

F. C. Baur's Place in the Study of Jewish Christianity
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I. Introduction

Ferdinand Christian Baur was born in 1792 and died in 1860, having lived in Württemberg in southwest Germany his whole life. After teaching briefly at the lower seminary in Blaubeuren, he was called to be professor of theology at the University of Tübingen in 1826, where he remained until his death 34 years later. Throughout his career, he produced an astonishingly wide range of work (Emanuel Hirsch reportedly counted 16,000 printed pages), on subjects ranging from the history and philosophy of religion to the critical study of the New Testament, from multi-volume works in the history of dogma to treatises on church history and polemical writings directed against his various detractors.¹ If one could claim that his work as a whole has an overriding theme, one could do worse than to suggest the relationship between history and theology – or perhaps better, the radical historicity of theology.

In this contribution, I intend to examine one narrow but influential slice of that historical theological work: Baur's conception of Jewish Christianity. Given the importance for the theme of two essays Baur published in 1831, it is necessary to focus attention on these works, especially seeking to locate his approach to Jewish Christianity among the work of his predecessors in search of Baur's distinctive contribution. I will then proceed to examine the phenomenon of Jewish Christianity in his later works and draw some general conclusions.

II. Baur in the Study of Jewish Christianity

When one examines the expansive and expanding literature on the phenomenon of Jewish Christianity, one quickly realizes that even the object of study itself is under debate: what precisely does the term "Jewish Christianity" refer to? Should the term be defined with reference to praxis (e.g., Torah observance), theology (e.g., belief in a human but not divine Messiah), ethnic background, geographical location in Palestine, chronology (before the destruction of the Temple in 70CE) or perhaps simply in terms of a Jewish or Semitic 'conceptual frame of reference'?²

¹ See the bibliography of Baur's works in Peter C. Hodgson, *The Formation of Historical Theology: A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur* (Makers of Modern Theology; New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 285-91; Horton Harris, *The Tübingen School: A Historical and Theological Investigation of the School of F. C. Baur* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990 [orig. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975]), 263-74; also, note Klaus Schuffels, "Der Nachlass Ferdinand Christian Baur's in der Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen und im Schiller-Nationalmuseum Marbach/Neckar," *ZKG* 79 (1968): 375-84. On Hodgson's work, cf. K. Penzel, "Will the Real Ferdinand Christian Baur Please Stand Up?" *JR* 48 (1968): 310-23.

² For histories of research on Jewish Christianity, see A. F. J. Klijn, "The Study of Jewish Christianity," *NTS* 20 (1974): 419-31; Gerd Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul in Jewish Christianity* (trans. M. E. Boring; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 1-32, 214-234; S. C. Mimouni, "Le judéo-christianisme ancien dans l'historiographie du XIX^{ème} et du XX^{ème} siècle," *REJ* 151 (1992): 419-28; H. Lemke, *Judenchristentum zwischen Ausgrenzung und Integration. Zur Geschichte eines exegetischen Begriffes* (Hamburger Theologische Studien 25; Münster: Lit, 2001); James Carleton Paget, "The Definition of the Term 'Jewish Christian' / 'Jewish Christianity' in the History of Research," in *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (eds. O. Skarsaune and R. Hvalvik; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 22-54, repr. in his *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (WUNT 251; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 289-

Especially given the contested nature of the field, it is only natural to turn to the history of research for clarification: we may have lost our way, but might our forebears have known the path? Or, to change the metaphor, can a turn *ad fontes* purify the muddied waters of current scholarly contention? In the case of Jewish Christianity, this involves one in a double quest for origins: the origins of a certain story of origins, the beginning of a certain way of thinking about the beginning. In this *forschungsgeschichtliche* impulse, it is not uncommon to see Baur hailed as the originator of the concept. So, for example, A. F. J. Klijn, writing in 1974, says baldly: “Modern study of Jewish Christianity began with F. C. Baur in 1830.”³ Shortly after him, Stanley Riegel speaks of Baur as “the first to study Jewish Christianity as an entity.”⁴ Joan Taylor, in the course of an article questioning the utility of the term ‘Jewish Christianity,’ is likewise explicit about her understanding of the roots of the concept: “The idea of a somehow ‘Jewish’ Christianity standing apart from a Gentile Church originated in the concepts of the Tübingen school, a hundred and sixty years ago.”⁵ Other examples could easily be adduced.⁶

It may come as a surprise, then, when we turn to Baur’s 1831 essays, expecting to find there the *wissenschaftliche* equivalent of *creatio ex nihilo*, only to discover – his essays have footnotes! The fact that Baur’s dependence upon predecessors was for so long overlooked may have more to do with a certain style of 19th century footnote that appears to be designed to conceal as much as to reveal than anything else, but we have in fact seen a renewed interest in the predecessors of Baur in the study of Jewish Christianity.⁷ The recovery of an earlier phase of investigation into the phenomenon of Jewish Christianity leads, in fact, away from German shores, and to England.

Two English Deists in particular wrote works which examined the phenomenon of Jewish Christianity: John Toland’s *Nazarenus: Or, Jewish, Gentile, and Mahometan*

324. For current approaches to Jewish Christianity, see, e.g., C. Colpe, “Das deutsche Wort, ‘Judenchristentum’ und ihm entsprechende Sachverhalte,” in idem, *Das Siegel der Propheten. Historische Beziehungen zwischen Judentum, Judenchristentum, Heidentum und frühen Islam* (Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte 3; Berlin: Institute Kirche und Judentum, 1990), 38-58; S. C. Mimouni, “Pour une définition nouvelle du judéo-christianisme ancien,” *NTS* 38 (1992): 161-86; J. Carleton Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 3 (eds. W. Horbury, W. D. Davies and J. Sturdy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 731-775; G. Stemberger, “Judenchristen,” *RAC* 19 (2001) cols. 228-45; M. Jackson-McCabe, “What’s in a Name? The Problem of ‘Jewish Christianity,’” in *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered* (ed. M. Jackson-McCabe; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 7-38, 305-10; D. Boyarin, “Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument For Dismantling a Dubious Category (To Which Is Appended a Correction of My Border Lines),” *JQR* 99 (2009): 7-36; J. Frey, “Zur Vielgestaltigkeit judenchristlicher Evangelienüberlieferungen,” in *Jesus in apokryphen Evangelienüberlieferungen: Beiträge zu außerkanonischen Jesusüberlieferungen aus verschiedenen Sprach- und Kulturtraditionen* (eds. J. Frey and J. Schröter; WUNT 254; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 93-137, esp. 94-98.

³ Klijn, “The Study of Jewish Christianity,” 419; for 1830 one should probably understand 1831.

⁴ Stanley K. Riegel, “Jewish Christianity: Definitions and Terminology,” *NTS* 24 (1977-78): 410-15, here 411.

⁵ Joan E. Taylor, “The Phenomenon of Early Jewish-Christianity: Reality or Scholarly Invention?” *VC* 44 (1990): 313-34, here 314.

⁶ E.g., Anette Rudolph, “Die Judenchristen in Justins Dialog mit Tryphon,” in *Studia Patristica XXXVI* (ed. M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold; Louvain : Peeters, 2001), 300-306, esp. 300-302; cf. also Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul*, who is not unaware of Baur’s predecessors, but still thinks it justified to begin his survey of research of Jewish Christianity with Baur.

⁷ See esp. Lemke, *Judenchristentum*, and Carleton Paget, “Definition of the Term.”

Christianity, first published in 1718, and Thomas Morgan's *The Moral Philosopher* (3 vols.; 1737-1740).⁸ It would be fair to describe each of these works as curious and lumbering, but this should not obscure the innovative way in which the apostolic era is conceived by both authors. Toland contended that the earliest Christianity was Jewish Christianity and Paul came into conflict with this original Christianity by means of his preaching against the law. In fact, Toland identifies Paul as the target of the *Epistula Petri* prefixed to the Ps.-Clementine Homilies, which speaks of an ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος.⁹ The earliest Christians were known interchangeably as Nazarenes or Ebionites, and the early church was therefore marked by a plurality of parties standing in tension with one another. Ultimately, however, a peaceful resolution was achieved, reflected in Acts 15, and both gospels – to the circumcision and to the uncircumcision – were allowed to coexist within the church. Morgan similarly sees the early church as marked by irreparable divisions between Paul and the Jewish apostles, though he argues that Paul is the one who stands in concert with Jesus, while the Jewish apostles have failed to perceive the universal impulse of Jesus' message (including, it should be added, the import of this for their continued reverence of the Old Testament).¹⁰ It is also worth noting that for Morgan, Paul becomes the great proponent of free-thinking. As Morgan writes, "The Truth is, that St. Paul was the great Free-thinker of his Age, and the brave defender of Reason against Authority."¹¹ His opposition to Peter at Antioch signifies a vote of protest: the individual conscience against Peter, the first pope, and the implicit ecclesiastical institutional authority of Jerusalem (or in the murky shadows, Rome or Canterbury) threatening from a distance. One notes a certain Pauline self-conception, or perhaps, if one may pardon the phrase, a Self-like Paul conception, in such statements – and this is a rhetoric which is not, as we shall see, foreign to Baur.

⁸ J. Toland, *Nazarenus: or Jewish, Gentile and Mahometan Christianity* (London, 1718), recently re-edited twice, each with an extended introduction: Gesine Palmer, *Ein Freispruch für Paulus: John Tolands Theorie des Judenchristentums, mit einer Neuausgabe von Tolands Nazarenus von Claus-Michael Palmer* (Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Theologie und Zeitgeschichte 7; Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1996); J. Champion, ed., *John Toland, Nazarenus* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999). Note also H. Graf Reventlow, "Judaism and Jewish Christianity in the Works of John Toland," in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies III* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1977), 111-16; M. Wiener, "John Toland and Judaism," *HUCA* 16 (1941): 215-42.

T. Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher in a Dialogue between Philalethes a Christian Deist and Theophanes a Christian Jew* (3 vols.; London, 1737-40). The second and third volumes carry on controversy with Morgan's detractors. Cf. David Patrick, "Two English Forerunners of the Tübingen School: Thomas Morgan and John Toland," *Theological Review* 14 (1877): 562-603; Carleton Paget, "Definition of the Term," 293-97 (to whom I am indebted for drawing Patrick's article to my attention).

⁹ *Nazarenus*, Letter I, Chapter VIII = Champion, *Nazarenus*, 148-50; Claus-Michael Palmer, *Nazarenus*, 45-46.

¹⁰ Patrick, "Two English Forerunners," 581-83, supplies nine points of convergence between Baur and Morgan: 1) Gal 2 is the central text; 2) the controversy at Antioch between Peter and Paul is the outcome of a standing controversy; 3) Paul has a different gospel from that of the twelve; 4) both Morgan and Baur have a similar view of the questions in dispute; 5) Paul's assertion of his apostleship is against the twelve; 6) the four requirements of the apostolic decree correspond to requirements for 'proselytes of the gate'; 7) Morgan is closer, according to Patrick, to Schweigler than to Baur in viewing the Jewish side as developing into Catholicism; 8) the canon was a late formation of the Catholics, though Morgan does not know Baur's mediating books; 9) the apocalypse is by John and Jewish Christian – and so parochial, rather than universal.

¹¹ Morgan, *Moral Philosopher*, 1.71; I owe knowledge of the citation to Patrick, "Two English Forerunners," 572.

But Toland and Morgan are writing in English in the first half of the 18th century; this still leaves a gap of a hundred years and a foreign language between Baur and the English Deists. Whether Baur himself can read English is questionable, and he does not apparently find occasion to cite English texts – a favor which many English-speaking theologians have been only too happy to return. Certainly there is nowhere he evinces direct influence from either Toland or Morgan. Any influence from the English Deists must, it seems, be indirect.¹²

As it happens, during the 18th century one sees a rise in the reading, sales and translation of English books in Germany. As the literary historian Bernhard Fabian has written:

In the long history of intellectual exchanges between England and Germany the eighteenth century stands out as a period of special significance. It was a period in which Germany assimilated the contemporary literature of England to an extent and with an intensity that has few parallels in the relations between two national cultures. The flow of ideas began in the last decades of the seventeenth century and continued uninterrupted throughout the eighteenth into the early part of the nineteenth.¹³

Although the demand for French books continually exceeded the demand for English books throughout the 18th century,¹⁴ the works of both Toland and Morgan were discussed and debated in German theological circles. The eminent historian Johann Lorenz Mosheim penned an early attack against Toland in 1722, while still a young man.¹⁵ The fourth volume of U. G. Thorschmid's *Freydenker-Bibliothek*, published in 1767, contains nearly a hundred pages summarizing Toland's *Nazarenus* and the reaction to it.¹⁶ The reaction to Thomas Morgan's *Moral Philosopher* was less explosive, but still significant.¹⁷ Of course, Tübingen in the 18th century was not quite a hotbed of Enlightenment thinking, a sort of Göttingen of the south. In fact, an official document

¹² In the following, I am indebted to some of the general lines of influence traced in Lemke, *Judenchristentum*, and Carleton Paget, "Definition of the Term," though my analysis differs in the contours of its argument.

¹³ Bernhard Fabian, "English Books and Their Eighteenth-Century German Readers," in *Selecta Anglicana: Buchgeschichtliche Studien zur Aufnahme der englischen Literatur in Deutschland im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Veröffentlichungen des Leipziger Arbeitskreises zur Geschichte des Buchwesens; Schriften und Zeugnisse zur Buchgeschichte 6; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1994), 11-94, here 11.

¹⁴ *Vindiciae Antiquae Christianorum Disciplinae*. Hamburg: B. Schiller and J. C. Kisner, 1722. Fabian, "English Books," 36.

¹⁵ Mosheim, *Vindiciae Antiquae Christianorum Disciplinae* (Hamburg: B. Schiller and J. C. Kisner, 1722). Baur later discusses Mosheim as a historian without mentioning his polemic against the Deists in "The Epochs of Church Historiography," in Peter C. Hodgson, ed., *Ferdinand Christian Baur on the Writing of Church History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 142-52.

¹⁶ U.G. Thorschmid, *Versuch einer vollständigen Engelländischen Freydenker-Bibliothek* (4 vols.; vols. 1-2: Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1765-1766; vols. 3-4: Cassel: Johann Friedrich Hemmerde, 1766-1767), 4.188-277; cf. Christopher Voigt, *Der englische Deismus in Deutschland: eine Studie zur Rezeption englisch-deistischer Literatur in deutschen Zeitschriften und Kompendien des 18. Jahrhunderts* (BHT 121; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 226; cf. 174-200. In the fifth volume, Thorschmid intended to discuss Morgan (together with Bernard de Mandeville) but this never appeared; cf. Voigt, *Der englische Deismus*, 184. For other German reviews and reactions to Toland's *Nazarenus*, see *ibid.*, 53-56.

¹⁷ Jan van den Berg, "English Deism and Germany: The Thomas Morgan Controversy," *JEH* 59 (2008): 48-61. He criticizes Voigt, *Der englische Deismus*, for ignoring Morgan (51 n. 20).

from 1757 in the Tübingen Stiftsbibliothek offers the guidance that Deist books should only be read for the purpose of refutation.¹⁸ It is intriguing that a Württemberg contemporary of Baur's, Gotthard Victor Lechler, should publish the first history of English Deism just a decade after Baur's essay on the Christ-party at Corinth appeared.¹⁹ What is more intriguing, however, is the fact that Lechler thanks Baur in the preface for his help in securing the Deist literature necessary for his study.²⁰ Though we have no way of knowing precisely which Deist works were lacking in Tübingen, this may offer some small confirmation of the suggestion that Deist influence on Baur was indirect.

It is possible, however, to draw a connecting line between the English Deists and the Halle Neologian, Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791). David Patrick, in a learned article from 1877, labors to demonstrate that Semler knew Toland and Morgan by means of his presence in Halle when a debate concerning their work took place, or by Semler's role as a reviewer for the *Nachrichten von einer Hallischen Bibliothek* when the works of Toland and Morgan were reviewed. This is entirely plausible, but it is now also possible to add to this several references to works by Toland and Morgan in works written or edited by Semler.²¹ Of course, these are not always complimentary references, but they are sufficient to demonstrate that Semler knew their works. This becomes significant when one observes Semler's striking conception of early Christianity as marked by competing parties – or, as he sometimes calls them, different dioceses – the Judaizing and the Pauline.²² In his investigations on the canon, Semler anticipates Baur's tendency

¹⁸ Martin Brecht, "Die Entwicklung der Alten Bibliothek des Tübinger Stifts in ihren theologie- und geistesgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang: Eine Untersuchung zur württembergischen Theologie," *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte* 63 (1963): 3-103, here 71.

¹⁹ Gotthard Victor Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus* (Stuttgart and Tübingen: Cotta, 1841). Lechler's work was reviewed by E. Zeller in the third fascicle of the first volume of the *Theologische Jahrbücher*, which appeared in 1842 (pp. 574-587), though Zeller does not discuss the views of Jewish Christianity of Toland and Morgan. Pace Carleton Paget, "Definition of the Term," 296 n. 30, Lechler does interact with Toland's *Nazarenus*, but relegates it to an appendix (469-72).

²⁰ After thanking Baur, he goes on to write, "Es wurde nämlich der in den öffentlichen Bibliotheken von Tübingen und Stuttgart noch nicht vorhandene Theil der deistischen und anti-deistischen Literatur für die Universitätsbibliothek erworben, indem die Bücher unmittelbar aus London bezogen wurden. Was auch so noch zu vermissen war, holte ich in England im vorigen Jahre nach, wobei ich übrigens mich überzeugte, dass die grossen Bibliotheken, des *British Museum* zu London, die *Bodleian* [*sic*] zu Oxford, und die öffentliche Bibliothek zu Cambridge, wenn auch an antideistischer, doch nicht an deistischer Literatur Wesentliches enthalten, das mir zuvor entgangen war" (*Geschichte*, iv). Carleton Paget ("Definition of the Term," 296 n. 30) has also posed the question why Lechler refrained from calling attention to the similarities between Toland and Morgan's views and those of Baur; it may be that he initially refrains from doing so out of the personal debt he owes Baur, though this did not restrain him from publishing his *Apostolisches und Nachapostolisches Zeitalter* against Baur ten years later.

²¹ Semler mentions Morgan and/or Toland in his *Apparatus ad liberalem Novi Testamenti interpretationem* (Halle: J. Godofredi Trappii, 1767), 24-25; *Christliche freye Untersuchung über die sogenannte Offenbarung Johannis aus der nachgelassenen Handschrift eines fränkischen Gelehrten herausgegeben* (Halle: Johann Christian Hendel, 1769), 314; *Institutio ad doctrinam christianam liberaliter discendam* (Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1774), 78-82 (sect. 44); *Versuch einer freieren theologischen Lehrart* (Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1777), 74-75. For Semler's oppositional understanding of early Christianity, Patrick ("Two English Forerunners," 596-97) further points to Semler's *Praefatio ad illustrandam catholicae ecclesiae originem*, which is prefixed to Semler's *Paraphrasis in Epistolam II. Petri, et Epistolam Iudae* (Halle: Hemmerde, 1784).

²² On Semler's view of two parties, see, e.g., his *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon* (4 vols.; Halle: Carl Hermann Hemmerde, 1771-1776), vol. 4, Vorrede: "Es ist aus den ältesten uns noch übrigen Schriften erweislich, daß es lange Zeit eine Parthey von Christen gegeben, die zu der Dioeces von

criticism by judging the nature of the books by whether they appeared more Judaizing or Pauline, or were involved in a process of uniting the two parties.²³ Semler's views do, in fact, seem to prefigure Baur's nicely. Might this suggest a direct influence of Semler on Baur?

Such influence is of course not unlikely, but difficult to prove. Martin Brecht has demonstrated the influence of Semler and Neologie on the Tübinger Stift of the late 18th and early 19th centuries,²⁴ and it is possible that Baur has received Semler's conclusions secondhand through his teachers or those whom he read.²⁵ In the end, of course, whether Semler's conclusions reach Baur directly or by circuitous means is immaterial.

Finally, if we want to know the most proximate sources for Baur's conception of Jewish Christianity, we should attend to those works that he himself cites.²⁶ Restricting our attention to the year 1831, when Baur's first real forays into the study of Jewish Christianity began, what do we gain by examining Baur's sources in his two essays that year, *De Ebionitarum origine et doctrina, ab Essenis repetenda*, and his essay on the

Palästina gehöret, folglich Schriften dieser Apostel, welche unter die Beschneidung eigentlich ihre Dienste verwendeten, angenommen haben; und an diese Christen, die zu Jacobi, Petri, Dioeces gehörten, hat Paulus seine Briefe nicht gerichtet; sie hat also auch sie nicht unter ihren Lehrschriften gehabt. Dagegen hat die Partey Christen, welche zu Pauli Dioeces gehörten, auch gar wol gewusst, daß Jacobus, Petrus, Judas, an sie keine Briefe geschickt hatten; sie haben folglich diese Schriften auch nicht unter ihren Gemeinden aufweisen und einführen können. Beide Parteien sind Christen, und haben sich von den Juden abgesondert; aber die Dekungsart der palästinischen Judenchristen ist noch niedriger, und an mancherley locale Ideen und geringe Bilder gewöhnet, als daß andere Christen, welche nicht unter diesen Einwanern leben, eben diese Lehrart für sich." Also, in the same place, Semler recognizes the Ps.-Clem Homilies and Recognitions as reflecting the Petrine-Pauline conflict. Note also idem, *D. Joh. Salomo Semlers Lebensbeschreibung von ihm selbst abgefaßt* (2 vols.; Halle: 1781-1782), 2.27; cf. S. Alkier, *Urchristentum: Zur Geschichte und Theologie einer exegetischen Disziplin* (BHT 83; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 34-40.

²³ See Patrick, "English Forerunners," 597; cf. also R. W. MacKay, *The Tübingen School and Its Antecedents* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1863), 97; Adolf Hilgenfeld, "Ferdinand Christian Baur nach seiner wissenschaftlichen Entwicklung und Bedeutung," *ZWT* 36.1 (1893): 222-44, here 223, 232; note further those cited in Lemke, *Judenchristentum*, 260. Samuel Davidson, *The Canon of the Bible: Its Formation, History and Fluctuations* (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1877), 247-251, already places Baur as a follower of Morgan, Toland and Semler, though with more success than either Morgan or Toland. Likewise, in an off-handed manner, Robert Morgan notes that "Semler introduced Morgan's theory (1737-40) about the difference between Pauline and Petrine Christianity into Germany, and the door was opened for the modern historical study of the epistle [i.e., Romans], beginning with F.C. Baur's essay (untranslated) on its 'purpose and occasion' (1836)" (*Romans* [NTG; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995], 142-43); perhaps here Morgan is dependent on O. Pfeleiderer, whose 1885 Hibbert Lectures contain a section entitled, "Morgan, Semler, Baur"?

²⁴ "Entwicklung der Alten Bibliothek," 76-84, citing H. E. G. Paulus, *Skizzen aus meiner Bildungs- und Lebensgeschichte zum Andenken an mein 50 jähriges Jubiläum* (Heidelberg and Leipzig: Karl Groos, 1839).

²⁵ Though it is a mere argument from silence, it is perhaps worth noting that when Baur discusses Semler in his 1852 work on the *Epochs of Church Historiography* (ET 153-62), a version of lectures delivered in the previous decade, he mentions neither English deists, nor Semler's view of Pauline and Judaizing influences in early Christianity.

²⁶ Between Semler and Baur, one might mention works on Jewish Christianity by H. E. G. Paulus, Christian Wilhelm Flügge, W. M. L. de Wette, Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt, and August Neander (see Lemke, *Judenchristentum*, 237-49); but it is especially the last two who are of importance to Baur. Lemke, however, fails to mention Gieseler and Credner, both important figures in the discussion of Jewish Christianity in the early 19th century. More surprising, she neglects to mention Baur's work *De Ebionitarum origine et doctrina, ab Essenis repetenda* (Tübingen: Hopferi de L'Orme, 1831).

Christ-party in the Corinthian Church? Four conclusions are worth emphasizing, which together pose the question of Baur's originality afresh.

First, we see that the language of 'parties' to describe groups in early Christianity is widespread. Following on from Toland, Morgan and Semler, we see Jewish Christians spoken of as a 'party' (*partey*) by, e.g., Lobegott Lange, who conceives of them as ethnically Jewish Christians who keep the law and had a view of Christ as merely human.²⁷ The extent, however, to which such parties are at odds with each other remains a matter of dispute. Lange himself claims that, while Paul can be seen as an opponent of Jewish Christianity, in raising the particularism of Judaism to a universal religion, he is only following the lead of the apostle Peter.²⁸

Second, we encounter a discussion about different types of Jewish Christianity. Both Karl Ludwig Gieseler and August Neander propose a distinction between Nazarenes, tolerant Jewish Christians who think that Jews should keep the Torah but not Gentiles, on the one hand, and Ebionites, who think all Christians should observe the Law on the other.²⁹ Paul's opponents are of the latter variety, though Gieseler appears to suggest that the Jewish apostles are of the former, tolerant variety.³⁰ The schism in early Christianity is not simply Paul vs. the Jewish Christians, but rather a schism, of which Paul is at least a partial cause, within Jewish Christianity itself: one line becoming Nazarenes, the other Ebionites. Lange mentions the view (with which he disagrees) that Peter changes his mind at Antioch once he hears from James and decides that all Christians, regardless of their ethnicity, must keep the Mosaic law: this could be described, using Gieseler's terms, as a conversion from Nazarene theology to Ebionite theology. One can observe, however, disagreements about whether both types of Jewish Christianity are present in the apostolic age, or only arise later.

Third, we find a general recognition of the relevance of the Ps.-Clementine literature, together with the possibility, already noted by Toland and Semler, of its containing an anti-Pauline polemic. Neander countenances the possibility of an anti-Pauline polemic behind the portrayal of Simon Magus, but he is not ultimately convinced.³¹ D. von Cölln, on the contrary, suggests that in *Hom.* 18.11, "the Clementine Peter contends against the Pauline foundational statement" that one must love God rather than fear him. Likewise, Paul is certainly to be seen behind the figure of Simon Magus.³²

²⁷ Lobegott Lange, *Die Judenchristen, Ebioniten und Nikolaiten der apostolischen Zeit und das Verhältnis der neutestamentlichen Schriften zu ihnen historisch und exegetisch beleuchtet* (vol. 1 of *Beyträge zur ältesten Kirchengeschichte*; Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1828); see esp. 13-32; 63-92; referenced in Baur, *De Ebionitarum*, 5 n. 3.

²⁸ Cf. Lange, *Judenchristen*, 72-73.

²⁹ Karl Ludwig Gieseler, "Ueber die Nazaräer und Ebioniten," *Archiv für alte und neue Kirchengeschichte* 4.2 (1820): 279-330; August Neander, "Beylage: Ueber die Pseudoclementinischen Homilien, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Ebioniten," in his *Genetische Entwicklung der vornehmsten gnostischen Systeme* (Berlin: F. Dümmler, 1818), 361-421. Both are referenced in Baur, *De Ebionitarum*, 3-4.

³⁰ Gieseler, "Ueber die Nazaräer," 317.

³¹ Neander, "Ueber die Pseudoclementinischen Homilien," 364.

³² D. von Cölln, "Clementina," in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste* (eds. J. S. Ersch and J. G. Gruber; Leipzig: Johann Friedrich Gleditsch, 1828), vol. 18: 36-44, here, 39. The article is referenced in Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie* (1831) IV: 61-206; here, 133-35.

Von Cölln also suggests that the Ps.-Clementine literature has its roots in Ebionite circles and may reflect the tensions of the late 2nd century. Indeed, in his standard edition, Cotelier had ascribed the Recognitions to the second century: ‘secundo saeculo compositi’.³³

Fourth, and finally, even one of Baur’s key interpretative moves in his essay on the Christ-party at Corinth, the reduction of four parties to two, had been anticipated over thirty years previously. Baur cites a short essay by Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt, in which he contends that the Pauline and the Apollo parties are one, and the Petrine and Christ parties are one,³⁴ the latter being Jewish Christians. It would also be possible to point to the analogy of Semler’s reduction of the two parties, Nazarenes and Ebionites, to one party, to which Gieseler refers.³⁵

Turning now to Baur’s essay on the Christ-party at Corinth with this context in mind, we find that Baur’s contribution, while not to be downplayed, is perhaps less innovative than one might have been led to believe by the claims of *creatio ex nihilo* with which this contribution began. When Baur suggests, “Let us investigate first of all the question in what the chief opposition between the Pauline and Petrine parties consisted,” he answers, perhaps tellingly, that “Usually [*gewöhnlich*] the Petrine party has been taken as a strictly judaizing party...”³⁶ This seems to imply Baur’s awareness of his siding with an extant interpretation. Indeed, Baur is also, in this early essay, careful to ascribe the conflict between the Judaizing and Pauline parties not to the Jewish apostles themselves, but to their followers.³⁷ Likewise, perhaps one of the most contestable of Baur’s interpretative moves, the two-sided assumption that there are agitators being addressed in 1 Corinthians and that these are Judaizing agitators, recalls Schmidt’s similar contentions.

At this stage, Baur thinks of the Ebionites as a sect of Jewish Christianity, though later he will come to identify Ebionism with Jewish Christianity.³⁸ He follows D. von

³³ J.-B. Cotelier, *SS. Patrum qui temporibus apostolicis floruerunt, Barnabae, Clementis, Hermae, Ignatii, Polycarpi opera edita et non edita, vera et supposita, graece et latine, cum notis* (rev. ed. Leclerc; Antwerp: Huguetanorum sumptibus, 1698), 484. Note Baur, “Christuspartei,” 116-36. Other elements of the Ps.-Clementine Homilies were more contentious, not least Baur’s later use of them as a witness to Christian Gnosticism, following Neander; for a full history of research, including Baur and Neander, see esp. F. Stanley Jones, “The Pseudo-Clementines: A History of Research,” *SecCent* 2 (1982): 1-33, 63-96, here 69-70. On the question of approaches to Jewish Christianity in the Ps-Clem, see Jones, “Pseudo-Clementines,” 84-96. Jones also notes that “subsequent research has antiquated most of the details in Baur’s description of the place of the PsCl in the history of the early church” (86).

³⁴ Johann Ernst Christian Schmidt, “Ueber die Stelle I Kor. I, 12. und die ursprüngliche Bedeutung des Namens *χριστιανοί*,” in *Bibliothek für Kritik und Exegese des neuen Testaments und älteste Christengeschichte* (N.p.: In der neuen Gelehrtenbuchhandlung, 1797), 1.86-100: “wenn Paullus in unserer Stelle gleich von vier Partheyen zu redder scheint, so redet er doch nur von zwey; die Paulliner und Apollonier sind Eine, die Petriner und Christianer ebenfalls Eine Parthey” (91). The article is referenced in Baur, “Christuspartei,” 76-77, 82-83; and, later, in *Paul* 1.274-76.

³⁵ Semler, “Geschichte der christlichen Glaubenslehre,” prefaced to vol. 1 of S. J. Baumgarten, *Untersuchung theologischer Streitigkeiten* (ed. J. S. Semler; Halle: Johann Justinus Gebauer, 1762), 210, as cited in Gieseler, “Ueber die Nazaräer,” 281 (which, it will be recalled, Baur cites in his *de Ebionitarum*).

³⁶ “Christuspartei,” 77; cf. 114.

³⁷ “Petrus selbst hatte an dieser seinen Namen in Korinth führenden Partei keinen Antheil, wie schon daraus zu schließen ist, daß Petrus nicht selbst nach Korinth gekommen war, wohl aber müssen, wie aus allem hervorgeht, umherreisende Pseudoapostel, die sich auf den Namen des Petrus beriefen, auch nach Korinth gekommen seyn” (83).

³⁸ So, he writes that the Ps-Clementine Homilies are “unläugbar nicht bloß ein judenchristliches, sondern ein namentlich mit der Secte der Ebioniten in irgend einem nähern Zusammenhange stehendes

Cölln in ascribing the Ps.-Clementine Homilies to these Ebionites, and in seeing them as containing anti-Pauline polemic.³⁹ But Baur does not achieve interpretative mileage from the Ps.-Clementine literature by dating it early (which he does not by the standard of his day), but by making the suggestion, again paralleled in von Cölln, that the Homilies mark a late development of a process that must have been ongoing. As Baur writes, “The Pauline letters to the Corinthians and the Galatians on the one hand, and the Clementina on the other, mark the outlying points by which it is possible to determine the polemic which arose in the ancient church against the apostle Paul.”⁴⁰ Between these two points, of course, Baur locates the development of what he takes to be legends concerning Peter’s presence in Rome, as evidence of an ongoing anti-Pauline polemic in the early church. An option which Baur does not consider is to follow Neander and Gieseler in distinguishing between Nazarene and Ebionite Jewish Christianity, the former insisting on law-keeping only for ethnically Jewish Christians, the latter insisting on Torah observance for all Christians regardless of their ethnicity. Baur does not, however, believe the Nazarenes are attested early.⁴¹ Might Baur have made sense of Peter in Nazarene rather than Ebionite terms? However problematic those terms may now appear, they demonstrate that within Baur’s day he had the option of constructing a less oppositional account of Jewish Christianity.⁴² The reason he did not may be related to one of the motifs that consistently recurs throughout his later writing on Jewish Christianity: the struggle for universalism. The issue between Paul and his opponents was “whether Judaism should be a material and integrated part of Christianity or not.”⁴³ To Paul is ascribed a “decisive bursting through the constraints of Judaism.”⁴⁴

Almost two decades later, Baur, in the course of writing the recent history of the Theology Faculty in Tübingen, had occasion to reflect on his Christ-party essay (which he now tells us had arisen from lectures on the Corinthian epistles). With what now appears as inflated rhetoric, he speaks of how he departed from the previous harmonious conceptions of the apostolic age, he emphasized the various parties and their tendencies, he looked on the Catholic church as something that could only emerge at the end of a long historical process.⁴⁵ It is not without irony that one can point out the tendencies

Product” (“Christuspartei,” 116). It is Schliemann who points out that originally Ebionites are a sect for Baur, but then they come to be synonymous with Jewish Christianity; see Adolph Schliemann, *Die Clementinen nebst den verwandten Schriften und der Ebionitismus* (Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1844), 368.

³⁹ E.g., “Christuspartei,” 127-28.

⁴⁰ “Christuspartei,” 136.

⁴¹ *De Ebionitarum*, 7-8.

⁴² Baur does not explicitly define Jewish Christianity, but it seems to involve a) ethnically Jewish Christians who b) insist on keeping the Torah and c) have a particularistic rather than universal vision for Christianity. On Baur’s view of Jewish Christianity, see esp. Lemke, *Judenchristentum*, 257-91.

⁴³ “Christuspartei,” 108.

⁴⁴ “Christuspartei,” 109.

⁴⁵ See Baur, “Die evangelisch-theologische Fakultät vom Jahr 1812 bis 1848,” in *Geschichte und Beschreibung der Universität Tübingen* (ed. K. Klüpfel; Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1849), 389-426, here, 407-408: “...sehr abweichend von der hergebrachten Ansicht, welche in der apostolischen Zeit und der unmittelbar auf sie folgenden alles nur in der schönsten Harmonie und Einigkeit, in der gleichmäßigsten Entfaltung vor sich gehen läßt, vielmehr die heterogenen Elemente, in deren Gegensatz sich jene Zeit bewegte, ihre Parteien und Tendenzen, ihre Kämpfe und Vermittlungen nachzuweisen, und überhaupt die Entstehung einer katholischen Kirche nur als das Resultat eines vorangehenden tief eingreifenden geschichtlichen Processes zu begreifen suchte.” Cf. Heinz Liebing, “Historical-Critical Theology. In

reflected in Baur's writing of a victor's history. The Christ-party essay was important as a synthesis of previous work, as an integration of various independent theses in the service of the whole. But mostly it is important in retrospect as, in Zeller's words, "die ersten schüchternen Flügelschläge," – the first timid beating of the wings.⁴⁶

III. Baur's View of History and Philosophy

Before continuing on to examine the function of Jewish Christianity in Baur's later writings, it is worth pausing briefly to make the point that Baur is not a crass Hegelian who simply imposes a rigid scheme of dialectical oppositions upon history.⁴⁷ Baur had undertaken two years of philosophical training in the Tübinger Stift before he came to study theology, and was especially attracted to the idealist philosophy of Plato, Fichte and Schelling during those years.⁴⁸ In idealist thought, Baur found a way to overcome the dualism with which he had been faced in his theological training: rationalism vs. supernaturalism.⁴⁹ In Schelling especially Baur encountered a dialectical thinking that proceeded by way of opposition and mediation.⁵⁰ So, for example, in Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism*, which Baur had read and recommended to a student by 1822, he found the following type of statement: "This advance from thesis to antithesis, and from thence to synthesis, is therefore originally founded in the mechanism of the mind [which Schelling has been attempting to demonstrate], and so far as it is purely formal (as in scientific method, for example), is abstracted from this original, material sequence established in transcendental philosophy."⁵¹ As a corollary of

Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Death of Ferdinand Christian Baur, December 2, 1960," *JTC* 3 (1967): 55-69: "In later years Baur repeatedly designated the 1831 essay as the foundation of his total conception of the development of primitive Christianity" (62).

⁴⁶ E. Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur," in his *Vorträge und Abhandlungen geschichtlichen Inhalts* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag [L. W. Reiland], 1865), 1.354-434, here 414; cf. also Dilthey's comments on the fact that Baur had still not come to all his critical conclusions in the 1831 essay, cited in Lüdemann, *Opposition to Paul*, 218 n. 38.

⁴⁷ Against the charge that Baur is simply a crass Hegelian, see Hodgson, *Formation* (note also Penzel, "Real Ferdinand Christian Baur"); Robert Morgan, "F. C. Baur's Lectures on New Testament Theology," *ExpTim* 88 (1977): 202-206; idem, "Baur's Paul," *ExpTim* 90 (1978): 4-10; idem, "Non Angli sed Angeli: Some Anglican Reactions to German Gospel Criticism," in vol. 1 of *New Studies in Theology*, (eds. S. Sykes and D. Holmes; London: Duckworth, 1980), 1-30, esp. 9-10, 28; idem, "Ferdinand Christian Baur," in vol. 1 of *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West* (ed. N. Smart, et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 261-89.

⁴⁸ Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur," 358-59.

⁴⁹ This is at least a strong way of reading Baur's emerging idealism; cf. Liebing, "Historical-Critical Theology"; Hodgson, *Formation*; Harris, *Tübingen School*.

⁵⁰ For the importance of Schelling for Baur, see Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur," 364; Gotthold Müller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur und David Friedrich Strauss in Blaubeuren (1821-1825)," in *Glaube, Geist, Geschichte. Festschrift für Ernst Benz zum 60. Geburtstag am 17. November 1967* (eds. G. Müller and W. Zeller; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 217-30; Carl E. Hester, "Gedanken zu Ferdinand Christian Baur's Entwicklung als Historiker anhand zweier unbekannter Briefe," *ZKG* 84 (1973): 249-69; K. Scholder, "Baur, Ferdinand Christian (1792-1860)," *TRE* 5 (1980): 352-59, here 353; Carl E. Hester, "Baur's Anfänge in Blaubeuren," in *Historisch-kritische Geschichtsbetrachtung. Ferdinand Christian Baur und seine Schüler* (ed. U. Köpf; Contubernium 40; Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1994), 67-82. For Schelling in Baur's later works, note, e.g., *Epochs*, 240-41 n. 1.

⁵¹ F. W. J. Schelling, *System of Transcendental Idealism (1800)* (translated by Peter Heath; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 47; cf. 42-50; orig: *System des transcendentalen Idealismus* (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, 1800).

this, Schelling states that “philosophy can enumerate only those actions which constitute epochs, as it were, in the history of self-consciousness, and establish them in their interrelations with one another.”⁵² In his early days of teaching – and certainly well before he read Hegel – Baur already operates with an understanding of the opposition of principles as what moves history.⁵³ In his early work is where Baur utters his famous – perhaps infamous – phrase, “Ohne Philosophie bleibt mir die Geschichte ewig todt und stumm.”⁵⁴ And in the preface to the first edition (1847) of Baur’s *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmengeschichte*, written over 20 years later, Baur says: “Only the coarsest empiricism can think that one should simply surrender oneself to the materials, that the objects of historical reflection could be taken just as they lie before us.”⁵⁵ His philosophical and theological commitments change over time (and such changes are of course a matter of some debate), but whether he is in his Schleiermachiean phase, his Hegelian phase, or his late return to Kant, his historical thinking is still marked by the oppositional dialectics which he learned early under the tutelage of Schelling.

IV. Jewish Christianity in Baur’s Thought after the Christ-Party Essay

The development of Baur’s thought through time has been traced often enough, and an attempt to repeat the experiment will not be ventured here. Rather, the rest of this chapter sketches some of the major elements of what Baur calls in the preface to his book on the gospels, the ‘Totalanschauung’, especially in so far as these impinge on Baur’s view of Jewish Christianity.⁵⁶ For this, in the end, is why the Christ-party essay is distinctive, and what marks Baur’s work on Jewish Christianity out from his predecessors.

1. Principle, Universalism and the End of Judaism

In his programmatic analysis of the writing of church history, Baur makes clear how he thinks church history should be written. One must grapple with a period or a movement until one has grasped its principle or Idea:

everything proceeds from a starting point in which the Idea that is to be realized through its entire temporal manifestation is clearly and definitely expressed; and once initiated, the development proceeds from one point to another in a continuity in which it should not be difficult to relate everything individual to the Idea that is the basis of the whole, or to determine the relation in which one thing stands to another.⁵⁷

⁵² Ibid, 50.

⁵³ See esp. Hester, “Baur’s Anfänge,” with reference to a lecture Baur gave in 1819 entitled, “Vergleichung der griechischen und deutschen Nation” just before Christmas (a handwritten MS in Baur’s Nachlaß in the Universitätsbibliothek Tübingen (Mh 970, 8b)).

⁵⁴ *Symbolik und Mythologie oder die Naturreligion des Alterthums* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1824-25), 1.XI.

⁵⁵ Cited in Hodgson, *Baur on the Writing of Church History*, 364 n. 45.

⁵⁶ *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien, ihr Verhältnis zu einander, ihren Charakter und Ursprung* (Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1847), iv, vi; cf. also “Die evangelisch-theologische Fakultät,” 408.

⁵⁷ *Epochs*, 47-48; Cf. 44: “no one can deny it to be in the nature of the case that, whereas on the one hand historical research must immerse itself in the mass of details (not without the danger of losing itself in the particular), on the other hand it must also rise again to the universal, to those Ideas that must be the guiding points of view and illuminating stars on the long journey through the centuries.” “Symbolics,

In the *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, which Klaus Scholder calls “perhaps the work which most fully brings together his life’s work,”⁵⁸ Baur suggests that the Christian principle “looks beyond the outward, the accidental, the particular, and rises to the universal, the unconditioned, the essential.”⁵⁹ One sees this most clearly in the proclamation of Jesus: the call to love one’s neighbor is a privileging of the universal over the particular, the objective over the subjective. In this sense, Baur’s summary of Jesus’ teaching – “This universal is that form of action in accordance with which we do to others what we wish that others should do to us. The morally good is thus that which is equally right and good for all, or which can be the object of action for all alike” – sounds very Kantian, and this ethical idealism is a hallmark of Baur’s late thought. But his emphasis on universalism as belonging to the essence of Christianity belongs to all stages of Baur’s thought. In this light, both paganism and Judaism were a sort of *praeparatio evangelica*. Precisely because Christianity has such a clearly universal mandate, coupled with Baur’s understanding of history as teleologically progressing toward a dialectical resolution, he is almost bound to regard Judaism as a dead religion once Christianity is on the scene. “Thus Judaism is nothing more than the religion of the law in contradistinction to Christianity, which is the religion of the spirit. Both its position in the world and its inner constitution declare that the function of Judaism is that of effecting a transition, of filling up an interval.”⁶⁰ Paul “places Judaism and Christianity together under the light of a great religio-historical contemplation, and of a view of the course of the world before the universal idea of which the particularism of Judaism must disappear.”⁶¹ “The particularism of Judaism must disappear” – the political potential of those words is haunting in the shadow of the holocaust, though it would be unfair to Baur to attribute to him their full import.

But against paganism and Judaism, Christianity is the ‘absolute religion’. To Judaism belong the mere “hollow forms” of religion, because the spirit has outgrown them.⁶² The self-revelation of the spirit in history “eliminates more and more completely all that bears the stamp of particularism and subjectivity, we see that it can have no other issue than at the point where the origin of Christianity is found.”⁶³ Paul subsequently becomes “the first to lay down expressly and distinctly the principle of Christian universalism as a thing essentially opposed to Jewish particularism” and sets this principle before him “as the sole standard and rule of his apostolic activity”.⁶⁴ This is precisely why Jewish Christianity is such a bother to the apostle: by insisting on the

rather, seeks to reconstruct the two opposed doctrinal concepts as systems by grasping each in the unity of its principle, for at the root of each system lies a primary determination of the religious consciousness that bears in itself its own well grounded claim to truth” (*Der Gegensatz des Katholicismus und Protestantismus nach den Principien und Hauptdogmen der beiden Lehrbegriffe* [2nd ed. Tübingen: L. F. Fues, 1836], 3, as translated and cited in Joseph Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy, 1832-38: Romantic-Idealist Assessment of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation* [AAR Studies in Religion 7; Tallahassee, FL: American Academy of Religion, 1974], 45).

⁵⁸ Scholder, “Baur,” 357; Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries* (2 vols.; Theological Translation Fund Library; transl. Allan Menzies; London: Williams and Norgate, 1878).

⁵⁹ *Church History*, 1.33.

⁶⁰ *Church History*, 1.58.

⁶¹ *Church History*, 1.59.

⁶² *Church History*, 1.10.

⁶³ *Church History*, 1.22; cf. 18.

⁶⁴ *Church History*, 1.47.

particular, Jewish Christians impede the progress of the divine in history. They are fundamentally hybrid, since they partake of that universal principle of Christianity but refuse to allow that principle to flourish and burst the bonds of a constrictive religion that belongs to a past era.

Where does Jewish Christianity therefore have its origin? Is it only based in a misunderstanding? In a remarkable passage in his *Church History*, Baur claims that in fact both the Pauline universalism and the Jewish Christian particularism can trace their roots back to Jesus. In a statement that almost sounds Chalcedonian, in structure if not in content, Baur writes:

there was the moral universal in him, the unconfined humanity, the divine exaltation, which gave his person its absolute significance. On the other side there was the cramping and narrowing influence of the Jewish national Messianic idea.⁶⁵

Jesus, one might say, clothes himself in Jewish particularism in order to burst it from the inside out. That particularism is basically a concession to the needs of the historical consciousness of the day, but something to be surrendered as soon as possible – like a rocket’s fuel tank that can be discarded once the vessel has been propelled along its true course. It is precisely this duality in Jesus that accounts for the duality among his followers.⁶⁶ In this sense, then, Jesus does intend to found a new religion.⁶⁷

2. Jewish Christianity and the Development of Early Christianity

If one wants to press Baur for historical detail about his conception of Jewish Christianity, this is only possible to some extent. He uses the term *Judenchristentum* assuming that its meaning is self-evident (which, of course, it is not), but clearly it stands in contrast to *Heidenchristentum*.⁶⁸ At one point, Baur states that “Jewish Christians were Jews by birth,”⁶⁹ and clearly his emphasis falls on the Torah observance upon which they insist for themselves and for new members of the Christian movement. He elsewhere suggests that “[t]he Ebionites...are just what the Jewish Christians were originally, as distinguished from the Pauline Christians... it cannot be deemed an unjustifiable use of the name to say that Jewish Christianity in general was a kind of Ebionitism,”⁷⁰ and in context Baur is arguing against Epiphanius’ view that the Ebionites did not arise until after the destruction of the Temple. In this sense, we observe the completion of the move from seeing the Ebionites as a sect of Jewish Christianity to seeing the Ebionites as, for all intents and purposes, co-extensive with Jewish Christianity. Baur does mention “the more tolerantly disposed Nazarenes,” but perhaps their tolerant natures do not attract

⁶⁵ *Church History*, 1.49.

⁶⁶ *Church History*, 1.49-50.

⁶⁷ In his *Vorlesungen über Neutestamentliche Theologie* (ed. Ferdinand Friedrich Baur; Leipzig: Fues’s Verlag, 1864), Baur claims that “Jesus ist Stifter einer neuen Religion; was aber das Wesen einer Religion an sich ausmacht, ist nicht ein dogmatisch ausgebildetes Religionssystem, ein bestimmter Lehrbegriff, es sind nur grundanschauungen und Principien, Grundsätze und Vorschriften, als unmittelbare Aussagen des religiösen Bewusstseins” (45-46, cited in Lemke, *Judenchristentum*, 265).

⁶⁸ “Baur verwendet sowohl die Form ‘Judenchristen’ als auch ‘Judenchristentum’ wie selbstverständlich und ohne jede ausdrückliche Erklärung oder Einführung” (Lemke, *Judenchristentum*, 274).

⁶⁹ *Church History*, 1.107-08

⁷⁰ *Church History*, 1.181, 182; cf. 181-83.

Baur, with his love of conflict, since he does not devote much attention to them.⁷¹ In a footnote, Baur at least mentions Hilgenfeld's view that "the Nazarenes and Ebionites are not so much two separate sects of Jewish Christianity as rather different modifications of the old hostility against Paulinism as it softened down to a more tolerant attitude towards Gentile Christianity."⁷²

In broad strokes, Baur's picture of the development of early Christian history is well known. According to Baur's book on *Paul*, which Zeller calls Baur's 'Lieblingswerk',⁷³ the "bounds of the national Judaism" were a hindrance to the conscious idea of Christianity actualizing itself.⁷⁴ After the persecution of Stephen, the Hellenistic part of the Church leaves Jerusalem and allows Jewish Christianity to become firmly entrenched there,⁷⁵ with Peter in due course becoming "the head of the Judaizers."⁷⁶ The subsequent conflict unfolds in three stages: an initial period of intense conflict between the Pauline and Judaizing parties; the authentic Pauline letters (the four so-called *Hauptbriefe*), belong to this earliest phase,⁷⁷ as does John's Revelation on the Jewish Christian side, which contains, on Baur's view, anti-Pauline polemic.⁷⁸ In the time after Nero's persecutions, there was a second period in which the prevailing tendency was to "bring the two opposing parties nearer to each other, by a process of smoothing down their differences, and finding the mean between their opposing principles."⁷⁹ The process of reconciliation, in which each side slowly yielded on its hardened convictions, took some time. So, e.g., the requirement of circumcision was abandoned over time as a concession to the historical success of the Gentile mission, though circumcision was now simply exchanged for baptism.⁸⁰ As the period of reconciliation presses onward, we meet with a mixed group of Pauline and Jewish compositions: we are told that Hebrews is a product of Jewish Christianity, "but a Jewish Christianity more free and spiritual, which is broad enough to have Paulinism itself as a presupposition."⁸¹ Likewise, the Pastoral Epistles have in view pastoral instructions "in the interest of Paulinism as well as of Jewish Christianity."⁸² Over time, Christian universalism became an accepted fact (the idea had been successful in realizing itself, we might say), but there were residual ill feelings toward Paul which caused the impulse toward universalism to be ascribed by, e.g., the book of Acts, to none other than Peter –

⁷¹ *Church History*, 1.182.

⁷² *Church History*, 1.182 n.3; further on the Ebionites, see *Church History*, 1.89-92, including discussion of the Ps.-Clementine Homilies and Recognitions and the famous identification of Simon Magus with Paul which we observed in Baur's earlier essay on the Christ-party at Corinth.

⁷³ Zeller, "Ferdinand Christian Baur," 366.

⁷⁴ *Paul*, 1.3.

⁷⁵ *Paul*, 1.39-42.

⁷⁶ *Paul*, 1.7.

⁷⁷ In a later period, Baur contends that the Gospel of Luke is, aside the Pauline epistles, "the purest and most important source we possess for the knowledge of Paulinism" (*Church History*, 1.77; if this is reminiscent of Marcion, it is not accidental; cf. 82-84: "In the early history of Paulinism he [i.e., Marcion] is, next to the author of the Gospel of Luke, the most characteristic representative and champion of the pure Pauline principle" here 82).

⁷⁸ *Church History*, 1.84-87.

⁷⁹ *Church History*, 1.77.

⁸⁰ *Church History*, 1.106-108.

⁸¹ *Church History*, 1.115.

⁸² *Church History*, 1.128.

contrary to Baur's historical knowledge otherwise.⁸³ Eventually the conflict subsides entirely and the Catholic Church can be regarded as fully established; and here, Johannine Christianity represents a form of Christian consciousness beyond the Judaizing/Pauline divide.

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to read this process of development as suggesting merely that the error of Jewish Christianity opposes the truth of Paulinism until the latter eventually wins out. In disagreement with Ritschl, Baur contends that "Jewish Christianity is necessary for Paulinism."⁸⁴ Baur is certainly clear that Paulinism is the "higher principle," and he does not attempt to hide his loyalties, but he does suggest that "neither of the two tendencies is absolutely true; each has its justification as against the other."⁸⁵ Thus, the productivity of this tension should be kept in view, and one should not allow the naturally more one-sided exposition of Baur's *Paulus* to obscure it.⁸⁶

Finally, it is worth noting that in Baur's reconstructions of pre-Christian Judaism, the most immediate parent of Paul's Jewish nationalistic opponents, Baur is content to see everything through Paul's eyes, making precious little use of the literature of early Judaism itself.⁸⁷ "The relation of Christianity to heathenism and Judaism is," according to Baur's Paul, "defined as that between the absolute religion and the preparatory and subordinate forms of religion. We have here the progress from servitude to freedom, from nonage to majority, from the age of childhood to the age of maturity, from the flesh to the spirit."⁸⁸ For Baur, Judaism after the advent of Christianity is simply encased in silence, consigned to the perpetual immaturity of belonging to a bygone age.

3. Anti-Catholicism, Anti-Judaism?

This leads immediately on to the final observation I would like to make: one finds a striking confluence between anti-Catholic rhetoric and anti-Jewish rhetoric in Baur's reconstruction of early Christianity. In fact, Judaism provides a direct inheritance to Catholicism in the form of its hierarchy and external institutions:

For whence were all those theocratic institutions and aristocratic forms derived, in which the Catholic Church found ready to her hand the elements of her future organisation, and which contained in themselves all the conditions of a power that should conquer the world, whence but from Judaism?...It was Paulinism that conquered the soil for Catholic Christianity: it was the Pauline mission to the

⁸³ *Church History*, 1.109.

⁸⁴ *Church History*, 1.102-03.

⁸⁵ *Church History*, 1.103.

⁸⁶ Among some of the more interesting contentions of Baur's concerning Jewish Christianity in his book on *Paul*: In the Corinthian epistles, "indisputably the same Judaizing opponents [as in Galatians] are in question" (1.267, 269). Of Romans, Baur suggests that "Now in the Epistle to the Romans [Paul] proceeds to do away with the last remaining portion of the Jewish exclusiveness, by taking up and representing it as the mere introduction to the Christian Universalism which extended to all nations" (1.322). Baur goes on to call Rom 9-11 the "centre and pith of the whole, to which everything else is only an addition" (1.327), anticipating in some ways some of the social and ethnic concerns of the New Perspective on Paul. On the relationship of Baur's essays on Corinth and Rome to his book on Paul, see Hodgson, *Formation*, 204-205 n. 15. On Baur's Paul more broadly, see Hodgson, *Formation*, 202-212.

⁸⁷ On Paul's view of Judaism's relationship to Christianity, see *Paul* 2.188-204. According to Paul, the "ante-Christian period was the period of the reign of sin; and in this description Judaism is included: in Judaism also sin reigned" (2.188).

⁸⁸ *Paul*, 2.212.

Gentiles which added to the original congregation of the sealed the great multitude of those who came from all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. But it was Jewish Christianity which supplied the forms of organisation and erected the hierarchical edifice upon this basis.⁸⁹

One could be forgiven for confessing to being underwhelmed by this praise of Jewish Christianity, coming, as it does, from a Protestant idealist. But what Baur goes on to say next is telling:

when Paulinism rebutted the aristocratic claims of Jewish particularism, and destroyed the very root from which these claims sprang, it made the principle of Christian universalism an integral element of the general Christian consciousness. It thus secured for itself, for the whole future of the Church, the power to step forward again and again with all its original keenness and decision, whenever hierarchical Catholicism should again overgrow evangelical Christianity, and offend the original Christian consciousness in its most vital element.⁹⁰

Paulinism's contention with Jewish Christianity elides seamlessly into Protestantism's conflict with Catholicism.

If we apply Baur's own *Tendenzkritik* to his writings, if we turn back upon him with what Baur once refers to as "the keen-sightedness of Protestant mistrust,"⁹¹ do we see a confluence of anti-Catholicism with anti-Judaism? We should recall that Baur's polemical exchanges with the Catholic theologian Möhler take place during the period that produced Baur's greatest Pauline works.⁹² Indeed, often one could simply substitute Protestantism for Paulinism and Catholicism for Jewish Christianity and the essence of his argument would remain the same. For example, one needs merely to place side by side two citations to observe the similarities. In his *Epochs of Church Historiography*, he writes, "Protestantism is the principle of subjective freedom, of the freedom of faith and conscience, of the autonomy of the subject in opposition to the heteronomy of the Catholic conception of the church."⁹³ And in his *Church History*, commenting on 2 Cor 3:17, he writes, "The Lord is the spirit: and the spirit is liberty. That is to say, the principle and essence of Paulinism is the emancipation of the consciousness from every authority that is external or exercised through human means, the removal of all confining barriers, the elevation of the spirit to a standpoint where everything lies revealed and open in luminous clearness to its eye, the independence and immediateness of the self-consciousness."⁹⁴ When Baur finally calls "free thinking" the principle of Protestantism,⁹⁵ alongside the "emancipation of the consciousness of authority" that Paulinism brings, one cannot help but recall Thomas Morgan and see Baur, like his later

⁸⁹ *Church History*, 1.112-13.

⁹⁰ *Church History*, 1.113; cf. 113-14.

⁹¹ *Epochs*, 87.

⁹² For a study of the conflict and an analysis of the writings on both sides, see Fitzer, *Moehler and Baur in Controversy*.

⁹³ *Epochs*, 249. Cf. 250: "From a higher level one can understand for the first time the true significance of a subordinate level, because it now appears for the first time for what it really is – not the whole and complete truth, but only a momentary aspect of the same, through which the Idea in the course of its development must first pass, or a form of consciousness that must first be fully lived in order to be able to move on with the awareness of having the maturity for a higher level."

⁹⁴ *Church History*, 1.65.

⁹⁵ *Introduction to the History of Christian Dogma*, 362 (in Hodgson, *Baur on Church History*).

disciple Ernst Käsemann, as reading Paul in his own image, and seeing himself in the *imago Pauli*.

V. Conclusions

In conclusion, it is clear that Baur is not the first to study Jewish Christianity, or to treat it as an entity. Many of the key interpretative moves in his early essays had been anticipated by exegetes working in the thirty or forty years or so before he wrote. In addition, he stood in a line that stretched back through Semler to Thomas Morgan and John Toland, though we cannot ascertain with any certainty whether he was conscious of following in their footsteps. Nonetheless, if Baur did have his predecessors, he transposes the conversation about Jewish Christianity into a new key by making the study of parties in early Christianity subservient to the ‘Totalanschauung’, the holistic grasp of the process of the absolute religion establishing itself within history. It is precisely this conviction that enables his historical work to function as theology, and conversely motivates the precise historical work that he attempts.

It is also, we would have to say from our current perspective, what tempts Baur to distort the evidence – though of course one person’s distortion is another’s interpretation. But can earliest Christianity be seen as determined by the struggle between Pauline and Judaizing tendencies? Baur’s reading arguably rests on a tendentious reading of Paul, though it would stray beyond the bounds of this contribution to substantiate this claim. Nonetheless, it is a possible reading of Paul, seen not least in the fact that he has been followed by scholars such as Daniel Boyarin, Gerd Lüdemann, Michael Goulder and C. K. Barrett – though for Boyarin, the universalizing Paul is to be lamented rather than celebrated. One might suggest that Baur’s conception of early Christianity is a play with very few characters: the same Jewish Christian opponents lurk behind all of Paul’s certainly authentic letters; the plurality of parties at Corinth is really reducible to two; James and Peter are at one with each other rather, as Galatians 2 might suggest, in some tension with one another. That tensions existed in early Christianity is undeniable, but today one is prone to see rather more and varied tensions than Baur in his day saw.

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