Protestant Church of his day as an antiquated form of Judaism too attached to the dead historical letter of the Bible,⁹⁶ which, of course, upset his overall aesthetic religious views with the vulgarities of history that cannot be beautified or glossed over with Romanticism. Even worse, since Kantian Idealism and Romanticism cross-pollinated one another, theologically Romantic Anti-Semitism was further bolstered by Kant's idealistic Anti-Semitism. Kant too wanted to de-Judaize German Christian civilization by euthanizing "Jewishness" in order to keep the fires of the Enlightenment blazing. "On this theme, Kant had a large legacy, legitimizing a de-Judaized Christianity that Schleiermacher, the early Hegel, Harnack, and Hermann recycled, to mention only major liberal religious thinkers."⁹⁷ In a word, the history of the Bible starring the Jews upset the aesthetic idealism of both German philosophy and religiosity.

Following the First World War, Harnack said old Judaism was a relic of the past that needs to be abandoned for modern Christianity to prosper in the 20th century. Those who held onto the Old Testament were having a paralyzing effect on the progress of religion and the church.⁹⁸ Harnack went so far to say that the Hebrew Old Testament was not part of Christian Scripture.⁹⁹ Such statements along with many others were then later used by Nazi Christians.¹⁰⁰ The final

⁹⁵ Barth, *God, Grace, and the Gospel*, p. 58.

⁹⁶ Gerdmar, p. 63.

⁹⁷ Dorrien, p. 549.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

gravestones of this 'liberal' de-Judaization of the New Testament and Christianity came with the likes of Gerhard Kittel (1888-1948) and Walter Grundmann (1906-1976), both of whom were Nazi Party members. Kittel was the editor of the magnum opus *Theological Dictionary of the Greek New Testament* (TDNT). Grundmann worked side by side with Kittel on this monumental project together with many other works. Grundmann joined the Nazi Party as early as 1930, and was the academic director of the Eisenach Institute, which was a major driving force behind de-Judaizing German church life.¹⁰¹ In 1936, Grundmann essentially became a professor of *volkisch* theology at the University of Jena. As New Testament professor there, Grundmann struck "Hebrew from the curriculum, arguing that the early church had read the Greek Old Testament, not the Hebrew one."¹⁰² Kittel himself went so far to teach that Jesus was "non-Jewish or anti-Jewish in His preaching,"¹⁰³ and the New Testament itself was an anti-Semitic document.

Shockingly, Kittel characterized Esther from the Old Testament as a book that promoted a false world Jewry bent on international power that artificially demanded the conversion of many Gentile proselytes – which invariably led to racial mixing.¹⁰⁴ As such, Kittel did not believe the Jews were a race, but a racial mixture, which is why their very existence was such a threat to society. Kittel thus held post-exilic Judaism was a corrupted form of Jewry at complete odds with its earlier foundations that rooted the Hebrew tradition in the blood and soil of the promised-land of Israel where racial mixing was forbidden. Such views led Kittel to mine the book of Ezra in particular for modern day application of biblical principles since the scribe forbade interracial marriage of the exiles after they returned from Babylon. While much of the Old Testament was taken less seriously, Ezra was a book that Kittel could believe in, "Eliminating mixed blood and intermarriage is sound – the Jews themselves did this."¹⁰⁵ After Nazi biologist Ernst Lehmann read Kittel's Old Testament historical summary of the Jewish racial problem that allegedly had been threatening world order with its racial mixing since the exile, he concluded, "When the Jewish problem is biologically substantiated in such an unequivocal way as in the following explanation by the theologian Kittel, the biologist can learn something from theologians."¹⁰⁶ At the time, Lehmann was the Academic Dean of Tübingen, where Kittel was also professor. Here the proximity of Social Darwinian biological Anti-Semitism inherited from German Romanticism crossed paths with theological Romanticism under the guise of theological 'liberalism.'

While some scholars have more recently tried to portray Kittel and Grundmann as conservative theologians, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* presumes the liberal fantasy of Julius Wellhausen's (1844-1918) JEPD theory that foisted upon the entire Old Testament 'historical' evolutionary views completely alien to the text itself. Kittel was a New Testament professor at Tübingen University for many years that had been the very hotbed of radical historical criticism that F.C. Baur initiated that was picked up, deepened, and developed throughout the entire theological apparatus of German liberalism up until the First World War. While Barth's revolt and the rise of Neo-Orthodoxy might have re-established some conservative influences back into German Christianity between the first and second world wars, very few conservative theologians would even say Barth was theologically conservative because he became so tied up in Theological Existentialism, which is perhaps only marginally better than Theological Romanticism. Barth himself accepted the 'scientific' results of German higher criticism that attempted to deconstruct the history of the entire Bible through a modern evolutionary grid. The flashpoint between liberal and conservative theologians during the late 1800's and early 1900's was essentially over this very issue. Kittel purposely disassociated himself from J.B. Lightfoot's (1828-

¹⁰¹ Gerdmar, pp. 536-38.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 535.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 498.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 485.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 484.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

89) Christian apologetic writings coming out of England that sharply opposed Tubingen's higher criticism.¹⁰⁷

Even Grundmann presumed German higher critical theories, but he also became deeply inspired by Rudolf Bultmann's (1884-1976) demythological program of the New Testament during the Second World War.¹⁰⁸ Like so many German theologians before him, Bultmann's 'liberalism' demythologized the Bible so that it would not have to be accepted at face value – an embarrassment to the modern mindset. Through Bultmann's demythological approach, the ancient text of the New Testament could be rescued from the great stress brought against it through science and modern historiography, and thus find 'existential' relevancy once again in the modern world. Yet, it must be pointed out that once Bultmann demythologized the historical Jesus, His Jewishness became irrelevant. No wonder Grundmann found Bultmann's demythologizing program so theologically insightful.

Schleiermacher's anti-Judaism thus cast a long dark shadow over the entire history of German Theological Liberalism. F.C Baur quipped that none "since Marcion (85-160) had shown so much antipathy towards Judaism as Schleiermacher,"¹⁰⁹ a spiritual legacy which Harnack himself managed to hand off to a Nazified Christianity. As far as Schleiermacher was concerned, the more Jewish the biblical text, the less valuable it was, and that Judaism had no connection to Christianity.¹¹⁰ Schleiermacher held that the early Christian community's belief in a coming earthly Messianic Kingdom was a childish form of religion, the very last "fruits of Judaism."¹¹¹ Schleiermacher especially hated the historical foundations of the Bible precisely because they were Jewish. He held that "the historical and particular had little value. What Schleiermacher considered important in Christianity is neither the historical nor the teaching of Jesus, but the fact that Christianity was an eternal religion that is the model for eternal humanity."¹¹² Closely related, Schleiermacher alleged that Judaism was merely an antiquated bloodthirsty "religion of punishment and recompense, instead of being a religion that challenges and educates people."¹¹³ He considered Judaism to be a dead historical religion with no future. In the final analysis, Schleiermacher's de-historicization of the biblical text went hand in hand with his Anti-Judaism, a feature that played no small role in the growing historical criticism of the Bible throughout the 19th century. The whole point was to de-Judaize the Bible away from what German Bible scholars considered to be backward, particularistic, legalistic, judgmental, and heteronomous in contrast to that which they deemed to be progressive, scientific, open-minded, autonomous, and free.

While Schleiermacher himself was not racist, and had some very close Jewish friends,¹¹⁴ his real friends were still the fellow Romantics that he ministered¹¹⁵ to throughout his life. More to the point, those Jews who were his friends were the enlightened ones who had given up their Judaistic backgrounds. Schleiermacher suggested that the Jews who were willing to renounce radical observance of the Law and – especially – Messianic expectation, should create a confession of their own, on par with the Christian Church. In other words, Schleiermacher wanted to favor only those Jews who fitted his own ideal picture of religious expression.¹¹⁶ Yet at the same time, Schleiermacher was irritable toward enlightened Jews who did not appreciate Christianity. Neither did he care for what he called their "Chaldean view of beauty and wisdom" that was contrary to the "European spirit."¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 426.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 543.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 64.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 66.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 71-72.

¹¹⁵ See *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers* by Friedrich Schleiermacher.

¹¹⁶ Gerdmar, p. 71.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 72.

In spite of the liberalism of Schleiermacher's Christian universalism, he was a strong patriot in the classic spirit of German Romanticism and nationalism, particularly in the face of Napoleon. While Schleiermacher was an original supporter of the French Revolution, the invasion of Napoleon was quite another matter. Indeed, as the "troops fought on the battlefield, so Schleiermacher fought in the pulpit, although interestingly he was also trained in the local militia."¹¹⁸ With no small irony, while Schleiermacher denied ancient Jews their particularism, it was quite acceptable for modern Germans to possess their own in the grand scheme of things. Schleiermacher held that the "borders and destiny of the nations were rooted in God's will and creation; each people had been given its calling on earth and its specific spirit, whereby its specific glory would be attained. In political terms, this meant a theological legitimation of the idea of Germany as a nation with a God-given calling, where nationality was linked to the order of creation: only a person who is one with his nation can live as a citizen in God's kingdom."¹¹⁹

Schleiermacher's dialectic between nationalism and liberalism would characterize the entire history of what is otherwise known today as German Theological Liberalism up until its dissolution during the Great War under Adolf Harnack's watch. This was particularly true during the Second Reich (1871-1918) when Albrecht Ritschl's (1822-89) social gospel of Theological Liberalism dominated Germany in the late 1800's up until the time of the war. Ritschl's Protestant social gospel not only became very influential, but it was also inextricably tied up with the nationalistic project that established the Second Reich. While Ritschl's school of Theological Liberalism was opposed to the idea of a state church controlled by conservative confessionism, it dreamed of a national Protestant culture dominated by Christian ethics¹²⁰ along Kantian idealistic lines that was much more favored because of its secular character. Many believed that liberal Protestantism's social gospel had surpassed the ecclesiastical stage of Christianity's previous history to now enter to its ethical-political spiritual age functioning now as a spiritual power in the German nation.¹²¹

However, the Dominionism of Ritschl's social gospel that pushed for the Kingdom of God this side of the grave invariably left the Jews behind as second class citizens. Protestant liberalism was thus not very liberal toward the Jews, but very nationalistic toward them instead. In fact, the placement of the Jews "was basically the same in the liberal as in the confessional or Catholic vision. For Jews, a Christian state meant relinquishing their religion if they wanted to be assimilated or living as second class citizens, for example, not being admitted to public posts, army training or the field of education."¹²² There was thus no improvement or progress for the Jews. Indeed, "national liberalism required assimilation. From early on liberal Christianity had been a twin to this national liberal project, dreaming of a united Germany where particularistic groups had been assimilated into the body of the people. The refusal of even liberal Jewish groups to assimilate was a thorn in the flesh to liberal Christianity."¹²³ Ritschl and other leading liberal Protestants opposed what they considered to be Jewish segregation, backward legalism, and restrictive ceremonialism as they hindered their freedoms in a variety of ways. Liberal Protestantism in Germany thus became "an oppressive force against Judaism in the last decades of the 19th century, at the same time as anti-Semitism flourished and Jewish identity was placed within narrow limits."¹²⁴

In reality, the Second Reich was an Anti-Semitic state under the spiritual power of liberal Protestantism where Romanticism, nationalism and socialism all mixed together through the propagation of the social gospel. The great carnage of World War I, however, devastated the optimism of Protestant liberalism that it never recovered from during the post war years as it

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 133-34.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 134.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 135.

began to sink into decline. When nationalism and socialism once again came together some 15 years later, Germany was much more secular and pagan the second time around. The pagan underpinnings of Schleiermacher's natural theology dressed up in Theological Romanticism became more pronounced as secular Protestantism was replaced with Existentialism and political mysticism. The symbol of the cross was replaced with the swastika,¹²⁵ and the mixture of secularity and paganism converted Anti-Semitism into a much more murderous enterprise than anyone could have previously envisaged. German Theological Liberalism did not progress or expand the Protestant Reformation, but managed to put it in reverse as true Romanticism invariably does. As it undermined faith in the miraculous testimony of the Scriptures, it left behind a vast spiritual wasteland after it collapsed in the great tumults of World War I.

Hegel's Philosophy of History & German Higher Biblical Criticism

In the early 1800's, Schleiermacher helped establish the University of Berlin. When the university was opened in 1810, Schleiermacher was the main theology professor. As the first rector and first dean of the university, Schleiermacher helped organize its theological faculty. Through his fellow Romantic friends, particularly Schelling, Schleiermacher became acquainted with Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). After Schelling had taken Hegel under his wing, his writing career began to grow however slowly it may have started out. Schleiermacher saw Hegel's potential and so helped bring him on board as Berlin University's philosophy chair to fill in the vacancy left behind by Idealist philosopher Fichte. Hegel had written a book called *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1806) that was beginning to garner some attention from German academia. Hegel taught at Berlin University for 12 years between 1818-30 before his death in 1831. By combining Romanticism and Idealism with a new field of thought called Historicism – a term coined by Romantic philosopher and friend of both Schleiermacher and Hegel, Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel – Hegel became the most dominant philosopher of the 1800's whose thought continues to reverberate throughout the entire West even today. Protagonists and antagonists of his philosophy alike have not been able to free themselves from Hegel's brilliance. The genius of Hegel's thought was its all-encompassing unity that not only brought Idealism, Romanticism, and Historicism together, but also aligned it with a secularized form of Judeo-Christian eschatology.

Based on allegedly 'scientific' historical research, Historicism emphasizes that people are children of their own times and must be understood as such. This not only means that any given historical context must be rigorously investigated before one can truly understand the past, but it also suggests that man is primarily an historical being rather than viewed as an eternal being made in God's image. While Historicism thus tries to present itself as historically objective, the very fact it prejudices past generations of people are children of their own times still nonetheless presumptuously assumes the idea of progress and the relativity of truth since truth is considered relative to one's own time. Historicism is thus a philosophy of history no matter how much it tries to assert otherwise. Furthermore, latent within the idea of Historicism is also a secular form of eschatology since the progress of history is presumed along both linear and teleological lines. It was this latent eschatology within the concept of Historicism that Hegel not only noticed, but also brought out and pushed it to its limits with his own philosophy of history that is often characterized as Absolute Idealism.¹²⁶ Hegel found an eschatological end game for Idealism,

¹²⁵ See *Hitler's Cross* by Erwin Lutzer.

¹²⁶ The Encyclopedia Britannica defines Hegel's Absolute Idealism in this way, "Idealism for Hegel meant that the finite world is a reflection of mind, which alone is truly real. He held that limited being (that which comes to be and passes away) presupposes infinite unlimited being, within which the finite is a dependent element. In this view, truth becomes the relationship of harmony or coherence between thoughts, rather than a correspondence between thoughts and external realities. As one proceeds from the confusing world of sense experience to the more complex and coherent categories of science, the Absolute Idea, of which all other abstract ideas are merely a part, is approached. Hegel also held that this increasing clarity is evident in the fact that later philosophy presupposes and advances from earlier philosophy, ultimately approaching that to which all things are related and which is nevertheless self-contained—i.e., the Absolute Idea."

Romanticism, and Historicism by propounding a forward-looking idealistic future that was no longer viewed as otherworldly or transcendent.

Hegel took Kant's transcendental Idealism and blended it with Romanticism so that subjective reason was holistically fused with not only all of life, but all of history as well. In this way, Hegel did away with Kant's subject-object distinction by alleging that the rational was real and the real was rational in a holistic synthesis of rationalism and empiricism. "Hegel attempted to translate the immediacy of the empirical into the mediacy of the spiritual. He did so by establishing an identity of object and subject, of immanence and transcendence"¹²⁷ into a semi-pantheistic¹²⁸ view of evolutionary history. Hegel accomplished this great feat by identifying Kant's unknowable thing in and of itself as the 'Spirit' of evolutionary pantheism that immanently works behind the scenes in all world historical peoples throughout the progress of history that the doctrine of Historicism unveiled. In other words, Hegelian Spirit was not the transcendent God of the universe who created a real world and placed man within His order of creation to learn about and experience His glory, but an immanent 'Spirit' of this world who unfolds or manifests himself within history so that history itself becomes transcendent without any necessary outside divine interference. In Hegel's mind, man, nature, and history is the 'Spirit' and the 'Spirit' is man, nature, and history. In this way, reality itself is 'Spirit' and 'Spirit' is reality so that Hegel's system can easily be characterized as Absolute Idealism, but with a strong eschatological bent. Hegel thus got around Kant's unknowable thing in and of itself by postulating a progressive incarnation of the 'Spirit' within history that has now manifested what the thing in and of itself actually is, i.e., a semi-pantheistic world 'Spirit' of human advancement.

Even though Hegel loved philosophy, he was first trained as a theologian at Tubingen University that will later become world famous after his death under F.C. Baur's leadership. It was Baur who took Hegel's philosophy of history together with the Romanticism of both Schleiermacher and Schelling to lay the foundation stones of what is otherwise known today as higher biblical criticism. Hegel's religious philosophy of history came about because he closely connected his philosophy with religion, "Philosophy became a kind of theology for Hegel because he saw all reality as an expression of the Absolute - who is God. All that exists is the expression of the divine mind."¹²⁹ Yet, Hegel's intention was to progressively replace religion with philosophy. As such, on the one hand, Hegel "spoke of his system as one in which religion and philosophy have at last been reconciled, but on the other hand, he claimed to have eliminated religion in favor of philosophy."¹³⁰ It must also be pointed out that Hegel accomplished this primarily by spiritualizing the secular rather than secularizing the spiritual. While Kant's Idealism secularized the spiritual, Hegel's philosophy of history spiritualized the secular by destroying the empirical¹³¹ opposition to 'Spirit' so that the problem between subject and object disappeared into a holistic synthesis of progressive idealism. Karl Marx, while acknowledging the philosopher's genius, famously said he had to place Hegel's philosophy on its head by removing the spiritual and focusing entirely on the secular. Hegel's philosophy of history thus had an incredible impact even on western political and social sciences, let alone with regard to philosophy and religion.

What Hegel did was to replace divine providence in history with the presumption of human spiritual progress being the manifestation of the immanent 'Spirit' working through history in the world. Biblically speaking, divine providence is distinct from the written revelation of the Bible where God silently works behind the scenes in both nature and in history to draw all men to Himself through the sovereign supervision of all circumstances. Biblically speaking, such providential supervision on the part of God is understood only very generally as the apostle Paul

¹²⁷ Mack, p. 45.

¹²⁸ Hegel's philosophical theology was semi-pantheistic. Hegel criticized Spinoza's (1632-1677) pantheism and settled for a synthesis between God's transcendence and immanence that is difficult to categorize. While Spinoza's pantheism was nature based, Hegel's semi-pantheism was historically, politically and socially based.

¹²⁹ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 502.

¹³⁰ Gruner, *Philosophies of History*, p. 58.

¹³¹ Mack, p. 47

makes so clear in his famous Mars Hill speech given in Athens (Acts 17:24-28). For the most part, divine providence belongs to God's inscrutable sovereign will that is largely beyond human knowledge (Proverbs 15:3; 16:1-11), even though believers are well aware that He is actively involved in all things (Psalm 139; Matthew 6:25-34; Hebrews 1:3). Yet as Hegel left behind the inscrutable transcendence of the biblical God, he filled providential history with many precise details obtained from his own philosophy of history. For Hegel, "the ultimate design of the world must be perceived. And if theology fails to explain these processes, then philosophy has to vindicate the Christian religion by demonstrating God's execution of His purpose in history."¹³² Hegel did this by speaking about the "cunning of reason" that worked behind the scenes in order to bring to fruition the Spirit's immanent plans for the world to help usher in God's kingdom on the earth this side of the grave. In spite of the passions of men, the "cunning of reason" is used by the immanent Spirit to bring about divine goals and accomplishments in history that were not intended. As such, men "act historically by being acted upon by the power and cunning of reason, which is to Hegel a rational expression for divine providence: thus the motives, passions, and interests in history are indeed what they appeared to be at first glance, namely, the human stuff of it, but within the framework of a transcending purpose, promoting an end which was no part of conscious intentions."¹³³ One of the great problems of Historicism is how to account for progress, i.e., transcending the past, if men are merely historical beings who are children of their own times. Hegel's semi-panteism of Absolute Idealism with heavy doses of secular eschatology was propounded to help resolve this dilemma.

The idea of human spiritual progress heading toward a consummate goal is at the heart of Hegel's philosophy of history as the cunning of the 'Spirit's' reason teleologically guides man toward an eschatological end that he has been largely unaware of - until the advent of Hegel's philosophy of history. More to the point, since man is spiritually progressing through the cunning of reason, it goes without saying that Christianity as a religion has also been historicized, surpassed and superseded. Just as the New Testament surpassed the Old Testament, so Hegel's philosophy of history has now superseded Christianity. For Hegel, "even though Christianity had grasped the truth, it had grasped it in an imperfect manner, namely in images and symbols and stories, rather than in philosophical concepts."¹³⁴ In other words, "religion for Hegel is simply an imaginative and pictorial way of representing philosophical truth"¹³⁵ so that the evolution from religion to philosophy is part and parcel of the Spirit's use of the "cunning of reason" to transform religious language into true conceptual and/or synthetic knowledge. In this way, Christianity evolves into a superior or higher philosophical synthesis as the Spirit progresses from religion to philosophy. Religious mysteries are thus "elevated to the level of reason, and thus cease to be mysteries." As such, traditional Christianity thus has no future in Hegel's system, but it will live on in philosophical form.¹³⁶ This, of course, means that "Hegel wanted to get rid of religion."¹³⁷

The providential and teleological outworking of God in man throughout history was the key to Hegel's philosophical system. In the final analysis, the entire history of philosophy becomes an evolutionary development of truth. Hegel called this outworking of God in man the dialectic so that what Hegel calls 'God' or 'Spirit' or 'Reason' progresses dialectically in man throughout history through the synthesizing of oppositions - whether those oppositions be religious, social, political, economic, artistic, or even warring states against each other. The advancement of the 'Spirit' is thus secured by historically synthesizing a thesis and its antithesis that initially lock horns only to produce a higher state of synthesis at the final end of the struggle. For Hegel, "to say that something develops dialectically is saying that it necessarily falls out with itself and releases its own opposite from itself so as to return to itself again, not by becoming the same as it had been

¹³² Lowith, *Meaning in History*, p. 55.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹³⁴ Gruner, p. 58.

¹³⁵ *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 457.

¹³⁶ Gruner, p. 58.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

originally, but by realizing its unity on a higher level such that it is reconciled with its opposite; it then falls out with itself once more and so on."¹³⁸ As such, the dialectical movements of world history are manifestations of the Spirit's providential direction. "Through divine action contradiction between antithetical movements or cultures are repeatedly resolved into a higher synthesis."¹³⁹ In short, "Hegel thought of history itself as a forum in which the contradictions and inadequacies of finite thought and action are exposed allowing the infinite mind of the Absolute to reach higher levels of cultural and spiritual expression."¹⁴⁰ Put in another way, true knowledge of ultimate reality is "the product of the Spirit which, in a dynamic development, reconciles the self-contradictions that permeate every aspect of human experience."¹⁴¹

Hegel's Spirit was thus certainly not the God of the Bible, "When Hegel spoke of God, he meant God in man and in the final analysis, he really meant man alone."¹⁴² In his semi-pantheistic Romantic Idealism of an all-encompassing Monism, Hegel denied the Creator-creature distinction of the God of the Bible, and in so doing, precluded His immutability and transcendence. Hegel rejected static theological ideas about God as being unreal and illusory. Hegel instead viewed God as progressing through the history of man so that He perfects Himself through the historical process. "For in Hegel's teaching it is man in whom God becomes himself."¹⁴³ This, of course, greatly diminishes the God of the Bible, and elevates man at the same time. "If his philosophy, as he said, was a kind of self-worship, it was self-worship, the worship of man by man."¹⁴⁴ Hegel is thus at the very heart of the progressive mindset so characteristic of the modern age, "Man's self-congratulation, self-admiration, and self-glorification belong to the modern consciousness, and the case of Hegel must count as a prime example."¹⁴⁵ In a word, Hegel's philosophy of history is the worship of man's self-causing evolution. In effect, what Hegel did was to conflate natural revelation and/or theology to surpass biblical revelation and/or theology through this own modernized philosophical history. As such, Hegel's philosophy history was a curious mixture of the both the sacred and the profane which degraded sacred history to the level of secular history and exalted secular history to the status of the sacred.¹⁴⁶

Closely connected, Hegel's semi-pantheism had enormous significance with regard to the Incarnation of Christ. The incarnation is not so much that Eternal God became human flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ the Messiah, but that God or Spirit incarnates itself in the world in such a way that it progressively changes with the world and perfects itself through the dialectical process as the very attributes of God are historically worked out in man.¹⁴⁷ In Hegel's system, the Incarnation of Christ is therefore not a one-time historical event that has eternal repercussions as the transcendent immutable God breaks into human history to bridge the chasm between God's holiness and man's sinfulness, but that God constantly incarnates Himself throughout history manifesting a greater and greater philosophy along with it. In other words, as far as Hegel was concerned, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ as portrayed in the Bible makes God too limited to a particular setting.¹⁴⁸ A more general philosophical religion rooted in universal history was the key to Hegel's incarnation of God in man through time that went beyond the historical limits prescribed by the Bible. Relative to the progressive revelation of God in human history, "the figure of Christ thus had no special significance for Hegel; it only marked the point at which the process had become manifest for the first time."¹⁴⁹

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

¹³⁹ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 502.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 457.

¹⁴² Gruner, p. 59.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Lowith, *Meaning in History*, p. 59.

¹⁴⁷ Gruner, p. 59.

¹⁴⁸ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 502.

¹⁴⁹ Gruner, p. 59.

In spite of the progressive character of Hegel's thought, he was not a relativist. Hegel did believe in a final truth, one that was rapidly coming upon the world scene particularly through his own philosophy of history as the World Spirit was entering into its final phase of progressive development. Hegel thought he had managed to reconcile religion and philosophy that was an inherent sign of the eschaton. Idealistically understood through subjective thought alone, Hegel believed his philosophy as a whole represented a similar, if not superior, reconciliation that rivalled the incarnation of God in Christ with a final comprehended reconciliation of "philosophical theology. It seemed to Hegel that the 'peace of God' was brought about in a rational way through this reconciliation of philosophy with religion."¹⁵⁰ Hegel thus presumed his great "attempt to translate theology into philosophy" was to "realize the Kingdom of God in terms of the world's real history."¹⁵¹ While many may presume Hegel's philosophy of history to be audacious, it must be granted that one of the reasons why he pushed his dialectical philosophy of history was to discourage those who arrogantly presume their fragmented egos and blinded obscurantism¹⁵² is the whole truth and nothing but the truth (Proverbs 8:17). While Hegel did strongly argue that all truth was one, this was not understood dogmatically like an exclusivist religion or differing philosophical position, but holistically understood from a broad Romantic perspective. "The 'one philosophy' to which Hegel refers is not his own as distinct from others, but rather the whole of philosophic thought, which constitutes a many-faceted though still unitary truth. Indeed perhaps one of Hegel's most significant contributions to philosophy was his demonstration that it could be regarded as a whole instead of a disconnected series of contradictory opinions."¹⁵³

Yet such an Idealistic Romantic picture of truth cannot but willfully confuse sacred and secular history that in the end promotes the secular over the sacred. As such, Hegel's philosophy of history played no small role in the development of higher biblical criticism that was launched by Ferdinand Christian Baur at Tubingen University. Sadly and deeply ironic, what Hegel borrows from the biblical Judeo-Christian worldview, i.e., its sacred history and eschatology, was used against it. In particular, Hegel's eschatological secular philosophy of historical progressivism will in fact become confused with the real history of the Bible under Baur's so-called higher criticism of the New Testament. Not only did Baur hold that ancient authors of Scripture were essentially immature religionists who did not have genuine objective standards of Enlightenment historiography, he will also borrow much from Hegel's dialectical view of progressive history to reconstruct the history of the entire New Testament. In short, the biblical writers did not have an up-to-date modern historical consciousness, and so lacked the necessary enlightened or scientific acumen to be considered reliable in their historical affirmations. Their theology and superstitious belief in miracles drove their historical testimonies so much that they cannot be taken at face value, but must be vetted under the scientific lens of Enlightenment historiography. Beyond that, the history of the New Testament must also be reconstructed and Hegel's philosophy of history was the very tool that was used to reconstruct what actually happened during the time of the ancient church.

While there is a controversy over how Hegelian was Baur, this particular scholarly dispute is not as critical as it may seem at first glance. Hegel himself was a mishmash of classical philosophy, theology, Kantian Idealism, Romanticism, and Historicism. Hegel's holistic philosophy is actually very hard to pin down - which was the primary thrust of his entire outlook. As such, though Hegel's philosophy is called Absolute Idealism, his dialectics and concern with reconciling opposites was found in the writings of both Schelling and Schleiermacher. While Baur was a fan of both Schleiermacher and Hegel, he did not accept them uncritically. Yet, there is no question that Baur took Hegel's philosophy of history and applied his historical triad of thesis-

¹⁵⁰ Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, p. 48.

¹⁵¹ Lowith, *Meaning in History*, p. 58

¹⁵² Hinchman, Lewis. *Hegel's Critique of the Enlightenment*, p. x.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

antithesis-synthesis to reconstruct the history of the early church. While earlier bible critics were content with simply being skeptical of the biblical record in general, particularly with regard to miraculous history, Baur will not only share their skepticism, but will attempt to reconstruct that history along Hegelian lines. This was different, new, and radical, and it turned Tübingen University into a major international school of biblical criticism.

Baur was born in 1792 and died in 1860. He grew up in the rustic town of Blaubeuren¹⁵⁴ in the beautifully romantic hilly area known as the Swabian Alb not far from the Black Forest. Baur was a bookworm even in his youth. He went to Blaubeuren Seminary at a young age, a Lutheran school that had been a monastery in the Middle Ages. After seminary, Baur became a student of Tübingen University that was in the same general area, and undoubtedly would have been very familiar with the Romantic philosopher Schelling¹⁵⁵ since his father was the Church superintendent of Maulbronn that was also in the Swabian Alb area. In fact, both Schelling and Hegel were students in Tübingen in the late 1700's. When Baur was at Tübingen, the philosophies of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling dominated the academic landscape.¹⁵⁶ At the same time, the grandson of the renowned bible scholar Johann Albrecht Bengel, Ernst Gottlieb Bengel, was one of the primary theological professors at Tübingen. While Ernst's grandfather before him had staunchly defended "the authority of the Bible through historical investigation and reasoned argument,"¹⁵⁷ such an emphasis was far less pronounced in the grandson's teaching. Bengel the younger "portrayed Jesus as a great ethical teacher, 'the highest educator of humanity,' the supernatural element in Jesus's life and work being discreetly pushed into the background. Not that any of the old traditional doctrines were explicitly denied; but Jesus was now regarded as divine in consequence of the divine truths which he taught; his divinity was ascribed to him rather than being inherent in his Person."¹⁵⁸

It was Bengel the younger who had the most influence over Baur at Tübingen. Such influences were eventually carried over into his teaching career that began at Blaubeuren Seminary before he later replaced Bengel the younger at Tübingen University after he died in 1826. During the 1820's, Baur was heavily influenced by Schleiermacher's theology as well, although he made his own independent adaptations to his growing theological worldview. Like Schleiermacher before him, Baur conflated natural revelation at the expense of biblical revelation and used natural theology to interpret biblical theology. In fact, Baur essentially understood natural revelation as a universal religious consciousness that all people have throughout history, "Baur viewed the essence of every religion as lying in the higher religious consciousness, in the consciousness of the higher supra-sensual sphere, in the feeling of absolute dependence upon a power existing outside of natural and sensual perception. This feeling of dependence has its seat in the religious consciousness and finds its expression in the various myths and legends of the many national cultures. Revelation is not to be thought of as supernatural communication from an other-worldly source, but is manifested in history as a general revelation from God, a divine process of education for mankind."¹⁵⁹ Baur thus held very similar theological views to both Schleiermacher and Hegel in spite of some nuances and differences between them all. There was also considerable controversy and deliberation over Baur's semi-pantheistic mysticism which held up his appointment at Tübingen for several months.¹⁶⁰

After Hegel's death in 1830, Baur became ever more skeptical that the Bible was inspired by God, that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, or that He was even resurrected. Closely related, Baur had increasing doubts concerning the true origins of Christianity that had been passed down to modern times since its inception. Such doubts, along with his increasing interest in Hegel

¹⁵⁴ Harris, p. 13.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 16-17.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 20-22.

throughout the 1830's, coalesced into what became known as higher criticism. With no small thanks to one of Baur's prized students from his teaching days at Blaubeuren Seminary, David Strauss (1808-74), Baur became more interested in Hegel's dialectical philosophical theology. Baur identified himself a Hegelian as early as 1833¹⁶¹ and mastered his philosophical theology perhaps more than any scholar before or since.

After leaving Blaubeuren Seminary, Strauss went onto Berlin University to learn from Hegel himself. Strauss became a full blown Hegelian, and then wrote a bombshell book entitled *The Life of Christ Critically Examined* that rocked the theological world of Germany in 1835. In this book, Strauss rejected the miraculous history of the Gospels and considered them to be a historical legend or myth that was fashioned, perhaps inadvertently so, by second century authors far removed from the Life of Christ. His book led to such an incredible firestorm that was so controversial even Baur himself had to distance himself from his former student - though he held similar views.¹⁶² When pressed, Strauss claimed his book was not written to destroy Christianity precisely because true religion, along Kantian Idealistic lines, was based on ideas, not facts.

While Strauss used Hegelian natural theology to historically re-interpret the Gospels, Baur will use it to reconstruct the history of Acts and the New Testament epistles. Baur was particularly doubtful of Luke's authorship of the book of Acts, and believed there were bigger rifts in the early church than is generally understood - problems that were theologically glossed over, but now can be investigated properly along strict anti-supernatural historical lines that Hegel's philosophy of history helped establish. What Baur essentially did was to inflate the history of the early Catholic Church at the expense of apostolic history. The New Testament as written stands out in sharp relief from the historical background of the times. If it occurred in the way the New Testament reads at face value, it would indeed strongly suggest miraculous beginnings since such a record would be too far advanced compared to the rest of the Greco-Roman world. As such, since modern historiography has shown miracles are mythological, what really happened was that later religionists foisted upon the origins of Christianity legendary fables wrapped around a false miraculous history. In Baur's eyes, such undue conflation needs to be re-adjusted by a more critical historical investigation.

Using Semler as his starting point who was the first to drive a wedge between the theology of Peter and Paul, Baur further developed this hypothesis along Hegelian lines by saying that the early church had a thesis, which was a Jewish form of Christianity, that was then followed by its antithesis, which was a Gentile form of Christianity, that was finally synthesized into the early Catholic Church over the course of a few centuries. This Hegelian triad was encapsulated in Baur's book entitled, *Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ*, a viewpoint that Baur held unchanged throughout the remainder of his life.¹⁶³ Using primarily the Antioch incident recorded in Galatians 2 where Paul charged Peter and Barnabas with hypocrisy for caving into the pressures of the Judaizers, Baur exaggerated this historical incident as indicating a great theological conflict in the early church between what he called the Jewish Petrine party and the Gentile Pauline party. After all, Galatians 2:7-8 speaks of the gospel to the uncircumcised under Paul's ministry, and then the gospel to the circumcised under Peter's ministry.

As such, Baur held there was an early Jewish Christianity that was a pro-Mosaic Law form of Christianity represented by Peter and also by the book of Matthew. Baur considered Matthew as the first gospel written because of its unmistakable Jewish character. However, out of this Jewish Christianity grew its antithesis - the law free gospel of grace according to the apostle Paul. Baur considers that Paul's Greek anti-Jewish Christianity can readily be seen in Romans, Galatians, and in both 1-2 Corinthians. These were the only true Pauline epistles that Baur considered genuine. The rest of Paul's epistles were written much later during the times of the early Catholic Church, particularly the Pastoral Epistles that demonstrate church hierarchy. Baur believed that

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁶³ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 128-29.

the book of Acts, John's writings, and much of the rest of the New Testament was written at this time when a synthesis of Jewish-Greek Catholicism coalesced to bring Peter's and Paul's gospels together sometime in the middle of the second century A.D. Since the Jewish-Gentile split is not seen in much of the rest of the New Testament, Baur presumed it therefore must have been written later. This also meant that much of the New Testament was essentially a forgery in the sense they were not written by who they said they were. Such books were written by early Catholics instead of the apostles as they bridged the schism of Peter and Paul into a higher synthesis. As such, the World Spirit was moving forward in classic Hegelian fashion.

Needless to say, only an idealistic philosopher could come up with such a fantastic line of reasoning that is perhaps even more fantastic than believing in the miraculous history of the New Testament. Baur repudiated the miraculous history of the New Testament only to replace it with a secularized and Romantic form of mystical idealism all his own. Even Galatians 2 itself, which Baur considers to be genuinely written by the apostle Paul, resolves the alleged early split between Jewish and Greek Christianity. Rather than admit that his Hegelianism distorted the historical record of the New Testament, what he did was to throw out all the evidence that suggested otherwise. The remaining letters are thus regarded as late and inauthentic because they do not reflect such Hegelian tendencies. Shockingly, Hegelianism was so strong at the time that Baur's reconstruction of the New Testament was taken all too seriously by all too many. The orthodox Protestants who protested against such a philosophy of history were characterized as rigid anti-progressive legalists of some sort. While there is no question there were certainly problems in the early church, such troubles were not as drastic as Baur made them out to be. What Romantics often do is stress the antinomies and oppositions in life so they can then demote rationalism in favor of their own spiritual reconciliation program(s) along holistic lines that are presented in plausible secular forms so they do not look as mystical as they really are. In this way, the heteronomy of miraculous, yet rugged, biblical history was replaced with an aesthetic triad of idealistic beauty that mystically showed the progress of the World Spirit working in dialectical fashion.

Even though Baur's Hegelian blitzkrieg had spectacular rapid gains at the beginning, catching many in the theological world offguard, his legacy was not carried forward by the Ritschl's liberal school of theology that followed Tubingen's dominance in the mid 1800's. English and Scottish scholars, J.B. Lightfoot (1828-1889) and Sir William Ramsay (1851-1939) respectively, rolled back Baur's theory, even though few bothered to take note. Even today Baur's theory is bandied around by many. They are completely unaware that Baur's Hegelian fantasy concerning the origins of Christianity was refuted in rather short order by both of these very serious scholars.¹⁶⁴ While J.B. Lightfoot was/is one of the great historians in all of church history, Sir William Ramsay was an archaeologist who spent many years in Turkey investigating the historical background of the book of Acts. Ramsay was also a historian in his own right who wrote many historical books on the New Testament.

Sir William Ramsay actually studied at Tubingen and was initially convinced biblical higher criticism was true until hard and empirical historical evidence on the ground in Turkey caused him to repent of his earlier views. When Ramsay finished his incredible research, though he still remained skeptical of miracles, he concluded the New Testament was historically authentic, and that St. Luke was the greatest historian of the Greco-Roman period. One of the primary reasons Sir William Ramsay changed his views was precisely because St. Luke time and time again used first century names that had changed by the middle of the second century.

Earlier, Lightfoot was able to disprove Baur's theory by finally dating two books written by the early Christian writers Clement and Ignatius. Lightfoot was able to establish that Clement's

¹⁶⁴ "One of the curious features in German theology is that no ghost is ever laid. A century after his death Baur still walks abroad, and echoes of his ideas are found in all kinds of places. It is still not uncommon to hear references to the 'four undoubted Epistles of Paul' (Galatians, Romans, 1-2 Corinthians), a view which was first put forward by Baur. It is odd that the phrase should have had such a long life," p. 62 from *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986* by Stephen Neill and Tom Wright.

writings were written in the mid 90's and that Ignatius' writings were written around 110. Such dates turned out to be very significant because both Clement and Ignatius have strong allusions to almost the entire New Testament in their writings. Meaning that if Clement and Ignatius alluded to most of the New Testament around the turn of the first century A.D., then obviously, the New Testament must have been written before that time. Lightfoot's research on Clement and Ignatius thus confirmed that the New Testament was a first century document. Baur's theory thus fell like a house of cards, especially after Dr. Adolf Harnack acknowledged and corroborated Lightfoot's prodigious research on the topic.¹⁶⁵ Harnack also wrote a book in 1905 accepting Luke as the author of his gospel and the book of Acts.¹⁶⁶

In 1976, John A.T. Robinson then wrote a book entitled *Redating the New Testament* that was/is the final deathblow to radical New Testament historical criticism. Robinson rolled the New Testament even farther back than Lightfoot. Robinson strongly pointed out that much of the entire New Testament had to have been written before 70 A.D. – and the reason why is pretty simple, obvious, and hard to miss. Most New Testament authors wrote in such a way that they presumed the Jerusalem Temple was/is still standing. The Jerusalem Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. This means that most of the New Testament must have been largely written before 70 A.D. This, of course, brings the entire discussion back to square one before the so-called higher criticism even began, but rather than acknowledge the hidebound Bible believing Protestants were correct all along with regard to the historical authenticity of the New Testament, Robinson's work has been simply ignored ever since. Archaeologically speaking, Gospel fragments have also been found that go all the way back to the first century. A lot of ink was thus foolishly spilled attacking the historicity of the New Testament for some 250-300 years, but it was all for nothing with no progressive fruit to show. The historiography of the Enlightenment was wrong, and the German additions of Idealism, Romanticism, and Hegelianism only compounded this foolish enterprise by hiding it underneath layers of secular mysticism that were both progressivist and nationalist at the same time. The real fraud was/is not the New Testament, but the scholarly perpetrators of biblical minimalists who criticized the New Testament without warrant, most of whom were of German origin.

However, with the higher criticism of the New Testament being rolled back in the late 1800's, the German theologians and philosophers took up new positions – this time directed against the Old Testament starring Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). Wellhausen was a Lutheran Bible scholar who propounded the infamous JEPD documentary hypothesis in his book entitled *Prolegomena on the History of Israel* published in 1883.¹⁶⁷ Presuming that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch as such a feat would have been too far advanced for its time, Wellhausen postulated that it was not put together until its final form right after the Babylonian captivity around 500 B.C. Even though Genesis-Deuteronomy may look like a composite whole, it is in actuality a piecemeal of different Hebrew traditions and outlooks which eventually were synthetically woven together. Thus the first five books of Moses were really not written by Moses, but was a process of evolutionary development over a period of almost 1000 years. According to Keil and Delitzsch, this position was initially promulgated by Orientalist and Hebraist Georg Heinrich August Ewald (1803-75),¹⁶⁸ whose biblical criticism originated with his teacher Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827), the very founder of Old Testament higher criticism. Wellhausen was a student of Ewald, but he gave most of the credit to Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette (1780-1849) for the establishment of Old Testament higher criticism that his JEPD documentary hypothesis was built upon.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ For this fascinating discussion see *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, by Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, pp. 55-62.

¹⁶⁶ Neill & Wright, p. 62.

¹⁶⁷ The original work was entitled *The History of Israel* published in 1878.

¹⁶⁸ Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 1, p. 17.

¹⁶⁹ Gerdmar, p. 77.

Wellhausen theorized there were four different Hebrew traditions or strands, i.e., documents, that were finally synthesized together to create the Pentateuch right before the Babylonian exile. The names Wellhausen gave to these four documents were: J, which is the Jahvistic or Yahwistic document which emphasized God's name Jehovah or Yahweh that represents the earliest source going back to Solomon's reign; E, which was the so-called Elohist document written by a group of people or editors who emphasized God's name as Elohim came a bit later with the Northern Kingdom of Israel; P, which is what he called the Priestly document that codified the rituals and formalistic religion seen so prevalently in the book of Leviticus that was not completed until as late as 500 B.C., and then finally; D, which was the Deuteronomistic document or primarily the book of Deuteronomy, which was compiled during Josiah's reign immediately before the Babylonian exile (1 Kings 22:1-20) in 620 B.C.

Even though the entire Old Testament already shows how the Hebrews developed historically from the times of the Patriarchs to their slavery in Egypt followed by the Exodus and the Conquest, and then onto the historical periods of the Judges, the united and divided kingdom stages respectively before bottoming out in the Babylonian Exile,¹⁷⁰ this was not enough evolution for the German Bible critics. Wellhausen wanted more evolution within the Old Testament historical record and so provided it as he held that later redactors gradually knitted the different documents (JEPD) together into what is now known as the Pentateuch. As far as Wellhausen was concerned, it is a myth that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, although he and his followers did allow for some kernel of Mosaic history to exist in the ancient past when Moses actually lived.¹⁷¹ The reasons given for such an evolutionary makeover is there are too many different divine names, vocabulary words, styles, and differing theologies in the Pentateuch. The other bothersome traits are that two different stories of the same event are seen in passages like Genesis 1-2 along with anachronisms that show Abraham abiding by laws and statutes that did not exist until much later in Old Testament history. For such reasons and others, rather oddly enough, the first five books of Moses, which are naturally assumed to be the foundational books of the Old Testament, or actually the last. In the Wellhausen evolutionary scheme, the foundation becomes the roof in a form of scholarly dyslexia that sees everything backwards or upside down.

Worse, Wellhausen's theory won a broad scholarly consensus that lasted for almost a century,¹⁷² considerably much longer than the Baur's New Testament higher criticism. Certainly one of the primary reasons for this is precisely because of the great time gap that exists between modern times and the Old Testament that has proved to be much more difficult to bridge in order to demonstrate the excesses of the Wellhausen theory. Another critical reason why Wellhausen's theory has proven to be so resilient is because of the doctrine of geological and biological evolution that has allegedly shown Genesis to be a myth in the minds of most people, particularly Genesis 1-11. Meaning that while Hegel's evolutionary philosophy of history was all too easily historicized, Darwinism has proved to be much more difficult to historicize because of its decidedly biological and geological basis which defies historical analysis. Since geological and biological evolution conveniently predates human history, Darwinism uses naturalistic uniformitarian processes that are observed today to explain past natural history relative to geology and biology. However, the fact that Darwinism requires such incredibly deep time to explain evolution strongly suggests its answers are not all that explanatory as the great problems of biological development and geological upheavals are dissolved in the abyss of deep time. Neither is it a coincidence that Darwinism appeared on the historical scene when virtually anything and everything was explained from an evolutionary point of view – whether that be history, religion, philosophy, society, politics, etc. Geology and biology simply jumped on board along with everyone else. It can also be easily demonstrated that Darwin borrowed much from German Romanticism,

¹⁷⁰ Compare this to Titus Livy who characterized the entire history of Rome as a vicious circle of conflict between the nobility and the slaves.

¹⁷¹ Waltke, *Genesis*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

particularly with regard to Wilhelm von Humboldt's writings, not to mention Goethe. Humboldt worked closely with Schleiermacher to found Berlin University. If Newton's physics was eventually historicized, why not Darwinism? Leftist scientists in particular have fought hard to prevent this from happening because they strongly believe evolution is the truth and nothing but the truth.

With regard to Wellhausen's JEPD theory, Hegel's philosophy of history stood more in the shadows, but still played a role. As the Hegelian triad of thesis-antithesis-synthesis was increasingly historicized during the 19th century, historians, philosophers, and theologians began presuming a much more general evolutionary understanding of religious development that helped establish the History of Religions School under Ritschl's theological influences that replaced Tubingen's radicalism in the later 1800's. What is most peculiar about Wellhausen's JEPD theory, however, is its essential Romantic character that borrowed too much from de Wette's Theological Romanticism. As such, Wellhausen's JEPD theory placed Israel's religious development in reverse. Worst of all, the dyslexia and backwardness of Old Testament higher criticism that willfully confuses the superstructure with the foundation, is strongly Anti-Semitic precisely because what is historically depicted is not a progressive evolution of Israel's religion, but the very opposite. Along very Romantic lines, the history of Israel degenerates from its simple foundations to restrictive legalism and ritualistic materialism as the Deuteronomists and the priests took over the Jewish religion and fashioned it into a corrupt Judaism far removed from its pure Hebrew beginnings. Similarly, Hegel himself held that most everyone contributed to the progressive growth of the World Spirit throughout history except for Judaism. Judaism cut itself off from the progressive evolution of the World Spirit, and thus the Jews "will no longer have a history. As the most reprobate people, all that remains of the Jews is ongoing fossilized existence."¹⁷³

Much of Wellhausen's JEPD theory is rooted in de Wette's Theological Romanticism. De Wette was a Romantic follower of Schelling. He was a close colleague of Schleiermacher. In fact, Schleiermacher facilitated the finding of a faculty position for de Wette at the University of Berlin.¹⁷⁴ De Wette's theology of the Old Testament was a romanticized craving "for the primordial, natural, and simple."¹⁷⁵ As early as 1804, de Wette argued the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but developed over time, and was so late on the historical scene that it essentially became the very sourcebook of Rabbinic Judaism. However, this was not seen as process of religious progression, but rather of spiritual deterioration, particularly with regard to what he considered to be the legalism of the book of Deuteronomy, "Whereas the other parts of the Pentateuch represent an early, original, simple, and spontaneous religion, Deuteronomy, with its focus on cultic centralization and ritual action, represent a degeneration of Israelite religion, being a post-exilic development" that was "a gathering of later laws ascribed to Moses through historical fiction."¹⁷⁶ De Wette held that the Hebrew religion under Moses was pure and simple, but was later complicated by a petrified Judaism that promoted the letter of the written word over the freedom of the spirit.¹⁷⁷ De Wette further criticized "Judaism for having destroyed the aesthetic dimension of religion. The outward, physical and superstitious, and the adherence to a book, were not acceptable to this aestheticism."¹⁷⁸ De Wette believed that the exile ruined the purity of the Hebrew religion with foreign influences carried back home from Babylon. Judaism was thus an "unsuccessful restoration of Hebraism" where "metaphysical reflection" had "replaced ethical direction, where concept and letter" had "replaced life and enthusiasm, and where a written source of religion" had "been established."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷³ Mack, p. 53.

¹⁷⁴ Gerdmar, p. 87.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 81.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 82.

Politically, de Wette was a liberal and romantic German nationalist with strong Anti-Semitic sentiments who cherished the ideals of the French Revolution but experienced the invasion of Napoleon instead. While many today may scratch their heads over a nationalist form of liberalism, it represented the heart and soul of Germany throughout much of the 1800's, particularly in the first half of the century before the advent of the Second Reich when the country was finally united:

The specifically German aspect of the movement was its nationalism: the desire for national independence and the dream of a unified Germany. Whereas in present day politics, nationalism often has a conservative ring to it, in the early 19th century Germany, it was a matter near to the hearts of liberals. The alternative was the old, fragmented, particularistic and partly feudal German-speaking sphere with hundreds of political entities – from territorial states, principalities and free cities, to abbeys and bishoprics. This particularistic structure hindered national unity and obstructed national liberal reforms. The terminology of particularism and universalism so often used in de Wette's (and others') discussions of the Hebrews and Jews directly corresponds to this discussion. German Jews as a particularistic entity, paralleled by post-exilic Judaism, threatened to disturb the universalistic-nationalistic project, the search for national unity and cultural cohesion, with which liberals identified themselves. For a long time, this frustrated passion for a united and great German *volk* meant a growing threat to the freedom of the Jews.¹⁸⁰

What originally attracted German liberals to romantic nationalism was its social collectivism.¹⁸¹ In between both world wars, many despised the political fragmentation of the Weimar Republic as well. This brings up the question once again as to how Romantic is Theological Liberalism? The answer is, very much so.

From Romanticism to Secular Existentialism & Postmodern Fascism

As Hegel's Idealism, Romanticism, and semi-secular eschatology dominated the philosophical and religious background of Germany throughout the 1800's, the worship of God was converted into the worship of man. With no small thanks to Kant's Transcendental Idealism, man, particularly German man, was increasingly glorified throughout the 1800's as God became increasingly irrelevant.¹⁸² Such a growing secularity became a cultural cancer that German Theological Liberalism did little to remedy, but in fact, only made the condition more terminal. German philosopher-theologian Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-72) posited the God of the Bible was merely a projection of human consciousness. Accordingly, Feuerbach held that religious doctrines and practices must therefore be profaned into a progressive form of socialism since the growth of politics is a sign of faith in man as such.¹⁸³ Presuming Feuerbach's basic thesis to be true, Karl Marx (1818-1873), Germany's infamous economic philosopher, turned Hegel's semi-pantheism upside down into a form of atheistic materialism where socio-political economic contradictions became the drivers of history that was invariably leading the world into a clash between the capitalist and working classes whose positive outcome would usher in the communist utopia this side of the grave.

Yet, Marx's atheism is not out of the ordinary here. Many German scholars at the time believed pantheism was actually just another way of promoting atheism. Social Darwinist and

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁸² Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹⁸³ Lowith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche*, p. 81.

zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) quipped pantheism was just a more polite form of atheism. Moreover, with pantheism invariably comes the worship of nature as well where Romanticism, Existentialism, and Postmodernism entered into the German bloodstream through the likes of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), and finally Nazi philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), perhaps the last of the great philosophers.

Whereas Goethe emphasized poetry, literature, holism, and feelings which blended Enlightenment reason and Naturalism with Romanticism in order to undercut the Judeo-Christian worldview that strongly separated the creation from the Creator, Schopenhauer essentially hardened this worldview by laying the foundation stones of what later became known as Existentialism. Existentialism is a holistic philosophy which emphasizes existence itself in contrast to the God/human emphasis of the Judeo-Christian worldview that recognized man's kingship over the natural world. The subtle difference between them is that whereas Romanticism highlighted personal feelings in general, Existentialism underlined willpower. Yet both were strongly opposed to the Judeo-Christian theological worldview that placed God and man over nature's order of creation. While God is transcendent over all of nature, man shares in some of His transcendence being made in His image. Man was thus granted the right to rule over God's creation, and as such, cannot be reduced down to the level of communion with nature or a monistic or holistic natural existence. While man is still a created being to be sure, he is also above the natural world he was placed in by God Himself. In the Bible, man is by nature a binary, dualistic being. He is created and so is a part of creation, but he is also the apex of creation since he is related to the transcendence of God being made in his image. Dr. Peter Jones of the Truth Xchange smartly calls the Judeo-Christian worldview "twoism" in contrast to "oneism," which is ancient pagan monism brought up to date in modern philosophy.

Schopenhauer's brand of Existentialism was clearly revealed in his most important work called *The World as Will and Representation* where he stressed that will is more intrinsic to what a human being is rather than his reason or intellect. In his atheism, Schopenhauer claimed the "thing in itself" that lies behind what Kant said was unknowable, was actually the will.¹⁸⁴ For Schopenhauer, the subjective human will represented and/or determined how objects of consciousness were interpreted and understood. Schopenhauer's romantic "feelings had revealed to him that reality is Will - a deeply irrational and conflictual Will, striving always and blindly toward nothing."¹⁸⁵ When will is the defining characteristic of what a man truly is, his understanding or representation of the world is thus both subjective and irrational precisely because his will colors his outlook. According to Schopenhauer, the real world is filled "with constantly needy creatures who continue for a time merely by devouring one another, pass their existence in anxiety and want, and often endure affliction, until they fall at last into the arms of death."¹⁸⁶ Such a nature based philosophy preceded the Darwinian descent of man into a purposeless natural world dominated by struggle in nature and the survival of the fittest. Welcome to the modern West's culture of death drawn from nature's law of the jungle.

While Schopenhauer believed he was continuing and correcting the great legacy of Kant with his existentialist nature based philosophy, he also became the father of environmental ethics as well.¹⁸⁷ Schopenhauer was the first most important animal rights guru in the modern sense. In his existentialist anti-humanist worldview, Schopenhauer elevated animal rights to the same level as people, which invariably leads to the degradation of human rights since people are no longer viewed as superior to animals. In fact, Schopenhauer even taught an inverse "love your neighbor as yourself" with a twisted environmental version of the same by virtually suggesting that man's relationship to animals or nature, whether good or bad, will determine his relationship to people.

¹⁸⁴ Mack, p. 8.

¹⁸⁵ Hicks, p. 54.

¹⁸⁶ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Volume II, p. 349.

¹⁸⁷ Varner, G.E., "The Schopenhauerian Challenge in Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 7 (3), 1985, pp. 209-229.

Along existential lines Schopenhauer thus replaced Kant's secularized moral reason taken from Christian values with a nature based ethic that attempted to curb the excesses of the human will with a doctrine of pity toward existence and her existential beings. Like Kant, Schopenhauer was also Anti-Semitic, only much worse. Schopenhauer replaced Kant's ethical Anti-Semitism and replaced it with an Anti-Semitic environmental ethic that blamed the Jews for animal cruelty precisely because the book of Genesis teaches them to be lords over the earth which led to a dominating and destructive relationship to nature.¹⁸⁸ Schopenhauer was the *Fuhrer's* favorite philosopher, whose doctrines played no small part in the rise of fascism and National Socialism in the early 20th century.

Schopenhauer's existentialism was then hardened further by Nietzsche who taught on the will to power and the death of God. Nietzsche vehemently castigated Kant's categorical imperative, the last vestiges of God found in modern western philosophy. While Nietzsche fully agreed with Schopenhauer's thesis that the human will was more important than thought, he rejected his doctrine on pity and humaneness that Schopenhauer advocated to curtail the instinctual excesses of the will. Nietzsche considered such an ethos as womanly and weak. As such, Nietzsche replaced Schopenhauer's pity with his infamous "will to power" doctrine. Nietzsche's "will to power" was a very chauvinistic existential ethic rooted in the earth where biological instinctual willpower was to dominate all of life. Nietzsche's godless existential will was underscored so strongly that he held the Judeo-Christian worldview especially in contempt because it tried to tame the will through what he considered to be an anti-nature slave morality of meekness that had weakened all of Europe with mediocrity and poor eugenic health. As far as Nietzsche was concerned, thanks to the Judeo-Christian love morality that ministers to the weak, the weak were now not only dominating the strong, but even worse, sickening all of Europe. Europe thus needed to return back to a nature based strength of will to recover its cultural and physical health - a veritable triumph of the will that later became the very spiritual heart of National Socialism.

According to Nietzsche, western rationality has shown that God is dead. It therefore must be transcended, not by Kantian idealism, but by a new set of existential earth based values in order to avoid the dangerous meaningless of nihilism. Since Nietzsche believed the weakest part of man was his rational consciousness, and that biology, body, willpower, and instinct were his strengths, these new earth based existential values governing the future would have to transcend the Enlightenment. At this philosophical juncture, German Romanticism becomes progressive through Nietzsche's Existentialism. Since God is dead, men must become supermen in order to legislate an existential future based on will, biology, and instinct rather than upon western rationality and ethics. Nietzsche went so far so as to recommend state prescribed breeding programs in order to weed out the weak from the strong. Nietzsche also assumed that war and conflict was at the existential vortex of human evolution and growth. Thus, Nietzsche's "will to power" was not an attempt to dominate nature, but was to be in accordance with nature, and rooted in an earth based evolutionary existentialism. Since the Judeo-Christian God was as good as dead, the only place left to develop an ethic was to be found in nature and biology. As such, Nietzsche attempted to overcome the death of the Judeo-Christian God by promulgating a new natural man with fresh existential earth based values. This new natural man would be a superman of the earth who could heroically face the nothingness of life with willpower, strength, and vitality. Nietzsche took to heart Kant's assertion that objectified nature has no meaning to it in itself, and thus provided his own form of existential transcendentalism, which he labeled the transvaluation of all values. Hardly surprisingly, with such a worldview, even though the *Fuhrer* was a pantheist,¹⁸⁹ Nietzsche was his second favorite philosopher.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena: On Religion*, pp. 370-71.

¹⁸⁹ See *Hitler's Religion: The Twisted Belief that Drove the Third Reich*, by Richard Weikart.

¹⁹⁰ Kubizek, August. *The Young Hitler I Knew*, p. 136. Strangely, more than a few scholars have stated that there is no evidence that Hitler ever read Nietzsche. Yet Hitler's friend in his youth, August Kubizek, clearly said Hitler "always

Though both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were great thinkers, they used their great minds to attack thought and the western philosophical tradition that, before Kant, was once wedded to the Judeo-Christian worldview. Even worse, such an atheistic legacy became mixed up with science as the very lifeblood of both Romanticism and Existentialism flowed freely into the German scientific department, particularly with regard to biology, medicine, and even ecology as well. Such disturbing philosophical views were then hardened even further into 'empirical' scientific facts under Ernst Haeckel's Social Darwinism called Monism in those days - all of which, when blended together, became the very bread and butter of National Socialism. Thus with biblical foundations finally removed after 150 years of struggle or *kampf*, Germans began trumpeting the inhuman laws of the jungle as veritable existential facts by politicizing biology into racism and eugenics. Such political secularism subverted Judeo-Christian morality and replaced it with a culture of death and destruction where Anti-Semitic euthanasia practices would eventually lead to the murder of millions of Jews and others during the holocaust as they were removed from the ecological landscape of Europe that was deemed overpopulated.

The Nazis essentially made the Nietzsche Archives of Weimar the "official shrine of their regime after 1933"¹⁹¹ where Nazi philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) spent much time (1935-42).¹⁹² Many scholars have tried to show that Heidegger resigned his philosophical chair from the University of Freiburg in 1934 as some kind of token opposition against the Nazis, but this is blatantly false. On the contrary, Heidegger did not resign because he opposed the Nazis, but because his attempt to Nazify the university met with stiff opposition. Heidegger thus decided to devote himself more fully to Nietzsche. Why? To Nazify Nietzsche for National Socialist consumption. Even as late as 1944, Heidegger claimed that Nietzsche was the spiritual inspiration of Hitler.¹⁹³ "As one Nazi functionary said, whoever says 'Heil Hitler!' at the same time is saluting Nietzsche's philosophy."¹⁹⁴

Martin Heidegger's strong interest in Nietzsche during his tenure under National Socialism is no trifling matter. Heidegger built the fascist bridge between Nietzsche's existentialism and what is today called Postmodernism. Postmodernism is barely discernible from nihilism.¹⁹⁵ As such, what is meant by Postmodernism is very difficult to express. This by itself makes it very challenging to define because under existentialism, the application and power of rationalism and reason is greatly diminished. Ready-made designations, classifications, and descriptions are thus very hard to come by. Regardless, however Postmodernism is defined, it should be viewed primarily as Heidegger's postwar form of existentialism that covered over his previous Anti-Semitism with a more generic anti-humanism. After the war, Heidegger's writings became more opaque, which managed to disguise his Nazism. In so doing, Heidegger's racism and Anti-Semitism were replaced with anti-humanism, which should by no means be understood as any kind of progress, but a deepening of all the problems involved connected to his existentialism.

With Heidegger at the helm, Postmodernism is very anti-humanistic precisely because it reduces the critical importance of the rational human mind to the brute level of the natural world and biological instincts together with pagan nature mysticism - something which Heidegger calls "being" or what one might call existential existence. With no small thanks to Heidegger's works and efforts, much of postmodern western philosophy is deeply committed to various forms of anti-

had his Schopenhauer by him, later Nietzsche too." In an earlier edition of his book entitled *The Young Hitler I Knew* which included a chapter 6 called "School," Kubizek said that Hitler devoured the library in his youth and that "I remember Adolf as always surrounded by books." In case he be misunderstood, Kubizek said again, "Books were his whole world." p. 134. With such testimony, it is actually hard to believe that Hitler did not read Nietzsche, a popular critical thinker in Germany's history.

¹⁹¹ Faye, Emmanuel. *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars 1933-35*, p. 252.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 252.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁹⁴ Veith, Gene. *Modern Fascism: The Threat to the Judeo-Christian Worldview*, p. 82.

¹⁹⁵ See *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism* by Karl Lowith.

humanism.¹⁹⁶ In Heidegger's postmodern philosophy, 'being' or existence or what was previously understood philosophically as objectified nature, now becomes more important than the human subject. While Heidegger brings back into philosophy that nature or 'being' itself is revelatory and not barren of meaning as Kant once held, the meaning of 'being' is not a rational or theological meaning according to western reason or the Judeo-Christian worldview.

Heidegger uses existential 'being' to deconstruct western rationality and the Judeo-Christian worldview along postmodern lines. In the process, both the God of the Bible and the human subject are relegated into the background as 'being' itself becomes a virtual anti-transcendental god of some sort that overshadows the rational humanism of man. With God and the human subject gone, 'being' or existence itself is to dominate all thought and is the very heart of true thinking, which is not to be confused with western rationalism or Christian theology. While Kant held the subjective knower was to use his *a priori* reason to make objective judgments about reality that was barren of meaning in itself, Heidegger turned his Transcendental Idealism on its head by postulating that reality itself will unveil to man in a semi-mystical form of hermeneutics how to think existentially rather than rationally. Here, Heidegger's hermeneutics are particularly pernicious because reason and rationalism have now been completely dethroned in the process of interpretation or understanding. Heidegger's radical existentialism thus sits at the end of line for both Romanticism and Existentialism as it stares down into the abyss of irrational nihilism¹⁹⁷ and its corollary, anti-humanism.

Heidegger was/is the most important philosopher of the 20th century. Many western students of Heidegger have been so enamored with his existentialist philosophy that it has been very difficult for them to accept the fact that he could be a real Nazi. Many have also presumed that Heidegger's interest in National Socialism was temporary and that he later turned away from the movement. However, Heidegger's turning from National Socialism is a modern myth built on outright lies and the later redaction of his earlier materials hidden under dense language and opaque existentialism.¹⁹⁸ Even today, some of Heidegger's works are strictly controlled by his family.¹⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger was an unrepentant Nazi, and was extremely Anti-Semitic. Even after the war he spoke of the inner truth and greatness of National Socialism. In fact, Heidegger believed Nazism went astray by not being fascist enough to follow through with its basic existentialist platform to the end.

The idea that Heidegger temporarily strayed into Nazism only to later recover himself with a much more mature existentialist philosophy is simply untenable. In fact, it is far more likely Heidegger managed to infiltrate much of the post-modern world with a more developed Nazi political philosophy.²⁰⁰ With its transcendental emphasis upon mind, thinking, and thought, Heidegger held that both classic western philosophy and the Judeo-Christian worldview inauthentically elevated rootless contemplation over the reality of existence. As far as Heidegger was concerned this has led western man into an abstract and inauthentic lifestyle contrary to the real existential world grounded in 'being.' Heidegger's radicalism consisted of trying to do away with the dominating influences of all abstractions that were inherent in western philosophy and the Judeo-Christian worldview.

Existentialism is also very fertile ground upon which to develop an environmental philosophy. Existentialism uses natural existence or 'being' to trump rational or religious thought that heightens itself above the natural world. Nature and its holistic interrelatedness thus become Romantic and existential trump cards to neutralize both philosophy and religious faith as inconsistent with what actually exists in the real world. Religious and philosophical thought needs

¹⁹⁶ See *The Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz* by David Hirsch, pp. 69-165.

¹⁹⁷ See *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, pp. 58-83, by Dr. Stephen Hicks.

¹⁹⁸ See Emmanuel Faye's *Heidegger: The Introduction of Nazism into Philosophy in Light of the Unpublished Seminars 1933-35*.

¹⁹⁹ Faye, p. xvii.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-322.

to bow to nature and its existence, rather than try to arrogate itself above them through imaginary ideas and concerns, especially of the Christian theological variety. For Heidegger, religious and western speculative thought invariably leads to a false, dominating view over nature, which has become especially superficial in the modern mechanized world. For Heidegger, therefore, what needs to be done is to destroy western philosophy and its Judeo-Christian handmaid. The main thrust of Heidegger's political philosophy is to reduce all metaphysics to the question of 'being' or existence.²⁰¹ In so doing, western man's alienating and destructive dominance over nature or being, which is all based on a false illusion, can be arrested.

In a speech given in November 1933, Heidegger proclaimed, "We are witnessing the end of philosophy that had idolized a thought deprived of soil and power."²⁰² That modern environmentalism has swept in behind the collapse of classic western philosophy and the fading Judeo-Christian worldview is thus no accident. It is part and parcel of the whole modern denial of any transcendental truth or God that exists independent and outside of the natural world. Without such transcendental truths, all that is left is amoral nature and its factual existence, and Martin Heidegger has been leading this particular charge since his early days in the camp of National Socialism. As such, Heidegger vehemently attacked both western morality and philosophy. Because of his radical existential views, "the very principles of philosophy are abolished. No place is left for morality, which is openly and radically annihilated."²⁰³

Heidegger's Nazi radicalism was also observed in 1931 by another student who claimed the philosopher was convinced only a National Socialist dictatorship could oppose Marxism properly. He also said that violence, if not liquidation and assassination, against opponents was an acceptable solution to political problems.²⁰⁴ Heidegger openly proclaimed the *Fuhrer* principle, German racism and eugenics, Nazi collectivism, and was even promoted as rector to the University of Freiburg when Jewish professors were being forcibly removed from their posts. Heidegger proclaimed the people of Germany were to be governed by an 'erotic' love for the Nazi state.²⁰⁵ As an Anti-Semite Heidegger complained about the growing "Jewification" of society. Heidegger accepted in no uncertain terms the Nazi doctrine of *lebensraum*, and called the Jews in the eastern territories Semitic nomads.²⁰⁶ This characterization essentially deprived the Jews of their living space in the Slavic East. Many of Heidegger's students during the 1930's would later fully immerse themselves in the fiery cauldron of World War II on the Eastern Front. Shockingly, many dead German soldiers on the battlefields of the Second World War possessed Heidegger's books in their rucksacks.²⁰⁷

In June of 1933, Martin Heidegger spoke at the Freiburg university stadium during a book burning ceremony.²⁰⁸ While un-German books were being publicly burned, Heidegger stated, "Flame announce to us, light for us, show the path from which there is no turning back." Much of Heidegger's environmental, existentialist philosophy was specifically designed to do away with all thought he considered to be abstract or inauthentic. Heidegger's presence and words at the book burning of 1933 showcases a political ecological fascism in the name of existentialism.

More than a few historians point out that since Heidegger did not believe in biological racism, he cannot be considered a genuine Nazi. However, Heidegger's opposition to biological racism had more to do with the fact he considered Darwinism an Anglo-Saxon construct²⁰⁹ since

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 249.

²⁰² Ibid., p. 71.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 316.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 134.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 142-144.

²⁰⁷ Heidegger critic Paul Hühnerfeld (1926-1960) stated, "These books, whose meaning was barely decipherable when they appeared, were devoured. And the young German soldiers in the Second World War who died somewhere in Russia or Africa with the writings of Hölderlin and Heidegger in their knapsacks can never be counted. Heidegger loved the German Romantic writer Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843).

²⁰⁸ Faye, p. 53.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

Darwin was a Victorian Englishman.²¹⁰ More importantly, in place of a literal, fundamentalist view of biological materialism, Heidegger taught a racial rootedness in the German soil that was ontologically or existentially grounded rather than biologically based.²¹¹ Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, written in 1927, related authentic existence to the idea of "essence of being" rather than to something as literal as the blood. However, though Heidegger considered himself a philosopher, he never disavowed the Nazi doctrine of blood and soil. He merely repackaged it and undergirded it with philosophical categories rather than biological ones.

More importantly, in some ways, this existential or ontological en-rootedness actually deepens his ties to Nazism further. In such a scenario, Nazi biologism could also easily fall under Heidegger's German existentialism without a contradiction per se. It also provides a philosophical justification for German racism without it being necessarily tied to the fundamentalism of Nazi scientism - which Heidegger considered to be inauthentic because it was not existentially based. This, in turn, provides a broader foundation for Nazi doctrines to rest upon, pollinate, and grow, particularly with regard to the rise of Postmodernism. Heidegger's fascism is thus built on environmental existentialism rather than biological scientism. Indeed, in his Heidelberg courses he enlightened his audience by saying, "The Fatherland is being itself."²¹²

²¹⁰ Heidegger believed that National Socialism went astray under the pressures of the war.

²¹¹ Faye, pp. 258-262.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Conclusion

The Biblical Archaeological Review (BAR), by no means a conservative Christian magazine, published a surprising article in 2011 by Jewish archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel entitled, "The Birth and Death of Biblical Minimalism." Biblical minimalism is the general presumption that the Biblical text cannot be a trusted source of actual verifiable history, especially with regard to the authenticity of the Old Testament. In the article, Garfinkel demonstrated that the minimalist position is now no longer viable. Too much archaeological evidence has been uncovered. While this has not and cannot prove the inerrancy of the biblical text, it is still a far cry from the tidal wave of skepticism that flooded the modern world back in the 1800's when German higher criticism virtually dominated all historical studies of the Bible.

In the article Garfinkel established that even King David and his kingdom can no longer be considered a myth. This brings modern scholarship all the way back to 1,000 B.C - only 200-400 years shy of Moses himself, the very founder of Israel as a nation. Such archaeological truths together with many others have placed much pressure on the biblical minimalist position. They have now been forced to redefine the time of the Iron Age in order to maintain their skeptical legacy toward the historicity of the Davidic kingdom. This is a far cry from the past when many a scholar just re-arranged the biblical chronology to suit their 'higher critical' theories superimposed upon the text like de Wette, Baur, Strauss, Ewald, and Wellhausen. Time and time again, biblical minimalists have been forced to retreat from their earlier positions, only to stubbornly stop at some other line of reasoning. Repentance is thus awfully hard to come by, especially when confronted with the historical truth of the Bible.

Ever since German skepticism systematically spearheaded the attacks against the historical authenticity of the Bible, the assumption was that much of the Old Testament was written much later than what the Hebrew text records about itself. Since the entire Hebrew Bible was not fully organized until after the Babylonian exile (500's B.C.), the presumption was it would therefore be impossible to say with any certainty whether or not the historical details described throughout much of the Old Testament actually occurred as the record indicates. With such a "late date they would couple an ultra-low view of the reality of that history, dismissing virtually the whole of it as pure fiction, as an attempt by the puny Jewish community in Palestine to write themselves an imaginary past as a form of national propaganda."²¹³

Many also presumed that the older Hebrew writings were based on untrustworthy oral traditions. The Hebrews were considered to be an uneducated, agrarian society who naively believed in miracles. This religious childishness thus made them incapable of a historical consciousness that could be considered reliable in terms of recording factual events. However, this assumption about Hebrew oral tradition has recently been proven to be another myth of the modern historical imagination. In 2005, archaeologists found a rock in a remote location in ancient Israel that had every letter of the Hebrew alphabet inscribed on it. It too can be dated as far back as 1,000 B.C. The remote location that this alphabet was found in shatters the idea that much of the Old Testament is largely based on oral tradition. The force of this evidence is truly profound - if the outback areas could write, then what of the larger cities? More critical, the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem, Israel holds that the first genuine writing came from the Canaanites and the Hebrews, not the Sumerians or the Egyptians. The Canaanite and Hebrew languages were considerable advancements compared to the Cuneiform of the Sumerians and the Hieroglyphics of the Egyptians.

Thanks to 'higher critical' theories, all too many modern historiographers have presumed that the Hebrews followed the Greek method of oral tradition in the writing of their holy books, never mind the fact that ancient Greek tradition had very little interest in history. Indeed, the

²¹³ Kitchen, K.A. *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, p. 2.

Greeks did not jump onto the historical bandwagon until the 400's B.C.²¹⁴ with Herodotus, lagging far behind the Hebrews. Although occasional miracles do show up in the Bible from time to time, much of the entire Old Testament reads like a history book, very unlike ancient Greek mythological accounts. The Old Testament methodically goes through several thousand years of general and Jewish history from the very beginning. It constantly pinpoints actual dates, eras, specific geographical locations and historical figures, along with a multitude of ancient names that would have been lost had it not been for the Hebrew Scriptures. Too many moderns have purposefully tried to associate Greek myths with Hebrew religion in order to dismiss the historical tradition of the latter. However, as the archaeological evidence of Old Testament Israel continues to mount with an ever increasing plethora of artifacts to draw from, it is now time for modern historians of all persuasions to face the sober truth that the Hebrew religion took the remembrance of their history very seriously (Deuteronomy 4:10-39; 32:7-10; Psalm 78). It has become quite clear that the Hebrew record of miracles in the Old Testament has in no way clouded the historical judgment of the prophetic writers of Scripture with mythological distortions or religious propaganda.

Closely related, if the Hebrews were so truthful with regard to lesser issues like history and politics, then more than likely, their supernatural religious beliefs may be just as authentic as well. Meaning that if the Hebrew writers were so good at telling the truth with regard to minor secular historical details, this further indicates that the religious miracles and larger revelatory events surrounding those particular miracles may not be mythological as many have presumed. Still further - if Hebrew history is authentic, then what of its prophecies? Religion or myth cannot be bridged with genuine history in ancient Greek religion which is why the allegorical method of interpretation was invented. However, the religious truths of the Old Testament and the accuracy of its history are anything but unbridgeable, and the faith required to build that bridge is not nearly as superstitious or irrational as the former would certainly be.

Isaiah the prophet began his prophetic ministry in the year King Uzziah died (Isaiah 6:1-13) and continued as such through the great international difficulties that characterized much of Judah's reign under the kingly leadership of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isaiah 1:1). Simultaneously warning the nation of the looming Assyrian invasion that eventually devastated most of the nation coupled with the apocalyptic coming of a Messianic age that promised salvation for Israel in the future (Isaiah 1:1-2:4), Isaiah's ministry was rooted in the historical realities of the day (Isaiah 36-39). He strongly applied the judgments of the Mosaic Law against the nation for her idolatrous Baalistic natural theology contrary to the historical revelation of the Old Testament. It was precisely this behavior that invited the Assyrian invasion (Isaiah 10:1-34). On the other hand, Isaiah also prophesied the coming of Messiah and a glorious Messianic age in the last days in which Jerusalem will become the religious headquarters of the entire world where international peace, justice, and equity will replace their previous judgments and warfare at the hands of godless nations (Isaiah 2:1-4; 9:1-7; 52:1-55:13). Nature will also be idyllically restored to an existence which will surpass the wonders of the Garden of Eden (Isaiah 11:1-12:6).

This linear, chronological, historical, and factual revelation of the Hebrew Bible as exhibited by Isaiah and all the other Old Testament prophets stood in great contrast to the ancient pagan belief in eternal return that characterized much of Greco-Roman religion. Pagan nature worship curved history²¹⁵ into a hopeless circle that enslaved man under the unremitting natural cycles of life, suffering, death, and rebirth. Man's God-given dominion over nature (Genesis 1:26-31) and his historical destiny in the apocalyptic future (Isaiah 65-66) from beginning to end were not even a consideration among the Greeks and Romans. In the Old Testament, the history of Israel begins with Abraham in a tent, but ends with their return to the Promised Land from the Babylonian exile. In between those times, they were enslaved in Egypt, became a nation during

²¹⁴ Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History*, p. 19-20.

²¹⁵ See especially Roman historian Livy on this.

the Exodus, conquered the promised land, devolved into the debauchery at the time of the Judges, rebounded with the united monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon, split into the competing kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah in the south, and then finally both were exiled into foreign nations because of their pagan nature worship. When they returned back to the land, the kingdom and its former glory did not return, but it was still better than the lawlessness of the time of the Judges. The Old Testament thus did not curve time like the Greeks often did. The Old Testament was fully aware of human development precisely because it specifically taught that man was made in God's image, and that the distinction between nature and history was born in the opening chapters of Genesis 1-4.

The point of Greco-Roman history, however, was not that it was going anywhere or that it would reach a Messianic-eschatological goal in the apocalypse, but that it was something to escape from. This would be accomplished either through the mythical tales of gods on the one hand (if one was superstitious), or through timeless philosophical abstractions on the other hand (if one was more rationally minded). Either way, history was largely disdained by the Greco-Roman world.²¹⁶ It was not taken seriously as a venue for any real meaning precisely because it was subject to so much suffering, change, and uncertainty.

The Old Testament is so preoccupied with history that more than a few early Enlightenment German scholars, philosophers, and theologians constantly criticized Jewish religion for having virtually no concept of an afterlife – which is yet another misnomer (Isaiah 66; Daniel 12:1-2). Yet, German scholars time and time again compared the Hebrew Old Testament to a myth. So which is it? To the Hebrew writers of the Bible, however, history had great meaning – so much so, that even the ups and downs of everyday life did not interfere with their unshakable faith in the predestined outcome (Psalm 2; 89; Isaiah 65-66; Ezekiel 40-48; Zechariah 12-14) by an Almighty God who created the universe out of nothing by His spoken word (Genesis 1:1-31). The Hebrews therefore took history far more seriously than the Greeks or Romans. This is readily seen by reading virtually any Old Testament book that constantly reminds its readers of one historical fact after another. In truth, as Jewish-German scholar Karl Lowith makes so clear, “only the Jews are really a historical people, constituted as such by religion, by the act of the Sinaitic revelation. Hence the Jewish people could and can indeed understand their national history and destiny religiously, as a religious-political unity.”²¹⁷ That the ancient Hebrew authors would take history so lightly to mischaracterize its facticity for theological purposes is thus highly unlikely. Even all of their heroes are objectively portrayed – warts, sins and all.

Sadly, it has taken 150 years of archaeological research to overturn the ‘higher critical’ fantasy of many a German scholar in the 1800’s who spent an inordinate amount of time attacking the foundations of the Bible to help advance their shallow and superficial mysticism of secular human progress based on natural theology and naturalistic principles that somehow had proved the Bible was a sham. However, both world wars in the 20th century shattered the progressive hubris of the 19th century, only to leave the present age scarred with the angst of so-called postmodernism – all the while Hebrew history became more and more confirmed by archaeological evidence after Israel regained its nationhood in the 20th century. That the Dead Sea Scrolls were found at essentially the same time Israel became a nation is another fact often ignored.

Perhaps more critical, what modern historians have often failed to grasp is that their linear conception of time and the view that history is inexorably leading to a meaningful goal in the future is, in fact, rooted in the Old Testament prophetic tradition, “Even the articulation of all historical time into past, present, and future reflects the temporal structure of the history of salvation. The past points to the first things, the future to the last things, and the present to a central presence which connects the past with the future through a teleological succession.”²¹⁸ In other words, their teleological belief in secular human progress based on a modern historiography

²¹⁶ Collingwood, pp. 20-25.

²¹⁷ Lowith, *Meaning in History*, p. 194.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

that has allegedly shown the present age far more advanced than the ancient past is in fact a philosophy of history based on the Biblical text itself.²¹⁹ Such a consideration may have prevented them from presuming too quickly that the Hebrew people of the past were so backward and uneducated that they could not have come up with something as advanced as the Old Testament at such an early date. Their historicist, i.e., their progressive view of history blinded their interpretation of the ancient Hebrew past as they not only repudiated biblical miracles, but also the theology, metaphysics, and the great spiritual meaning wrapped around the historical events of the Bible.

The great problem with Historicism is that historicists reject metaphysics, theology, and miracles as an almost immediate knee-jerk reaction precisely because they presume they 'know' what the religionists of the past "did or could not know, namely that metaphysics and theology are strictly speaking not possible. All this entails that the historicist does not understand the past thought in the way in which this understanding might be called true, i.e., in the way in which the thinkers understand it themselves."²²⁰ Imbued with German Idealism and Hegelian progressive Spirit peppered with Romantic and existentialist impulses, Historicism led to a series of one grave misjudgment after another in their evaluation of the biblical facts – whether Old or New Testaments. Their progressive secularism blinded them to the facts of biblical history as they invariably secularized the Bible to fit their modern theories and viewpoints. "The more a historian tries to take advantage of his temporal position by discounting or reinterpreting a view on the ground 'We now know such and such which this man in his time was unable to know' – the more, in other words, he thinks that he can understand the past better than it understood itself – the less he is able to achieve true understanding, and the more he gives hostage to fortune by relying on one or the other of a multitude"²²¹ of secularized explanatory theories, chock full of modern presuppositions, far removed from the actual historical event(s) they are supposed to be explicating.

The historicity of the biblical text has been confirmed in spite of the miracles recorded, the exact opposite of what historicists presumed. Historicism's hatred toward biblical miracles clouded historicist's historical judgments with regard to the genuineness of the rest of the Bible. Their prejudice against miracles prejudiced their entire outlook of the Bible. Since miracles were/are both impossible and childish from a modern point of view, the historical reliability of the biblical text that underlays those recorded miracles must necessarily also be suspect, childish, and unreal as well. Such deductions, however, turned out to be false, and wildly off the mark. The history of the biblical text has been increasingly substantiated as archaeology has now demonstrated virtually every historical generation alluded to throughout the Bible, with some gaps here and there, from Abraham all the way down to the time of the New Testament as surprisingly accurate. Furthermore, this historical corroboration has occurred even though very little archaeological discovery has taken place of what is actually possible. Archaeology is a poor man's profession. Very little has been accomplished over the last 150 years as time, money, politics, and opportunity prevent much more work than otherwise could be done. Yet in spite of the relative paucity of archaeological activities, Germany's gigantic assault against the historicity of the Bible has been overturned. Will the moderns repent of such arrogant historical felonies? Not likely. Worse, the damage has already been done and may not be recoverable, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do (Psalm 11:3)?" Even worse, German higher critical theories are still being taught as fact in all too many academic institutions, and still have tremendous influence even in many seminaries. The propaganda remains thick, as it always was.

The most insidious aspect of this whole German operation was its use of biblical eschatology itself in order to replace it with their own millenarian views – which was/is nothing more than a form of semi-secular mysticism. All the while German philosophers and theologians

²¹⁹ See especially *Philosophies of History: A Critical Essay* by Rolf Gruner.

²²⁰ Gruner, *Philosophies of History*, p. 111.

²²¹ Ibid.

mocked the miracles of the Bible, they began propounding absurd progressivist philosophies of history as they secularized the coming Kingdom of God into various speculative and political movements. Many German scholars like Reimarus and others advocated the apostles theologized about the death and resurrection of Christ after he was crucified in order to make his pronouncements about the imminent coming of the Messianic kingdom less inconsistent with reality.²²² Still many others characterized the Hebrew view of religious history as very unspiritual with little concept of the afterlife that came into the fore after Christianity. Did not Hegel and the German social gospel adherents essentially advocate the very same position(s) they were criticizing by secularizing the apocalypse? Even Kant himself, the great anti-metaphysician, postulated a secular “kingdom of ends” that can only truthfully be understood as a form of idealistic mysticism. How is it that such foolish forms of secular mysticism are more believable than biblical miracles? Schleiermacher himself essentially held that the rise of civilization and progress were not only modern secular miracles, but also replaced biblical miracles which he eschewed.²²³

While many such scholars did not believe in the physical and/or historical miracle of the resurrection of Jesus, but in some phantom of hope of some sort that the idea of resurrection instills in the mind, their secular mysticism failed to realize that a progressive view of history requires the resurrection of the dead to make any sense. Unlike the Greco-Roman world that believed history was either strictly secular or inextricably bound up with pagan notions of Eternal Return reflecting the circular cycles of nature, many socialist and political progressives presume the historical future itself is linear, eschatological, redemptive, and utopian – which is about as metaphysical as it gets. Yet the entire Judeo-Christian eschatological hope in the future is completely dependent upon the resurrection of the dead. What good is a linear and progressive eschatological view of history that rushes towards its goal of final judgment and salvation without the resurrection? Dr. Rolf Gruner acutely remarks:

.... the very secularity of their thought creates also at least one great obstacle to their undertaking. It prevents them from justifying evil in the eyes of those who are themselves affected by it. A man who suffers here and now cannot be consoled by being told that his misery serves a purpose in that it plays its necessary part in ensuring a glorious future for generations still to come. What matters to him is his life, and perhaps that of some of his contemporaries and immediate successors, not the life of people who will be born when he has been long dead; why should he have any interest in being a means to their happiness or perfection? In this respect traditional Christianity is on much stronger ground ... for according to its teaching each individual has access to a state of bliss in a future life to which his suffering in this life is essentially related.²²⁴

In other words, the Bible specifically prophesies a future Messianic and/or heavenly Kingdom of eschatological social justice precisely because it presumes and predicts the resurrection of the dead. Without the resurrection of the dead, a hopeful goal-orientated redemptive view of history is utter nonsense – something which the classical world would have well understood. Plato’s Republic (360 B.C.) may have been viewed as a utopian ideal, but the classical mind never believed the historical process itself was heading towards a fulfillment of that particular goal. Thus, while the moderns routinely mocked the Judeo-Christian apocalypse prophesied in both the Old and New Testaments that promises an eschatological goal of ultimate judgment and salvation, they remained completely unaware how they themselves were false prophets of what can easily be characterized as secular apocalypticism and/or millenarianism. “Modern man’s understanding of

²²² Dispensationalism easily solves this problem that many scholars dwelled upon in their Gospel studies. It is not that the coming Messianic Kingdom was dissolved into the Church Age, but that it was postponed or delayed until the Second Coming of Christ as Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and John present in both the Old and New Testaments.

²²³ Barth, p. 21.

²²⁴ Gruner, *Philosophies of History*, p. 11.

history – and thus also modern philosophy of history - has a religious ancestry without itself being religious. That is to say, it has retained features such as the linear conception of time and the notion of history as a goal-directed process, yet has jettisoned the sacred and supernatural context in which alone they had once made sense.”²²⁵

Those more secular, like Marx example, fared even worse than Kant, Hegel, or Schleiermacher and Ritschl. In the process of turning Hegel on his head, Marx turned the Judeo-Christian apocalypse upside down as well. Karl Marx prophesied a future utopian state of communistic humanism free from all class divisions at the end of history after an eschatological battle with capitalism – all based on his observation of studying the ‘empirical’ laws of economic science. Even National Socialism predicted a millennial 1,000 year Reich based on keeping Nature’s biological evolutionary laws of racial hygiene. More contemporary forms of socialism are less ominous, but still hubristically believe in the gradual and progressive perfectibility of man. Today, the United Nations is propagating its own eschatological Millennium goals where poverty will end, hunger will stop, universal education will be provided, the sexes will be equalized, peaceful global partnerships will be created together with a green utopia of environmental sustainability.

Modern man has discarded the religious foundations of the Bible, but he has still largely retained the hopeful orientation toward the future, albeit in a secularized form. As biblical history was de-sanctified, stunningly the deification of modern progress took its place together with the growth of Idealism and Historicism. Along Hegelian lines, Germany was the very vanguard of such incredible evolutionary developments in the West. Modern man’s belief in philosophical, religious, and/or political progress therefore replaced his belief in biblical prophecies and miracles. Political hubris is now deemed far more advanced than childish faith. Is it really? While the hopeful outcome since both world wars may not be as certain as it once was in the 1800’s, the belief in progress has by no means been discarded. Even Postmodernism cannot escape the idea of progress as its very prefix indicates. The prefix “post” presupposes some form of advancement, even though it is rooted in the mindlessness of anti-human philosophies like Romanticism and Existentialism. At the end of the day, however, postmodern blind utopianism will prove to be just as illusory as the Hegelian eschatological juggernaut of the 1800’s – and this by the prophetic determination of the word of God (Psalm 2).

While the Puritans in England began fashioning their millennial views based on the Bible,²²⁶ German Deists, Idealists, Romantics, Progressives, and Liberals constructed a Germanic eschatology based on their own autonomous natural theology that not only replaced the Judeo-Christian apocalypse according to their own image, but also served as its rival counterfeit. With no small irony, Jewish apocalyptic prophecies were re-interpreted and eschatologically applied to Germany itself.²²⁷ By substituting biblical eschatology for historical progressivism, secular German scholars increasingly positioned themselves as the vanguard of cultural evolution and revolutionary religious and philosophical change. Shockingly, the Jewish-Christian biblical eschaton was then replaced by a secularized or politicized German one. The theology of the Bible was replaced with an evolutionary natural theology that placed Germany on top of the Hegelian totem pole. As such, it is hardly surprising that many German theologians and Bible scholars were quick to reject Zionism, even though the Old Testament clearly predicts a Zionistic eschatological future. They did this because of their German Anti-Semitic natural theology, not because of what the biblical texts themselves actually said.

More troublesome, the Protestant Reformation in Germany did not go far enough in applying sound hermeneutical principles throughout all portions of the Scriptures. While the Protestant Reformation under Luther rightly used the historical-grammatical contextual method of interpretation to rescue salvation passages in the New Testament from Catholic mysticism, it failed

²²⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

²²⁶ See *Dispensationalism Before Darby* by William Watson.

²²⁷ See especially Karl Lowith’s discussion about Hegel in *Meaning in History*, pp. 52-59.

to apply the same sound hermeneutical methods with regard to the prophetic portions of the Scriptures. With a much better grasp of the great soteriological and eschatological implications of the Old Testament, Romans 9-11, 1-2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter, and the book of Revelation, the Protestants would have served themselves much better throughout the 1800's leading up to the Nazi era. Romans 9-11 and 2 Thessalonians was the standard the apostle Paul laid down so many centuries ago where Old Testament prophetic passages were understood historically and grammatically in context - a standard many Protestants in Germany fell short of. The numerous prophetic passages throughout the Old and New Testaments, which promise a future national restoration of Israel in the promised-land as prescribed by the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New Covenants respectively,²²⁸ were simply ignored. This unfortunately continued the Anti-Semitic sentiments of Catholic eschatology since Augustine. Many Old Testament prophecies which bespeak of Israel's future national salvation were confusedly interpreted as references to the church, however problematic and inconsistent with sound hermeneutical principles this was.

As such, the Protestant Reformation in Germany stopped short of sound biblical interpretive exegesis when it came to prophetic passages. In so doing, they in turn revealed an Anti-Semitic Gentile bias. The apostle Paul himself strongly warned the Roman church about this some 2,000 years ago, "But if some of the branches were broken off (Israel), and you (Gentiles), being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them for the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches (Romans 11:17)." Paul then drives his sharp point all the way home:

... for if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery - so that you will not be wise in your own estimation - that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, 'the Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins (Romans 11:24-27).

In their arrogance, the early church quickly forgot that "If the first piece of dough is holy (Israel), the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too (Romans 11:16)." The early church ignored Paul's reminder to the apostolic Roman church that God is not through with His people Israel in spite of their general unbelief in Messiah. In the process of so doing, Paul interpreted Old Testament covenants and prophecies historically and grammatically in context, "From the standpoint of God's choice, they (Israel) are beloved for sake of the fathers; for the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable (Romans 11:28b-29)." Here, echoing the prophets of the Old Testament, the apostle Paul clearly understood the Jewish people are still God's people in spite of their many sins. Such an understanding as taught by the apostle Paul would have spared Martin Luther and the Protestants its Gentile arrogance toward the Old Testament and the Jews.

At the same time, as the Protestant Reformation stopped short of applying the historical grammatical contextual method of interpretation equally to all portions of Scripture, this opened up a big hole for the Hegelian evolutionary juggernaut. In fact, outside of theologians like Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Keil, and Delitzsch, the only influential interpreters who seemed to have applied historical exegesis to all parts of the Bible were the German Hegelians, skeptics and agnostics. As such, their naturalistic and mystical underpinnings attacked the historicity of the Bible rather than expounded it. Under the guise of so-called scientific higher criticism, eminent scholars such as F.C. Bauer and Julius Wellhausen, along with liberal theologians like Strauss, Ritschl, and Harnack, all applied Hegelian pantheistic ideas about religious development in history to the entire Bible. While Hengstenberg, Kurtz, Keil, and Delitzsch, tried to correct the deficiencies

²²⁸ See Genesis 12:1-4; Deuteronomy 30:1-9; Psalm 89; Jeremiah 31:1-40.

of their Protestant 'cousins' by emphasizing the importance of salvation history, they did not go far enough in that direction to be an effective counterweight to Hegel and his semi-Christian pantheistic followers. The 'historical' evolutionary views of Hegel's semi-pantheism proved to be an almost irresistible tidal wave throughout the 1800's in all the theological halls of Germany. That the collapse of the Anti-Semitic social gospel and the Second Reich in the trench warfare of the First World War was then replaced by a much more secularized and sinister political mysticism known as the 1,000 year Third Reich, is thus not nearly as unexpected as so many scholars have characterized it to be.

In other words, the dangerous nationalistic racism of Nazism did not jump out of thin air in 1919 with the organization of the NSDAP, the National Socialist Worker's Party, but was fueled and fired not only by Romanticism and Existentialism, but also by secularism and Theological Liberalism as well, all of which wrestled with the fallout of the Enlightenment in their own various ways. More to the point, with a list of academic German superstars like Goethe, Lessing, Kant, Schelling, Fichte, de Wette, Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Nietzsche, Baur, Strauss, Ritschl, Marx, Feuerbach, Wellhausen, Haeckel, Harnack, Heidegger, and many others like them, placed in the most important halls of influence for a sustained 150-200 years, is it any wonder that National Socialism became the final capstone of such a legacy? Granted, the Nazis crudely mixed these ingredients together into an explosive concoction that blew up all of Europe, but the ideas that lay behind the National Socialist experiment were previously propounded by its academic forefathers. Many historians and philosophers have been scratching their heads for many years now how something as brutal and animalistic as Nazi Germany ever could have come about in the modern West. "How could one of the chief centers of the civilized world have become a torture chamber for millions of people, a country ruled by criminals so effectively that it conquered most of Europe, moving out toward other continents, planting its swastika from Norway to the Caucasus and Africa before it was brought down at the cost of 30 million lives? What happened to the nation of thinkers and poets, the 'good' Germans that the 19th century knew?"²²⁹

Well, for starters, perhaps all those 'good' German poets and intellects of the 18th and 19th centuries, most of whom spent an inordinate amount of time attacking the biblical faith, were not as 'good' as they have been trumpeted to be. If they had bothered to seriously read books like Hosea, Isaiah, and Daniel from the archives of the Old Testament, rather than develop all kinds of contrived, complicated evolutionary schemes to doubt their authenticity, they perhaps could have been warned by such works, and thus avoided the Nazi doomsday, particularly with regard to their anti-Semitism. However, this became increasingly impossible as the intellectual wheels of Germany essentially came off through Idealism, Romanticism and Existentialism - all philosophical movements that promoted deep subjectivity. Beginning with Kant, the German academy began spilling much ink in attacking and downgrading the mind and intellect, not upgrading it. Idealism, Romanticism, subjectivity, feelings, instincts, existential will, and evolutionary survival of the fittest all gradually melded together into one of the most irrational and thoughtless academic and political movements ever devised by the 'genius' of man. In fact, in between 1750-1945, for the most part, the only time many a German philosopher seemed to be interested in reason and intellect was to use it to attack the Bible, Christians, and Jews. They subjected the Bible to ostensibly rigorous demands of reason, but were very lax with regard to their own subjectivity, Idealism, Romanticism, and Existentialism, not to mention their later Social Darwinism which was anything but scientific. "It has been said that after God died in the 19th century, man died in the 20th. For when God is dead, man becomes an untamed beast."

All too many German theologians and philosophers accepted many of the basic tenets of the Enlightenment, particularly when it was applied to Judeo-Christian natural theology and historical criticism. At the same time, however, German philosophers and theologians worked overtime to fix what they considered to be the excesses of the Enlightenment that worshiped reason. Yet, instead of returning back to the Judeo-Christian worldview and the historicity of the

²²⁹ Davidson, Eugene, p. xiii - introduction to Albert Speer's *Inside the Third Reich*.

Scriptures, they tried to improve the excesses of the Enlightenment with their own Idealism, subjectivity, Romanticism, Liberalism, Existentialism, and scientism – all of which compounded all the problems involved. This, in turn, did not lead to progress but rather to a profane debasement of the human being. Such a legacy unleashed men’s passions and instincts rather than develop a thoughtful morality based on the glory of God and the fact that man was made in God’s image. By the 20th century, it became clear what could easily happen if man was just a Social Darwinian accident that had evolved chaotically through animals over meaningless millions of years with his own subjective will making all the decisions.

Even worse, this beastly German odyssey of unbelief, skepticism, anti-truth, Anti-Semitism, Romanticism, and Existentialism did not come to an end after World War II. It continues unabated even today through the legacy of Nazi sage Martin Heidegger. In the *Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz*, Dr. David Hirsch argues that the current anti-humanism running roughshod over the contemporary West is largely due to Heidegger’s great influences. Hirsch thus warns, “It is misleading to disengage contemporary anti-humanism from Nazi dehumanization, for they share (the same) philosophical and cultural origins.”²³⁰ In short, Heidegger’s post-modern re-direction away from anti-Semitic racism to anti-humanism after the war did not express repentance. On the contrary, it only provided a veritable cover-up of his Nazi past that aided his entrance back into western academia. Hirsch has thus strongly argued that Postmodernism should best be understood as post-Auschwitz.²³¹ In other words, Postmodernism is existentialism after Auschwitz. Much more disturbing, according to Hirsch, the goal of Postmodernism is to deconstruct the sober truth that the European academy, particularly in Germany, actually fed the intellectual beast which led to the holocaust. “In brief, the post-Auschwitz age is one in which the nineteenth century prophecies of Marx and Nietzsche have been realized in the Soviet gulag, on the one hand, and in the Nazi death camps, on the other.”²³² Hirsch continues, “Whatever Postmodernism may be, the post-Auschwitz age is one of total war, mass murder, and genocide; an age of the death of God and of the eclipse of western culture and Judeo-Christian values.”²³³

Neither Europe nor the North American secular-leftist academy have come to grips with the fact the 20th century was a socialist slaughterhouse of epic proportions. Postmodernism thus moved in to save secular Europe from facing up to its own intellectual catastrophe in the face of the apocalyptic abyss of World War II – even though Germany’s pre-war Idealism, Romanticism, Existentialism, and Liberalism – theological and otherwise – all played a powerful role in justifying the inhuman brutality of the holocaust. That Heidegger had to argue after the war that anti-humanism does not invariably lead to inhumanity is perhaps far more revealing than most scholars would care to admit.²³⁴ Indeed, “Hitler and Heidegger shared a world outlook. Both sought to return German culture to pagan roots by rupturing that fusion between Hellenism (ancient Greco-Roman culture) and Hebraism (ancient Judaism) that constitutes European humanism (through Christianity).”²³⁵

Most troublesome, very few scholars are today concerned about Heidegger’s postmodern fascist philosophy that has cast a giant shadow over the post-war West, not only with regard to the concept of truth, but also relative to the interpretation of history, literature, and the Bible as well. This can only mean that Heidegger’s postmodern influences are profound indeed as the western mind has been so dulled with existentialism it can no longer appreciate the depths into which it has fallen. After the war, having watched and even participated in what the Nazis did with willpower, Heidegger seemed to emphasize even more his “let it be” attitude of existential being to life that no longer seems even to value even the human will. Thus, in its great opposition to the

²³⁰ Hirsch, David. *Deconstruction of Literature: Criticism after Auschwitz* p. 255.

²³¹ Ibid., pp. 244-68.

²³² Ibid., p. 245.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 256.

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 262.

Bible and the Judeo-Christian worldview, German theology and philosophy has managed to destroy both the mind and the will of the human being. This is what the German geniuses managed to do when they rejected God's miraculous revelatory history of the Bible. It is thus long past the time to abandon and repudiate the destructive trajectory of this German odyssey that has not only reversed the Protestant Reformation in Europe, but also reaped a great harvest of doubt, despair, death, deconstruction, and demolition throughout the entire western world. With Protestantism virtually gone today in Europe, the medieval world of Islam and Catholicism has returned with no small thanks to this post Reformation German odyssey of deconstruction and destruction. In attacking the Bible, Europe has essentially gone back to its pre-Reformation heritage that will lead to everything but blessing, particularly as it sides with Islam against the Judeo-Christian worldview.

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