

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1830)

- *Faith and Knowledge* (1801)
- *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (1832)
- *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, esp. contributions by H.S. Harris and L. Dickey
- M. Inwood, *Hegel* (excellent introduction to his philosophy)
- T. Pinkard, *Hegel. A Biography*
- P.C. Hodgson, *Hegel and Christian Theology* (full text available at Oxford Scholarship Online)

Hegel



Hegel II

- Like Schleiermacher, H. had concurrent interests in philosophy and theology, but always wrote as philosopher
- Yet: hugely influential for theology in 19th/20th centuries
- Also: H.'s own thought is deeply informed by his theological background

Hegel III

- Unlike Kant, H. saw the task of thinking God
- Otherwise philosophy would separate itself from most central issues and leave them to theology
- H. connects the new separation of faith and knowledge with the rise of Protestantism and its strong notion of faith (subjectivism)

Hegel IV

- This was to be shielded from analytical reason
- Solution: philosophy can think God again by mediating his transcendence with his immanence
- Adopts from theology the idea of ‘death of God’
- → ‘Speculative Good Friday’

Hegel V

- Characteristics: H. finds interesting those doctrines which Enlightenment thought had rejected (also: Incarnation, Trinity)
- Is his philosophy thus a vindication of orthodoxy?
- For H. the truth of all these doctrines becomes apparent *in philosophy*

Hegel VI

- Consequence: his school (made up of theologians, historians, jurists among others) split into a conservative and a 'left-wing' part over precisely this issue in the 1830s.

Week 4: Critique of Bible, Revelation, Religion

- A) David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874)
- *Life of Jesus* (1835) in English translation by 'Marian Evans' (=George Eliot) available online
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/strausss/>
- Ch. on Strauss in:
- A. Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* (online at
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/schweitzer/>)

David Strauss



Strauss II

- Extremely prolific and successful religious author
- In the *Life of Jesus* St. put biblical criticism back on the agenda (1835)
- Basic idea: to confront the traditional ('supernaturalist') and modern ('rationalist') exegesis of all gospel passages
- Aim: to show that both are wrong insofar as they assume the gospel narrative is meant to be historical

Strauss III

- The truth is that they are 'mythical'
- They express an idea in the form of a story
- This idea is the coming together of God and man (Hegelian influence!)
- So to ask how 'historical' they are is beside the point
- St. saw this initially as a way of achieving a religiously satisfying reading of the Bible

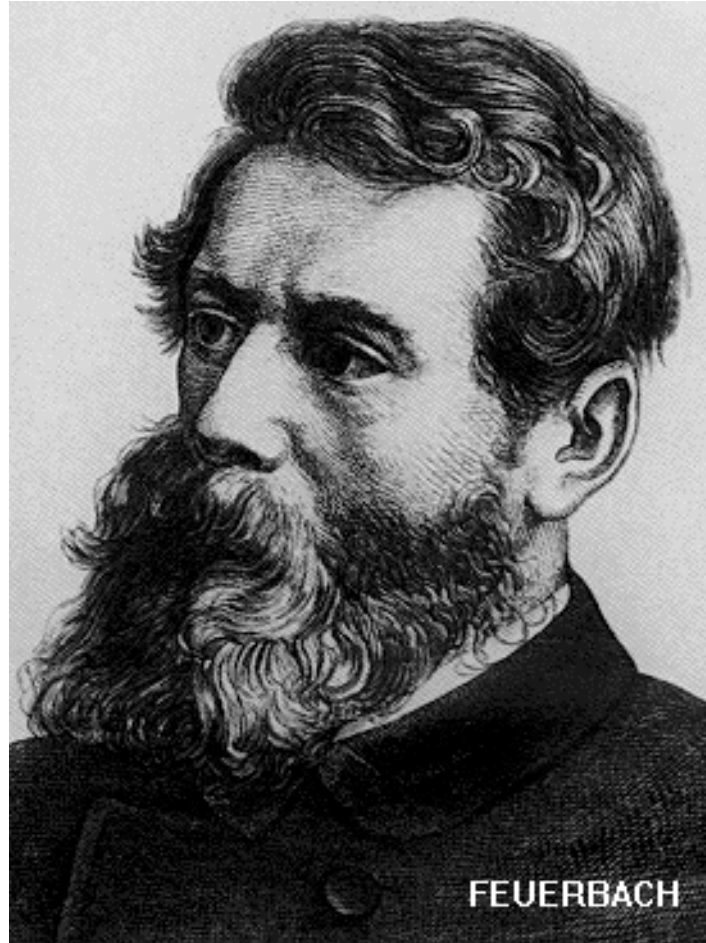
Strauss IV

- Strauss was a pioneer of historical criticism – many of his insights became currency
- Yet his theology too is influencing his criticism:
- ‘The less historical the better for true faith’
- Violent reactions followed the publication
- In its wake St. moved ever further away from Christianity, became sharp opponent of organised religion

b) Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872)

- *Essence of Christianity* (1841) online at: <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/feuerbach/works/essence/>
- K. Ameriks (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, final ch.
- W. Breckmann, *Marx, The Young Hegelians, and the Origins of Radical Social Theory*, ch. on Feuerbach
- K. Barth, *Protestant Theology in the 19th Century*, ch. on Feuerbach (important for Barth's own theology!)

Ludwig Feuerbach



Feuerbach II

- Basic idea: religion is projection:
- God does not make man in his image, man makes God
- Not a projection though of the individual man, but of ideal, universal man
- All religions are inherently anthropomorphic
- Theological attempts to purge this notion of God are rejected as 'a subtle, devious kind of atheism'

Feuerbach III

- If all the attributes, then, are human, there is no reason there is a transcendent subject to them
- From *Essence of Christianity* (§ 2):
- ‘What is God to man, that is man’s own spirit, man’s own soul; what is man’s spirit, soul, and heart – that is his God. God is the manifestation of man’s inner nature, his expressed self; religion is the solemn unveiling of man’s hidden treasures, the avowal of his innermost thoughts, the open confession of the secrets of his love.’

Feuerbach IV

- Shift in concept of religion
- For Hegel religion was ultimately a kind of cognition
- Feuerbach sees it as essentially 'practical', a matter of our desire for certain goods we wish to obtain
- Religion is 'relish'

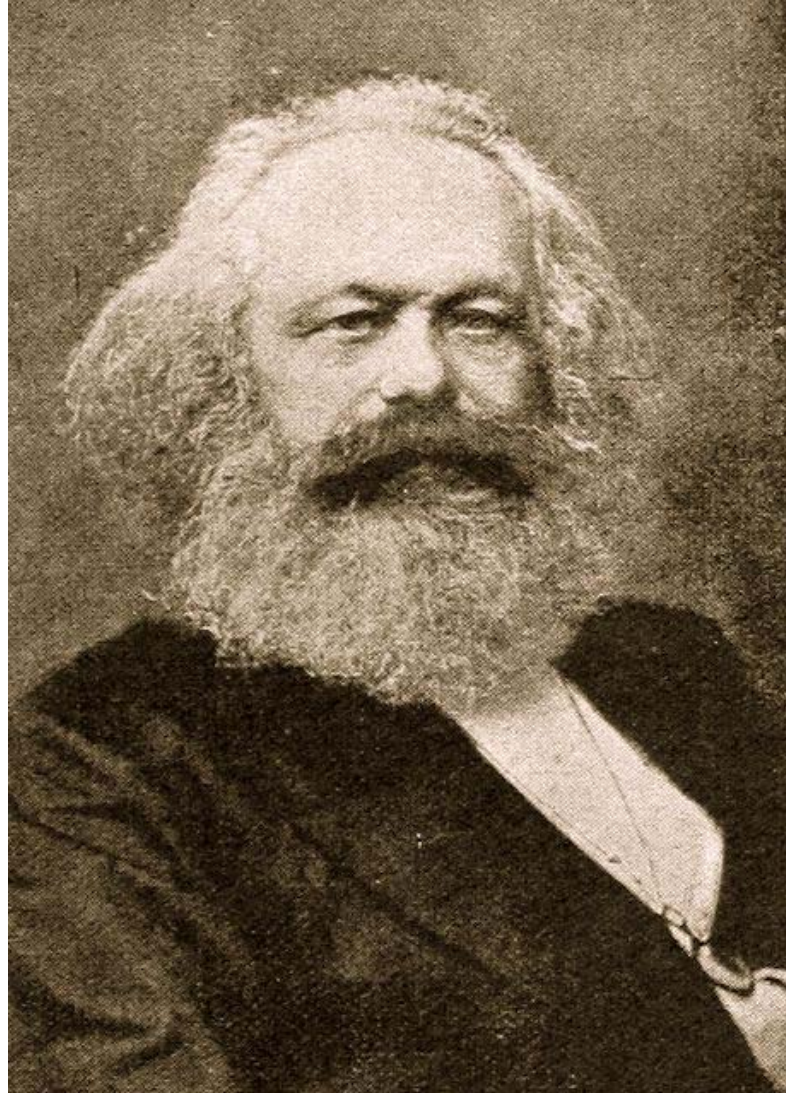
Feuerbach V

- F. claimed this was in line with Luther
- Cf. the *Large Catechism* (on the 1st commandment):
- ‘that upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god’
- Later theology (esp. Barth) accepted that theology had to be careful there

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

- Most works online at:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/index.htm>
- ‘Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’ (1844)
- ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ (1845; published only in 1924!)
- P. Singer, *Marx. A very short Introduction*
- Breckman, op cit, ch. 7
- N. Lash, *A Matter of Hope. A Theologian’s Reflections on the Thought of Karl Marx*

Karl Marx



Marx II

- Mocking the intellectual debates of his time:
- ‘As we hear from German ideologists, Germany has in the last few years gone through an unparalleled revolution. ... It was a revolution beside which the French Revolution was child’s play, a world struggle beside which the struggles of the Diadochi [successors of Alexander the Great] appear insignificant. Principles ousted one another, heroes of the mind overthrew each other with unheard-of rapidity, and in the three years 1842-45 more of the past was swept away in Germany than at other times in three centuries. All this is supposed to have taken place in the realm of pure thought.’ (*The German Ideology*, 1845)

Marx III

- M. essentially accepts the validity of Feuerbach's critique of religion:
- 'for Germany the criticism has been essentially completed' (1844)
- Correction is needed of the underlying anthropology though:
- 'the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In reality, it is the ensemble of the social relations.' (1845)

Marx IV

- Man is either free or estranged, depending on the economic situation
- Thus the Hegelian idea of liberating of man to his true humanity must be achieved via a social revolution
- Consequence for religion: it is an inversion or reality which necessarily belongs to an 'inverted' world

Marx V

- ‘Religion is ... the *fantastic realization* of the human essence since the *human essence* has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle *against that world* whose spiritual *aroma* is religion.’ (1844)
- Consequences are ambiguous: fight against religion is mistaken, but fight for social revolution will do away with religion alongside

Marx VI

- ‘*Religious* suffering is, at one and the same time, the *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.’ (1844)
- *Opium* is here almost a medication which is needed in the estranged world
- Where Feuerbach had criticised theology for its answers, M. criticises them (including F.) for asking the wrong question.