



Lectures on New Testament Theology: by Ferdinand Christian Baur

By R. I. (Bob) Tricker



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Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), one of the great innovators in the study of the New Testament, argued that each of its books reflects the interests and tendencies of its author in a particular religio-historical milieu. A critique of the writings must precede any judgments about the historical validity of individual stories about Jesus in the Gospels. Thus Baur could move beyond the impasse created by Strauss's *Life of Jesus*. Baur demonstrated that the Gospel of John is not a historical document comparable to the Synoptic Gospels and cannot be used to reconstruct the teaching of Jesus, and that the Synoptic Gospels must be read critically and selectively. He applied the same principles to the Epistles, arguing that only four are genuinely Pauline (Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans).

Baur's *Lectures on New Testament Theology*, delivered in Tübingen during the 1850s, summarize thirty years of his research. The lectures begin with an Introduction on the concept, history, and organization of New Testament theology. Part One is devoted to the teaching of Jesus, which Baur finds most reliably in Matthew. Part Two contains the teaching of the Apostles in three chronological periods. The first period presents the theological frameworks of the Apostle Paul and the Book of Revelation; the second period, the frameworks of Hebrews, the Deutero-Pauline Epistles, James and Peter, the Synoptic Gospels and Acts; and the third period, those of the Pastoral Epistles and the Gospel of John.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Baur's work, though over 150 years old, makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the development of New Testament theology in various stages in the life of early Christianity. The translator and the editor of this volume are to be congratulated and thanked for doing the hard work of returning Baur to the consideration of English-speaking New Testament scholars. I highly recommend Baur's *Lectures on New Testament Theology* as required reading for all in the field of New Testament Studies, to help us begin to set the evidence and the questions right."--*Reading Religion*

"Few nineteenth-century books on the Bible remain as rewarding as Baur's last lectures. They offer an accessible update of the pioneering historical research of his Paul, The Canonical Gospels, and Church History, which shaped New Testament studies for over a century. Combining historical exegesis and reconstruction with theological interpretations indebted to Kant's ethical idealism they offer a model for understanding the texts in new cultural contexts. Excellently translated by Robert Brown and introduced by Peter Hodgson this great synthesis should correct some stale stereotypes and give due recognition to a genius unjustly neglected outside Germany. It could also contribute to the revival of critical New Testament theology." --Robert Morgan, University of Oxford

About the Author

Peter C. Hodgson is Emeritus Professor of Theology, Divinity School, Vanderbilt University. With Professor Brown, he co-edited and translated Ferdinand Christian Baur's *History of Christian Dogma* (OUP, 2014) and *Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, Volume I: Manuscripts of the Introduction and the Lectures of 1822-1823* (OUP, 2011).

Robert F. Brown is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Religion and History of Philosophy, University of Delaware. His publications include *Hegel: Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825-6: Volume 1* (OUP, 2006) and *Volume 2* (OUP, 2009).

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