

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

An oration, being a work of art, has a unity in itself; it has some leading idea. This is called its theme. The first duty of the orator is to find his theme, the subject matter of his oration. Hence the first part of rhetoric is *inventio, εὕρεσις*. The next duty of the orator is, so to arrange his thoughts as to make them correspond with the nature of his theme and with the end which he aims to promote. Hence the second part of rhetoric is the *dispositio, collocatio, τάξις*. In expressing his ideas, the orator adopts a certain form of language accommodated to the genius of his subject, or to the peculiarities of his own mind. This form of language is called his style. The third duty of the orator, then, is his selection of words and phrases; and the third part of rhetoric is *elocutio, pronuntiatio, λέξις, ἐπιμνηστική*. The oral method of address being peculiarly appropriate to eloquence, the fourth part of rhetoric is devoted to the corporeal expression of ideas, and is called *pronuntiatio, actio, προφορά, ὑπόκρισις*. The ancient rhetoricians added a fifth department, the *memoria, ars memoriae, μνήμη*; the art of calling to mind the various divisions of the discourse by associating them with certain images of the fancy, or certain rooms in a building, etc., *imagines* and *loci*. As our rhetoricians, however, prescribe that an oration be committed to memory previously to its being delivered, they dispense with this fifth department.

---

### ARTICLE III.

#### CRITIQUE ON STRAUSS'S LIFE OF JESUS.

By Rev. H. B. Hackett, Professor of Biblical Literature in Newton Theological Institution.

*Wissenschaftliche Kritik der Evangelischen Geschichte. Ein Compendium der gesammten Evangelienkritik mit Berücksichtigung der neusten Erscheinungen bearbeitet von Dr. A. Ebrard. 1842. pp. 1112.*

NO PORTION of the Bible, not excepting now even the Pentateuch, which had been so long the battle-field of the German critics, excites so much interest at the present moment in Germany as the four Gospels. This is owing to the new direction which the course of biblical criticism has taken in that country,

since the appearance of Strauss's work on the Life of Jesus in 1835. This work,<sup>1</sup> it is well known, has produced a sensation in the German theological world, unequalled by anything which has occurred since the publication of the Wolfenbüttel Fragments by Lessing, in 1778. It has passed rapidly through repeated editions, has been printed, how many times we are unable to say in an abridged and less critical form for uneducated readers, has been translated into other languages and has given rise to a controversy which, after the lapse now of these ten years nearly, is still kept up with undiminished vigor.<sup>2</sup>

Of the degree of positive influence which this work of Strauss has exerted, of the actual impression which it has made on the public mind, it is not easy to form a definite opinion. We should certainly err, however, were we to regard the attention merely which it has awakened as any very exact criterion of the favor, with which its doctrines have been received, or as indicating to any very great extent an increase of the infidelity of Germany over and above that which previously existed. In the first place, it should be remembered, that at the time when Strauss came forward with his new theory for the explanation of the gospel history, the old type of rationalism, that which flourished particularly from the beginning of the present century until 1817, which is represented in exegesis by Paulus, and in dogmatics by Wegscheider, had lost very much its scientific interest with the public, and had thus left the ground open for some new development of the rationalistic principle. Under these circumstances Strauss appeared; and of those who embraced his sentiments, the great majority consisted not of those who now went over from the Christian camp to unbelief for the first time, but of such as had already taken this step, and on this occasion merely exchanged one form of religious skepticism for another. In the second place, Strauss's notoriety has proceeded, after all, much more from the opposition which his views have encountered, than from any de-

<sup>1</sup> Strauss has also published in dogmatic theology a work entitled, *Die christliche Glaubenslehre*, etc., or as Kratander (*Zeugniss für die christliche Wahrheit*, S. 2) with a significant peronomasia terms it *Glaubens-Lexikon*. This has attracted much less attention. Add to this and his *Das Leben Jesu*, one other volume—his *Streitschriften* or *Controversial Writings*, and you have then a complete apparatus for the study of Straussism in its original sources.

<sup>2</sup> A summary view of the Straussian literature, that is, of the principal writings which have appeared in the course of this discussion, the names of their authors, their object, style and merit of their performances, etc. may be found in *Rheinwald's Allgemeines Repertorium*, Bd. 21, 23, 24, 31, 43.

monstration of numbers or strength which his supporters have made in his behalf. Those who have taken part against him exceed by scores those who have attempted to do battle for him.<sup>1</sup> Zeal for the truth of God is not yet wholly extinct in the land of the Reformers; and this zeal, wherever it exists, cannot but display itself whenever any danger, be it real or apparent, seems to threaten the interests of Christianity. "We bar the doors carefully, not merely when we expect a *formidable* attack, but when we have *treasure* in the house." It is truly gratifying to see the proof which this controversy has elicited, that Germany has still so many who continue faithful to the truth, and who can bring to the defence of it an ability and learning equal to the crisis. Again, the civil proceedings, in which Strauss has been involved, have given him a publicity which his writings alone would not have procured him. At the time of the publication of his *Life of Jesus*, he was occupying the place of Repentent in the theological seminary at Tübingen, and at the same time delivering lectures on philosophy in the university. He was immediately called on by the superintendents of public instruction to show, if he could, how the views advanced in this book were to be reconciled with his position as a professed Christian teacher. Failing to make this out to the satisfaction of his judges, he was removed from his office, and thus became at once, in the estimation of many, a martyr to the rights of free inquiry.<sup>2</sup> He was elected, after this, in

<sup>1</sup> It is allowed on all hands, that Strauss has not been able to establish any distinct school of his own. Some individuals have adopted parts of his system, but by this eclecticism itself they declare virtually that as a whole they regard it as inconsistent and untenable. Among those who have written either extended reviews of Strauss in the journals devoted to literature and theology, or separate treatises, are mentioned the names of Steudel, Klaiber, Vaihinger, Hoffmann, Kern, Ullmann, Müller, Paulus, Osiander, Bretschneider, Schweitzer, Schellmeyer, Tholuck, Gelpke, Harless, Kottmeier, Krabbe, Neander, Sack, Lange, Grulich, Theile, Eschenmayer, Heller, Wilke, etc. etc. Some of these names will be recognized as among those of the staunchest defenders of rationalism. The truth is, the critical principles propounded by Strauss are so universally destructive in their nature, that men not only of evangelical faith in the Gospel, but faith of any kind in the history of the past or human testimony in general, find themselves at variance with him.

<sup>2</sup> The ministers of the Prussian government were disposed at first to prohibit the publication of his work in Prussia. But the question was submitted to Neander, and he gave his advice against it. He replied that the doctrine of Strauss was certainly subversive of Christianity and the church; but that the book was yet written without offensive levity, and with scientific earnestness—that the only proper weapons to be used against it were counter argument and discussion, and that as a matter of policy also it should be given over for its

1839, with much opposition and after loud protestation from various quarters, to the professorship of dogmatics and church history in the university of Zürich in Switzerland. But the people of the canton, indignant at the outrage thus offered to their religious feelings, soon rose *en masse* and compelled him to resign his office and withdraw from the country. The excitement and controversy attending these transactions drew on him necessarily universal attention, and rendered him famous throughout Europe. Finally, there are already no slight indications, that the influence of Strauss is waning, and that the impression which he seemed to produce at first, has given way to a more sober estimate of his work considered as an intellectual production, as well as to a conviction of the utter falsity of the critical principles so called, on which it is written. In such a country as Germany, where the learned class is so numerous, there are always many who take no very active interest in the theological results which such controversies are designed to establish, who yet make it a matter of honor to see to it, that literary justice is dealt out to the parties. They constitute a sort of court of science, into which these questions are brought, and where, all polemic feelings being put aside as much as possible, they are decided with reference solely to the skill, ability and general fairness of argument, with which the combatants have maintained their cause.<sup>1</sup> The judgment thus

fate to the public conscience and reason, since a different course would only confer on it a still further factitious celebrity. This advice prevailed; and Neander immediately set himself at work to do his part towards vindicating the safety of such counsel. As the fruit of this effort he soon produced his great work, *Das Leben Jesu Christi in seinem geschichtlichen Zusammenhange und seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, which in the frequency of its republication has kept pace with that of Strauss itself, notwithstanding the accidental eclat of the latter, and has done more unquestionably towards counteracting its pernicious tendency than any other single production. See a generous testimony to its merits, as well as a beautiful tribute to the character of Neander in general, from an opponent in the *Hallische Jahrbücher* for April 1839. On the question of the censorship, Hengstenberg took a different view in his *Kirchenzeitung*, and censured the decision of Neander with great severity. The character of seriousness, it is proper to add, which Neander accords to Strauss's work, must be understood in the spirit of the maxim *a potiori nomen fit*. There are certainly passages in it, which would not be out of place in the pages of Voltaire or Paine, and which contrast strongly enough with the generally earnest tone with which he affects to write. Tholuck has inadvertently upon some of these passages in his *Glaubwürdigkeit d. evang. Gesch.* pp. 41, 42. Allusion will be made again to this topic in the sequel.

<sup>1</sup> The disposition of the German public in such matters is well illustrated by the discussion which Bretschneider's *Probabilia* (de Evang. et Epist. Joannis

given has always great influence in determining the authority and ultimate fate of the views which are the subject of dispute. We feel ourselves borne out now by our means of information in saying, that the scientific public in Germany have decided on the contest between Strauss and his opposers, and have given no doubtful verdict in favor of the latter.<sup>1</sup> This may be inferred, among other proofs, with sufficient certainty from the present tone of the leading critical journals, from the well known character for talents and scholarship of many of those who have signalized themselves on this occasion in defence of Christian truth, and particularly from the style of discussion as regards Strauss individually, which the later publications relative to him have assumed. A politic controversialist does not venture, whatever may be his own private sentiments, to treat an opponent before the public in a manner very much at variance with the general estimation, in which he is held. The bearing which he exhibits towards him will be conformed very much to what is supposed to be the public consequence of the personage, with whom he has to do. Dr. David Friedrich Strauss, on this principle, has ceased certainly to be a very formidable character. His name, whatever terror it may have awakened once, is now pronounced without fear. As the smoke of the battle has cleared up, his dimensions have revealed themselves more clearly to the view of his countrymen; they have verified his humanity, and now treat him just like any other mortal who, though he may have shown some acuteness and said some just things in a very good style in opposition to unwise apologists for the truth, is yet suspected of having gone sadly astray from religion and common sense; that is, they give

---

apostolici, indole et origine), excited some years ago concerning the authenticity of John's Gospel. He took ground against it on account of the difference of contents and coloring which it exhibits as compared with the synoptical Gospels; and his personal authority, as well as the speciousness of his reasoning, procured for a time some currency to his view. But a host of combatants soon rose up on the other side, and maintained the genuineness of John with such evident superiority of learning and argument, that out of deference to public opinion, Bretschneider was obliged to acknowledge himself beaten, and to take back his assertions. His explanation of this procedure (*Dogmat. v. 1. p. 252*) that he foresaw this result, and merely threw out his doubts to provoke inquiry and to establish the Gospel of John on a firmer foundation, may be taken for what it is worth.

<sup>1</sup> The article on *Strauss*, in the *Conversations-Lexikon der Gegenwart*, 1840, may be considered as a fair summing up of the judgment of the critical public in the premises referred to. In a work of that national character, an article of a palpably partizan character would not be expected to find place.

him full credit for his shrewdness—they admit him to be in the right when he is not wrong—they refute him with argument as well as they can whenever he makes himself pretension to argument;—and as for the rest, who can blame them or find fault with their logic, if they are unable to deal with impiety, absurdity and nonsense otherwise than as such?

It is in this general style now intimated, that Dr. Ebrard has taken up the questions at issue between Strauss and his opposers in the work named at the head of this article; and in so doing has reflected, in common with other similar writings which have lately appeared, the present feeling of an extensive portion at least of Germany in respect to this controversy.<sup>1</sup> It does not comport with our object to characterize this able production at much length. It occupies an intermediate position between a regular commentary on the Gospels, on the one hand, and a connected biography of the Saviour on the other. It has this in common with the former, that it discusses the same general topics, such as the plan of the different evangelists, their genuineness, the consistency of their several accounts with each other, which claim the attention of an interpreter; but, it differs from a commentary, inasmuch as it does not profess to give a detailed exposition of the Gospels or of any extended portions of them in continuous order. It resembles, again, a biographical sketch of the Saviour in its attempt to arrange the materials of the evangelical history in their supposed chronological connection, but makes no endeavor, like the *Lives of Christ* which we have, for instance from Hess and Neander, to throw over this naked outline the fulness of representation and freshness of coloring which an expansion of the hints and simple statements of the evangelists render so easy to a master of the art of historical composition. The work has professedly a polemic aim against Strauss,<sup>2</sup> and more particu-

<sup>1</sup> The work of Professor Wieseler, *Chronologische Synopsis der Evangelisten*, etc., which is said to be on a plan very similar to that of Dr. Ebrard, the writer has not seen. It is reviewed in very commendatory terms in a recent number of Tholuck's *Litterarischer Anzeiger*. It is rumored that both these authors have received, since the publication of their works, important academic promotions.

<sup>2</sup> It seems that since Strauss wrote his book, German infidelity has run a new stadium, leaving him who was just now its foremost standard-bearer so far in the rear, that his swifter competitors speak of him as being at present in the same ranks with Hengstenberg and Tholuck. Strauss does not say and does not mean, in the ordinary sense of the expression, that the Gospels are a forgery; but these new lights of infidelity affirm this without reserve. Bruno

larly against that part of his book which professes to compare the different accounts of the Evangelists with one another, and out of the alleged inconsistencies and contradictions to be found in them, to construct an argument in support of his hypothesis of their mythic origin. As a work of critical science, as a general help to the thorough study of the Gospels, it is certainly one of the most useful books of the kind which we have ever seen. But it is especially valuable as presenting to us a critique on Strauss's *Life of Jesus* as a literary and scientific work, and thus enabling us to judge of it precisely in those respects, in which it has arrogated to itself the greatest merit. We propose, therefore, in the sequel of the present Article, to avail ourselves of some of the materials here offered for forming such a judgment,<sup>1</sup> and at the same time to present, so far as it may be necessary for the accomplishment of this particular object, a brief account of the leading notions of Strauss's monstrous hypothesis.

This writer, who has attained so much distinction, was born at Ludwigsburg in Würtemberg, in 1808. He pursued his early studies chiefly at Tübingen, officiated for a short time as vicar to a country curate, and then went, in 1831, to Berlin, where he heard lectures from Schleiermacher. Hegel had died a short time before this, but had left his philosophy in the zenith of its glory, to which Strauss now attached himself, and on which, after his return to Tübingen, he lectured with great applause at the university. At the age of twenty-seven he published his *Life of Jesus*, and thus brought his name for the first time prominently before the public. In this work he has applied the principles of Hegelianism to the interpretation of Scripture, and claims it as his great merit that he was the first to extend the domain of this philosophy to matters of religion. As this system is variously expounded by its teachers, it is not surprising, that some of them,

---

Bauer is the most noted representative of this school. They find but little favor anywhere, so that even de Wette, who has a great talent for finding out the humor of the public says, in one of his last works, that his readers will not expect him to take notice of the objections of such a man as B. Bauer. Dr. Ebrard has devoted some attention, in his work, to this development, as also to the similar one of Gefrörer—hence the title, *Gesammte Evangelienkritik*—but has confined himself mainly to a more respectable antagonist—Strauss.

<sup>1</sup> The materials here used, furnished by Ebrard, are chiefly those contained in the extract at the close of the Article. The other statements made, which are of such a nature as to seem to require documentary justification, have been derived from the sources, either named or intimated, in the progress of the discussion.



as Marheinecke, Rosenkrantz and others who claim to be its true representatives, and to maintain its consistency with revelation, should refuse to acknowledge Strauss as a disciple of this school. As an adherent now of the Hegelian philosophy, according to his exposition of it,<sup>1</sup> it is impossible for him to admit the idea of Christianity as a historical religion, and he must discover consequently some mode of explaining its records, their origin and the contents of them, which is consistent with his philosophy. Here lies the *πρώτον ψεύδος* of his scheme. The question of the genuineness of the Gospels is prejudged before he comes to their examination. It is impossible that any amount of evidence for them should establish their truth against the *a priori* decisions of his philosophy. This philosophy, as expressed in a word, is undisguised pantheism. Here is the norm, to which all must be brought, the *lapis Lydius* which is to try everything. On this principle it becomes with Strauss a philosophical absurdity to suppose that the Gospels are genuine productions, and contain a record of actual occurrences and veritable doctrines as these terms are generally understood; for from such an admission what would follow? Aye—there would be then a personal God—he would be omnipotent and could work a miracle—the soul is immortal, and will live on in the world to come—every individual is accountable for himself, and must look to the consequences of his destiny—doctrines of course which pantheism denies, and which it must view as the brand-marks of spuriousness in any book which professes to teach them. Straussism now proposes to itself the somewhat difficult task of adhering to its philosophy and yet maintaining a show of respect for the Scriptures. It would not venture on the avowal of an open hostility to the word of God.

From this step indeed the rationalism of Germany under all the forms of its manifestation has studiously held itself back.<sup>2</sup> It has

<sup>1</sup> On the relation of Strauss to the Hegelian school of philosophy, see Hagenbach's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, p. 304, 1840. Comp. also Pelt's *Theologische Encyclopædie*, § 70. 4, b. 1843.

<sup>2</sup> It is a singular phenomenon, that the deism of England, on the contrary, which is the same development under another name, has, generally speaking, discarded at the outset and avowedly, the authority of the Bible, and has built its system of religion, so far as it has had any beyond a mere negation of the idea of revelation, professedly on natural grounds. It would be interesting to inquire into the reasons of so different a proceeding. One explanation which has been assigned for it is, that the deists of England have mostly been laymen, disconnected with the church and ecclesiastical establishments, whereas those who have promoted the same movement in Germany have generally been professional theologians.

always aimed at the same object, and that has been to blot out from the Bible all evidences of a supernatural revelation, and to reduce its teachings to a level with those of nature; but it has labored to accomplish this result without acknowledging any inconsistencies between it and a certain reception of the Bible as a source of religious instruction.<sup>1</sup> The methods which it has employed for this purpose have been various, and have been changed from time to time, as their insufficiency and absurdity have become apparent. The one which has been on the whole most prevalent, and which has held possession of the field longest is that of a forced interpretation.<sup>2</sup> On meeting with a miracle or the appearance of a miracle in the Bible, it was explained away as a natural occurrence, either because the sacred writers themselves, it was alleged, really intended to relate it as such, and no other view is authorized by a just construction of their language, (thus in the account of the man healed at the pool of Bethesda, John never thought of relating anything more, it was said, than a case of ordinary cure by bathing), or when the desired result could not be reached in this way, because we are to consider the writers as merely stating their own impressions in regard to the matter, while it belongs to us as interpreters to distinguish between their opinion of an event and the event itself. What these arts were found inadequate to accomplish, it was left to the principle of accommodation, so called, to consummate. The Jews—so the rationalists argued—were looking merely for a temporal king in the Messiah; and Jesus, who was a good man and sincerely desired the moral reformation of his countrymen, took advantage of this idea—(most palpably false, by the way—for what more per-

<sup>1</sup> This remark forms no exception to what was said of Bauer in a preceding note. Infidelity and rationalism are not convertible terms. Every species of the latter is a species of the former, but not the reverse.

<sup>2</sup> This style of exegesis reached its culminating point in Paulus's Commentary on the Gospels. One example of it will suffice;—it is from his remarks on the miracle of the fish and the *stater* in Matt. 17: 24—27. According to Paulus, nothing was further from the intention of the Evangelist than to relate a miracle. Peter was simply to open the mouth of the fish for the purpose of removing the hook, and then carry it to the market, where he would obtain a *stater* from the sale of it; or, as an improvement upon this, in a later edition of his work, Peter was to open his own mouth on the spot (*αἰροῦ!*) in order to cry the fish for sale, etc. It is but little more than a quarter of a century since this mode of treating the Scriptures had the sanction of the leading rationalistic critics of Germany. It is now universally discarded even by them, and is unheard of in their lecture-rooms, except as the illustration of an obsolete absurdity.

fect contrast can be imagined than that which exists between the Saviour as he was and professed to be, and that which the worldly Jews expected of the Messiah),—gave himself out as the Son of God, as the head of a new universal kingdom, as the Judge of the world, and so on, simply in order to procure a more ready reception of his instructions, and to accomplish with better effect the benevolent object of his mission. In this way the Bible seemed to retain in some sort its authority and truth, and yet was robbed of everything which could be construed into evidence of its divinity or of the supernatural character of the dispensations whose history it contains. But this mode of interpretation lost at length its novelty. It violated too many principles of language and common sense to maintain its ground against the stricter views of philology which had begun to prevail; and the spirit of rationalistic criticism transformed itself next from the contents of the sacred writings to the sacred writings themselves. The critics of this school became suddenly endued with a wonderful sagacity for deciding on the genuineness of ancient compositions, for distinguishing by means of certain internal indications of style, idiom and thought, together with a certain inward, undefinable sense of their own, between such parts of these compositions as were true, and such as were false; they could place their hands, with infallible certainty, upon the entire book, in the sacred volume—upon the chapter here and there, or upon the verse which was to be rejected as an interpolation and as unworthy of its reputed divine origin. Before such a process, those parts of the Bible which contained anything offensive to the rationalistic sense, which affirmed, for instance, the reality of miracles, prophetic inspiration and the like, rapidly disappeared; and yet the effort which was thus in fact overturning the foundations of Christianity and all revealed religion, claimed to be nothing more than an assertion of the rights of a just and scientific criticism. But the arbitrary nature of such judgments could not fail to be perceived. They were capable of being exposed, and were exposed; so that rationalism began again to be pressed with the difficulties of its position both as attempting to maintain a mode of attack on the Scriptures which it could not justify at the bar of science, and as seeking to conceal its design by an artifice too shallow to answer any purpose of deception. All these expedients having been exhausted, one might have supposed, that rationalism would be compelled now either to desist from the warfare, or carry it on henceforth without reserve or subterfuge, with

an open assumption of the ground which it really occupied, but which it was so unwilling to avow. To this issue it seemed for a time as if it must come; but at this juncture Strauss presents himself with his mythic scheme, and opens the way for at least one other experiment of the kind which had been so often attempted.

The term *myth*, which has been so much used in modern criticism,<sup>1</sup> is variously explained. The definition of it, which Strauss adopts as regards the Gospels, is that of a *religious idea clothed in a historical form*. This historical form may be, in itself considered, a pure fiction, having no foundation whatever in any actual occurrences, but arising solely from the tendency of the human mind to give to spiritual truths an outward representation, or it may be founded upon certain historical circumstances as a point of departure, which have been gradually enlarged and modified in conformity with the ideas which have sought to express themselves by means of them. The former is the idea of the myth in its purity and universality; and it is this sense of it which Weisse<sup>2</sup> has adopted as the foundation of his attempt to get rid of the facts of the evangelical history. Strauss, on the contrary, employs it in the other sense. He admits that there was such a person as Christ—a Jewish Rabbi—(that is his language) who lived and taught in Palestine at the period which is usually assigned to him—that he collected a circle of disciples whom he impressed with so high an idea of his wisdom and goodness, that they considered him as the Messiah, and thus at length awakened in his own mind an ambition, hitherto foreign to him, of being received in that character. This is the sum of all the historical truth which he allows to be contained in the Gospels. The rest is the result of a disposition on the part of the followers of Christ, which began to manifest itself soon after his death, to glorify their deceased Master in every possible way, and especially by ascribing to him those traits of life and character which the Jews supposed from the Old Testament would be exhibited by the Messiah.

<sup>1</sup> The term is one which plays an important part in all the more recent writers on Greek and Roman mythology. The views of the principal of them—as Heyne, Voss, Buttmann, Creuzer, Hermann, Welcker—as they lie scattered through their numerous writings, are brought together and stated in a summary form by K. O. Müller; *Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie*, S. 317 sq. His own theory also is developed in the above work.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Evangelische Geschichte, kritisch u. philosophisch bearbeitet von Ch. Hermann Weisse*, Leipzig, 1838.—Dr. Ebrard has made the consideration of this form of the mythic system a topic of separate remark in his work, so far as its difference from that of Strauss seemed to require it.

The Gospels, in a word, are, with the exception of the slight historical basis just mentioned, the product of a mere mental effort to realize and embody the rational Messianic idea which prevailed among the Jews so universally at the time of the birth of Christ. The Old Testament, as already intimated, is regarded as the soil, out of which these ideas, which have been rendered thus objective in Christ, are said to have sprung. Thus the temptation of the Saviour, which the evangelists relate, is resolved into a fiction, having its origin in the belief, that good men, as illustrated in the history of Job, are objects of the special hatred and persecution of Satan; and hence this must have been true also of the Messiah. The account of the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes is merely an imitation of the Mosaic account of the manna in Ex. 6: 16; and the transfiguration on Tabor has its type in what is related as having befallen Moses on mount Sinai. The visit of the Magi from the East is said to have been suggested by the prophecy of Balaam in Numb. 24: 17, that a Star should arise out of Jacob, and by the representation in Is. lx. and Ps. lxxii., that distant nations and kings should bring presents of gold, spices and other costly treasure as a tribute to the Messiah. The flight of the holy family into Egypt was intended to correspond to the flight of Moses into Midian, the murder of the children of Bethlehem to that of the children of the Israelites by Pharaoh, the appearance of Jesus at the age of twelve years in the temple, to the somewhat similar narratives respecting Samuel, Solomon, Daniel, (1 K. 3: 23 seq. 1 Sam. iii. Dan. 4: 5 seq.) etc. etc. These are examples of the manner, in which the histories of the Gospels are said to have been formed, or more properly speaking, to have formed themselves. They are the work, not of any single individual or of any fraudulent design, but of a gradual and spontaneous aggregation about the person of Jesus of the various types and analogies which the Jews supposed would be realized in the Messiah. The commonly received opinion respecting the time of the composition and the authorship of the Gospels would be fatal of course to this theory; and this opinion accordingly is without ceremony set aside, and the ground assumed, that the Gospels were written about the middle of the second century after Christ, not by persons who stood in a sufficiently near relation to him to be able to report what they wrote on the authority of their own knowledge and observation, but by individuals whose names are unknown, who put down in good faith as their own belief and that of their contemporaries these mythic

fictions then current, which had gradually sprung up and wrought themselves into a historical form in the manner which has been described. The Gospel of Luke, however, and the Acts are referred by Strauss to a somewhat earlier origin, and the epistles of Paul also, with the exception of particular passages, are allowed to be genuine.<sup>1</sup> His main argument for justifying his assertion, that the Gospels originated at so late a period, is derived from what he represents as their internal condition. Of this he gives his own account; and were there nothing to object to it as regards either the soundness of the critical principles on which he has proceeded in this examination or the accuracy and truth of his statements, it might seem indeed, that we have here no slight obstacle to a literal reception of the Memoirs of the Evangelists. He undertakes to make out, that they offend perpetually against the chronology, history, social customs and institutions of the period, to which they profess to relate, and furthermore that they are full of discrepancies and contradictions as compared with each other, which no art of interpreters and harmonists can possibly reconcile. On this basis he builds his conclusion—the Gospels could not have proceeded from writers who had any personal connection with the transactions and scenes which they relate, but they must have been composed at a period when time had already obscured the original accounts and left room for those intermixtures of the marvellous and incoherent, which they everywhere exhibit, and which mark the mythic creations of every age and people. It is generally acknowledged that Strauss has stated the apparent discrepancies between the Gospels with unusual force and effect; and it is on the ability displayed here, that his pretensions as a writer and critic mainly rest.

It will be perceived at once from the preceding sketch, that the work of replying to Strauss must consist principally in a vindication of the Gospels against the charges which he has preferred against them. The other parts of his hypothesis fall at once, when

---

<sup>1</sup> His views respecting John's Gospel have been vacillating. In the first edition of his work he declares himself fully convinced, that it is not genuine; but in the third edition, after reading the arguments of Neander and de Wette in defence of it, he retracts this opinion so far as to say, that though not yet decided for it, he could no longer as before decide against it. But in the fourth edition of his work, published in 1841, we find, that he has taken back this concession and returned to his first denial. To admit the genuineness of John, even in a qualified sense, and at the same time to pretend to hold the views of Strauss, would seem to be a contradiction in terms.

deprived of this support. If the claims of the Gospels be established and they are shown to be from the hands of the personal followers of Christ, or of their associates, there remains then no interval for the mythic process of which Strauss speaks, and the very idea of it, sufficiently absurd even were we to concede to him the entire interval for which he contends, is seen to be at once the merest dream that ever entered the head of a philosopher. It is with this vindication, as involving obviously the gist of the whole subject, that Dr. Ebrard has occupied himself mainly in the present work. Those more general objections, consequently, which lie against the views of Strauss, he has had less occasion to urge fully, than some other writers who have pursued a different plan. These will be found given at greater length, particularly by Tholuck in the introductory part of his *Credibility of the Evangelical History*,<sup>1</sup> by Ullmann in his work entitled *Historical or Mythic*,<sup>2</sup> and by Julius Müller in his articles in the well known theological Journal, *Studies and Criticisms*,<sup>3</sup> published at Heidelberg. As illustrating the manner, in which this part of the discussion has been conducted, it will not be out of place to mention here some of the leading positions which have been taken against Strauss under this more general view of the subject. We have space only to enumerate them without much expansion.

First, it is affirmed that on Strauss's principles all history loses its certainty, and becomes a mere phantom, an illusion. No biography was ever written of any individual, no history of any kingdom or nation, which may not be resolved into a set of myths as easily as the account of the Saviour contained in the Gospels.<sup>4</sup> All confidence in the past is destroyed; all distinction between the ideal and actual is annihilated, and men can be certain of nothing which has taken place at any period remote at all from their own time, whatever may be the testimony by which it is supported. Second, the theory of Strauss leaves the origin of the Christian church, the rise and spread of Christianity in the world, an un-

<sup>1</sup> Die Glaubwürdigkeit der evangelischen Geschichte, zugleich eine Kritik des Lebens Jesu von Strauss, von Dr. A. Tholuck, 1838.

<sup>2</sup> Historisch oder Mythisch? Beiträge zur Beantwortung der gegenwärtigen Lebensfrage der Theologie, von Dr. C. Ullmann, 1838.

<sup>3</sup> Studien und Kritiken, 1836.

<sup>4</sup> Luther's Leben nach Dr. Caspar, is an ironical attempt of this nature to draw a parallel between Luther and Paul. In design and style of execution it is similar to Whately's Historical Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte—the difference being that this is intended to meet one form of skepticism, and that, another.

solved enigma—an event without any adequate cause or conceivable explanation. It involves the absurdity of a creation out of nothing. It can be shown that Christians existed already in great numbers in every part of the Roman empire at the close of the first century—that they were bound together by the most intimate communion of sentiment and opinion—that they held their principles with such firmness, that no violence of persecution, no blandishments of wealth and power, no terrors of martyrdom could move them from their faith; and yet Strauss tells us, that the idea of this Messiah, whose name they bore and for whom they sacrificed and suffered so much, did not fully develop itself till half a century later than this! Third, the character which the Gospels attribute to the Saviour, is entirely unlike that which the Jews as a people expected that the Messiah would assume. It is not easy in fact to see how the image of him, which they had pictured out to themselves under the influence of their national pride and egotism, could have been more decidedly contradicted than in the person and history of Jesus as presented to us by the evangelists. The idea of such a character as that of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels, was entirely beyond and above the conceptions of the Jews, and so far from being produced by a desire to realize their Messianic hopes, arrayed against itself their strongest prejudices and passions, and from that hour to this has been an object of their most determined rejection and hatred. Fourth, the supposition of Strauss assumes a definiteness and unity in the expectations of the Jews respecting the Messiah, which did not exist. The bulk of the people, as we find it stated also in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, believed that he would be a descendant of David and a native of Bethlehem; but according to the conceptions of the Rabbins, as founded on Dan. 7: 21, he was to be a celestial spirit, who would descend at once from heaven to earth, in order to establish his kingdom—traces of which opinion present themselves in the Gospel of John and in Paul. Some supposed that his dominion would be temporary, others, eternal; some, that he would convert and bless the heathen, others, that he would destroy them; some, that he would restore to life the dead of all mankind, others, that he would raise the Jews only; and so on many other points, their views were in like manner entirely vague and unsettled. Fifth, the anticipations of the Jews respecting the Messiah, whatever they may have been, could have had no influence on the heathen; and yet the great majority of those, who had embraced Christianity before the middle of the se-



cond century, consisted of converts from heathenism. The forming principle, consequently, to which Strauss attributes so much efficacy in the production of the Gospels, was here entirely wanting. To suppose that these histories could have been constructed out of an idea which *really* occupied the minds of men, would seem to be sufficiently absurd; but what are we to think of it, when by far the greater part of those who are said to have been the unconscious instruments of working out this mythical development, had not even this idea itself! Sixth, he attributes to the early Christians a procedure just the opposite of that which they actually adopted. He assumes that they had already in their minds a distinct image of the Messiah, as derived from the symbols and prophecies of the Old Testament, and that they then framed a history for it in accordance with these predictions; whereas it is notorious, both from intimations of the New Testament itself and from other sources, that they were inclined to just the opposite course—that is, having the facts first given—the history itself presented to them—to interpret the prophecies on the principle that their meaning is likely to be best explained by their fulfilment. They no doubt carried this principle so far, as to put often a forced interpretation on Scripture, in order to increase the testimony of prophecy to the truth of Christianity; but that only shows how impossible it would have been, under such circumstances, that the Gospels should have been produced in the manner that Strauss represents. Seventh, all history proves that nothing which can be pretended to be in the remotest degree analogous to what is supposed here, has ever taken place, except in the most barbarous times and after the lapse of an almost interminable series of years; and yet Strauss would persuade us that Christianity from being a mere fiction established itself in the minds of men as a historical verity, in the incredibly short period of little more than a century after the death of its Founder, and that too in the most enlightened age of Greek and Roman civilization! Finally, his system is affirmed to be full of self-contradictions and to contain in itself the elements of its own refutation. He denies, for instance, the genuineness of the evangelists in general, but receives them as trust-worthy witnesses whenever they assert anything which he can employ as an argument for impeaching their own credit. He professes to regard the contents of our Gospels as the result of a process of symbolization, so simple and natural, that it was carried on by a thousand minds at once, without consciousness or design; and yet when he comes to the actual details, he is obliged to assume a degree

of reflection and study in adjusting the character of Christ to its supposed mental type, utterly irreconcilable with the idea of any such spontaneous operation.<sup>1</sup> He allows that Luke probably wrote his Gospel in the first age of Christianity; and, as every one knows, this Evangelist opens his history with the announcement (Luke 1: 1—3), that many had already preceded him in writing on the same subject.<sup>2</sup> Even his history, therefore, was not the first which had been composed. Written accounts of the life of Christ were already in existence and well known.<sup>3</sup> They must have made their appearance, consequently, almost immediately after the crucifixion of Jesus. There could have been no interval of any duration between that event and their composition. This is justly regarded as decisive of the whole question. It is thus proved, that written documents relating to the Founder of Christianity have existed from the very first, and that there has never been any such traditional period in the church, as Strauss pretends, and as is necessary to the support of his hypothesis, during which men were dependent for their knowledge concerning Christ upon uncertain oral accounts, which were transmitted from one to another. This history had already been written out by various hands and scattered far and wide, before the mythic

<sup>1</sup> Here is an instance of it which Ebrard notices. The narrative of the scene of Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve years, is said to have arisen in the following manner—*ex uno disce omnes*: 'It was perceived in the case of the Old Testament heroes (1 Kings 3: 23 seq. Susanna 45 seq.,—the distinction between canonical and apocryphal books, Strauss ignores) that the spirit which impelled them manifested itself in their twelfth year; and hence it was thought (not by any body in particular of course—*dachte man!*) that the spirit could not have been concealed longer than this in the case of Jesus; and as Samuel and Daniel had given proofs, at that age, of their future destination as seers and rulers, so Jesus must also have exhibited himself, at that period of life, in the part which he was afterwards to act (!) as the Son of God and the teacher of mankind.' Such an artificial combination of different traits from the histories of the Old Testament, such a studied selection of particulars and circumstances for the purpose of investing the character of Christ with greater majesty and glory, is conceivable only in connection with a wilful and designed fabrication. What becomes then of the pure mythic formations, of which Strauss has so much to say!

<sup>2</sup> It is worthy of remark too, that Luke does not mean to intimate by reference to this fact, as some have supposed, that these accounts were inaccurate and worthless, and that he wrote, therefore, in order to give more authentic information. His design is merely apologetic;—since so many others, he means to say, had ventured to write upon a subject of such difficulty and magnitude, it would not be considered as presumption in him to make a similar attempt.

<sup>3</sup> Papias, it is expressly mentioned, an immediate disciple of the apostles, had a written Gospel in his hands.

period, to which Strauss would refer the formation of our Gospels, had arrived. Had any such tendency to exaggeration as he supposes discovered itself then, those histories would have served as an effectual check upon it, and preserved the great body of Christians at least, from lending an ear to fictions, which they saw to be unsustained by their written testimonies.<sup>1</sup>

It may appear singular, that the work of Strauss should have excited so much surprise, when the idea, on which it is founded, instead of being advanced now for the first time, had long been familiar to the minds of a certain class of German critics. Semler was the first perhaps, who distinctly proposed it, and we find it actually applied by him to the histories of Samson and Esther. After this it was adopted without reserve by such writers as Eichhorn, Kayser, Gabler, Ammon, Berthold, Sieffert and others, in particular passages both of the Old and the New Testaments, that is to say, whenever they met with narratives and representations, which in their more obvious, historical sense, implied a supernatural interposition, and from which they could not easily remove the appearance of this, either by impeaching the integrity of the text or by explaining away its meaning by a forced interpretation. In this manner and by such critics, the mythic principle had been gradually extended to numerous portions of the Old Testament and to various facts in the history of the Saviour, as his supernatural birth, his resurrection, ascension, and still other events of the like miraculous character. Strauss's book contains in fact very little in its actual details, which has not been anticipated by preceding writers. His peculiarity consists merely in this, that he has given to this mode of interpretation a degree of unity and completeness, which it had not yet received. He was the first to open his mind to the conception that the means which had been employed to do away with certain parts of revelation, might be employed with equal effect to do away with the whole of it. Others who had gone before him in the same career stopped short of the issue, to which their principles were leading them;—he took up the work where they left it and urged it through with unflinching constancy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The history of what befel the apocryphal Gospels, so called, will occur to the reader as confirming this remark.

<sup>2</sup> Strauss is to be regarded as a legitimate product of the rationalistic style of criticism which has been so much in vogue in Germany for the last half century or somewhat longer. He has at length brought its tendencies to their extreme result and illustrated them on a scale which now amazes even many of

It will sound strangely to our readers to be told after this, that Strauss still pretends to hold fast to the truth of Christianity and would deem it a serious breach of charity for any one to question the sincerity of his faith in its records. The explanation of this mystery may be given in few words. According to his philosophy, the truth of the facts of Christianity is not necessary to the truth of Christianity itself. Christianity is an idea, entirely independent of the history so called, in which it has accidentally clothed itself; and if a person holds merely to this idea, whatever it may be, he holds to all which is true and all which was ever intended to be taught as true in the Christian writings; and is entitled to the name of a believer. Thus, one of the great truths asserted in Christianity, as he affirms, is the reality of the divine and human in man, that is, in every man—for pantheism makes us all of course—entire and several—parts of the deity;—and this truth, after having so long struggled to bring itself to the distinct consciousness of mankind, has at length attained its fullest development and recognition in the person of Jesus Christ. That is, the human mind has employed him—it being a matter of indifference to the truth itself, whether there ever was such a person or not—as the representative of this idea;<sup>1</sup> and if any one receives this idea, he receives all which the Gospel teaches respecting the divinity of Christ and the miraculous works attesting this character, which he is said to have performed. So also of various other truths, which find their symbolization in the history which the Evangelists have related. Indeed, since these truths have been embodied, so to speak, in a more impressive manner and with greater purity in the Gospels, than in any other similar mode of representation, Christianity is to be considered as the most perfect religious dispensation which has yet appeared, and as marking the highest progress which the human race have hitherto made, in the apprehension of moral and spiritual truth.

This mode of viewing the Scriptures creates obviously a necessity for some method of interpretation, conformed to it. Here Strauss's system has to encumber itself with a new mass of absurd-

---

those who have long labored zealously at the same vocation, but without a full consciousness of their position. This topic is well treated by Amand Saintes in his *Histoire critique du Rationalisme en Allemagne, depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours*, p. 183 sq.

<sup>1</sup> Hence the inappropriateness of the title of his work—*Life of Jesus*—has with reason been objected to Strauss by his opponents; for it is not a *Life* which it contains, but a detailed argument to show that there never could have been any such thing as the title assumes.

eties. All the ordinary, established laws of language are disregarded, and a set of hermeneutical rules introduced as loose and visionary, as any which were ever applied to the Bible by a Hermas, Origen or Swedenborg. The literal or historical sense must be discarded. There is always a deeper meaning for the initiated, than that which lies upon the surface. While the ordinary reader attaches himself to the outward form, the philosopher penetrates to the spirit.<sup>1</sup> That which is related as fact being understood as symbol, this symbol will be explained of course as denoting any idea which the fancy of the interpreter may choose to connect with it. In this way Hegelianism with a mock reverence for the word of God, may adduce its Scripture warrant for all its dogmas and blasphemies;—the Bible is converted into a perfect *quodlibet ex quodlibet*,<sup>2</sup> and there is not a philosopher who

<sup>1</sup>It may be well enough for common people to remain connected with a church; but Strauss affirms (II. S. 616) that philosophers should be exempted from that obligation (Church-membership, in Germany, it will be recollected, is a matter of birth-right—Jews and anabaptists excepted). A waggish opponent thinks, that it would have to depend probably upon an academic examination to determine whether a man was philosopher enough to justify this concession, and that it would become, therefore, practically rather a queer business.

<sup>2</sup>Clansen (*Hermeneutik des neuen Testaments*, etc. S. 336) characterizes the hermeneutical system of Strauss thus: "If we compare the results of the mythic treatment of the Scriptures with those of the allegorizing mode, we shall find that they are in many respects entirely the same, yet with one fundamental difference. Both agree, for instance, in the principle that the dignity and divinity of the Scriptures demand a departure from the historical sense. In the language of Strauss himself (Ausz. 2. S. 2) "either the divine cannot have taken place in this manner or that which has taken place in this manner cannot be divine." In order, therefore, not to be obliged to give up the absolute truth of the contents of the Bible, it is necessary, as the only course left, to abandon their historical truth. Thus, the two systems agree in reference to their general method, and in many of the details also of such an exposition of the text. But in respect to the principle on which they are based, there is an important difference. The allegorical theory of interpretation takes for granted, that the objective truth, that which was intended to be conveyed, is identical with that presented in the written Word. Where a collision is affirmed to exist between the two, it can be regarded, as apparent only and resulting from an illusory view of the letter of the text. To remove this, will be the work consequently of the interpreter; and hence, when the allegorizer relinquishes the historical sense, he does it only in order to penetrate more deeply into the interior of the Word and draw out thence the meaning which is said to have been designed by the Holy Spirit, the author of the Scriptures.—The mythical style of interpretation, on the contrary, is founded professedly on a strict distinction between the representation of things as given in the Scriptures, and the real import of them, as ascertained by an enlightened philosophy, without respect to the intention of the writer."

has lived from Confucius to Schelling, who might not with equal propriety plead its authority for his wisdom or his ravings.

We have not space to pursue further these topics. It only remains for us now to endeavor to assist the reader in forming some general conception of the manner, in which Strauss has developed his internal argument, as it is termed, against the genuineness of the Gospels. The nature and object of this have been already stated. It professes to be founded on a comparison of the Gospels with each other, and with other writings, Jewish as well as Greek and Roman, which illustrate the same period of history. Out of this comparison he undertakes to show, that the Evangelists abound in the most palpable inconsistencies and self-contradictions, and that they are utterly at variance also with other unimpeachable historical authorities. In this way, he would impose on the Gospels a character, corresponding to that of the origin while he imputes to them—he would make them out to be the productions of men who lived at a remote period from that of the scenes and events which they describe and which exhibit proof, in this contradictory form of their narratives, of the vague, uncertain manner in which they were handed down for so long a time from one generation to another.

That the ground over which this part of the work conducts us, is free from difficulty, no one who has studied the Gospels critically, will pretend to deny. Strauss is not the first who has made this discovery. The apparent discrepancies between the Gospels were noticed by the earliest Christian writers, and received from them the attention which, as Christian apologists, they were bound to give to them. Augustine has left us a treatise—*De Consensu Evangelistarum*—on this very subject. Similar works were composed by Eusebius and Ambrose.<sup>1</sup> The same ground has been traversed by a thousand writers since their time; and as often as a new commentary has been written on the Gospels with any pretensions to critical merit, it has repeated and explained these difficulties. It has been said with probable truth, that in Strauss's whole work there are not perhaps twenty of these discrepancies between the Evangelists, as they are called, which have not been pointed out by previous writers, and for which a solution has not been proposed. It has been shown, that a portion of them, as urged by objectors, consist entirely of misstatements which need only to be placed in a correct light, in order to

<sup>1</sup> The title of Eusebius's work is *περὶ τῆς τῶν εὐαγγελίων διαφωνίας*; that of Ambrose, *Concordia evangelii Matthæi et Lucæ*.

have their groundlessness perceived—that some of them rest upon the ignorance of critics themselves in regard to language or a deficiency of information in some other branch of antiquity—that some of them which for a time appeared to be incapable of explanation, have been since cleared up by more extended research and the advancement of science—that many of them result merely from the fragmentary form, in which the Evangelists have related their history, and that in those cases in which they seem to differ from each other, it may reasonably be resolved into the imperfections of our own knowledge, and that in those cases again, in which they disagree with other writers, they are entitled, considered merely as historians, and all question of their inspiration apart, to as much credit, as Josephus or Philo or Tacitus or any one else, whose authority has been so confidently arrayed against them.<sup>1</sup>

But all this avails nothing for Strauss. Things remain for him as they have been from the beginning—criticism has made no progress since the days of Porphyry;<sup>2</sup> Chubb, Morgan, Reimarus<sup>3</sup> and such like, are the only men of true discernment, while the rest of the world have been deceived by superficial appearances, and need still to have their errors and credulity, corrected and exposed. This task has been so often undertaken, yet without success, that one would think that some special fitness for it

<sup>1</sup> It will not escape recollection, that there is a positive as well as a negative side to this subject. An irrefragable argument for the credibility of the Evangelists may be derived from their incidental coincidences, as compared with each other, and their remarkable fidelity to the chronological, social, civil, and geographical relations of their age and country. Our English theological literature can boast one work relating to this subject, which has not its superior in any language,—we mean Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*. It is the arsenal, from which the Germans themselves have drawn their best weapons in the present warfare.

<sup>2</sup> This heathen philosopher wrote a work in the third century, entitled—*κατὰ ἑρμηνείαν λόγος*. The arguments on which he principally insists here, are the contradictions which he affirmed to exist in the Scriptures of the Christians, and the allegorizing mode of interpretation, to which a portion of them were addicted.

<sup>3</sup> It was supposed for a long time by many, that the Wolfenbüttel Fragments were the production of the poet Lessing, and that his pretence of having found them in the library at Wolfenbüttel was a mere fiction. This opinion of their authorship has been proved at length to be incorrect. It is now known, that the writer of them was H. S. Reimarus, a pastor and professor at Hamburg, who died in 1781. His positions, though savoring of a skepticism unparalleled for that period, were very moderate compared with those of Strauss, and are not irreconcilable with a conviction of the truth of the sacred records.

would be necessary, in order to warrant now a renewal of the attempt, with any prospect of a better result. Mere elegance of style, dexterity in stating the points of an objection with force, hardihood of assertion, unbounded egotism, contempt for the opinions and cold-blooded indifference to the dearest hopes of mankind, would not seem to be sufficient qualifications for undertaking this labor anew. Surely, some new discoveries have been made which are to take the world by surprise. Recesses of science have been explored, hitherto unsealed to mortal eyes. Our champion must have brought to his work stores of erudition, before which the learning of all Christian scholars sinks away into insignificance and contempt. We are now assuredly about to hear the testimony of witnesses against the Gospels, who have never yet spoken, and whom it has been reserved to the indefatigable Dr. Strauss, in the illimitable excursions of his far reaching scholarship, to discover for the first time, and to bring forward, on this occasion of the re-hearing of this so often adjudicated question.

How far these expectations are realized by the actual result, might be shown by following Dr. Ebrard in his detailed exposure of some of the objections which Strauss has urged against the history of the Saviour. But we have the means of satisfying the curiosity of our readers on this point in another way. In the first part of his treatise, Dr. Ebrard makes a thorough business of examining and refuting the objections of Strauss, in connection with the particular passages in the Gospels, on which they are founded. He then at the commencement of his second part presents a summary view of the critical principles which are assumed as the foundation of these objections, and with the soundness or unsoundness of which they must stand or fall. At the same time he gives us a clue to the literary pretensions of our critic, and reveals some secrets of book-making, which are adapted to put us on our guard against first appearances. From this statement as drawn out by our author, any one can judge both how really formidable is this famous attack which Strauss has made on Christianity, and how far authorized he is, by any superiority of knowledge and learning, to look down with scorn upon the host of Christian scholars whom he has treated with so much contempt. Dr. Ebrard presents this critique—such it virtually is—on Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, under the head of a *Receipt* for enabling any one who chooses, to produce a similar book, and thus to emulate this great author, in the renown which he has won. We



shall conclude the present Article, therefore, by copying out for our readers this receipt with some considerable fulness. Here it is.

## RECEIPT

*For writing a Life of Jesus like that of Dr. David Fr. Strauss.*

(a) Before you begin, go to an antiquarian book-store and buy a copy of LIGHTFOOT and WETSTEIN, for the sake of their Rabbinic learning; and then fetch from some public library the second part of HAVERCAMP'S JOSEPHUS, and opening it at the Register, set it on the table before you.

(b) You are now to task yourself for an introduction. Let it be something written in your finest style, in which you will have much to say about science, Origen and his allegorical interpretation and various other matters, with some flourishes at last respect your subject, how deeply affecting, how beautiful and grand it is, though as to historical reality you will not presume to claim a great deal for it.

(c) You enter next on the work itself, and must commence with special care. There are four histories before you, from which you are to draw your materials. You have nothing to do here with the question, whether these books are biographies or compositions of some other kind, whether everything is narrated in the exact order of its occurrence or not, whether all the writers had the same plan or a different one, etc. But you assume without mooting the question at all, that these four histories are so many chronological biographies, written entirely on the same plan, for the same object and in the same manner. This of course you will not be so simple as to say expressly; but if two of the books happen not to agree at any time, you will proceed just as if that which you do not say, were a point taken for granted beyond all dispute. Your readers will be none the wiser for it. Comp. Str. B. I. p. 285, 294, 407, 500, 574, 650, 718, 733, 738.

(d) You take up now the contradictions of your four sources. If these are trivial and lie merely in a different mode of representation, you then pretend that as for yourself, you attach no great importance to them, but at the same time you take care to bring them all forward and to put them in as imposing an attitude as possible. To illustrate this, suppose for example, you were writing a life of Farel. In one of your sources it is said, Farel was a reformer from Frankfort, and met with Calvin at Geneva; but in another of them, Calvin came to Geneva, where he saw Farel

and Viret, and still in a third, Farel visited Viret, in whose room was a French traveller, Calvin. Here you reason thus: According to A, Calvin is already in Geneva, and Farel finds him there, while according to B and C, Calvin finds Farel; according to C, it is Farel who calls upon Viret, while according to B, it is Calvin who makes the visit to Farel and Viret; according to C, the meeting of Farel and Calvin is an accidental one, while according to B, Calvin appears to have sought the interview by design; according to C, the meeting takes place in Viret's room; according to B, it has entirely the appearance, as if it took place in a room which Viret and Farel occupy together. Comp. Str. † 109, 135, and indeed §§ 17—143.

(e) If the contradictions are really great, and such as to indicate to an unprejudiced person, that the events which two of the sources relate are entirely different from those related in the two others, you are then, either silently to assume the identity of the two accounts, or to seek to render this plausible by urging the points of similarity. In this way you can show off a rich stock of contradictions. Thus, for example, A says: "Cajus, on a certain occasion, met a carriage full of country people who were riding home from a church service. Just at that moment an old beggar woman passed by and asked them—they were singing merrily at the time—for a present, but received none. Cajus took out his purse and gave her a few groschen. Grateful for his kindness, she kissed his hand and prayed that God would bless him and his family." B says: "The wife and children of Cajus had gone on a certain occasion to visit an aged aunt. Cajus could scarcely wait for their return. Towards evening he went out on the way to meet them, and the carriage soon appeared. The children, when they saw their father, shouted with joy; and on coming nearer, he perceives that their aged relative herself sat with them within. He sprang upon the door-step of the carriage, and, full of joy, kissed her hand." You put on now a conscientious mien, and discourse after this wise: "On account of the differences here, the harmonists have attempted to explain the two accounts as referring to different transactions. But who does not see the violence of this assumption? Both times, we have a Cajus who goes out to walk; both times, a carriage full of people who both times sing and shout; both times, Cajus meets with the carriage; both times, a family is mentioned; both times, an aged woman figures in the scene; both times, the hand is kissed. That the two narrators wished, therefore, to relate one and the

same occurrence, admits of no question. It is quite another matter, whether in the manner in which they relate it, they do not contradict themselves. According to A, it was a carriage full of people, who have no particular connection with Cajus—peasants, it would seem; according to B, they are his children; according to B, the carriage has a door-step—it was a coach, therefore; according to A, it appears as if it was a common wagon; according to A, the carriage is returning from church-service, according to B, from a visit. According to A, the woman is a beggar woman and receives from Cajus an alms; B not only knows nothing of any alms, but makes the beggar woman his aunt. According to A, it is the woman who kisses his hand, and indeed, as would seem, upon the ground, by the side of the wagon; according to B, it is he who kisses her hand and in the carriage itself. He who does not perceive now, that we have to do here with two secondary, distorted accounts of some legendary event, does not know what distorted or legendary means. Comp. Str. § 89, 101, B. II p. 96 and elsewhere.

(f) Nay, even if the *time* in one authority is *expressly* different from that in the other, still you must assume the identity of the two events; and now your contradictions will become as plentiful, as you can wish. For example, A says: "Cajus travelled to Rome in his thirtieth year, and saw St. Peter's church," and B says: "Cajus travelled in his fortieth year to Erfurt and visited the great clock." Here you find the first contradiction in this, that according to A, Cajus travels to Rome, according to B, to Erfurt—the second in this, that according to A, he sees St. Peter's church, according to B, the great clock—the third is this, that A and B contradict themselves in reference to the period of life when Cajus is said to have made the journey in question. Comp. Str. B. II 505 and elsewhere.

(g) If you find any event related only by A and B, but not by D and C, you are not to inquire whether A and B may have had special grounds for mentioning it, which the others had not, but you say at once—"C and D *know nothing* of this event or circumstance." Comp. ex. gr. Str. B. I. p. 428, 536, 677, 686, 727, 744; II. p. 20, 49, 123, and other places.

(h) When three writers who are independent of each other, relate an event, it must be strange indeed, if one of them does not describe it more minutely, the others, less so. This circumstance now you must turn to account, and always find a "climax," in the different versions of the story. Thus, for example, A says:

VOL. II. No. 1.

"Cajus came into the forest, and found a wounded stag and healed it." B says: "Cajus went out to walk, and as he came to the borders of a forest, he saw a stag lying there, wounded by a thorn, which he extracted;" C says: "Cajus went into a forest to walk, and heard a groaning; he went in the direction of the noise and saw, etc." Evidently a "climax," you must now exclaim! The locality is designated by A only as a forest; by B as the border of the forest, and the wound is said to have been occasioned by a thorn. C, finally, has resolved the accidental finding of the animal into a hearing of its groans, and a gradual approach to the spot." Comp. Str. B. II. p. 143 and elsewhere.

(i) In certain cases, you can avail yourself also of another artifice. Suppose, A related a circumstance *m*, and B related the same circumstance, but added at the same time attendant circumstances *n*, *o*, *p*, not mentioned in the account of A, which are of such a nature, however, that the circumstance *m* occurring, they must necessarily *eo ipso* have taken place along with it. Here now you are not to say: "If the statement of A, that *m* occurred, be true, then the statement of B, that *n*, *o*, *p* also (as necessary consequences of *m*) occurred, must likewise be true;" but you say just the reverse;" "B has merely *conjectured* the attendant occurrence of *n*, *o*, *p*." For example: A says: "The tree fell to the ground;" B says: "The tree fell to the ground; its branches were broken to pieces, and much of the fruit hanging upon them, being loosened by the shock, fell off." You say now thus: "B adds to the general fact the breaking of the branches and the falling off of the fruit as accompanying circumstances. We need not hesitate long upon the question, whence did he know this. If the tree fell, he said to himself, nothing is more likely than that some of its branches were broken, and much of the fruit shaken off." Comp. Str. B. II. p. 490.

(k) Having found now a sufficient number of contradictions between the different accounts of the narrators, you pass next to the *internal difficulties* which lie in each individual history, or in the *subjective event* itself, to which the history relates. Here you enter on a field, from which you can gather ample spoils. Every event is either simple and related only in its most general traits, or it is described fully with an enumeration of all its circumstances. If the former be the case, you then say: "This plain, unadorned representation is perfectly agreeable to the spirit of the primitive, legendary age, in which the story had its origin;" but if the latter be the case, you say: "The minuteness with which

the narrator has dressed out the event in all its circumstantial drapery, shows most clearly, that the exaggerating power of tradition has been at work here." Comp. Str. B. I. p. 383, 395 b., 450, 567, 635, 728. II. 24 f, 36 f, and other places. Proceed in this way, and you will never find yourself at a loss. You can turn anything into a myth, whether stated by your narrator in one form or another. Say what he will, it is myth, and myth must remain.

(l) A bold and impudent falsification of the facts, you will occasionally find very useful. By mere assertion or the gratuitous introduction of some trait unknown to your author, you can make the particulars of a statement appear entirely contradictory to each other. You need have no fear of such a step, as if it might be hazardous; scores of readers will believe you the sooner for so dashing a manoeuvre. Thus, for example, it is said, "Cajus was a faithful father, and devoted much time and labor to the education and instruction of his children;" and, in another passage, it is related, that a son of Cajus, now grown up, met with a man who had previously been his teacher. You have only now to pervert the first passage, so as to make it affirm expressly, that Cajus gave himself all the instruction to his children, which they ever received, and then you can ask, "how could his son meet with a teacher of his, when he never had any teacher except his own father?"

(m) Another little stratagem, to which you can resort, is that of constantly putting the question, what was the *object*, when a thing is so plain as to be evident of itself. If Cajus makes a deep and respectful bow to an aged man who meets him, you must ask: "What was the object of that bow? Was it intended merely to please and gratify the old man? But how can it be supposed, that the compliment of a stranger would afford an old man so much pleasure? Or did Cajus perform that act, in order to express his views respecting the reverence which is due to old age in general? A very good object, certainly, but there was no spectator present to profit by the example, and he would have done better at all events to have inculcated that principle publicly in a Compendium of Morals. Or will any one say, that it was to this particular individual that he wished to make such a demonstration of his sentiments? This, again, is not without its difficulty. The act being merely a silent one, might have been misunderstood; and he would have been surer of his object, to have explained it in express terms. And besides, what interest could he have in forcing upon a stranger, in so hasty a manner, an expres-

sion of his views upon a moral subject of this nature?" Comp. Str. B. I. p. 221, 261, 290, 556, 562, etc.

(n) It will be found that in the whole course of a history certain particular circumstances occur repeatedly, though in every separate passage where they are mentioned, they are sufficiently explained. The causes which occasion their recurrence, are always either specified or intimated. In such cases, you must make it a point to take these circumstances out of their connection, and to represent them as proceeding from a studied design of the writer, consequently as a pure invention on his part. If, for example, one of your sources relates in a certain place, that Cajus returning from a walk sat down to table, and again, in two other passages that he went out, on two different occasions, before dinner—induced indeed every time so to do by special reasons—you must then say: "It appears to have been a standing rule with Cajus, to walk or go out before dinner. Who does not see in this the design of the writer to distinguish Cajus from other men, since he represents him as going out for exercise in the forenoon, while the general practice is to do this in the afternoon. Comp. Str. B. II. p. 585, where John's outrunning Peter is said to be one of a series of incidents, introduced for the purpose of conferring a superiority upon John over Peter. For other similar manoeuvres of Strauss, see the author's work, Theil. I. § 78, 4.

(o) If you find that any difficult point has not been satisfactorily explained hitherto by any commentator, you need not ask, whether it can be thus explained; but you select two from the entire number of the different explanations offered, which distinctly contradict each other, and both of which are untenable. You now reason thus: "This explanation is impossible; that also is impossible. The matter therefore is inexplicable. Comp. Str. B. I. p. 226 f.

(p) But it is time to remind you of your learning. You have no conception what an effect it has now-a-days to see a mass of citations in a book under the text. "Ah —, I understand that"—you say — "but where shall I obtain this learning. I have not read either Josephus, or to confess the truth, a great deal of anything else. My dear friend, that makes no difference. The exegetical Manuals of Paulus, De Wette, Olshausen, and some antiquated commentaries and monographs you have already studied somewhat; Wetstein and Lightfoot lie before you; you own Wiener's Bible-Dictionary; and luckily, Havercamp's Josephus has several capital Registers. You need not suppose it necessary to

have read everything which you quote. Heaven forbid! Wherever you find citations—in Winer, in Paulus or elsewhere—copy them off without misgiving,—they are lawful plunder. Only think what a learned man the world will take you to be! How must such a hope fire your soul! But it may not be amiss to be a little particular in my instructions here. — You begin with Paulus. Here you labor at one point. You must amuse your reader with examples of his style of forced interpretation, and show at great length, how very *unnatural* his natural explanations are. Olshausen, you approach in a different way. He is not, confessedly, free from faults. His greatness consists not so much in the acuteness of his harmonistic talent, as in depth of Christian feeling and in his power of developing the spiritual fulness of the divine Word. In this respect his name marks an era in criticism. As a reformer of the shallow, insipid exegesis which rationalism had brought into vogue, he stands by the side of Schleiermacher and Neander, who produced a similar revolution in dogmatics and church history. His merits, however, you must overlook and attack him upon his weak side. You must hunt up as many instances as possible of his unsuccessful attempts to harmonize the evangelists, and point at them the shafts of your keenest ridicule and satire.—In Lightfoot, you must seek bravely for Rabbinic passages, whenever and wherever you can.—In Josephus, whenever the name of a city or any single political event comes in your way, you must scan the Register, and happy will you feel yourself to be, if Josephus does not mention this name or event. You then trumpet it forth in triumph as a proof, that Josephus “*knew nothing of it.*” Whether the name or event was important enough to be mentioned by him, you need not trouble yourself to ask; nor, as to the plan of Josephus, of which you are ignorant, need you make any inquiry. You take it for granted, that Josephus *must record every thing*; what does not stand in the Register of Josephus, did not exist—it is something which never took place.

(9) Finally, you are to read through also the *apocryphal Gospels*; do not be alarmed—it will not cost you much time. The most ridiculous distortions and caricatures of the life of Jesus, which you find there, you will sedulously collect and present them as parallel to the simplest biblical narrations. You can safely assume, that the majority of your readers have not read these apocryphal compositions in full; and so will not perceive, as they otherwise would, the utter irrelevancy of these pretended

parallelisms. Thus, for example, if a person reads in one book—"Cajus was very old, and when he went abroad, two of his sons were accustomed to lead him,"—and in another book—"Cajus was over a thousand years old, and was so weak, that he could not move a limb, but his sons took him upon their shoulders and bore him about, and his beard grew to be more than forty ells long"—every one sees that the first is a sober statement, but the second, an absurd tale. You must place them both, however, as parallel to each other thus: "Cajus is said according to A, to have become very old; we find precisely the same in the apocryphal book B, where we find even the number of his years mentioned as one thousand, and the length of his beard as forty ells long. Both accounts agree also in respect to the great bodily weakness which the old man suffered at this advanced period, since according to A, he was led by his sons, while in B, this legendary incident is already magnified into his being carried by his sons. One might attempt, indeed, to reconcile this by saying, that he was at first led, and afterwards, as his weakness increased, that he was carried; but it is manifest, that we have before us merely a mythic picture in both accounts. *Comp. Str. B. I. p. 226 f.*

And such stuff,<sup>1</sup> can it be supposed, that my readers will receive with patience? My dear friend, should you apply this mode of proceeding to any ordinary history, containing nothing of a miraculous nature, no one indeed would believe what you say—nay, the world would consider you as absolutely mad. But if you apply it to a section of the Bible, to a supernatural history, you may be sure of a legion of admirers, who will stand ready to catch up your words and echo them with thoughtless applause. Observe well, it is against the miracles alone that the skepticism in this case is directed. These, some men would at all hazards discredit and cancel from the records of truth; and any procedure which is designed to explain the sources of the evangelical history as unhistorical, they applaud as an exhibition of the greatest mental acuteness, whereas, were it applied to any other writing, they would undoubtedly pronounce it uncritical and nonsensical.

One word more, I beg to add, in conclusion. In some persons there is still left a spark of that weakness which is called reverence for the Bible. So long as this weakness exists, it will stand in your way, counteracting the impression which your investiga-

<sup>1</sup> A milder term here would not answer. The word in the German is "Zeug" and not "Stoff."



tions are intended to produce. Seek, therefore, on every possible occasion, to weaken and destroy it. The practised eye will not fail to discern such opportunities. Such passages, for instance, as *Matt. 17: 24—27. 21: 10.* etc., you will not suffer to pass unimproved for this purpose. In particular, I would remind you, that the cross on Golgotha is the place where the Saviour of men was mocked eighteen hundred years ago, and where it will be specially seemly to renew that derision, if any one has a disposition for it at the present day. Go thou now and do in like manner. "I will give thee the whole world, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. And your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall become as gods." *Probatum est.*

---

#### ARTICLE IV.

##### PRINCIPLES OF LATIN LEXICOGRAPHY.

Translated by Professor T. D. Woolsey, Yale College.

[The first part of the Latin dictionary of Wilhelm Freund, of Breslau appeared in 1834, and contained the letters A—C. The second part was published in two numbers, in 1836, and 1844, and went from D to K. The fourth part, (R—Z) was published in 1836, and the third part has been announced as about to appear in 1844. We believe that this lexicon will take a very high rank, probably before any other Latin, and certainly before any Greek one in existence. The preface, containing the author's views of lexicography and an account of his method, has a bearing by no means confined to the Latin or to any particular set of languages, and is, we think, calculated to be useful to all whose labors are directed to lexicography as well as to scholars in general. A translation of this preface is now laid before the reader.—TR.]

BETWEEN the first publication of the Latin lexicons of Forcellini, Gesner, and Scheller, and the appearance of the present work, more than fifty years have elapsed; and during just this interval, classical philology has met with so thorough a transformation that for this very reason the attempt to bring out a dictionary of the Latin tongue, which shall better correspond with the altered standpoint of the philological sciences, requires no excuse. Still it is