

Arthur Drews



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Christian Heinrich Arthur Drews [pronounced "drefs"] (November 1, 1865–July 19, 1935) was a [German](#) historian of philosophy and [philosopher](#), writer, and important representative of German [Monist](#) thought. He was born in [Uetersen](#), [Holstein](#), present day [Germany](#).

Drews became professor of philosophy and German at the [Technische Hochschule in Karlsruhe](#). During his career he wrote widely on history of philosophy and history of religions and mythology. He was a disciple of [Eduard von Hartmann](#) who claimed that reality is the [Unconscious World Spirit](#) also expressed in history through religions and coming to [consciousness](#) in the minds of philosophers. Drews often provoked controversy—in part because of his unorthodox ideas on religion, and in part because of his repeated attacks on the philosophy of [Nietzsche](#) and passionate support of [Wagner](#).

He became an *international sensation* with his book *The Christ Myth* (1909), by

amplifying and publicizing the *Christ Myth* thesis initially advanced by [Bruno Bauer](#),^[1] which denies the [historicity of Jesus](#).

The international controversy provoked by the *Christ Myth* was but one early chapter in Drews's life-long advocacy of the abandonment of [Judaism](#) and [Christianity](#) — both religions based on ancient beliefs from [Antiquity](#), and shaped by religious [dualism](#)^[2] — and his urging a *renewal of faith* [*Glaubenserneuerung*] based on [Monism](#) and [German Idealism](#). True religion could not be reduced to a [cult of personality](#), even if based on the worship of the *Unique and Great Personality* of a [Historical Jesus](#), as claimed by Protestant [liberal theologians](#) — which was nothing more than the adaptation of the [Great Man Theory](#) of history promoted by the [Romanticism](#) of the 19th century.^[3]

Drews had wide curiosity, a sharp intellect, a trenchant style, and was a philosophical gadfly most of his life. As a philosopher he kept encroaching on the turf of other specialties in German universities: in theology, philology, astronomy, mythology, music criticism, psychology. He was an irritant, his interference not welcomed, and he remained resented as an outsider. Drews was considered a maverick, a [dissenter](#). Staid German academics didn't accept his "dilettantism" [*Abweichungen von der communis opinio*, that is "straying from the common opinions"]. Eduard von Hartmann, and his theory of the "Unconscious" were not in vogue either, and Drews's dependence on his mentor was another hindrance. In every field, Drews created more enemies who wished him gone, than friends or followers. In spite of his prodigious fecundity and his popular notoriety, his hopes of getting a University appointment remained frustrated. He had to be content with his humble position as a teacher in his "Technische Hochschule" in Karlsruhe for the rest of his life.

Drews was a reformer, and stayed involved in religious [activism](#) all his life. He was, in his last few years, to witness and participate in an attempt by the [Free Religion Movement](#) to inspire a more liberal form of worship, and walked away from the [German Faith Movement](#), a venture trying to promote without success

an awakening for a *German Faith*, an unusual form of a nationalistic and racist faith with [Hinduism](#) overtones — far removed from the elitist [German Idealism](#) Drews expounded in his last book, *The German Religion* (*Deutsche Religion*, 1935) and that he had been hoping to see replace in the future what he considered an obsolete Christianity and its primitive [superstitions](#).^[4]



The Resurrection of Christ by [Noel Coypel](#) (1700) - Instance of [dying and rising god](#)



The Return of Persephone, by Frederic Leighton (1891) - Abducted by Hades, passes through the underworld, and is rescued by Hermes



Osiris on a lapis lazuli pillar in the middle, flanked by Horus on the left and Isis on the right (22nd dynasty, Louvre)





Roman mosaic, *Orpheus wearing a Phrygian cap, and beasts charmed by his lyre*



Double-faced Mithraic relief. Rome, 2nd to 3rd century AD. Louvre Museum

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The *Christ Myth* (1909)

Along with [Bruno Bauer](#) (1809–1882) and [Albert Kalthoff](#) (1850–1906), Arthur Drews is one of the three German pioneers of the denial of the existence of Jesus Christ.

He became famous in the 20th century as the best known proponent of the *Christ Myth* thesis, which disputes the existence of a [historical Jesus](#). His work *The Christ Myth* (*Die Christusmythe*) (1909) expounded this thesis. Oxford University calls it a "Classic".

In the Footsteps of 19th-Century Historical Criticism



David Strauß in 1874 - Wrote his *Life of Jesus* in 1835, age 27

Drews emphatically argues that no *independent* evidence for the historical existence of Jesus has *ever been found* outside the New Testament writings.^[5] He denounces the [Romanticism](#) of the *liberal cult of Jesus* [*Der liberale Jesuskultus*] as a violation of [historical method](#), and the naive [sentimentalism](#)

of [historical theology](#) [6] which attributes the formation of Christianity to Jesus's "great personality". He mentions the key names of [historical criticism](#) that emerged in the late 18th century and blossomed in the 19th century in Germany.

- [Charles-François Dupuis](#) (1742–1809) and [Comte Constantin-François de Volney](#) (1757–1820), the two French critical thinkers of the [Enlightenment](#), who were the first to deny the historicity of Jesus on *astromythical* grounds, which they saw as key factors in the formation of religions including Christianity.
- [David Strauss](#) (1808–1874), who, at 27, pioneered the Search for the Historical Jesus with his *Life of Jesus* in 1835 (of 1,400 pages) by rejecting all the [supernatural](#) events as *mythical* elaborations.
- [Bruno Bauer](#) (1809–1882), the first academic theologian to affirm the non-historicity of Jesus. He claimed that [Mark](#) was the original [Gospel](#), and the *inventor of the historicity of Jesus*. He traced the impact of major Greco-Roman ideas on the formation of the NT, especially the influence of [Stoic](#) philosophy ([Seneca](#)). Bruno Bauer's scholarship was buried by German academia, and he remained a pariah, until Albert Kalthoff rescued him from neglect and obscurity.
- [Julius Wellhausen](#) (1844–1918), an expert scholar of the [Torah/Pentateuch](#), who was a leader in historical and [source criticism](#);
- [William Wrede](#) (1859–1906), the promoter of the [Messianic Secret](#) in Mark, and who confirmed Bruno Bauer's claim that *Mark was the real creator of Christianity*;
- [Johannes Weiss](#) (1863-1914), the first exegete of the Gospels to attribute an apocalyptic vision to Jesus, accepted by Schweitzer and many others. He initiated [form criticism](#) later developed by [Rudolf Bultmann](#). Weiss gave the name of "[Q](#)" to the "sayings of the Lord" common to Matthew and Luke. He was considered the highest authority in his time.
- [G.J.P.J. Bolland](#) (1854–1922), a Dutch autodidact radical, interested in [Hegel](#) and von Hartmann (letters from Drews to Bolland were published in

German from 1890 to 1904[7]), who saw the origin of Christianity in [*syncretism*](#) by Hellenized Jews in Alexandria;

- [Albert Schweitzer](#) (1875–1965), a historian of theology, who presented an important critical review of the history of the search for Jesus's life in [*The Quest of the Historical Jesus - From Reimarus to Wrede*](#) (1906, first edition), denouncing the subjectivity of the various writers who injected their own preferences in Jesus's character. Schweitzer devotes three chapters to David Strauss (Ch. 7, 8, and 9), and a full chapter to Bruno Bauer (Ch. 11). Ch. 10 discusses the Priority of Mark hypothesis of Christian H. Weisse and Christian G. Wilke advanced in 1838.

Consequences of German Historical Criticism: Skepticism towards the NT

Consequences have been dramatic [8], especially outlined in *Christ Myth II*, "Part IV, The Witness of the Gospels".

- A general [*skepticism*](#) *about the validity of the New Testament*: "There is nothing, absolutely nothing, either in the actions or words of Jesus, that has not a *mythical* character or cannot be traced to *parallel passages in the Old Testament or the Talmud*. Historical criticism *resolves all details of the Gospel story in mythical mist* and makes it impossible to say *that there ever was such a person*" (Ch. 12).[9]
- *A loss of substance and meaning* in the figure of the "historical Jesus": "But what [a liberal theologian] *leaves intact* of the personality and story of Jesus is so meagre, and so devoid of solid foundation, that it cannot claim *any historical significance*." (Ch. 8) The *human Jesus* of liberal theologians, found by reduction and *elimination* of [supernatural](#) and other unwanted features, is so bloodless that it could have never induced the *emotional fervor* of a new [spiritual](#) movement, let alone a new religion.

**Syncretism: Jesus = Hebrew Prophets' Savior/Redeemer + Liberator
Messiah + ANE Dying-and-Rising Gods**

Drews uses the new findings of anthropology collected by [James Frazer](#) (1854–1941) with his descriptions of ancient [pagan](#) religions and the concept of [dying-and-rising god](#). Drews also pays extreme attention to the social environment of religious movements, as he sees religion as the expression of the *social soul*.



James George Frazer, author of the [Golden Bough](#)

Drews argues that the figure of "Christ" arose as a product of [syncretism](#), a composite of [mystical](#) and [apocalyptic](#) ideas:

1. A [Savior/Redeemer](#) derived from the major prophets of the Old Testament and their images of:
 - the [suffering Servant](#) of God (in [Isaiah 53](#)),
 - the *Suffering Victim* (in [Psalm 22](#)),
 - and the *personification of Wisdom* (in [Wisdom of Solomon](#), [Sirach](#) and [Proverbs](#))
2. The concept of [Messiah Liberator](#): freeing the Jews in Palestine from Roman occupation and taxation.

3. Mixed with the patterns of Persian and Greco-Roman *dying-and-rising godmen* — godly heroes, kings, and emperors, whose stories inspired the new anthropological concept of *dying and rising gods* popularized by Frazer — such as [Baal](#), [Melqart](#), [Adonis](#), [Eshmun](#), [Attis](#), [Tammuz](#), [Asclepius](#), [Orpheus](#), [Persephone](#), [Inanna](#), also known as [Ishtar](#), as well as [Ra](#) the [Sun god](#), with its fusion with [Osiris](#), [Zalmoxis](#), [Dionysus](#), and [Odin](#), figuring in *mystery cults* of the [Ancient Near East](#) ("ANE").

The Jesus Cult and the Mystery Cults

Drews points out the marked similarities of the early Christ cult to the existing and popular *mystery cults* — a theme already developed by W.B. Smith and J.M. Robertson, and later echoed by Maurice Goguel and reprised by the older brother of G.A. van den Bergh van Eysinga^[10] and van Eysinga himself.^[11] The rapid diffusion of the Christ religion took place in a population already shaped by and conversant with the sacred features of the mystery cults.^[12]

Jesus Displaces Mithras



A [mithraeum](#) found in the ruins of [Ostia Antica](#), Italy.

The *Christ Myth* is sprinkled with comparisons between the [Mithraic mysteries](#) and the cult of Jesus. Although the god Mithras was not exactly a "dying-and-rising" god, some similarities are meaningful. Especially the *sacramental feast* which allowed the initiated to experience a [mystical union](#) with the god.

Mithraism, imported from Persia to Rome, spread rapidly through the Roman Empire in the 1st century, and was considered a certain rival to early Christianity.

The major images picture the god being born from a rock, and the central event of hunting and killing a bull, with pouring of blood. The sun was portrayed as a friend of Mithras, and banquets with him on the hide of the bull. Females played no part in the images or the cult. The cult was popular among soldiers, and was likely spread by them.

Few initiates came from the social elite, until the revival in the mid-4th century (Emperor Julian). Drews claims that the figure of Jesus seemed more concrete, his story more moving, and it appealed more to women and the underdogs of society. The premature death of Emperor Julian was one of the causes of the Jesus mystery eventually winning over the Mithraic mysteries.

Christianity Arose Without any Historical Personality of Jesus



Raphaël, *Transfiguration of Christ*, 1520, Vatican

Drews shows that indeed *everything* about the story of Jesus had a *mythical character*, and that it was therefore not necessary to presuppose that a historical Jesus had ever existed. In fact, Christianity could have developed *without Jesus, but not without [Paul](#), and certainly not without [Isaiah](#).*^[13]

Drews concludes in the last chapter, "The Religious Problem of the Present" :

The Christ-faith arose quite independently of any historical personality known to us ;... Jesus was in this sense *a product of the religious social soul* and was

made by Paul, with the required amount of reinterpretation and reconstruction, the chief interest of those communities founded by him. The *historical Jesus is not earlier but later than Paul*; and as such he has always *existed merely as an idea*, as a *pious fiction in the minds* of members of the community...the Gospels are the derivatives...for the propaganda of the Church, and being without any claim to historical significance...[Religion] is a group-religion...the connection of the religious community...[Our personal religion], a religion of the individual, a principle of personal salvation, would have been an offense and an absurdity to the whole of ancient Christendom. [emphasis added]

Violent Negative Reactions to the *Christ Myth*

Public Outcry in Germany

The book fell on the German market like a bombshell, in the midst of a violent fight over the separation of state and religion. Drews managed an intense advertising campaign with lectures, articles, interviews. It caused considerable controversy. His work proved popular enough that prominent theologians and historians addressed his arguments in several leading journals of religion.^[14] In response, Drews took part in a series of public debates, which often became emotionally charged.



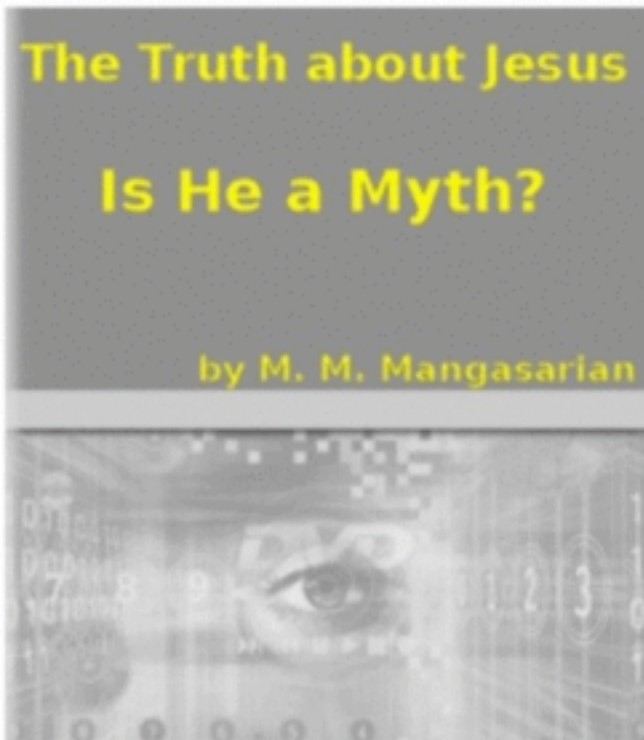
Berlin Zoological Garden

Zoologischer Garten Berlin

The Elephant Gate entrance

Drews led a militant campaign for his book, supported by the National Association of Free Religion Societies, and The National Association of Monists. which organized a huge debate on Jan 31 and Feb 1, 1910 in the *Berlin Zoological Garden* between monists and liberal theologians including Baron von Soden of the Berlin University. Attended by 2,000 people, including the country's most eminent theologians, the meetings went on until three in the morning. *The New York Times* called it "one of the most remarkable theological discussions" since the days of [Martin Luther](#), reporting that Drews's supporters caused a sensation by plastering the town's billboards with posters asking, *Did Jesus Christ ever live?* According to the newspaper his arguments were so graphic that several women had to be carried from the hall screaming hysterically, while one woman stood on a chair and invited God to strike him down.^{[15][16]} On Feb 20, 1910, a counter confrontation took place in the Bush Circus. The following year, on March 12, 1911 another follow-up debate was organized.^[17]

Universal Condemnation by Professional Theologians - A Sense of Crisis



Mangasar Magurditch Mangasarian, *The Truth About Jesus, Is He A Myth?*, 1909

In *Christ Myth II* (1912), Drews describes the cultural commotion:

Now the whole Press is engaged against the disturber of the peace...Opposing lectures and Protestant meetings are organised, and J. Weiss publicly declares that the author of the book has *no right to be taken seriously*. But among his fellows, within the four walls of the lecture-hall, and in the printed version of his lectures, Weiss assures his readers that he has taken the matter 'very seriously', and speaks of *the fateful hour through which our [theological] science is passing*. [emphasis added]

Most significant theologian scholars immediately felt the need to take up the challenge and entered the debate sparked off by Drews's *Christ Myth* about the *Historicity of Jesus*. Most of the responses world-wide by theologians were *violently negative and critical*.

But Drews had some quality supporters, like the famous Orientalist Peter Jensen. Coincidentally, [M. M. Mangasarian](#) also published in 1909 *The Truth About Jesus, Is He A Myth?*. In 1912, [William Benjamin Smith](#) published *Ecce Deus: Studies Of Primitive Christianity*, (with an introduction by [Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel](#) (1912).

Albert Schweitzer's Response in the 2d edition of the *Quest* (1913)

To discuss Drews's thesis, [Albert Schweitzer](#) added two new chapters in the second edition of his [Quest of the Historical Jesus](#). (*Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, 2. Auflage, 1913)[18]



G.P.J.P. Bolland

Ch. 22, (p. 451-499), "The New Denial of the Historicity of Jesus" (*Die Neueste Bestreitung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*) analyzes Drews's thesis, plus eight writers in support of Drews's thesis about the non-existence of Jesus: [J. M.](#)

[Robertson](#), Peter Jensen, Andrew Niemojewski, Christian Paul Fuhrmann, [W.B. Smith](#), [Thomas Whittaker](#), [G.J.P.J. Bolland](#), [Samuel Lublinski](#)]. Three of them favor mythic-astral explanations.

Ch. 23 (p. 500-560), "The Debate About the Historicity of Jesus" (*Die Diskussion über die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*), reviews the publications of 40 theologians/scholars in response to Drews, and mentions the participants in the Feb. 1910 public debate. Most of the publications are critical and negative. Schweitzer continues his systematic exposure of the problems and difficulties in the theories of the *Bestreiter* ("challengers") and *Verneiner* ("deniers") — the [Dutch Radicals](#), [J. M. Robertson](#), [W. B. Smith](#) and Drews — and the authenticity of Paul's epistles and Paul's historicity as well.

In those two chapters, Schweitzer, as usual in those high-minded Victorian times, runs a very polite and courteous discussion of all the arguments presented by the other parties and stays on a high ground of civility.

The discussing style uses such lines as:

- “But this assumption (of the opponents) does not explain this...”,
- “but this leaves unclear the fact that...”
- “But then, how can you explain that...?”,
- “There is nowhere the mention of that claimed influence...”
- “Where does this leave Paul’s assertion that...” etc...

That is the way Schweitzer conducted his theological refutation. He did not try to deliver a “hit” or a knock-out impact, but to gradually undermine his opponents' credibility. His interpretations only expressed his own opinions as an expert scholar, while his targets were not automatically "convinced". The debate simply rebounded and kept going after the 2d. edition of 1913.

**The *Christ Myth* Theological Debate, in 1909-1913 and 1914-1927,
Tabulated by Peter De Mey**



Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, First translation of the 1913 2d ed. (2001)

Peter De Mey, a professor of "Systematic Theology" at the Catholic Un. of Leuven (Belgium), in a comprehensive paper "On Rereading the *Christ Myth* Theological Debate" (ca. 2004), has cited and tabulated the extraordinary number of refutations from academic theologians in Germany, Britain, the USA, and France.

De Mey does not miss the opportunity first to belittle Drews's book ("no original thinker...a compilation of arguments developed by others...not really convincing") and then limits himself to only a selection of German responses (given the immensity of the literature sparked off by the *Christ Myth*), and only from "fundamental" theologians.

Professor De Mey offers a list of 87 books and articles: 83 publications in 1909-1927 (62 in German, 19 in English, 2 in French), plus 4 isolated odd ones.^[19] A *near-unanimity* of the responses cited by De Mey are *opposed to Drews's conclusions*, with some variations. Drews is pictured as a *lone maverick* facing the established club of academic scholars and theologians.

- - 68 citations of publications in the 1909-1913 period (52 in German, 14 in English, 2 in French), until Schweitzer's 2d edition of *The Quest* (1913). The list includes established German authorities such as [Wilhelm Bousset](#), [Daniel Chwolson](#), [Alfred Jeremias](#), [Adolf Jülicher](#), [Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel](#), [Albert Schweitzer](#), [Paul Tillich](#), [Ernst Troeltsch](#), [Hermann von Soden](#), and [Johannes Weiss](#)

Of the 40 theologians already listed by Schweitzer's *Quest* in his second edition, De Mey ignores 9 scholars (as not being "fundamental" theologians) that Schweitzer had considered significant, including an important response by the famous Babylonian expert Peter Jensen.

- - 15 citations after the 2d edition of *The Quest*, in 1914-1927. Of those, 10 were in German, 5 in English. Thus showing that Schweitzer's 2d. edition of the *Quest* in no way stopped the flow of further rebuttals by German theologians. It is WWI and its catastrophic aftermath in Germany that dampened the theological fervor for refutations.

The Major Refutations (in English & French) from 1912 to WW II

WWI put a damper on the heated flurry of refutations to Arthur Drews's *Christ Myth*, but they continued unabated, if more sporadically, until WWII. The major critical works weighed the merits of the arguments on both sides to conclude by confirming the historicity of Jesus against the deniers:

- Shirley Jackson Case (1872-1947), [*The Historicity of Jesus: a Criticism of the Contention that Jesus Never Lived, a Statement of the Evidence for His Existence, an Estimate of His Relation to Christianity* \(1912\).](#)

Canadian-born, Case was a professor at the Un. of Chicago. His book uses the *Christ of Faith* as the basis for his argumentation, maintaining

the validity of the supernatural, miracles and resurrection. In the "world-view in which natural law" is "dominant" and "reason and human experience have been made fundamental" and replaced "supernatural revelation", the Gospels are no longer perceived in their authentic light — being "reinterpreted...or else dismissed as utterly unhistorical." (Ch. 1)



Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, 1895

- [Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare](#) (1856-1924), [*The historical Christ, or, An investigation of the views of Mr. J.M. Robertson, Dr. A. Drews, and Prof. W.B. Smith, \(1914\)*](#). He was an Orientalist and Professor of Theology at Oxford. He reads the texts as showing a gradual deification of a man, pointing to an existing human source.
- [Maurice Goguel](#) (1880-1955), [*Jesus The Nazarene, Myth Or History?*](#) (1926). Son of a Lutheran pastor, he became a Professor of History of

Early Christianity in Paris. For him, Christianity *started as a mystery cult*, with a hero of a recent date, a Jewish faith-healer who came to believe he was the Messiah, and got executed by Pilate. Paul is a confusing patchwork of ideas and remains unexplained.

- A.D. Howell Smith (b. 1880), *Jesus Not A Myth* (1942). Howell Smith, son of a Church personality, did not follow his family example, became a director of the *Rationalist Press Association*, and wrote abundantly on the history of Christianity and the Church. He argues that the early Christian texts never call Jesus a God. The prediction that the Kingdom of God will happen during the lifetime of his listeners is a strong argument for the historicity of the preacher.
- Archibald Robertson (1886-1961), [*Jesus: Myth or History?* \(1946\)](#). Robertson's father (same name) was Principal of King's College, London and Bishop of Exeter. Robertson became a journalist/author. His book is a helpful account of the public debate in the 1890-1940 period. It lists the key spokesmen, gives a helpful analysis of their main arguments, while ending by seeking a compromise between both sides. Robertson pits two teams:
 - 11 "historicists": Frederick C. Conybeare, [Thomas K. Cheyne](#), [Paul W. Schmiedel](#), [Alfred Loisy](#), Albert Schweitzer, [Charles Guignebert](#), [Rudolf Bultmann](#), [Joseph Klausner](#), [Robert Eisler](#), Maurice Goguel, A.D. Howell Smith;
 - against 8 "mythicists": Bruno Bauer, [John M. Robertson](#), [Thomas Whittaker](#), [William B. Smith](#), Arthur Drews, [Paul-Louis Couchoud](#), L. Gordon Rylands, [Edouard Dujardin](#).

"Mythicism", an Imprecise and Confusing Journalistic Jargon

In their books, A.D. Howell Smith (1942) and Archibald Robertson (1946) popularized the use of *mythicist* (L19, i.e. late 19th c., "a student, interpreter, or creator of myths; also an adherent or student of mythicism), and *mythicism* (rare, M19, "attributing an origin in myth to narratives of supernatural events"; also "the tendency to create myths"). Both were bizarrely adopted as a

convenient, but imprecise journalistic shorthand for the "denial of Jesus existence", or the "thesis of non-historicity".[20]

For Drews, a professional philosopher, *Jesus historicity* was the *thesis*, always affirmed and demonstrated first, while *Jesus historicity denial* was the *antithesis* in a Hegelian sense, always coming in second position, *after* the positive thesis. Same thing with Schweitzer, who, in the rebuttals in the 2d edition of the *Quest* (Ch. 22 & 23), only speaks of *Bestreiter der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*, or *Verneiner* i.e. *challengers*, or *deniers* of the historicity of Jesus. Jesus has to be phenomenologically defined, *before* his existence can be denied.



Robert M. Price, *Deconstructing Jesus*

Theologians like to obfuscate the order of this conceptual link by *reversing* it, claiming that "mythicism" is a positive assertion, with the *historicist* only putting up a *defense* against the "mythicists". For instance, Hoffmann decries Ehrman's book as "entirely inadequate as a *defense*". [Emphasis added] [21]. Using the word *defense* switches the onus of evidence onto the non-

historicists. This reversal remains impossible when using the terminology of Drews or Schweitzer.

"Mythicisism" is also turned into the label of a fictitious, supposedly monolithic, "movement", in which fellow travelers are presumed to show cooperation, provide mutual support, and overlook their differences. But such *mythicisism* is an abstraction, which per se does not exist. Only individual "non-historicists" exist, each one with a different interpretation (or none) of the origins of Christianity. (See [The Denial of Jesus Historicity is not a Movement](#)). There are as many sharp *zizanies* (as the French like to call rivalries) among "non-historicists" as among "historicists", with no apparent dogma or party line. This point had, occasionally, been made by Robert M. Price and Richard Carrier. Hoffmann concurs:

"...there is a clear separation between *radical* NT criticism [the Dutch Radical School]... and *sensationalists*...internet propagators of uncontrolled speculation that suits their theological or atheological taste...they have made it far more difficult for the theory to get a fair hearing than any single group opposed to them...the last learned champion of the myth theory is George Wells". [\[21\]](#)

In fact, historicists do exhibit vastly different constructions of the *historical Jesus* — to the point of creating a "mess".[\[22\]](#) Schweitzer never attacks an abstract anonymous doctrine. As a historian, he always addresses the arguments of targeted scholars and writers, from the platform of his own personal arguments, avoids [weasel expressions](#) and specifically "names names".

A Contemporary Resurging Debate - "Jesus Historicists" vs "Historicity Deniers"

WWII put a stop to the public debate initially set off by Arthur Drews, until [George Albert Wells](#) (b. 1926), a professor of German at Un. of London, reignited it in the 70s with a series of books directly influenced by his readings of Bruno Bauer, Kalthoff and Drews in their original German.



George Albert Wells, *Did Jesus Exist?*

A whole series of scholars have re-opened the debate by publishing major refutations of Drews's *Christ Myth* thesis, including [Ian Wilson](#) (1984), [R.T. France](#) (1986), [Morton Smith](#) (1986), [Graham N. Stanton](#) (1989), [Robert Van Voorst](#) (2000), James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (2009), [R. Joseph Hoffmann](#) (1986 and 2010).^[23]

Various conferences have been held in the US and Europe, notably by the [Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion](#) (2007), and the [Center for Inquiry](#) CFI (2010), with scholars from both sides, such as [Robert M. Price](#) making contributions.

Major committees have been formed for communal examinations of the topics of historicity versus non-historicity, including:

- The famous [Jesus Seminar](#) formed by [Robert Funk](#) in 1985 under the tutelage of the [Westar Institute](#),
- The [Jesus Project](#) (Dec. 2007-Oct. 2009), under the leadership of [R. Joseph Hoffmann](#) and [Robert M. Price](#). Its goal was "to take the theory [of the non-existence of Jesus] as a 'testable hypothesis' and use the best methods of critical inquiry to reach a probable conclusion." ^[24]
- The [Jesus Process](#), formed in May 2012 as another round of inquiry with a new cast.

With the spread of the Internet, the old theological controversy that was raging 100 years ago has percolated down to the public forum and known a recrudescence,[25] with a "massive upsurge" of the non-existence thesis.[26] Both academic and independent scholars have ridden the new boom with publications all aimed at discussing the *Christ Myth* thesis and its aftermath, including major works by [Robert M. Price](#) (August 2011), [Bart D. Ehrman](#) (March 2012), [Richard Carrier](#) (April 2012), [Thomas L. Thompson](#) and Thomas Verenna (July 2012), and [Maurice Casey](#) (August 2012).[27]

R. Joseph Hoffmann, the arch-critic of Arthur Drews's *Christ Myth*

The Jesus Process

[R. Joseph Hoffmann](#) is a reputed historian of Early Christianity. Educated by Catholic nuns, he has remained a sentimental defender of the Church and a vocal advocate of Jesus Historicity, and at the same time a standard-bearer in the forefront of the campaign against Arthur Drews's Non-Historicity thesis. His contributions have been in books, conferences, and committees. He participated in the Jesus Seminar and the aborted Jesus Project. Like all other well-known scholars, Hoffmann also runs an Internet blog, the *New Oxonian*. Hoffmann is well-known for his witty, highly erudite and often acerbic style, and his penchant for complicated and extreme declarations.



R. Joseph Hoffmann, *The New Oxonian*

In May 2012, Hoffmann presented the [Jesus Process](#) defined as yet another round on the popular theme of "Consultation on the Historical Jesus". An introductory manifesto for the new group has been outlined in "Controversy, Mythicism, and the Historical Jesus" of May 22, 2012.[\[28\]](#).

When listing the major refutations of the *Christ Myth* thesis (Note [3]), Hoffmann notes that the "important studies" are the five works by S. J. Case, [F. C. Conybeare](#), [Maurice Goguel](#), [R. T. France](#), and [Morton Smith](#). But Hoffmann omits from that list many historically significant refutations such as Albert Schweitzer's critique of the *Christ Myth* in the added chapters 22 & 23 of the 2d edition of the *Quest* (1913, translated in 2001), or [Robert Van Voorst](#)'s work.

Targeting Drews, Creator of the Flashpoints of the Jesus Historicity Denial

Hoffmann has systematically used the *New Oxonian* for striking rhetorical blows at Drews's Non-Historical thesis, none yet being a decisive *estocade* (i.e. "death blow"). He does not hesitate to impute to Drews "a kind of *proto-Nazi* paganism".

[M]yth-theorists have normally held that the gospel writers... wrote fraudulent or consciously deceptive tales... The elimination of James as a "prop" for the historical Jesus has been a priority of the myth theorizers...[an] insupportable contention...[Drews is] [f]amous for his academic inexactness and sensationalism...with the glaring mistake...Despite the energy of the myth school...It remains a quaint, curious, interesting but finally unimpressive assessment of the evidence... an agenda-driven "waste of time"... a quicksand of denial and half-cooked conspiracy theories that take skepticism and suspicion to a new low. Like all failed hypotheses, it arrives at its premise by intuition, cherry picks its evidence... defends its "conclusions" by force majeure... a dogma in search of footnotes... its most ardent supporters... have been amateurs or dabblers in New Testament studies... least equipped by training or inclination ...[The Christ Myth is] manically disorientated, [arguing] a kind of *proto-Nazi* paganism... Drews is significant largely because he *created the flashpoints* to which many mythicists *return again and again*...[Emphasis added][28]

The *Christ Myth* Can no Longer Be Ignored

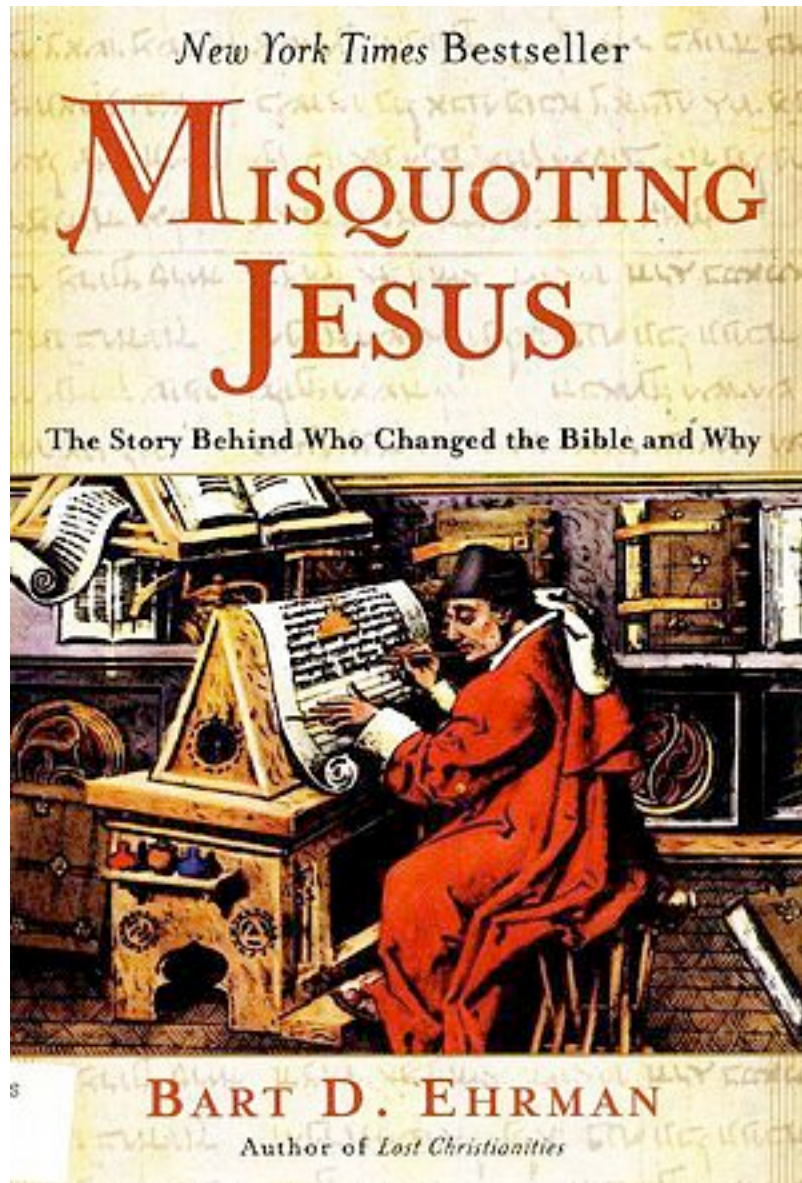


Richard C. Carrier, *Proving History: Bayes's Theorem & the Quest for the Historical Jesus*

Hoffmann has declared that the non-historicity thesis should no longer be ignored, but must be confronted head-on: "I have often made the claim that it has been largely *theological interests* since Strauss's time that *ruled the historicity question out of court*." [Emphasis added.][29]. Meaning that academics have ignored the *Christ Myth* thesis because of university expectations in favor of the historicity of Jesus. Hoffmann can cite all the cases of Ph.D.s unable to get a meaningful academic job. Not only David Strauss, but also Bruno Bauer was terminated as a professor at an early age. Arthur Drews, [Paul-Louis Couchoud](#), [George Albert Wells](#), [Alvar Ellegard](#), retained their academic positions only because they were independent from a Religious Studies department. [Thomas L. Thompson](#) could not obtain an appointment in the USA and found acceptance in Copenhagen. [Gerd Lüdemann](#) was not removed from Göttingen Un. but demoted to a non-credit course in Ancient History & Literature. [Richard Carrier](#) has embarked on a free-lance historian career.

Not only Germany, but also the US both produce a surfeit of educated Ph.D.s for the small number of professorships available. "Toeing the line" becomes vital for tenure. Years of study in the best universities do not guarantee prospects of a full career as an academic. Acceptance by future colleagues and chairmen of departments becomes a make-or-break condition.

Need for an Adequate Master Refutation of the Non-Historicity Thesis



Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*

Hoffmann has mentioned that [Bart D. Ehrman](#)'s book, *Did Jesus Exist?*, is "exceptionally disappointing and not an adequate rejoinder to the routinely absurd ideas of the Jesus-deniers. For that reason... I have had to abandon my indifference and get back into the fight--on the side of the son of man."[\[30\]](#).

Hoffmann has announced a major book, intended to become the master refutation of the *Christ Myth* thesis, in order to block the insidious increase of its popularity, and to safeguard the integrity of New Testament studies (*New Oxonian*, May 22, 2012)

This essay is in part an attempt to clarify procedural issues relevant to what is sometimes called the “Christ-myth” or “Non-historicity” thesis—an argumentative approach to the New Testament based on the theory that the historical Jesus of Nazareth did not exist... *The failure of scholars to take the “question of Jesus” seriously* has resulted in a *slight increase in the popularity* of the non-historicity thesis, a popularity that—in my view—now threatens to distract biblical studies from the serious business of illuminating the causes, context and development of early Christianity...It is a preface of sorts to a *more ambitious project on the myth theory* itself and what we can reliably know—if anything—about the historical Jesus. [Emphasis added][\[28\]](#)

Many more similar books are in the works by academic and independent scholars, all capitalizing on the new wave of interest — a vogue similar to that of a 100 years ago. Major publishers are jumping in the bandwagon, welcoming the renewed discussion of Drews's *Christ Myth* thesis and the expanding public debate on *Jesus Historicity* versus *Non-Historicity*.

Christ Myth II - The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus (1912)

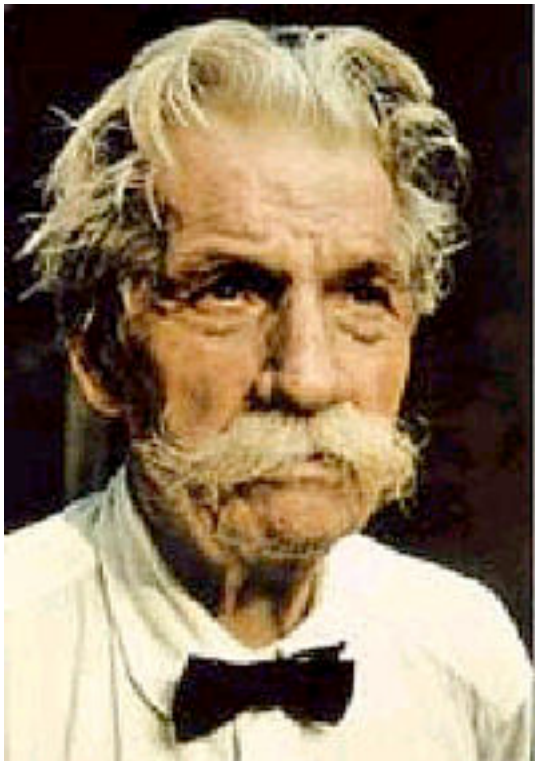
Critique of Circular Historical Theology and its Sentimental Lives of Jesus

Arthur Drews published a second part to his book, *Die Christusmythe II: "Die Zeugnisse für die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu"* (1911), to answer objections of

scholars and critically examine the [historical method](#) of theologians. [Joseph McCabe](#) (1867–1955), a formidably gifted linguist, orator, writer and translator, [31] who started life as a Roman Catholic priest, produced a first-class translation of *Christ Myth II* as *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus* (1912), published both in London and Chicago.

The Question of the Historicity of Jesus

The Preface of this classic book states:[32]



Albert Schweitzer

The question of the historicity of Jesus [*die Frage nach der Historizität von Jesus Christus*] is a purely historical question to be settled with the resources of historical research. [emphasis added]

In Ch. 3, "The Methods of Historical Criticism" of Part IV, "The Witness of the Gospels", Drews denounces the unscientific *methodology principles* of Theological History which have been used in [The Quest for the Historical Jesus](#), the new theological vogue since [David Strauss](#) (1808–1874), and

resulted in a long string of *Lives of Jesus*.^[33] Drews criticizes "historical theology" as *not respecting the rules of non-Christian historical method*, and giving way to *sentimental intuitions* and *basic circularity* of argumentation, where the existence of Jesus is *presupposed, but not evidenced by outside sources*. He takes as example the case of [Johannes Weiss](#).

[C]ritics are convinced of the historicity of the gospels *a priori, before investigating the subject*...[They only have] to seek the "historical nucleus" in tradition...How is it that Weinel knows the [innermost nature] of Jesus so well before beginning his inquiry that he thinks he can *determine by this test what is spurious in tradition and what is not?*...The gospels, it seems, are to be understood from "the soul of Jesus," not from the soul of their authors!...Johannes Weiss... acknowledges that in all his inquiries he *starts with the assumption that the gospel story in general has an historical root*, that it has grown out of the soil of the life of Jesus, goes back to eye-witnesses of his life, and comes so near to him that we may count upon historical reminiscences...There is a further principle, that *all that seems possible... may at once be set down as actual*... [This is how] all theological constructions of the life of Jesus are based... the historicity of which is supposed to have been *proved by showing that they are possible*... Johannes Weiss is a master in... [this] way of interpreting the miracles of Jesus... If any one ventures to differ from him, Weiss bitterly retorts: "Any man who says that these religious ideas and emotions are inconceivable had better keep his hand off matters of religious history; he has no equipment to deal with them" [A classical response of theologians to skeptics.]...[In] Weiss's *Das älteste Evangelium*...he tries to prove that... Mark is merely incorporating an *already existing tradition*. "Not without certain assumptions," he admits, "do we set about the inquiry..." [emphasis added]

Drews, like Schweitzer in his *Quest*, focuses mostly on German liberal theologians, while mentioning [Ernest Renan](#) (1823–1892) only *en passant*. He completely ignores [Baron d'Holbach](#) (1723–1789), the first to publish a critical [Life of Jesus](#), with his *Ecce Homo! (Histoire critique de Jésus-Christ, ou Analyse raisonnée des évangiles)* (1770).^[34]

I. The Jewish Witnesses



A Roman portrait bust said to be of Josephus[35]

1. [Philo](#): a Jewish contemporary of Jesus, knew of the [Essenes](#), but makes no mention of Jesus or Christians.[36]
2. [Justus of Tiberias](#): Drews mentions the curious case of [Photius](#), the 9th century Patriarch of Constantinople, who became famous for his [Bibliotheca](#) or [Myriobiblon](#), a collection of excerpts and summaries of some 280 classical volumes now mostly lost. Photius read through the Chronicle of [Justus of Tiberias](#), a contemporary of Josephus, who went through the [Jewish Wars](#) and the destruction of Jerusalem. Justus wrote a book about the War, and a Chronicle of the Jewish people from [Moses](#) to [Agrippa II](#) (27-ca. 94 AD). "*Photius himself believed there ought to be some mention of Jesus [in Justus's Chronicle], and was surprised to find none.*" [emphasis added][36]
3. [Josephus](#): pros and cons of the famous passage [Testimonium Flavianum](#), concluding it is most likely an [interpolation](#) or alteration.[37][38]

4. [Talmud](#): offers no contemporary report on Jesus, only later fragments from the Gospel tradition.[39]

II. The Roman Witnesses



Tacitus, historian of *Annals*

1. [Pliny the Younger](#) (61-ca.112 AD): his letter to Trajan of ca. 110 AD (X, 96) only mentions the existence of a cult of Christians with an innocent early-morning ritual. This letter has aroused the suspicion of [Bruno Bauer](#) and [Edwin Johnson](#). [40]
2. [Suetonius](#) (69-122 AD): the expulsion of Jews, making trouble at the instigation of an enigmatic [Chrestus](#) (*impulsore Chresto*), not spelled *Christus*, under [Emperor Claudius](#) leaves uncertain who *Chrestus* was, and does not support the historicity of a Jesus. [40]
3. [Tacitus](#) (56-117 AD): Next to Josephus, is host to the *second most important non-Christian passage* in *Annals*, XV, 44 (ca.115 AD). [Nero](#) lays the blame for the 64 AD fire of Rome on *Christianos*, followers of *Christus*, whose death was ordered by Pontius Pilate in Judaea, who is mentioned as *procurator* instead of

prefect. This passage has given rise to an intense examination of pros and cons.[41] *Jesus*, as a name, is not mentioned; *Christianos* seems to be a correction of an original *Chrestianos*; *the persecution of Christians by Nero is doubtful*, mentioned only in [Sulpicius Severus](#) (ca. 400), whose text could have been interpolated back into Tacitus; Tacitus's source must have been, not the archives, but hearsay from Christians. The strange circumstances of the discovery of the manuscript in the 15th century also raised questions.[42] A discussion on the authenticity of the Annals passage remains inconclusive.[43]

4. [Lucus a non Lucendo](#), no evidence can be deduced from the destroyed pagan manuscripts.[44]

III. The Witness of Paul





[Farnese Hercules](#), a Roman copy from [Lysippos Herakles](#)(Naples)

The Epistles of Paul, and doubts about their authenticity

[The first ten [epistles](#) of [Paul of Tarsus](#) appeared around 140 AD, collected in [Marcion's](#)[45] [Apostolikon](#). Their lost text was reconstituted by [Adolf von Harnack](#) in *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God*, 1921][46][47]

The leader of the [Tübingen School](#) of theology, [Ferdinand Christian \(F.C.\) Baur](#) (1792–1860), in *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi* (1845), had established as genuine the *four chief* [Pauline Epistles](#) — [Romans](#), [Galatians](#), [First Corinthians](#) & [Second Corinthians](#) — and that *Paul in the [Acts](#) was different from the Paul of the Epistles*.

Drews stresses that in the Germany of the 1900s, the genuineness of those four chief "Paulinae" (i.e. Paul's Epistles) "is so firmly held by [theologians] that any doubt about it is at once rejected by them as *not to be taken seriously*."

This fear didn't stop from doubts the likes of:

- Bruno Bauer, the first to declare all Paul's epistles to be 2d-century forgeries;[48]
- the English radicals [Edwin Johnson](#), [John M. Robertson](#), [Thomas Whittaker](#);
- the Dutch radicals [G.J.P.J. Bolland](#), Willem C. Van Manen[49] (with two key articles in English on "Paul & Paulinism" [50] and Romans[51] [52], and [G.A. van den Bergh van Eysinga](#), all belonging to the famous [Dutch Radical School](#), whose specialty was radical criticism of the Paulinae[53] and denial of their authenticity;[54]
- and [Albert Kalthoff](#) who revived Bruno Bauer's ideas and gave them a new shine.

Drews says it loud and clear: There's a *vicious circle of methodology* in historical theologians, and *if they find Jesus*, it's because *they assume in advance he's already in the stories*.

1. Proofs of the Historicity of Jesus in Paul[55]

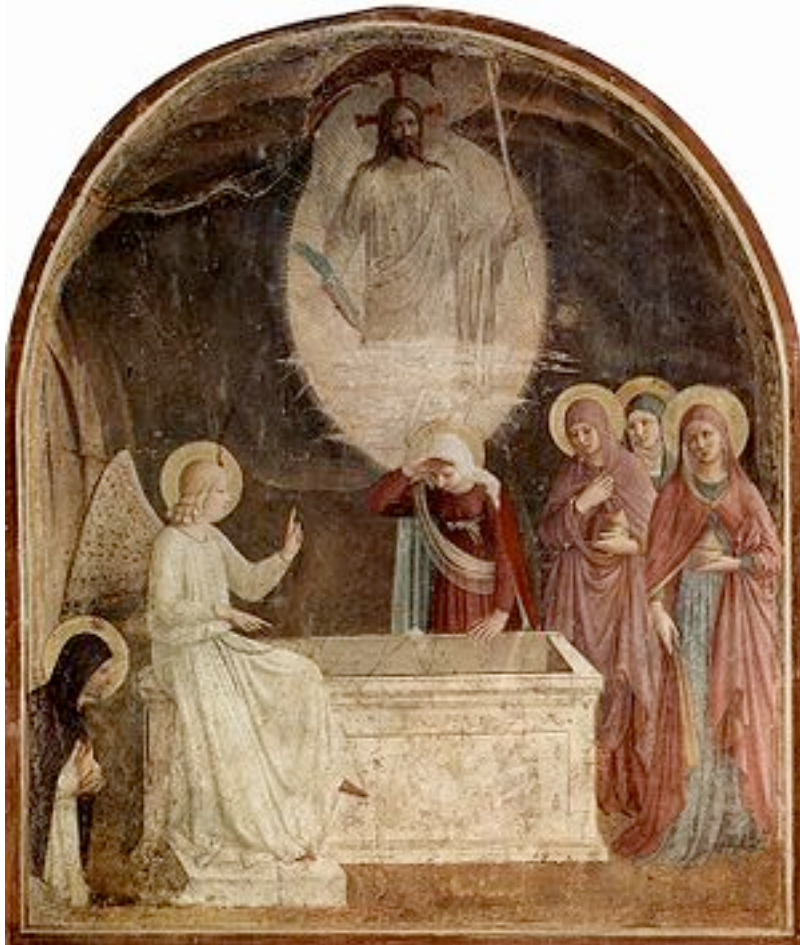
(a) *Simple Proofs:*

The Savior has to *appear to be a real man*. The law ([Halakha](#)) did not make men righteous, and so Jesus Christ was despatched to free men from the law, redeem them and deliver them from sin and death by his own sacrificial death. By his union with Christ, man becomes dead to the law and gains eternal life.

[Philo's Logos](#) is a similar divine [savior](#) and [mediator](#).

Blended with the *Liberator* [Messiah](#) (who has to descend from [David](#)), the fusion results in a *Suffering, Dying & Rising God*. But this Mediator/Savior *has to appear as a real man* before his sacrifice — *born of a woman under the law* ([Gal. 4:4](#)) (a Jewish expression).

The idea of a son of God sent as mediator to benefit mankind and confer [redemption](#) is abundant in Ancient Greek stories (Herakles, Dionysos), and [Ancient Near East mysteries](#) (Attis, Adonis, Osiris). Same idea in the [Son of Man](#) of the [prophet Daniel](#). The God figure is linked to the cycle of nature and sun periodicity. Paul enlarged and deepened the idea. [Gal. 4:1](#). The mention of the *twelve* in [1 Cor. 15:5](#) is a gloss.





Women at the empty tomb, by [Fra Angelico](#), 1437-1446.

(b) The Appearances of the [Risen Christ](#).

(c)

About the "visions" in [1 Cor. 15](#): Is the whole episode fashioned *according to the Scriptures*? And the mention that Jesus resurrected *appeared to more than 500 brothers* seems an interpolation.

(c) *The Account of the [Last Supper](#).*

[1 Cor. 11:23](#), has a suspicious liturgical form, while Mark and Matthew's accounts differ, and the phrase "*in memory of me*" is seen by many as a later interpolation. The betrayal by Judas is an invention, with *paradidonai* not meaning "betray", but "give up", ([Isaiah, 53:12](#)), while selecting the "night" for the action is pure stage setting. The preceding text, [1 Cor. 11:17-22](#), has been dealing with [agape](#), the love-feast of early Christians, to which the text returns. [1 Cor. 27-33](#).

(d) *The "Brothers" of the Lord [vs Brethren in Christ]*

In [1 Cor. 9:5](#) and [Gal. 1:19](#), has the phrase [Brothers of the Lord](#) a physical meaning and is it different from [brethren in Christ](#) (spiritual brotherhood in a sect or church)? This is an old controversy, but its conclusion remains obscure. "Missionary journeys" assigned to physical brothers seem highly improbable. [James the Just](#) is also called *The Brother of the Lord* (Gal. 1:19) because he is the most virtuous. Drews finds it *impossible to define* what kind of man this James is. Identifying who the man is (among the too many Jameses in the texts) remains utterly "hopeless".

(e) *The "[Words of the Lord](#)."*

[Those are the "sayings" of Jesus, their compilation first called [Logia](#), after [Papias of Hierapolis](#), and renamed the hypothetical "[Q source](#)" by [Johannes Weiss](#) (1863-1914).] There are many approximate parallels between Paul and Gospel sayings. Prohibition to part with a wife ([1 Cor. 7:10](#) & [Matthew 5:32](#)). Making one's living through the Gospel ([1 Cor. 9:14](#) & [Matthew 10:10](#)). [Parousia](#) in the clouds ([1 Thessalonians 4:15](#) & [Mark 13:26](#)) etc...Who borrows from whom? From Paul into Gospels, or the reverse? Those sayings are not all

exceptional, including many banal platitudes from [Talmud](#) ([Romans 2:1](#) & [Matthew 7:1](#)); ([Romans 2:19](#) & [Matthew 15:14](#)), etc...

2. Paul no Witness to the Historicity of Jesus[56]



Paul arguing with Jews, 12th-century champlevé enamel plaque -
DISPVUTABAT CV[M] GRECIS (*He disputed with the Greeks*) REVINCIBAT
IV[DEOS] (*He refuted the Jews*)

Paul was not concerned with the earthly life of Jesus, and his idea of Christ was formed independently of an historical Jesus. [Vrede](#) concurs: For Paul, only Jesus's death is important, and it is a "superhistorical" fact for Paul. *Paul knew nothing of Jesus*. Paul is not the disciple of a historical Jesus. *Paul invokes no distinctive acts of the "Lord", no sayings of Jesus*, even when it would have been most useful to his own preaching, for instance on the question of the law.

"[I]nstead of doing so, [Paul] uses *the most complicated arguments from the Scriptures* and the most determined dialectic, when he might have acted so much more simply." [Emphasis added.] Why not, for example, in [Gal. 2:11-14](#)

"in order to convince Peter that he is wrong in avoiding the tables of the [Gentiles](#)?".

Theologians have a ready-made "psychological" excuse to explain Paul's silence on Jesus' life: The epistles are *occasional papers that never have reason to speak expressly about Jesus*, as if everything about Jesus had already been communicated orally, and did not need to be repeated in the letters. Even when "[t]hese letters, [are] swarming with dogmatic discussions of the most subtle character", remarks Drews. It's one more excuse that theologians invent to conceal a major difficulty. Paul's Christ does not point to the Jesus of the Gospels.

3. The Question of Genuineness[\[57\]](#)

Drews examines the question of the *authenticity of the Epistles*, and the *Historicity of Paul* and starts with a reminder:

The Pauline Christ is a *metaphysical principle*, and his incarnation only one *in idea*, an imaginary element of his religious system. The man Jesus is in Paul the *idealised suffering servant of God* of Isaiah and the *just man of Wisdom* an intermediate stage of *metaphysical* evolution, not an historical personality.
[emphasis added]

Not a single trace of Paul has been found in the writings of Philo and Josephus. The [Epistle of Clement](#) is not reliable. There's no proof of the existence of the Pauline epistles before [Justin](#). [Papias of Hierapolis](#) was also silent about them.

(a) *Emotional Arguments for the Genuineness.*

The only tools for analyzing the epistles are internal evidence and [philology](#). Theologians rely on aesthetics, since there's no outside comparison to identify what they perceive as the *distinctiveness of style*. Theologians also resort to their "feeling" to detect the *powerful personality* of Paul, the *uninventible originality* of the epistles, they even claim they can *sense his soul*.

(b) *Arguments for Genuineness from the Times.*



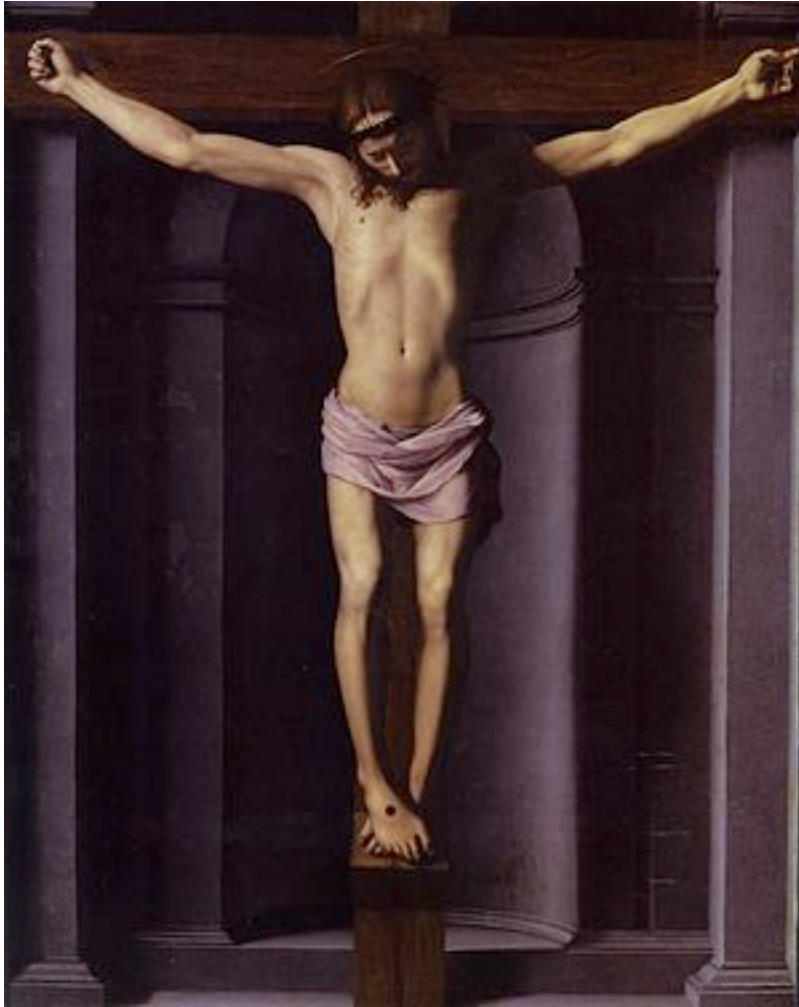
Paul of Tarsus, apostle extraordinaire to the Gentiles

[Van Manen](#) showed that the communities visited by Paul were complex organizations, not newly-founded and young. They point to the *middle of the 2d century* rather than the middle of the 1st. The [Gnostic](#) influence is noticeable.

[Gift of tongues](#), [circumcisions](#) were still issues in the 2d century. Justin's [Trypho](#) showed that the two sides of established Jews versus sectarian Jewish-Christians ([Nazarene](#)) were still confronting each other as in Galatians.

Only after the destruction of Jerusalem did Jews and Christians split, turning to enmity and hatred. Later Christians took the side of Romans against the Jews (135). Christians felt they were the new chosen, with a new [Covenant](#), and the Jews had become outcasts and damned. In [Romans 9-11](#) the Jews are excluded from [salvation](#).

[Paulinism](#) is *very close to the* [Gnosticism](#) *of the 2d century*, Drews emphasizes:



Bronzino's depiction of the Crucifixion with 3 nails, no ropes, and a *hypopodium* standing support, c. 1545.

In one case the connection *between Gnosticism and Paul* is so evident that it may be cited as a proof that Paul knew nothing of an historical Jesus; it is the passage in [1 Cor. 2:6](#), where the apostle speaks of the *princes of this world, who knew not what they did when they crucified the Lord of glory*. It was long ago recognised by van Manen and others that by these *princes* we must understand, not the Jewish or Roman authorities, nor any terrestrial powers whatever, but the *enemies of this world, the demons higher powers*, which do indeed rule the earth for a time, but will *pass away* before the coming triumph of the saviour-God. That is precisely the *Gnostic idea of the death of the Redeemer*, and it is here put forward by Paul; from that we may infer that he did not conceive the life of Jesus as an historical event, but a *general*

metaphysical drama, in which heaven and earth struggle for the mastery.
[emphasis added][51]

Paul does use a lot of Gnostic language, which was understandable in the 2d century, but *not around 50-60 AD*, given as the *spurious dating of the Epistles*. Not enough time had passed to elaborate and deepen the new thoughts. The [Damascus vision](#) is not enough to explain in Paul such a quick turn-around conversion from zealot Jew to fanatic Christian.

(c) *The Spuriousness of the Pauline Epistles*.

Paul's [Judaism](#) is highly questionable. Consulted rabbis cannot recognize a student of Judaism in Paul.[58][59] Paul is constantly referring only to the [Septuagint](#), and there's no clue that he knew any Hebrew. He thinks Greek, speaks Greek, eats Greek, uses Greek in everything. *Paulinism is much closer to the Hellenistic Judaism of Philo and [Wisdom](#)*. Paul never shows any respect for the sacred texts, distorting or changing their meaning, as in [Gal. 4:21](#). His mindset is unique, similar only to other 2d-century writers, like [Hebrews](#), [Barnabas](#), [Justin](#).

The Epistles and the Acts present two radically different stories ([F.C. Baur](#)).

The [Dutch Radical School](#) (Rudolf Steck[49] and Willem C. van Manen[49]) has mostly denied the authenticity of the Epistles.[53][54] *The Epistles' goal was to separate Christianity from Judaism*. Many intriguing scenarios are possible about the character of Paul, a Jew who turned against the law and Judaism, to give freedom to the new cult: one writer, or many?[60] But, for Drews's *Christ Myth*, the historicity of Paul is *secondary*.

IV The Witness of the Gospels



Sermon on the Mount, by *Carl Bloch*

This important part IV covers a complete text criticism and historical criticism of Gospel scholarship in 1912, in 14 chapters:

1. *The Sources of the Gospels*[\[61\]](#)
2. *The Witness of Tradition*[\[62\]](#)
3. *The Methods of Historical Criticism*[\[63\]](#)
 - (a) *The Methodical Principles of Theological History*
 - (b) *The Method of Johannes Weiss*
4. *The “Uniqueness” and “Uninventibility” of the Gospel Jesus*[\[64\]](#)
5. *Schmiedel’s [Nine] Main Pillars*[\[65\]](#)
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 - (a) *The Literary Character of the Gospels.*
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7. *The Mythic-Symbolic Interpretation of the Gospels*[\[67\]](#)

- (a) *The Suffering and Exaltation of the Messiah.*
- (b) *The Character and Miracles of the Messiah. — Supplement* [\[On Job\]](#)
- (c) [John the Baptist](#) and the [Baptism of Jesus](#).
- (d) *The Name of the* [Messiah](#).
- (e) *The Topography of the Gospels.*
- I. [NAZARETH](#).
- II. [JERUSALEM](#).
- III. [GALILEE](#).

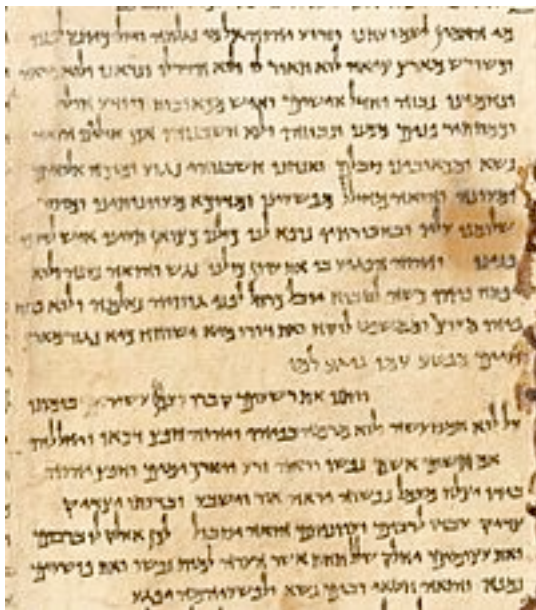


Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom, as in 1 Kings 3:12-13, Bible card, 1896, Providence Lithograph Company

- (f) *The Chronology of the Gospels.*
- (g) *The Pre-Christian Jesus.*
- (h) *The Conversion of the Mythical into an Historical Jesus.*
- (i) *Jesus and the* [Pharisees](#) *and Scribes.*
- (k) *Further Modifications of Prophetical and Historical Passages.*
- 8. *Historians and the Gospels*[\[68\]](#)
- 9. *The Words of the Lord [The "Sayings" of Jesus", the* ["Q source"](#)*]*[\[69\]](#)

- (a) *The Tradition of the Words of the Lord.*
- (b) *The Controversies with the Pharisees.*
- (c) *Sayings of Jesus on the Weak and Lowly.*
- (d) *Jesus's Belief in [God the Father](#)*
- (e) *Love of Neighbours and of Enemies.*
- (f) *The [Sermon on the Mount](#).*
- (g) *Further Parallel Passages.*
- 10. *The [Parables](#) of Jesus*^[70]
- 11. *General Result*^[71]
- 12. *The "Strong Personality"*^[72]
- 13. *The [Historical Jesus](#) and the Ideal Christ*^[73]
- 14. *Idea and Personality: Settlement of the Religious Crisis*^[4]
- Appendix [*Astral Speculations of the Ancients on [Psalm 22](#)*]^[74]

The Suffering Servant of God in Isaiah 53



Isaiah 53 in the [Great Isaiah Scroll](#), found at [Qumran](#) and dated to the 2nd century BCE

The book emphasized the role played in the formation of the figure of Jesus by the Old Testament character of *The Suffering Servant* in [Isaiah 53](#), [Jeremiah](#),

[Job](#), [Zechariah](#), [Ezekiel](#), etc... especially as presented in the Greek version of the Septuagint. [Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12 ESV](#) tells the story of the *human scapegoat* who, on God's will, is turned into an innocent lamb offered for sacrifice:

3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;... 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7... yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter... 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; ... stricken for the transgression of my people? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked... although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him... when his soul makes an offering for guilt... 11...by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12...because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. [emphasis added]

In ch. 7, "The Mythic-Symbolic Interpretation of the Gospels", Drews writes:




*Psalm 22:1-8 in St. Albans Psalter - DS DS MS mean *Deus, Deus meus*, first words in Latin Vulgate*

The mythic-symbolic interpretation of the gospels sees in Isaiah 53 *the germ-cell of the story of Jesus*, the starting-point of all that is related of him, the solid nucleus round which all the rest has crystallised. The prophet deals with the *Servant of Jahveh*, who voluntarily submits to suffering in order to expiate the sin and guilt of the people. [emphasis added]

The Suffering Victim of Psalm 22

Isaiah 53 is seconded by the *Suffering Victim* in crucial [Psalm 22](#), especially its lines: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?* (Psalm 22:1; [Mark 15:34](#)); *They hurl insults, shaking their heads.* (Psalm 22:7; [Mark 15:29](#)); *They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.* (Psalm 22:18; [Mark 15:24](#)). Other psalms present passages supporting the figure of the *Suffering Servant* of Yahweh ([Psalm 1](#), [8](#), [15](#), [23](#), [24](#), [34](#), [37](#), [43](#), [69](#), [103](#), [109](#), [110](#), [116](#), [118](#), [121](#), [128](#), etc..)

The Righteous as Personification of Wisdom, his Persecution and Death

Drews also underlines the contribution of the character of the *Just* or the *Righteous* in the [Book of Wisdom](#), and [Sirach](#).^[75]

- In "Wisdom 7:15-29", she is *a breath of the power of God, a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty*.^[76]

- In "Wisdom 2:10-19" the wicked are plotting against the righteous man: *Let us oppress the righteous poor man,*

- and in "Wisdom 2:20" they decide *Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to what he says, he will be protected*.^[77]

Drews adds:

[Ch. 7, "The Mythic-Symbolic Interpretation of the Gospels"] According to Deuteronomy ([21:23](#)), there was no more shameful death than *to hang on a tree* (in Greek *xylon* and *stauros*, in Latin *crux*); so that this naturally occurred as the true manner of the just one's death. Then the particular motive of the death was furnished by the passage in Wisdom and the idea of Plato. He died as a victim of the *unjust*, the *godless*.



Job, by [Bonnat](#)

[Ch. 8, "Historians and the Gospels"] No one will question that the figure of Jesus in the gospels has a certain *nucleus*, about which *all the rest has gradually crystallised*. But that this nucleus is an historical personality, and not *Isaiah's Servant of God*, the *Just of Wisdom*, and the *Sufferer of the 22d Psalm*, is merely to beg the question; and this is the less justified since all the really important features of the gospel life of Jesus owe their origin partly to *the myth*, partly to the expansion and application of *certain passages in the prophets*.

[Ch. 13, "The Historical Jesus and the Ideal Christ"]...There is not in the centre of Christianity one particular historical human being, but *the idea of man, of the suffering, struggling, humiliated, but victoriously emerging from all his humiliations, servant of God*, symbolically represented in the actions and experiences of a particular historical person. [emphasis added]

Features of Dying-and-Rising God Added to the Syncretic Mix



Icon of Jesus being led to Golgotha, 16th century, Theophanes the Cretan (Stavronikita Monastery, Mount Athos).

In Ch. 13, Drews thickens the syncretic mortar, emphasizing the *mystery cult* character of early Christian *ecstatic* reverence:

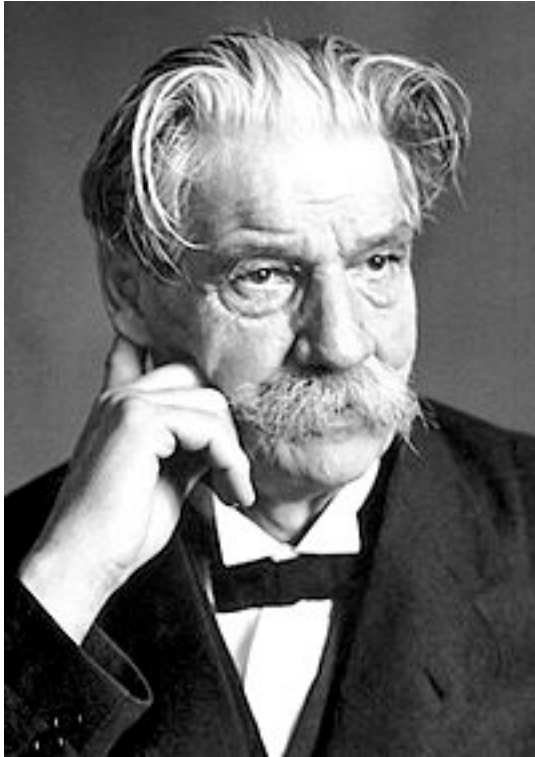
Isaiah's *suffering servant of God*, offering himself for the sins of men, the *just* of Wisdom in combination with the mythic ideas of a *suffering, dying, and rising god-saviour* of the *nearer Asiatic religions* — it was about these alone, as about a solid nucleus, that the contents of the new religion crystallised. The *ideal Christ, not the historical Jesus* of modern liberal theology, was the founder of the Christian movement... It is more probable that *Jesus and Isaiah are one and the same person* than that the Jesus of liberal theology brought Christianity into existence.

...that Christ became “the son of God” and descended upon the earth; that God divested himself of his divinity, took on human form, led a life of poverty with the poor, suffered, was crucified and buried, and rose again, and *thus secured for men the power to rise again* and to obtain forgiveness of sins and a blessed life with the heavenly father—that is *the mystery* of the figure of Christ; that is what the figure conveyed to the hearts of the faithful, and *stirred them to an ecstatic reverence* for this deepest revelation of God. [emphasis added]

The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus in Past and Present (1926)

Later, Drews came back to the same subject, in *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus in Past and Present* (1926), which is a historical review of some 35 major deniers of Jesus historicity (radicals, mythicists) covering the period 1780 - 1926.

"Historicity Deniers" versus "Historicists"



Albert Schweitzer, 1952 Nobel portrait, criticized the [Lives of Jesus](#) reconstructions

Note that *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus in Past and Present* of 1926 was meant to be Arthur Drews's pendant and counter response to [Albert Schweitzer's](#) [Quest of the Historical Jesus](#) of 1906. Drews's book was in fact presented in the guise of "*Quest of the non-Historicity of Jesus*", with its own historical review of the key Jesus deniers.

Like Schweitzer, Drews, again, ignores the priority of [Baron d'Holbach](#) in publishing the first critical "Life of Jesus", with *Ecce Homo! - The History of Jesus of Nazareth, Being a Rational Analysis of the Gospels*, (1770).[\[34\]](#)

As Schweitzer erected himself as the champion of "historicists", Drews stood up in opposition as the champion of "radicals" and "Jesus historicity deniers". They were later labeled "mythicists" by the media, a name never used by Drews, but popularized in the early 1940s by the British writers A.D. Howell Smith, in his book *Jesus Not A Myth* (1942) and Archibald Robertson in his book *Jesus: Myth or History?* (1946). This new label was convenient in opposing "mythicists" versus "historicists". [\[78\]](#). But "mythicism" is an

ambiguous and confusing word that does not convey Drews's precise meaning of "*denial of historicity*", the negative Hegelian "antithesis" which comes only *after* the primary positive "thesis", "*advocacy of historicity*". Other derived wordings have been *non-historicists*, *ahistoricists*, *existence deniers*, etc.... Although Drews was intellectually on the other side of the controversy over the historicity of Jesus from Albert Schweitzer, Hoffers notes that Drews "was temporarily a friend of Albert Schweitzer, the famous theologian and physician".

Pride of Place to David Strauss and Bruno Bauer

Drews gives the most prominent place to [David Strauss](#), who reduced all the [supernatural](#) events of the New Testament stories to the role of [myths](#); and to [Bruno Bauer](#), the first professional scholar who *denied the historicity of Jesus*, argued the *priority of Mark as inventor of the Gospel story* and the *fiction of Jesus's existence*, rejected all of Paul's epistles as *non genuine*, and emphasized the input of Greco-Roman ideas (especially the [Stoicism](#) of [Seneca](#)) in the New Testament documents. Both Strauss and Bauer were forced to abandon University life at a young age.



Bruno Bauer, German founder of the *Christ Myth* thesis

The Five Major Jesus Deniers Who Influenced Drews's *Christ Myth*

Among those Jesus deniers, Arthur Drews was especially influenced by the following thinkers:

- The German [Bruno Bauer](#) (1809–1882),^[1] the original pioneer of the denial of Jesus Historicity. See whole [Ch. XI "The First Skeptical Life of Jesus"](#) dedicated to Bruno Bauer, in Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906).
- The German [Albert Kalthoff](#) (1850-1906):
 - *Die Entstehung des Christentums - Neue Beiträge zum Christusproblem*, (1904), transl. *The Rise of Christianity* (1907);
 - *Was wissen wir von Jesus? Eine Abrechnung mit Wilhelm Bousset* (1904) [*What do We Know of Jesus? A Settlement with Wilhelm Bousset*];
 - *Modernes Christentum* (1906) [*Modern Christendom*].
- The American [William Benjamin Smith](#) (1850–1934), fluent in English and German, and close to Kalthoff:
 - *The Pre-Christian Jesus, Studies of Origins of Primitive Christianity* (1906/1911);
 - *Ecce Deus: Studies Of Primitive Christianity*, Introd. [Paul Wilhelm Schmiedel](#) (1912).
- The Scot [J. M. Robertson](#) (1856–1933):
 - *Christianity and Mythology* (1900-10);
 - *A Short History of Christianity* (1902);
 - *Pagan Christs - Studies in Comparative Hierology* (1903–1911).
- The Englishman [Thomas Whittaker](#) (1856–1935): *The Origins of Christianity* (1904), declaring Jesus a myth.

The Impact of the School of Comparative History of Religions

Space is dedicated to the major advocates of the *School of (Comparative) History of Religions*,^[79] flourishing in Germany (*Die Religionsgeschichtliche*

Schule) and the UK. Peter Jensen, the expert on Semitic Languages and Babylonian literature, in *Das Gilgamesch-Epos in der Weltliteratur*, (Part I, 1906 & Part II, 1928) [*The Epic of Gilgamesh in World Literature*],[80] had analyzed the [Epic of Gilgamesh](#), and found parallels in all later [ANE](#) myths, including the Hebrew Tanakh, Moses and Isaiah,[81] thus impacting on the authenticity of the Christian Gospels and destroyed the unique character of the Jesus story. [Alfred Jeremias](#) (1864-1935) , another expert in [ANE](#) languages and mythology, had published *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (1891) and advocated [panbabylonism](#), the thesis that sees the Ancient Hebrew stories directly derived from Babylonian mythology. The English summary (by Klaus Schilling) of *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus* describes Jeremias's views:

[Jeremias] only admitted Chaldean origin of early Judaism, but couldn't deny that there was some sort of impact from old Babylon in the New Testament. The Babylonian-Chaldean worldview is about the most astralmythical and astrological worldview found in history of cultures; the terms 'astrological' and 'Chaldean' were used synonymously by many authors since Hellenic times. In this sense Jeremias continued the works of Volney and Dupuis... The Christian calendar tells the story of the astral redeemer king, the 12 apostles are akin to the zodiac, and the 4 Gospels are akin to the cardinal points of the world.

The Dutch Radical School, from Allard Pierson to Van Eysinga

Drews was closely connected to what was called the school of Dutch “[Radical Criticism](#)”,[82] which not only denied the existence of Jesus Christ, the authenticity of Paul's epistles [53][54], and also the very historicity of Paul. Drews reviews the inputs from the key scholars:

- [Allard Pierson](#) (1831–1896): *De Bergrede en andere synoptische Fragmenten* (1878) [*The Sermon on the Mount and other Synoptic Fragments*], was epoch-making. It proved that the [Sermon on the Mount](#) is a post-70 product, a *collection of aphorisms of Jewish wisdom* placed into the mouth of the semi-god Jesus. Non-Christian witnesses are worthless, especially Tacitus. The *Galatians epistle is not genuine*

(contrary to F.C. Baur and Tübingen School). Non-historicity of Jesus is affirmed. Pierson is recognized as the founder of the Dutch Radical School.

- [Abraham Dirk Loman](#) (1823–1897): *Quaestiones Paulinae* (1882-6) [*Questions on the Paulinae*] contends that not only Galatians, but *all of Paul's Epistles are 2d-century forgeries* (following Bruno Bauer). No evidence of the Paulinae before Marcion, the epistles are Gnostic treatises. *Jesus is a 2d-century fiction*. "Some" Jesus may have existed, but buried and *lost in the dark*. The Jesus of Christianity is an ideal symbol, a non-historical construction.
- Samuel Adrianus Naber (1828–1913): Christianity mixed Jewish and Roman-Hellenic thoughts. *Greek myths have been fused with Isaiah*. Naber also supports the non-historicity of Jesus.



Willem Christiaan van Manen, Collection Leiden Un.

- [Willem C. van Manen](#) (1842–1905): *Paulus* (1890–96). Agrees with Loman and Rudolf Steck that none of the epistles is genuine. *Acts* are *dependent on Flavius Josephus* and date from ca. 125-150. As an

exception in the Dutch Radical School, does accept the historicity of Jesus. [49] [50] [51] [52]

- Rudolf Steck [49] (1842–1924): a Swiss scholar, an ally of the Dutch. In *Der Galaterbrief nach seiner Echtheit untersucht nebst kritischen Bemerkungen zu den Paulinischen Hauptbriefen* (1888) [*Inquiry into the Genuineness of the Galatians Epistle, and Critical Remarks on the Chief Paulines*], he branded *all the Pauline epistles as fakes*, [53][54] and supported Pierson and Naber.
- [G.J.P.J. Bolland](#) (1854–1922): *De Evangelische Jozua* (1907) [*The Gospel of Joshua*] continued Bauer's concepts about Philo and his Logos, the Caesars, and earlier Jewish Gnosticism. Christianity is the result of *syncretism between Hellenized Jews and Judeophile Greeks in Alexandria after 70*, with "Chrestos" (the good) becoming "Christus", i.e., Jesus. *The original Jerusalem mother community is mere fiction*. Bolland also maintains the non-historicity of Jesus. [83]
- [G. A. van den Bergh van Eysinga](#) (1874–1957): the last of the line to hold a professorship. His important writings came after 1926. Van Eysinga endorses the view that the epistles of Clement and [Ignatius of Antioch](#) are *not genuine*. There is no evidence of the Paulinae before Marcion, *all produced by the Marcion circle*. Paul does *not sound Jewish*, (in opposition to Harnack). Paul's epistles are full of incongruities. [84] There's no evidence of the existence of Jesus the Messiah. [85] [86] In 1930, van Eysinga dedicated an article to Arthur Drews, "Does Jesus Live, or Has He Only Lived? A Study of the Doctrine of Historicity", commenting on Drews's 1926 book *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus in Past and Present* [87] Van Eysinga expressed his conviction that the Jesus movement had started as a mystery cult in his article *Das Christentum als MysterienReligion* (1950, "Christianity as a Mystery Cult"). [88]

The attention to Drews and the Dutch School was revived by [Hermann Detering](#) and his Website, [Radikalkritik](#) [89] in German and English. [90]

Review of Other Historicity Deniers from Charles-François Dupuis to Georg Brendes



Charles-François Dupuis.

Drews gives credit to the two French pioneers, [Charles-François Dupuis](#) and [Comte de Volney](#), both imbued with an astral-mythical interpretation of Jesus and Christianity.

Drews does mention the broad impact of [Ernest Renan](#) (1823–1892), with his immensely popular Romanticist *Vie de Jesus* (1863, *Life of Jesus*), in implanting serious doubts among the bourgeoisie. But Drews is less impressed by Renan as a scholar than Schweitzer was, who had devoted a full chapter (13) to the French "theology historian",[\[91\]](#) a space equal to that devoted to Bauer.

The prevailing term then was *radicalism*, and Drews lends special attention to the adherents of Radicalism in Germany, the US, France, and England, and to a few other scholars, now less well remembered, but who made an insightful contribution in their time. Drews includes in his survey:

- [Hermann Reimarus](#) (1694–1768), a teacher of Oriental languages in Hamburg, and whom Schweitzer enshrined as the original German skeptic of the divinity of Jesus in his 1906 *Quest of the Historical Jesus - From Reimarus to Wrede*.
- [Edwin Johnson](#) (1842–1901), and his *Antiqua mater - A Study of Christian Origins* (1887).^[92] An English radical theologian who identified the early Christians as the "Chrestiani", followers of a good ([Chrestus](#)) God who had expropriated the myth of [Dionysus](#) "Eleutherios" ("Dionysos the Emancipator"), to produce a self-sacrificing Godman. Johnson denounced the twelve apostles as complete fabrication.
- The Pole Andrzej Niemojewski (1864–1921, Warsaw), *Gott Jesus im Lichte fremder und eigener Forschungen samt Darstellung der evangelischen Astralstoffe, Astralszenen, und Astralsysteme*, (1910), [*Research on the Gospels' astralmythic aspects of the Jesus God*]. He continues the line of Volney and Dupuis, by looking for parallels in astral mythology, but turns out to be "too confusing".
- [Samuel Lublinski](#) (1868–1910), *Die Entstehung des Christentums aus der antiken Kultur*, (1910), [*Origins of Christendom from the Ancient culture*], and *Das werdende Dogma vom Leben Jesu* (1910), [*The Dogmatic Emergence of the Life of Jesus*], who saw Christianity arising from Gnosticism, a product of late Judaism shaped by the Hellenistic and Oriental mystery cults, with [Essenes](#) and the [Therapeuts](#) as pioneering sects.
- Hermann Raschke, (1887–1970) *Die Werkstatt des Markusevangelisten* (1924), [*The Workshop of the Evangelist Mark*].^[93] A Lutheran minister, he claims that the Ancients didn't share in our modern historical consciousness, and made no absolute separation between historicity and mythic description. *Everything was understood magically and speculatively*. He stresses that [Bar Kochba](#) is the only authentic Messiah identified in the 1st and 2d centuries, with [Rabbi Akiba](#) the "false prophet" who endorsed him. Marcion's Evangelikon looks more like Mark than Luke, against Harnack (Eysinga). The Pauline Savior is the *Gnostic*

Redeemer. Scholars like Harnack religiously follow [Tertullian](#) (assuming that only [incarnation](#)-in-the-flesh can guarantee [Redemption](#) for mankind).



Georg Brandes, a sketch for a painting by [P.S. Krøyer](#), 1900

- [Emilio Bossi](#)/Milesbo (1870–1920), [Gesù Cristo non è mai esistito](#), (1904, *Jesus Christ Never Existed*). Bossi was a radical lawyer/journalist ("Milesbo" being his pen-name). Jesus is a *concoction* from [Tanakh](#) and *the mystery cults*, and Jesus's ethics are a patchwork from Philo and Seneca.
- [Paul-Louis Couchoud](#) ((1879–1959), *The Enigma of Jesus* (1924), with an introduction by [James Frazer](#). This is only the first step in his exegesis, as his important works appeared after 1926.
- [Georg Brandes](#) (1842–1927), an influential Danish critic, published late in life his [Die Jesus Sage](#) (1925), transl. *The Jesus Myth*. Following Bruno Bauer, Brandes sees the order of NT writings as: Apocalypse of John, Paulinae, Gospels. Paul's Jesus is all celestial, and the Gospels are but an assemblage of [midrash](#) bits. Greco-Roman stoicism is a far superior kind of ethics to Jesus's morality.

With the Dane Georg Brandes, Drews ends his review in 1925, establishing the first historical list of the key radical/mythicists. This list has been brought up to date and expanded by later writers.[\[94\]](#)

The Denial of Jesus Historicity is not a Movement

In his final conclusions ("English summary" of the book, by Klaus Schilling), Drews emphasized that deniers (radicals, mythicists) *do not form a movement* (a so-called "denial party") trying to "unite" them against an entity called "Christianity":

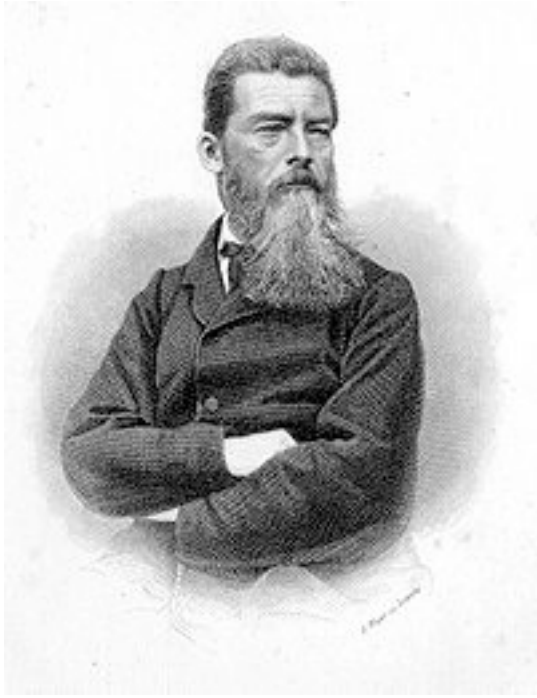
Drews describes the social consequences of a denial of historicity, and explains why so many theologians and secular researchers stick to historicity, though *the ahistoricity of Jesus is scientifically as sure as that of Romulus and Remus, or the seven legendary kings of Rome*. The consequences are generally underestimated.

It is quite understandable that the *denial party* is unique only in that point [of the *non-historicity, Ahistorizität*], and otherwise offers *a variety of diverging explanations* [each denier has his own independent hypothesis]. The church has done everything for 2000 years to *obscure and hide away the origins of Christianity*, so that there's no way to get any further without speculative hypotheses.

It is obvious that no serious researcher could claim the historicity of Jesus, unless it were the savior of the dominating religion of the prevailing culture. So there's *nothing but Christian prejudice* which keeps even secular researchers from admitting non-historicity... [emphasis added]

Origins of the Christ Myth Thesis: From Hegel, Feuerbach, Bauer, and Marx to Drews

Ludwig Feuerbach Heads the Young Hegelians: Man Created God



Ludwig Feuerbach - *God did not create man, man created God*

After the death of [Hegel](#) (1770–1831), the students known as the [Young Hegelians](#) developed radical ideas from the conservative philosophy of Hegel. They followed as their new mentor [Ludwig Feuerbach](#) (1804–1872), a student of Hegel, who strove to go beyond Hegel in completely separating philosophy from religion. Feuerbach had anonymously published in 1830 a book on *Thoughts on Death and Immortality*, which argued that individual human consciousness is part of an infinite consciousness into which it will be absorbed at death and that belief in a personal deity and immortality is merely an expression of [egotism](#) [i.e. self-preservation]. Found out, Feuerbach had been dismissed in 1832 from his chair in Erlangen, and had not been allowed to return in 1836.

In *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841), translated as [The Essence of Christianity](#) by George Eliot, Feuerbach followed his naturalistic stance and affinity for [Spinoza](#)'s atheism. He asserted that God was a projection of man's inner divine nature. *God had not created man, but it was mankind as a species that had created the image of God.* A radical thinker, Feuerbach urged that all

religions had to be eliminated, along with their tools of *using deception to instill fear and invoking the mystical powers of God*.^{[95][96]}

The Young Hegelians and Bruno Bauer's Friendship with Karl Marx

Bruno Bauer, also started as a student of Hegel became a [Young Hegelian](#).^[1] The Young Hegelians were being labeled *Left* or *Right* according to their stance on the question of state and religion. Bruno Bauer was first labeled [Left Hegelian](#), later a [Right Hegelian](#), and was successively rejected by both camps. But he claimed he was in-between, a stance for which he later found very few friends in life (except [Max Stirner](#)).

Young [Karl Marx](#) (1818–1883) was first sent to Bonn Un. to study law, but his father transferred him to Berlin Un. in Oct. 1806, where young Marx, age 18, switched to philosophy, and Hegel. He soon, in those heady days, befriended Bruno Bauer, one of his teachers, only 9 year older. According to Zvi Rosen, in *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx* (1977), Bauer exercised a particular influence over Marx. He played the part of mentor to his gifted protégé, inviting him into his home, and introducing him to the *Doctors' Club*, a group of Young Hegelians, who gathered around Ludwig Feuerbach and Bruno Bauer. They were critical of Hegel's metaphysical assumptions, but still adopted his [dialectical method](#) in order to criticise established society, politics and religion. Marx shared those views.

Marx studied the history of philosophy, mainly in Antiquity. It was Bauer who encouraged Marx to complete his PhD, *becoming his thesis advisor*. Marx's doctoral dissertation, *Difference Between the [Democritean](#) and [Epicurean](#) Philosophy of Nature*, showed that *theology must be subordinated to philosophy*, not a welcome argument for the conservative Berlin Un. Marx submitted his thesis to the more liberal University of Jena, receiving his degree in April 1841. After 5 years in Berlin, Marx had graduated, at age 23.

Discontinuity Between Judaism & Christianity - Bruno Bauer Removed from Berlin to Bonn

Bruno Bauer had started as a student of Hegel at Berlin Un. in 1828, at age 19, and had become a [Young Hegelian](#). On Hegel's recommendation, Bauer's 1829 "essay on Kant's aesthetics" won the Prussian royal prize in philosophy. From 1834 to 1839, Bauer was a Privatdozent (lecturer) on theology and biblical texts at Berlin Un.

Bruno Bauer lived through the national upset caused by David Strauss's *Life of Jesus* (1835), and was particularly interested in analyzing the influence of Hellenistic philosophy on early Christianity, while developing a Rationalist vision of theology on the model of Hegel. He published a rationalist critique of the Hebrew Bible, *Kritische Darstellung der Religion des Alten Testaments*, (2 vol., 1838), [*Critical Examination of the Religion of the Old Testament*], which was not well received by the Christian theologians of Berlin Un.

In addition, in 1839, Bauer published an attack on the leader of Berlin orthodoxy, his former teacher and now colleague, *Herr Dr. Hengstenberg, Kritische Briefe über den Gegensatz des Gesetzes und des Evangeliums* [*Dr. Hengstenberg, Critical Letters on the Conflict between the Law and the Gospel*], in which Bruno Bauer *denies that Christianity had emerged directly from Judaism*, stressing the discontinuity, and publicly breaking with the orthodox and conservative version. The commotion led to Bauer's transfer to the theology faculty at Bonn in 1839.[\[97\]](#)

Priority of Mark's Gospel and Non-Historicity of Jesus - Bruno Bauer Dismissed from Bonn Un.

1841 was the year Feuerbach had published *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), a strident attack on religion in favor of [humanism](#), arguing that the root of religion was mankind. Bauer wrote the pamphlet, *The trumpet of the last judgment on Hegel* (1841), in which he *denies that Jesus was an historical figure* and defends atheism.

At Bonn Un. Bauer continued with his examination of Hellenistic contributions to early Christianity, and published, first, his *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte des Johannes* (Bremen, 1840), [*Critique of the Gospel of John*],

and second, *Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker und des Johannes*, (3 vol. 1840-2, Leipzig) [*Critique of the Synoptic Gospels and John's Gospel*].

Bauer's thesis was revolutionary: *The gospels were purely literary, with no historically authentic material*. Bauer argued the *priority of Mark*, and that Luke and Matthew are elaborations on Mark. He criticized the naturalistic explanations of miracles favored by theological rationalism . The third volume *denied the historicity of Christ*.

All those new ideas were presented couched in highly abstract Hegelian concepts. In Christianity, religious consciousness became a purely abstract self, *in alienation of all genuine ethical bonds*. Whereas Judaism saw nature as subordinated to religious interests, *preserving the natural links of kinship and ethnicity*. Bauer equated Christianity and feudalism, and defended the freedom and equality of self-consciousness. Religion and the [absolutist](#) state were mutually sustaining, expressing [alienation](#) and repression.

Bauer's [Rationalism](#), was perceived as "[atheism](#)" and antagonized the conservative professors of his university. They lobbied for his dismissal in the spring of 1842, with the order coming directly from the King of Prussia, [Friedrich Wilhelm IV](#). *Bruno Bauer never taught again.*[\[97\]](#)

Bruno Bauer's Split from Karl Marx



A contemporary drawing of Karl Marx as a young man.

After his graduation from Berlin Un., Marx moved to Bonn to rejoin his mentor. Marx was hoping to pass his habilitation, the exam leading to a Privatdozent (lecturer) license. Marx and Bauer had plans to publish a radical periodical, *Archives of Atheism*. In July 1841 the two scandalised their class in Bonn by getting drunk, laughing in church, and galloping through the streets on donkeys.

Bauer's dismissal from Bonn Un. left Marx without a sponsor. This, combined with the example of Feuerbach's rejection from university life, made Marx realize that there was no hope for him in an academic career.

Bauer withdrew to Charlottenburg (a suburb of Berlin) to lead a modest existence, joining a group, the *Berliner Freien* (The Free), who attacked religion in the context of their Hegelian ideology without regard to the political realities

on the ground, and starting a new periodical, *Die Allgemeine LiteraturZeitung* with his brother [Edgar Bauer](#).

Introduction of Marx to Socialism and Sufferings of Workers

Marx was invited to write for a paper in Cologne, [Die Rheinische Zeitung](#), where he soon became editor-in-chief (Oct. 1842-March 1843). Upon moving to Cologne, Marx met [Moses Hess](#), a radical claiming to be a *socialist*, who invited Marx to socialist meetings and discussions of the *sufferings of the working-class*. For the first time, Marx was confronted with social problems (the poverty of Mosel wine growers) which Hegel's abstract dialectic was not enough to elucidate. [Socialism](#) boasted of offering a concrete solution, not a rhetorical one. Marx began to feel the need to learn more about real politics and economics in order to equip himself and become able to write about those new problems.

This parting of their ways and competing career choices led to the *break between the two friends*. Marx refused articles by die Freien. A letter to Ruge (30 November 1842) explained his stance:

I requested further that *religion should be criticised in the framework of criticism of political conditions* rather than that political conditions should be criticised in the framework of religion, since this is more in accord with the nature of a newspaper and the educational level of the reading public; for religion in itself is without content, it owes its being not to heaven but to the earth, and with the abolition of distorted reality, of which it is the theory, it will collapse of itself.

[emphasis added]

Abstract Hegelian concepts were no longer enough.[\[98\]](#) Meanwhile Bauer became critical of Marx's involvement with socialism. The break became final in March 1843, when Bauer felt Marx was becoming too political for his taste, stating that he was *not interested in political activity and educating the masses*. Over time, Bruno Bauer was to reject entirely the new direction of Marx & Engels towards [materialism](#), [socialism](#), and [communism](#).

The Jewish Question and the Holy Family Controversy

Bauer published a pamphlet *Die Judenfrage* (1843, Braunschweig, [The Jewish Question](#)) and a similar article on "Die Fähigkeit der heutigen Juden und Christen, frei zu werden" (1843, Zürich, "The Capacity of Present-day Jews and Christians to Become Free"). True *political emancipation of the Jews* requires a secular state, and the abolition of religion, requiring that both Christians and Jews to relinquish their religion.



[Napoleon Bonaparte emancipating the Jews, May 30, 1806, a French print](#)

Political Emancipation of the Jews vs Social Emancipation

Marx responded with a scathing article "[Zur Judenfrage](#)" (Paris, 1844, "On the Jewish Question", published in the only issue of his new paper, *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher, German-French Annals*). Marx remarks that a secular state can exist, one without a state religion, and makes a distinction: the citizen can lead a double life — as a "neutral" member of the *state community* granting him *political emancipation*, and with a private identity with his religion in *civil society*. This is still a long way short of *human emancipation* — which alone can resolve the "alienation" embodied in religion — by the very abandonment of religion. This "human emancipation" remains ill defined by

Marx, is conceived as an ideal, that is called for by the mechanics of the *mystical concept of "alienation"* that Hegelians never question.

Marx and Engels Team up Against Bruno Bauer

[Friedrich Engels](#) (1820–1895), 2 years younger, had met Marx briefly in Cologne in Nov. 1842, while on his way to Manchester. On his way back to Germany, Engels reconnected with Marx in Paris on Aug. 28, 1844.

The two men, finding themselves in perfect agreement, decided to produce together a thorough critique of Bauer and his group, [*The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism - Against Bruno Bauer and Co. by his pupils, Marx and Engels*](#) (Frankfort am Main, Feb. 1845), a book of 350 pages! The sarcastic reference of the "Holy Family" was to the Bauer Brothers. The goal was to criticize the idealistic train of thought of the Young Hegelians, and their critique of Christianity. The book was a sensation. The press spotted the *dangerous radical arguments calling for revolt*, and extolling socialism, even communism.

Young Marx accepts Feuerbach's Atheism and Bauer's Jesus Scholarship

Young Karl Marx adopted Feuerbach's radical view of religion and atheism during his time at Berlin Un. and his friendship with Bruno Bauer. Both Marx and Engels became *Feuerbachians*, but they modified Feuerbach's views by giving priority to the material and social conditions that favored the rise and power of religion.



Friedrich Engels, *a founding partner with Karl Marx of socialism/communism*

Marx certainly was also a *Bauerian* when both men were still close friends, Marx accepted all of Bruno Bauer's scholarship on the origins of the New Testament writings. *Including the non-historicity of Jesus Christ*, and the *priority of Mark*.^[1] At that time, the Christ Myth thesis didn't have the same kind of public resonance that it was to receive after the publicity orchestrated much later by Arthur Drews. The topic never received special attention from Marx or Engels. They were much more concerned about the nature and effects of *actual religion*, than by *the question of the origins* that fascinated Bruno Bauer. Marx's paramount interest remained focused on developing his [dialectical materialism](#) together with Friedrich Engels, which found its apotheosis in the [Communist Manifesto](#) (Feb. 1848), calling for a political [separation of state from religion](#).

Bruno Bauer's Later Works

After his dismissal from Bonn Un., Bauer spent his life deconstructing the New Testament, and focusing on the *Greco-Roman input* in the theology of early Christianity.

His maturity books were *Kritik der paulinischen Briefe* (Berlin, 1850–1851), [*Critique of the Paulinae*], *Kritik der Evangelien und Geschichte ihres Ursprungs*, 3 vol. (Berlin, 1850–1851) [*Critique of the Gospels and History of their Origins*]; 4th vol. under the title *Die theologische Erklärung der Evangelien* (Berlin, 1852), [*Theological Interpretation of the Gospels*].

Bauer had become convinced that the [Gospel of Mark](#) was the original story of Jesus, that the Gospel stories were pure fiction, regarding *Mark as the sole inventor of the Gospel stories and of Jesus historicity*. Bruno Bauer, by temperament a radical all the way, adopted the view that the *Pauline epistles were 2d-century forgeries* meant to counteract the character of Paul in the [Acts](#).

Friedrich Engels Pays Homage to a Forgotten Bruno Bauer

Engels who had had a Christian ([Methodist](#)) childhood, retained a stronger interest in the history and sociology of religion. He kept up with the progress of scholarship, and followed and admired Bruno Bauer's erudition. But German academics had *buried Bauer's "dangerous" conclusions*, and Engels did not stress the revolutionary character of the claim of the *non-historicity of Jesus*, first made by Bauer. Engels considered the question whether Jesus had existed or not a scholarly topic which remained secondary to the "alienating" effects of Christianity itself.

Engels's Eulogy of Bruno Bauer

After Bruno Bauer's death in April 1882, Engels published a *eulogy* of Bauer and his epoch-making role in the study of early Christianity, "[Bruno Bauer and Early Christianity](#)", [May 1882](#).

Official theologians, including Renan, wrote him off and, therefore, *maintained a silence of death about him*. And yet he was worth more than them all and did more than all of them in a question which interests us Socialists, too: the

question of the historical origin of Christianity...*It is clear that if spontaneously arising religions...come to being without deception playing any part, deception by the priests soon becomes inevitable in their further development.* But, in spite of all sincere fanaticism, artificial religions *cannot even, at their foundation, do without deception and falsification of history.* Christianity, too, has pretty achievements to boast of in this respect from the very beginning, as Bauer shows in his criticism of the New Testament...No matter how much the half-believing theologians of the period of reaction have struggled against him since 1849, *he irrefutably proved the chronological order of the Gospels and their mutual interdependence...*And, if almost nothing from the whole content of the Gospels turns out to be historically provable — *so that even the historical existence of a Jesus Christ can be questioned* — Bauer has, thereby, only cleared the ground for the solution of the question: what is the origin of the ideas and thoughts that have been woven together into a sort of system in Christianity...Bauer also gives very valuable data on the causes which helped Christianity to triumph and attain world domination. But here the German philosopher is *prevented by his idealism from seeing clearly and formulating precisely.* [emphasis added]



Bruno Bauer, ca. 1860?

Engels's Article On the History of Early Christianity

Engels published a late article, ["On the History of Early Christianity"](#), (*Die Neue Zeit*, 1894). He sees the *similarity of the communism of early Christians with the modern working-class movement and socialism*. Religion movements are rife with hucksters, charlatans and con artists. Engels renews his homage to the unique contribution of Bruno Bauer in spotlighting the role of the *Philo school of Alexandria* and the *Greco-Roman Platonism* and *Seneca's Stoicism* in Christianity, which was not a foreign cult imported from Judea, but home-grown within the Roman empire.

Tübingen defines the most that can be saved from early documents, and Bauer *the most that can be contested*. Now discovering the truth lying somewhere in-

between is not possible. In this era of rampant superstitions and supernatural fantasies, the [Revelation](#), datable to 68 is the oldest Christian document. *Mass movements start confused and chaotic*, with lack of clarity and lack of cohesion, and giving rise to a variety of sects. Same thing for early Christianity and early Socialism. *The first recruits for both were among the hopeless enslaved, oppressed and impoverished.*

Arthur Drews's *Christ Myth* Revives and Broadcasts Bruno Bauer's Non-Historicity to the World

Drews, through the mediation of Albert Kalthoff, had been exposed to Bruno Bauer's ideas and adapted them into the Monism inherited from his own mentor Eduard von Hartmann. Bauer's had presented his findings swimming in a torrent of complex abstract concepts that couldn't ring a bell with the general theologian public not trained in Hegelian jargon. His ideas had been easily *passed under silence by academics (das Totschweigen)* and practically forgotten (*das Vergessen*) for all practical purposes.

By contrast, the Dutch Radical School had paid great attention to Bauer's ideas and incorporated them in their own exegesis. But they wrote in Dutch, and were thus invisible to the world. Since 1890 Arthur Drews had been communicating with the kindred Dutch philosopher G.J.P.J. Bolland in German, [\[7\]](#) and read the books where Albert Kalthoff had been exhuming the old Bauer ideas in a new context.

Repackaging Bruno Bauer's *Jesus historicity denial* stripped of Hegelian concepts

Strongly influenced by the Jesus deniers in Britain (J.M. Robertson, T. Whittaker) and America (W.B. Smith), Arthur Drews saw a way to give a modern German packaging to Bauer's ideas, *in a clear and concise language devoid of Hegelian rhetoric and pedantic profundities* — no dialectic, no *alienation*, no synthesis, just straightforward *syncretism* based on the findings of mythology research — that would be intelligible and attractive to the general public.

Cleaning up and dressing up the older ideas in a modern garb, supported by effective advertising, and with a vigorous defense of the shocking new conclusions, was extremely successful.

The assumption that Jesus Christ had never existed, but that he had been the *ideal image* of a dying-and-rising Godman in a *Hebraic-Hellenistic mystery cult*, became broadcast to the larger public, and was given world-wide prominence thanks to the international success of Drews's *Christ Myth I & II* books.

International Influence of Drews's *Christ Myth*

Criticism in the United States

Drews's international popularity was confirmed by the New York Times's critical review of his *Christ Myth* book on March 26, 1911, "A German's *Christ Myth*: Prof. Arthur Drews Carries the [Higher Criticism](#) to the Point of Absurdity". The anonymous reviewer recites the current objections addressed to Drews's *Christ Myth* book. He lists the general criticisms addressed by theologians, denouncing

...the pseudo-scientific vagaries... in a style redolent of the professorial chair of a German pedant...[Jesus's] characteristics...are derived from Jewish ideals floating in the air at the time...This mythical personage was transformed into a demigod by St. Paul...virtually the creator of Christianity. His main grounds for disbelief in the existence of Jesus are *the absence of any contemporary references* to him except in the Gospels — a rather large exception, one would think. Passages of Josephus, Tacitus and Pliny are explained away as being late, or interpolated, or applying to the myth rather than to the person...

Dr. Drews proceeds ruthlessly to remove even this kernel [of a gracious life, with its marked individuality left by liberal theologians] and *leaves virtually nothing in its place* except a mass of floating ideas and ideals...concentrated around a non-existent personality...

[Prof. Drews] denies the originality of the sayings attributed to Jesus, and considers them tainted with other-worldliness...[his book] is an argument in

favor of...Monism...known as Pantheism...It is, however, just *the sort of presentment which attracts the half-baked mind that cannot judge of historic evidence.* [emphasis added][99]

Lenin Gains Power in Russia and Accepts Drews's *Christ Myth* Thesis

Drews's *Christ Myth* was to find an unpredictable reception in Russia, as his ideas reached the new Soviet Union leadership at the end of a very circuitous route — as a distant repercussion of the philosophy of Hegel and the reactions of his students, notably the relationship between Bruno Bauer and his young student, [Karl Marx](#).

At the end of WWI, back on the social front, the Russian revolutionary [Lenin](#) (1870–1924) had become the successor of Marx and Engels' [socialism/communism](#), formulating his own Russian version of [Marxism-Leninism](#) of [communism and atheism](#). Once the Bolsheviks gained power in the Soviet Union, [Marxist–Leninist atheism](#) became de facto the official doctrine of the state, under the leadership of Lenin, the Soviet leader from 1917 until his death.



Lenin accepted Drews's arguments - Drawing by [Nikolai Bukharin](#), 31 March 1927

Lenin was particularly *receptive to the ideas of Bruno Bauer*, a former *friend and ally* of Karl Marx when both were Young Hegelians. According to Zvi Rosen, in *Bruno Bauer and Karl Marx* (1977), Lenin was eager to use Bruno Bauer's attacks on Christianity as *agitprop* against the "bourgeoisie", as updated by Arthur Drews. He accepted Drews's thesis that Jesus had never existed as anti-Christian propaganda.

Lenin argued that it was imperative in the struggle against religious [obscurantists](#) to adopt revolutionary ideas like those of Drews, and demolish the icons of [bourgeois](#) society.^{[100][101]} Several editions of Drews's *The Christ Myth* were published in the Soviet Union from the early 1920s onwards, and his arguments were included in school and university textbooks.^[102] Public meetings debating *Did Christ live?* were organized, during which party operatives debated with clergymen.^[103]

Drews still a Reactionary Attacked by Lenin

However, this acceptance of his ideas in Moscow and the Soviet Union did not save Drews, a believer, from Lenin's attacks, for being a "[reactionary](#), openly helping the exploiters to replace old and rotten prejudices with new, still more disgusting and base prejudices".^[101]

At home, the diffusion of his book in the USSR had no impact on Drews's modest life as a teacher in Karlsruhe and were of no use to improving his social lot.

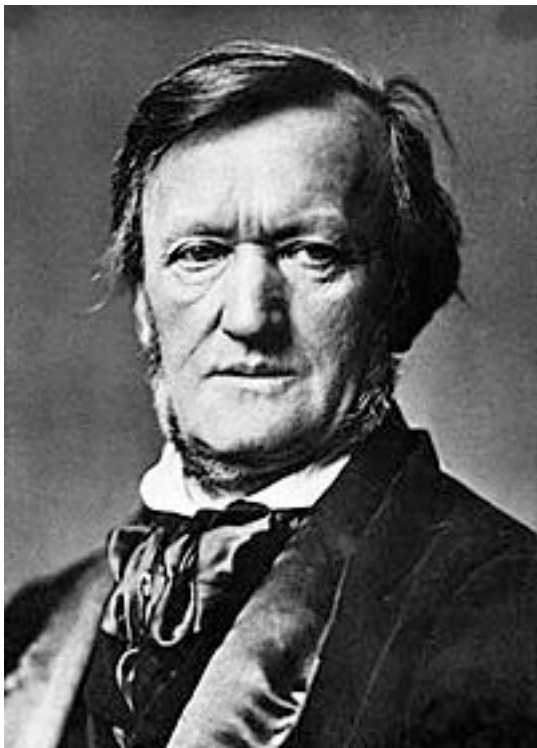
Inspiration for Paul-Louis Couchoud (France) and G.A. Wells (Britain)

In a different development to the West, Arthur Drews became influential on the formation of the "Jesus existence denial" theories of [Paul-Louis Couchoud](#) and [G. A. Wells](#). Fluent in German, they had followed the huge academic controversy over the Christ Myth, and were able to read all of Drews's work in the original German. They both accepted and adapted Drews's main ideas. Drews had finally found some followers abroad, both in France and England.

Wells, for instance, saw Jesus as *a personification of Wisdom*, which had *appeared on earth in some indefinite time past*. [William B. Smith](#) in the US, who also could read German fluently, remained a very close ally and a kindred soul.

In the same manner that Schweitzer is a seminal reference for historicists, Drews is a basic reference for the denial of Jesus historicity. Arthur Drews left his mark on practically the whole development of the *Christ Myth* thesis, (so-called "mythicism") which followed him.

On Wagner and Nietzsche



Richard Wagner in 1871

During Drews's life, Germany was going through turbulent times, politically and culturally. [Friedrich Nietzsche](#) had become a prominent cultural icon while [Richard Wagner](#) was a highly controversial personality.

Nietzsche was a strong critic of Christianity and its morality glorifying weakness and death.^[104] He had started as a friend and admirer of Wagner, but soon

became a disgruntled critic, turning against his previous friend. He reproached Wagner for his conversion to anti-semitic Christianity, his glorification of medieval sagas and spiritual chastity, as the sign of a decadent, dying culture. Wagner's "unending melody" only dramatizes theatrical posing, and is hostile to the affirmation of vital [Dionysian](#) life forces. Nietzsche claimed that Wagner's art was *not Germanic*, but close to Italy's Roman Catholicism. Nietzsche became passionately involved in his critique of Wagner's ideas, detailed in [Nietzsche contra Wagner](#).

Drews, a man of his time, didn't hesitate to enter the fray. He was a staunch supporter of Wagner, and wrote many books and articles on Wagner's religious and nationalistic ideas, which are still items of modern scholarship on the subject. Drews embarked on a *critique of Nietzsche*, surprising given that Nietzsche also was a lifelong critic of Christianity and Christian-based morality. Drews reproached Nietzsche for being an apostle of unbridled individualism — a stance which put Drews in an awkward position in the German establishment. Drews's criticisms of Nietzsche were never well received by German academics nor by German society as a whole, where Nietzsche had become a national figure, and they worked *against Drews's chances in ever obtaining a professorship*





Portrait of Friedrich Nietzsche by Edvard Munch, 1906

- In 1904, Drews gave a lecture in München on the philosophy of Nietzsche, *Nietzsches Philosophie*, critical of the German iconic thinker. [Nietzsche] is not aiming at bypassing morality as such, only the external morality which imposes its commandments to the individual, and results in the decay and submission of the Self. He would like to counter this old morality enemy of the Self with a *new morality springing from the individual will* and in conformity with his nature. [emphasis added][105]
- Drews continued with his philosophical critique of Nietzsche in *Nietzsche als Antipode Wagners*, 1919 [*Nietzsche, Antipodes of Wagner*].
- His 1931 book on Wagner came out with a supplement on Nietzsche and Wagner, considered by Hoffers one of the very books on Wagner, with many of Drews's views later *borrowed by the standard scholarship on Wagner without giving him credit*.
- Drews delivered another public critique of Nietzsche (his last one) in his article *Nietzsche als Philosoph des Nationalsozialismus?* ["Nietzsche, a philosopher of National Socialism?"] in the journal *Nordische Stimmen* No. 4 (1934: 172-79). There Drews again attacked Nietzsche on philosophical grounds, in direct opposition to *the Nazi effort to enlist Nietzsche in its propaganda*, and unconcerned about potential consequences. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, in *Experiences with Nietzsche*, quotes Drews: One finds in Nietzsche *neither national sympathy nor social awareness*, [Drews claimed]. Nietzsche is, on the contrary, and particularly after his break with Richard Wagner, *an enemy of everything German*; he supports the creation of a "good European," and goes so far as to *accord the Jews a leading role in the dissolution of all nations*. Finally, he is an *individualist*, with no notion of "the National Socialist credo: 'collective over individual utility'...After all this, it must seem unbelievable that Nietzsche has been honored as the Philosopher of

National Socialism, ... for he preaches in all things *the opposite of National Socialism*”, setting aside a few scattered utterances. The fact that such such honors have repeatedly been bestowed on him has as its main reason, that most people who talk about Nietzsche tend only to *pick the ‘raisins’ from the cake of his philosophy* and, because of his aphoristic style, *lack any clear understanding of the way his entire thought coheres*.
[emphasis added][106][107]

[Walter Kaufman](#), an expert on Nietzsche in the 20th century, presents the case in similar terms (although more favorably to Nietzsche) and finds Nietzsche and National Socialism incompatible.[108]

Drewe's Views on Religion: Idealism and Monism

Eduard von Hartmann, Monistic View of the World-Spirit as Unconscious

Drewe, unsatisfied by the abstract rationality of Kantian philosophy, was attracted by religion, but was put off by the spiritual dryness [geistige Dürre] of Christianity.[109]



Eduard von Hartmann, whose *Unconscious as Absolute* was the inspiration of Drews's thinking

Drews found his anchor in the Monism of [Eduard von Hartmann](#) (1842–1906), professor of philosophy in Berlin. Hartmann had been strongly influenced by [Schopenhauer](#) and his pessimism and had embraced [Darwinism](#) and history. Hartmann published his masterpiece, [The Philosophy of the Unconscious](#), in 1869. The [Unconscious](#) [*das Unbewusstsein*] became the new form of the ultimate reality, the [Absolute](#), or the [Geist](#) or *World Spirit* of [Hegel](#), combining [Pantheism](#) with [Rational Idealism](#) (with the double attributes of [Will](#) and [Reason](#)). The human mind is not separate from this unconscious reality, but exists as its coming to [self-consciousness](#) [*Selbstbewusstsein*], especially in philosophers' minds.

Drews expanded his views in *Die Religion als Selbst-bewusstsein Gottes : eine philosophische Untersuchung über das Wesen der Religion*, [*Religion as Self-Consciousness of God: A philosophical inquiry in the Essence of Religion*] (1906). Religions are conscious expressions of the Unconscious, and philosophy and religion can finally be united. The absolute Spirit was not

another separate entity, and Hartmann and Drews *rejected the idea of any [personal God](#), and any mind-matter [dualism](#)*.^[2]

The danger of modernity to "true religion"

In *Christ Myth II*, Drews specifies his motivation:

The chief danger that has come to our time, especially to religion, *under the influence of science is the denial of objective purpose in the universe*. Let men be taught to believe again in ideas, and then Monism, in its idealistic form, will become the first principle of all deep religious life. [emphasis added]

Need for a "religion of the future"

Drews goes on proclaiming a need for the "religion of the future" to be a "concrete" [Monism](#). The advocacy of this system of [Monism](#) became Drews's life program, the subject of his philosophical/religious writings. And also the motivation for his social activism in the *Free Religion Movement*, which had been sprouting all sorts of cultural associations (*Kulturbünde*) in Germany, in the search for a new religion anchored in European and, more specifically, German culture.

The power of history

Drews was plunged in the spirit of the time. The 19th century was the discovery of history as *evolution* and *progress* — in the wake of a conjunction of momentous cultural events.

- [Edward Gibbon's](#) monumental history of the [Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire](#);
- The Enlightenment's radical enthusiasm for "Universal Reason" triumphing over the superstitions of ancient times;
- The ideas of [Hegel's](#) historical [Idealism](#) in [The Phenomenology of the Spirit](#), which saw in History the implacable march of the *World-Spirit*;
- The discoveries of James Frazer about ancient religions in his [Golden Bough](#);
- The discoveries of [Egyptology](#);
- The extraordinary success of Historical Criticism in revealing the mythical features of the *mysticism* of Christianity;

- And the revolution of [Darwinism](#).

Both Hartmann and Drews shared this infatuation with history, and the belief in the *direction of history*, transmuted into a philosophical axiom by Hegel, and applied to the history of religion and mythology.

Influence of Albert Kalthoff and Reconnection with Bruno Bauer's Radical Ideas



Albert Kalthoff, revived Bruno Bauer's *Christ Myth* thesis

Drews derived some additional key ideas from Albert Kalthoff (1850–1906). [110] Kalthoff was an active minister, who managed to marry three times in his short life, and revived Bruno Bauer's *Christ Myth* thesis, in his *Das Christus-Problem. Grundlinien zu einer Sozialtheologie* [The Problem of Christ: Principles of a Social Theology] (1902) and *Die Entstehung des Christentums. Neue Beiträge zum Christusproblem* (1904). (Transl. 1907, *The Rise of Christianity*).

Kalthoff criticized the romanticist and sentimental image of Jesus as a Great Personality of history developed by German liberal theologians (including

Albert Schweitzer). In Kalthoff's views, it is the early church that created the New Testament, not the reverse. The early Jesus movement was socialist, expecting a social reform and a better world, which fused with the Jewish apocalyptic belief in a Messiah. Kalthoff saw Christianity as a social [psychosis](#). [111] Drews accepted Kalthoff's ideas, but insisted that the original Christian socialism was religious, not economic.[112][113]

Critique of Liberal Theology and its Romanticist Cult of Great Personalities

The Romanticist cult of personality towards the Historical Jesus

Drews did become an acerbic critic of the *faulty* [historical method](#) of the [academic liberal theologians](#). But he was not against religion as such, his critique of [Judaism](#) and [Christianity](#), as he mainly focused on the fact that they were just ancient, archaic, myths from [Antiquity](#) which had become [obsolete](#), and *their concepts foreign to our mindsets in the modern scientific age*.

He opposed the [Romanticist cult of personality](#) applied to the *Unique and Great personality* of Jesus in *Christ Myth II*: "[Theologians] substituted the *mere man Jesus* for the discarded dogma, 'Personalities, not ideas, make history.' The cult of the 'great man' began." He scoffed at the naive attempt of liberal theologians like Albert Schweitzer to idolize a [historical Jesus](#) as a "unique personality" which is simply the result of [The Great Man Theory](#) subjected to modern manipulations by scholars of the [Historical Theology](#) school. This had been already demonstrated by Schweitzer himself in his review of [historical criticism](#) in Germany, with his epoch-making book, [The Quest of the Historical Jesus](#), 1906).

God-mankind to replace "Godmen"

In *Die Religion als Selbst-bewusstsein Gottes : eine philosophische Untersuchung über das Wesen der Religion* [*Religion as Self-Consciousness of God: a Philosophical Inquiry in the Essence of Religion*] (1906), Drews saw the phenomenon of religion through his philosophical approach as *the self-consciousness of God through the mind of mankind*. Godmen were to be

replaced by *God-mankind*, an adaptation of [Georg Friedrich Hegel's](#) *World-Spirit*.

Jesus displaced Mithras for reasons other than force of personality

In "The Strong Personality" , Ch. 12 of "The Witness of the Gospels", Part IV of *Christ Myth II* , Drews argues that the force of personality of a *human Jesus* cannot be at the source of Christendom's spread:

[First, quoting Dupuis] Each man fights for his own chimera, not for history...in matters of religion *the belief of many generations proves nothing but their own credulity... A great error is propagated more easily than a great truth*, because it is *easier to believe than to reflect*, and men *prefer the wonders of romance* to the plain facts of history... we might urge against Christians that the faith of any people in the miracles and oracles of its religion proved its truth; I doubt if they would admit the argument, and we will do the same with theirs. I know that they will say that they alone have the truth; but the other people say the same.

[The Christ cult replaced the [Mithras](#) cult for reasons other than the force of personality]...the Persian Mithra was a very shadowy form beside Jesus, who *came nearer to the heart*, especially of *women, invalids, and the weak*, in his human features and on account of the *touching description of his death*. But that shows at the most that the *more concrete idea* has the better prospect of triumphing in a spiritual struggle than *the more abstract*; it proves nothing as regards the historical reality of the idea. Moreover, history teaches us that it was quite different causes—partly external and *accidental causes* of a political nature, such as the *death in the Persian war of the Emperor Julian*, one of the most zealous followers of Mithra—that gave Christianity the victory over Mithraism. [emphasis added]

The faith of the future cannot be based on historical personalities, but on the World-Spirit acting in mankind

He had been outspoken in presenting his views on religion with extreme clarity in "Idea and Personality: Settlement of the Religious Crisis", Ch. 14 of "The Witness of the Gospels", Part IV of *Christ Myth II* — [Modernism](#) rules: mankind cannot let the present be still shackled by *past superstitions of ancient times*.

Drews outlines the *religion of the future*: It must acknowledge the World-Spirit ([Geist](#)) proclaimed by Hegel as *God-mankind*, which is God manifesting himself through history with *human actors and oracles who are merely major agents*. The cult of "great personalities" is an illusion: Individuals can no longer be seen as *godmen*, just as revealers and oracles of the divinity.

The purely historical conception of Jesus cannot satisfy the religious consciousness of our age. [It is] obsolete. [Humanity] has not merely broken with the geocentric and anthropocentric view of the origin of Christianity, but has seen through the superstitious nature of ecclesiastical [Christology](#). Modern humanity has, therefore, the task of again universalising the idea of divine redemption, or enlarging the idea of a *god-man*...to the idea of a *god-humanity*...



Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel - *Historical Idealism of the World-Spirit*

[It] returns in a certain sense to pre-Christian religion and its numerous "god-men,"... filled with the idea of the one reality and its spiritual nature, to which the various individuals are related only as *modi*, phenomena, or *revelations*,

confiding in the divine control of the world, and therefore in its rationality and goodness... Thus man secures a *faith in himself, in the divine nature of his being*, in the rationality of existence; thus he is placed in a position to *save himself, without a mediator*, simply on account of his own divine nature... The religion of the future will either be a *belief in the divine nature of the self*, or will be nothing... no Christ is needed for it, and there is *no ground for concern that religion may perish with the denial of the historicity of Jesus*...

[The belief in Christ"] is not only superfluous, but mischievous. It loads the religious consciousness with *doubtful historical ballast*; it *grants the past an authority* over the religious life of the present, and it prevents men from deducing the real consequences of their Monistic religious principles. Hence I insist that *the belief in the historical reality of Jesus is the chief obstacle to religious progress*...

[No need to appeal to Hegel] to whom this high appreciation of the present above history may be traced, as well as this vindication of "personalities of world-history." The great personality has clearly a value even in our own view: in it the *unity of God and man*, the *God-mankind*, attains a clearer expression. It serves as proof to the religious consciousness that God raises up the right man at the right time. It reveals the *living connection of the common individual life with the universal spiritual life*. The divinity *lives in history*, and *reveals itself* therein. History is, in union with nature, the sole place of divine activity... one continuous stream of divine activity flows through time... To bind up religion with history, as modern theologians do, and to represent an historical religion as the need of modern man, is no proof of insight, but of a determination... to recognise the Christian religion alone. [emphasis added][4]

Studies of Monism



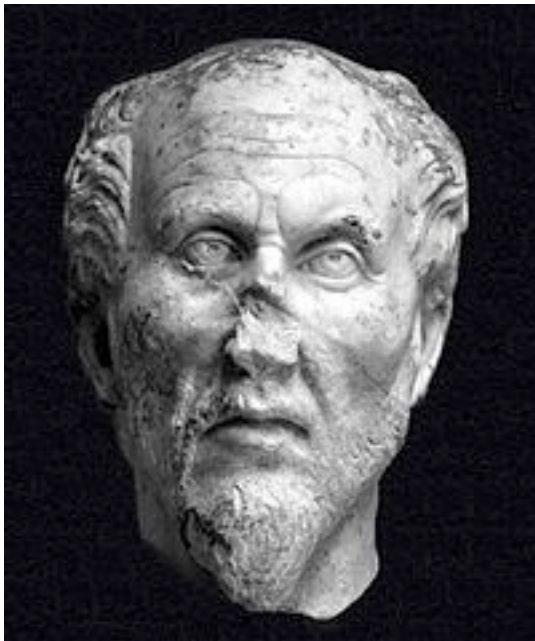
An early engraving of philosopher Spinoza, captioned in Latin, "*A Jew and an Atheist*".

Religion was intimately linked to the prevalent beliefs of the social group, and not just the expression of individual beliefs and faith. Drews reflected on the history of the great faiths of the world, and also on the European history of the 19th century, when [nationalism](#) had become the creed of all modern countries. His own mysticism, as a modern form of Monism, glamorized *the German idealism of the great German thinkers and poets* as the superior future form of religion for mankind. It also was related to [Spinoza's Pantheism](#), which also rejected judaism and Christianity as *superstitions of ancient times*, no longer valid for the rationalism of our modern times, and understood also *God as immanent in the world*.

- Drews was especially drawn to [Plotinus](#) (1907), who, 600 years after Plato, founded [Neoplatonism](#) to restore the integrity of Plato's esoteric

concepts that he felt were bastardized by the public. In so doing, Plotinus developed a major form of Monistic Idealism — with its concepts of the transcendent [The One](#) ("Tò "Ev", another name for the [Absolute](#) in Hellenistic philosophy) whose [emanations](#) define the [Nous](#) ([Logos](#), Order) and the [World Soul](#) (human souls and nature) — which was to influence all subsequent philosophy. Especially [Porphyry](#), Emperor [Julian](#), [Hypatia](#), [Augustine](#) and Christian theology, [Arthur Schopenhauer](#), and [Henri Bergson](#).

- A year later, Drews wrote *Der Monismus : dargestellt in Beiträgen seiner Vertreter*, Jena, 1908, where he analyzes the major philosophers of Monism
- In 1913, he published *History of Monism in Antiquity* (1912) throughout the various schools of [Hellenistic philosophy](#);



Plotinus, founder of *Neo-Platonism*

Drews thus managed to produce a modern system of philosophy joining the ancient [Idealism](#) and [Monism](#) of Plotinus's Neoplatonism and the modern Historical Idealism of Hegel, for whom the *World-Spirit* manifests itself in History.

Towards the end of his life, Drews starts writing more explicitly on what the idea of a monist "God" means in the context of modern Germany in the 1930s: *God* (1930); *The Word of God* (1933) —demonstrating his trend towards a *German-inspired form of religion*.

Astromythical Views Related to Early Christianity

Drews, always striving for objectivity in his historical approach, was intrigued by the alleged influence of ancient [astronomy](#) on the origins of religion, developed by the French Volney and Dupuis, and promoted throughout the 19th century. He included modern considerations on astromythical topics in some pages of his major books.

- The *Appendix* to his 1912 book *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus* was an essay on the astral speculations of the Ancients in relation to Psalm 22.
- Hoffer notes that, in the 1921 book on *The [Gospel of Mark](#) as a Witness against the Historicity of Jesus*, Drews shows "how Mark's reflects an astromythical triple journey along the [zodiac](#)".
- In 1923 Drews published a general introduction into astral mythology, *Der sternhimmel in der Dichtung und Religion der Alten Völker und des Christentums, eine Einführung in die Astralmythologie* [*The Celestial Sky in the Poetry and Religion of the Ancients and Christianity: an Introduction to Astral Mythology*], and its special influence on early Christianity. His interest remained a professional expression of curiosity and admitted speculations on relations detected by intuition and finesse, and never replaced rigorous text and historical criticism.

Other Books on Early Christianity

Drews also wrote a few more books on various aspects of Christianity, where he systematically analyzes the mythical nature of all the fantastic personages involved around Jesus Christ. The early Christian writings elaborate a gigantic fictional story with many parts, not sure exactly of how all the parts fit together.

Drews himself explains in *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus in Past and Present* ("English summary" by Klaus Schilling):

Drews was involved too deep into the subject to stop there, and went boldly further, exploring how Christianity could *become a world religion without a historical founder* or core group described in scripture... During the [First World] war, Schweitzer published more essays in a weak attempt to justify theology, which strengthened Drews' attitude and endeavor. [emphasis added]

- *The Legend of Peter* (1910, translated into English in 1997 by [Frank Zindler](#)). Drews complains that "the confusion in educated circles...is so great and the posture of Rome so impudent", and exposes the *completely legendary character* of the figure of [Peter](#), both in the Gospels and the fantastic history of Peter in Rome.
- *Das Markusevangelium als Zeugnis gegen die Geschichtlichkeit Jesu*, (Jena, 1921) [*The Gospel of Mark as a Witness Against the Historicity of Jesus*]. According to Drews (in Klaus Schilling's "English Summary" of *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus*): The Gospel is a poetic retelling of the astral mythical journey of the sun god, dressed in Tanakh pictures... The order of the tales follows almost strictly the astral mythical cycle. Mark's gospel is of astral magical, *Gnostic origin from the middle of the second century*... Drews had published an introduction to astral mythology in the cultures of the Mediterranean and Iranian region up to imperial times, in order to decrease the above ignorance. But theologians continued to indulge in their self-induced ignorance. [emphasis added]



Irenaeus, who first used *gnostic* to describe heresies

- In his 1924 book, *The Origin of Christianity in Gnosticism*, Drews developed the plausible hypothesis of the *derivation of Christianity from a Gnosticism environment*. In Drews's own words (in Klaus Schilling's "English Summary" of *The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus*): *Gnosticism is undeniably pre-Christian*, with both Jewish and gentile roots. The wisdom of Solomon already contained Gnostic elements and prototypes for the Jesus of the Gospels...God stops being the Lord of righteous deed and becomes the Good One...A clear pre-Christian Gnosticism can be distilled from the epistles of Paul. *Paul is recklessly misunderstood by those who try to read anything Historical Jesus-ish into it*. The conversion of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles is a *mere forgery from various Tanakh passages*... [The epistles] are from Christian mystics of the middle of the second century. *Paul is thus the strongest witness against the Historical Jesus hypothesis*...John's Gnostic origin is more evident than that of the synoptics. Its acceptance proves that even the Church wasn't concerned with historical facts at all. [emphasis added]

- *The Myth of Mary* (1928): which reads as *Jesus's Family and Entourage Exposed*. All the characters around Jesus are as *imaginary and fantastic* as Jesus himself. It is mind-boggling that theologians have pretended believing in such patched-up constructions for centuries.

Drews's Activism for Free Religion and Monism

The Need for a Modern Reform of Religion

One consequence of the success of the German school of Historical Criticism had been to instill an *overt skepticism towards the Christian religion* among the German population. A search for a German, non-Christian religion dated to pre-WWI times. Arthur Drews himself was a product of this emerging opposition to Christianity expressed in his lifelong concern about the state of the Christian Churches.



Martin Luther, founder of German Protestantism, 1529

After WWI, Germany became *radicalized*, the skepticism towards the two established Christian Churches and the search for a new kind of worship attuned to the national culture, became a latent national preoccupation, as alluded to by Leonard Foster in his 1938 article on "The New Paganism and the Old Teutonic Religion".^[114] One of Drews's concerns was about *restoring the authenticity of religion* in mankind. The twist of history is that both William Benjamin Smith and Arthur Drews denied the historicity of Jesus Christ, but, unlike most exponents of the myth thesis, they were convinced *theists* who thought that by *purging religion of all its legendary accretions* they were providing an important *cleanup* service and equipping it with the tools to efficiently *withstand the onslaught of modern materialism*.

Drews felt an urgent need to reform the structure of established religion, free it from its *attachment to the primitive features of the early mythical Christianity*. In *Christ Myth II* he glorifies the *greatness* of the "German mind" and complains:

How, then, can we be asked to admit that the salvation of modern times depends on a belief that has, in the Churches, *degenerated into a stupid superstition*?...Why, then, should we be compelled to take our religious possessions from the past? ...Are the ideas of a *remote age* and a *degenerate culture* to keep us under their power for ever? [emphasis added]

Drews's books happened to come out during a phase of *profound turmoil* in Germany and restructuring of its religious scene. Repeatedly, Drews came back to the same theme of the *need for reform* and to start thinking about the nature of *religion in the future*.

The Free Religion Movement

Drews was one of those scholars and an intellectuals who were not averse to bringing their ideas to the public, especially, in his case, if it was for the cause of countering the influence of Christian churches. He was a *religious activist*, willing to descend into the public forum and stand up for his views and

harangue the crowds. But, in his activism, he never condescended to *compromise or vulgarize his scholarship* for the sake of *popularizing* it.

The concern about a *renewal of religion* had been Drews's preoccupation all his life. But it had been shared by other Germans, Germany was going through a craze of forming all kinds of associations for matters of public concern, including religion. Alongside the established churches, Germany had seen a few important movements emerge with a liberated attitude towards religion:

- In 1859 was founded the *German Association of Free Religion Societies* (*Bund Freireligiöser Gemeinden Deutschlands*)
- Followed in 1881 by the *German Association of Freethinkers* (*Deutscher Freidenkerbund*)
- and in 1906 the *German Association of Monists* (*Deutscher Monistenbund*)

Drews threw in his lot with both the *Free Religion Association* and the *Monist Association*, which were part of the "*Free Religion Movement*" (*Freireligiöse Bewegung*).

In addition, Drews was a member of the new *No-Confession Committee* [*Komitee Konfessionslos*], formed in 1909, becoming president in 1912. The "Komitee" supported the *Church Exit Movement* [*Kirchenaustrittsbewegung*], which became very successful in attracting members who were drop-outs from their churches, a movement that had become significant since it started in 1905, and also successful in attracting scientific, academic personalities and cultural celebrities.

In 1924 Drews, who was the leader of the *Free Religion Society of Karlsruhe*, joined a few other Societies of the Southwest to form a new *Association of Free Religion for the Southwest* (*Verband Freireligiöser Gemeinden Süd- und Westdeutschlands*), with an orientation more religious and less political than the other movements.

The Völkish Movement



Germany's Renewal. A Monthly for the German People, 1919

By opposition to the religious movements, a non-religious cultural current had gained some impetus: The so-called Völkische Bewegung (*Völkish movement*), which dated back to the Romanticist movement of the 1850s, when the German revolutionary drives had been crushed by the arrival of Bismarck. Uwe Puschner is a well-known historian of this movement.

This movement had a popular base, and combined various elements:

- *extreme nationalism,*
- *anti-Christianity,*
- a reverence for the mythical Teutonic past,
- *racism, anti-semitism,*
- and a *revival of Germanic paganism.*

This trend is described in the books by [Hubert Cancik](#) & Uwe Puschner, *Antisemitismus, Paganismus, Völkische Religion* (2004) [*Anti-semitism, Paganism, and Völkish Religion*]; and by [Stefan Breuer](#), *Die Völkischen in Deutschland* (2008) [*The Popular Societies in Germany*].

Although the Völkish Movement was different in ideology from the National Socialism, Uwe Puschner has stressed that the two movements had great similarities, and that *the Völkish significantly contributed to the eventual success of the NSDP*.[\[115\]](#)

The New Popular Myth of the Superior German Race Spread by the NSDP Propaganda

Drews had been a philosopher and a historian of philosophy, with a proselytizing drive for promoting his brand of Idealistic Monism. His interest in religion and mythology made him sensitive to the religious "essence" of social cultural beliefs. *Romantic Nordic mysticism* had become a prevalent fascination among the 19th-century German elite, such as Richard Wagner and contemporary artists, historians and writers. It had unavoidably aroused Drews's attention to the old Teutonic beliefs much in vogue in Northern Europe

Hope of Rebirth and Transfiguration of a Defeated Country

Drews had seen in early Christianity a religion of *promise of rebirth and [transfiguration](#)* for a defeated and oppressed country (announcing the coming of the Kingdom of God), and the creation of a *national myth giving hope* to ancient occupied Palestinian Jews (expectation of a [Messiah](#) leader and liberator). Jews were expecting (hoping) that Palestine was going to go through its own course of dying and rising again.



Arno Breker's 1939 neoclassical sculpture *Die Partei* (*The Party*), which flanked one of the entrances to the [Albert Speer](#) designed [Reich Chancellery](#) of the [Third Reich](#), encapsulated the [National Socialist](#) ideals of the [Aryan master race](#), with *Die Partei* as the physical embodiment of the spirit of the [Nazi Party](#). Believers in [eugenics](#), the Nazis attempted to create a Nordic Aryan master race, or [super race](#).

During its rise in Germany, the [National Socialist party](#) (NSDP) appropriated in its ideology the old [Teutonic](#) mysticism of the highly educated artistic and literary elite, and its propaganda vulgarized it into a crude popular mass mythology of Germanic [Aryan](#) superiority, with quasi-religious overtones, encouraging the fringe development of what came to be called [Germanic Neopaganism](#).

Aging and close to death, Drews, was struck by the *theoretical parallel of early Christianity* with modern National Socialist mysticism — a *promise of national rebirth and transfiguration* from an oppressed state and of *renewed hope for a defeated country* under the leadership of a new charismatic liberator — which resonated with his own concept of a future religion based on German Monistic Idealism.

German Nationalism and Repudiation of Christianity

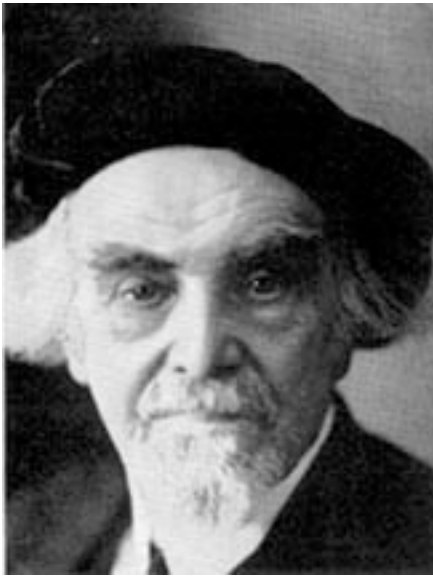
With the National Socialist Party's propaganda overwhelming the country like a tsunami, Drews's language in his last theological writings became more and more *heavy with the concepts of glorified Germanness* by opposition to the people of the [Ancient Near East](#) (ANE) — whose cultures had given rise to Greco-Roman classicism (including Drews's beloved Plotinus), but also Christianity — now all *devalued and labeled as foreign races*. Drews thus seemed convinced that the Unconscious World Spirit had moved from the Mediterranean to Germany, and *the philosopher had to go along*.

Feeling in touch with the new cultural spirit of *national rebirth* and *exalted hope in the future* then prevailing in Germany, Drews started evangelizing on the theme of *German nationalism*, using it as *another argument against Christianity*. Thus, he wrote in *Das Wort Gottes* (1933, p. 11) [*The Word of God*]:

[Free Religion believers] are “German and not Romans...[and must reject] a determination of our faith on the Bible and its knowledge...Christendom is the expression of sunken times and of *the mindset of a race foreign to us*... *Christendom has absolutely nothing to do with Germanness* [Deutschtum]...and a German Christendom [would be] *nonsense* ... [As for Protestantism] with the blows it delivers on the Gospels, it is straight on its way to Rome... Jesus the Aryan [is] *a pure ideal*. [There is] no reason [to assume] a Nordic origin of Jesus. [But the question of the origin of Jesus is secondary for Drews]... [Contrary to] believers in the Bible for whom Palestine is the 'Holy Land', for devotees of Free Religion, *Germany is the Holy Land*. [The German is], as an Aryan, fundamentally Monist, (Pantheist), [contrary to dualist Christians. Free Religion is] the manifestation of the essence [*Wesensausdruck*] of our German people. [emphasis added][116]

Drews systematically *used Monism in his battle against Christianity*. Drews concluded that Free Religion was "the very expression of the being of our German people"[117] Using the accoutrements of the rampant nationalistic fervor *for his own agenda*, Drews was still upholding his lofty ideals, but now in the form of a *German monistic Idealism*.

Berdyaev's Critique



Nikolai Berdyaev, Russian philosopher exiled in Paris

[Nikolai Berdyaev](#) (1874–1948) was a Russian philosopher of religion and politics. Writing in 1927 as an refugee from the Bolsheviks in a Paris threatened by Germany, he contends that Drews, as a *religious anti-Semite*, argues against the historical existence of Jesus for the *religious life of Aryanism*.

Drews -- is a philosopher of the Hartmann school. In his capacity as an Hartmannist, he preaches a *religion of pure spirit*. And he fights against the historicity of Jesus Christ in the name of a religion of spirit, he contends *against the religious materialism* which he detests. He is prepared to admit the existence of Christ, as the Logos. But for him *the Logos never could have been incarnated into a man* upon the earth, within earthly history. The *religious materialism of Christianity is a legacy inherited from Judaism*, it is a Semitic graft, and Drews in his capacity *as a religious anti-Semite*, struggles against this materialistic Semitic graft *for the religious life of Aryanism*, expressing itself in its purest guise in India. Drews, just like E. Hartmann, is a resolute *antagonist against Protestantism* and the religion of Jesus. For him Jesus was not real, in the metaphysical sense that Christ is real. He is the *antipode to*

Harnack, a result of the splitting apart of the God-Man -- the polar opposite to the Jesusism of the Protestants. (With the Christian Myth was connected the teaching of Drews and E. Hartmann about the unconscious Divinity, which in a fit of madness created the vale of being and *comes to consciousness through man*. cf. Drews, *Die Religion als Selbstbewusstsein Gottes*.) [emphasis added] [118]

Drews is *opposed to the theology of ancient Hebraism* as much as he is *opposed to Christianity*, and even more *opposed to liberal Protestantism*. This cannot be construed as a claim that Drews was a social anti-semite, as he was firmly *opposed to social anti-semitism* (see [Against Anti-Semitism](#)).

Drews shared the intense belief with the German elite of the sublimity of German consciousness (in art, literature, philosophy, science), again re-iterated in his book *Das Wort Gottes*. However, he saw religion as an expression of the Unconscious World-Spirit anchored in a community tightly rooted on an ancestral territory. In the late 1920s and '30s, hoping to see Germany *pull away from Christianity*, his writings took on an even stronger German nationalist flavor, as he rode the huge unfurling wave of German nationalism, that ended up getting *hijacked by the National Socialists*.

The German Faith Movement

A thorough description of this religious movement was presented by Ulrich Nanko in his 1993 book on the movement.[119] Many adventurers were trying to ride the coattails of the Nazi success to establish new spiritual/religious movements. Among them were the founders of the new [German Faith Movement](#) ([Deutsche Glaubensbewegung](#)), [Jakob W. Hauer](#) (1881–1962), and [Ernst Graf zu Reventlow](#) (1869–1943). Hauer had been a Protestant missionary in India, who had turned into a Sanskrit scholar imbued with the spirituality of [Hinduism](#) and a professor at the University of Tübingen.[120] His friend [Ernst Graf zu Reventlow](#) had been a navy officer, a journalist, and a Reichstag deputy who had joined the NSDP in 1927. He was an influential Nazi party member, but one who never gained the trust of Hitler, and never received

a position from the Nazi government. The movement adopted as its official emblem the “Sun Cross”, a circle image of the sun forming a rounded image of the Nazi swastika.

Hauer had started a religious movement that he wanted to expand with a larger group from the Völkish movement. Reventlow's cultural (but not racial) antisemitism led him to accept joining forces with Hauer in organizing a conference in July 1933 that would create another entity, the [*German Faith Movement*](#). This new religious group became active in 1934.



Jakob Wilhelm Hauer.

Hauer's ambition was to use Reventlow's NSDP connections to engineer a unification of the Free Religion movement with the Völkish movement. As the movement developed, its objectives were revealed as follows:

- National Religion, anti-Christian, with a Hinduism coloration, veneration of the sun, and pursuing a "species-true faith" for Germany, (a goal that resonated with Drews's hopes to see the emergence of a *German Religion*).

- [*Blood and Soil*](#) [*Blut und Boden*], values of racism (blood descent) and nationalism (ancestral land occupation), the fundamental ideology of Nazism
- Völkish populism (fusion with the racist/antisemitic Völkish movement),
- German Neopaganism, etc...

The *SouthWest Association for Free Religion*, including Drews's Karlsruhe Society, had joined, and Drews was invited to sit on the Working Committee of this new movement. But the collaboration was short-lived. The new group's *political objectives* (dreams of becoming a state religion) clashed with the basic program of the *Free Religion Societies*, which were pursuing more limited interests of freer religion. In addition, racism and antisemitism, which had become more overt in the NSDP's national policy after it had reached political power, became also quickly apparent as a major goal of Hauer and Reventlow. As a result, the Southwest Association of Free Religion, in which Drews's Karlsruhe Free Religion Society was a member, *soon withdrew from the German Faith Movement*.

The two leaders of the new group proved that they didn't have enough political pull. Hauer could not implement the planned fusion with the Völkish movement. Reventlow's connections did not bring any benefits from the Nazi Government. Contrary to hopes, the *German Faith movement* never became endorsed as a Nazi party organization, never obtained the privileges Hauer was seeking, and never achieved its latent goal of becoming legitimized *as the state religion* by the NSDP, in a vain hope to duplicate the endorsement of the Catholic Church by the Roman Emperor Theodosius in 380 AD.

Disillusioned, Hauer left in 1936, and joined the Party in 1937; and Reventlow also left the movement early, resuming the practice of Christianity, still unable to gain Hitler's favor.

Critique of the German Faith Movement

The anthropologist [Karla Poewe](#) has devoted her book *New Religions and the Nazis* (2005) to Hauer's attempt at founding a national religion.[121] [Richard Steigmann-Gall](#), author of *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity*,

1919-1945 (2004), is another expert on this period.^[122] He contends that Poewe, sharing "Hauer's sense of grandiosity", portrays Hauer as more significant than he was, making of "Hauer a 'truer' exemplar of Nazism than its own institutional incarnation".



Sun Cross, official symbol of the *German Faith Movement*, directed by Jakob W. Hauer and Ernst Graf zu Reventlow

Whereas Hauer was at most a fellow-traveller of the Nazis, a hanger-on with big ambition, "intent to appear relevant but ultimately rejected..."^[123] The movement never achieved more than the status of a small esoteric fringe group. It never managed to dent, let alone replace, Christianity in the land of Martin Luther. It turned out to be merely a cultural flash-in-the-pan, a curiosity in the complex landscape of Germany's religious life in the mid '30s. The NSDP government changed its name in 1938, and jettisoned it as a nuisance that was incapable of displacing the two strong Christian Churches in Germany, and only risked to alienate them against the new regime.^[124]

So, in spite of Drews's hope to promote a new religion based on an Idealistic Monism and Pantheism of a distinct German character, the participation of the Karlsruhe Free Religion Society in Hauer's effort to unify the provincial Free Religion associations with the Völkish movement was short-lived and produced no results.

Drews, an elitist thinker in the Hegel and Hartmann's tradition, had been an advocate of the *Unconscious World Spirit* as being the fundamental engine of religion acting in history through agents and oracles. He remained hostile to any religion *based on a historic personality cult* and, late in life, was confronted with the practical difficulty of translating his lofty ambitions to the simpler drives and requirements of a mass movement.

Drews's Last Book, "German Religion"

Drews had been all his life *opposed to any cult of a historical personality*. That was one of his major criticisms of Christianity. The *Unconscious World-Spirit* was larger than any individual — Great personalities were not godly, but simply its *agents* and *expressions*. Similarly, no modern form of religion could be based on the cult of a contemporary leader, even though it was the tendency of the NSDP ideology. But the NSDP never went all the way, and didn't try to impose a new "religion" to displace Christianity, which was still a strong force in Germany, and which had partly accepted the new Nazi leadership. The NSDP quickly got rid of the "German Faith Movement", which proved an unnecessary nuisance.



St. Gereon in Köln, oldest Roman church in Germany, started ca. 5th-6th Century

All his life, in most of his books, Drews had been concerned by the *obsolete survival of Christianity*, foreseeing its eventual disappearance, and insisting on the urgent need to *define and implement the religion of the future*.

Drews's book, *Deutsche Religion: Grundzüge eines Gottesglaubens im Geiste des deutschen Idealismus*, [*German religion: Principles of a Belief in God in the Spirit of German Idealism*] was published in 1935, year of his death, was to be his final message, as he died the same year at 70. In it, he tried to adjust his lifelong beliefs in Idealistic Monism to the perspective of the new social

situation in Germany. The philosopher's conscience had to move with the flow of the Unconscious World Spirit.

The "Deutsche Religion" not part of the Nazi ideology or propaganda

Drews's book is included in a catalogue of "Nazi Collection Research Resources" at the Ball State Un. Library. The citation for the book describes it as a "Work on the 'new' German religion that mixes faith and Nazi mysticism."[\[125\]](#) This description, likely entered by the collector, painting Drews's book with the Nazi ideology brush, reflects a popular misconception that is not scholarly justified, and does not reflect the 1935 German text. For Drews, "faith" meant *faith in the Unconscious World-Spirit*, which for him is the divine manifested in history through human consciousness; and "Nazi mysticism", if based on the cult of a personality, mythical or historical — be it Zeus, Mithras, Jesus Christ, Napoleon, or *Der Führer* — was the primary kind of mysticism that Drews always dismissed as a caricature of religion.

What Drews had endeavored to do was to stress the potential development of his own Idealistic kind of Monistic religion in the form of *Free Religion with a nationalistic German character*. He had never become a Nazi Party activist. His very brief involvement, before his death in 1935, with the aborted attempt of the SouthWest Association for Free Religion to join the brand-new venture called *German Faith Movement*, was misinterpreted as his "having lent his support to the early attempts to unite the various German pagan organizations into a unified body", a description that tended to make Drews wrongly appear as a promoter of old Teutonic values and [Neopaganism](#), in complete opposition to his lifelong beliefs in Idealism and Monism.

Critics of Drews like to present a much simplified and *distorted version of events of his last two years*, unable or unwilling to understand his motivations and ambitions. They forget to mention that Drews and his Free Religion colleagues abandoned the [German Faith Movement](#) and *dissociated themselves* from Hauer and Reventlow as soon as it became clear that the two leaders' ambition was much more political than authentically religious. Drews was *not interested in old mythical values*. He put his last ounces of

energy, just before his death, into writing a theoretical treatise to repeat his old message, urging a renewal of religion in the future, this time with a *more pronounced German character*, but still anchored on the German Idealism that he had been promoting ever since his youthful infatuation with Eduard von Hartmann.

Against Anti-Semitism

Among the many reservations about the German Faith Movement, one reason for abandoning it was what Drews and others perceived as blatant anti-semitism.

Drews *objected to the racist assumption in antisemitism*, in an article, *Jesus the Aryan* (*Jesus der Arier*, 1934) where he paid homage to the *courage and moral fiber of the Jews through history* and to the ancient Hebrew prophets who transformed *the primitive God of wrath into a God of mercy* in the *Psalms*, *Proverbs* and the *Wisdom* books:



Bar Kokhba's tetradrachm. Obverse: the Jewish Temple facade with the rising star. Reverse: A lulav reads: *to the freedom of Jerusalem*

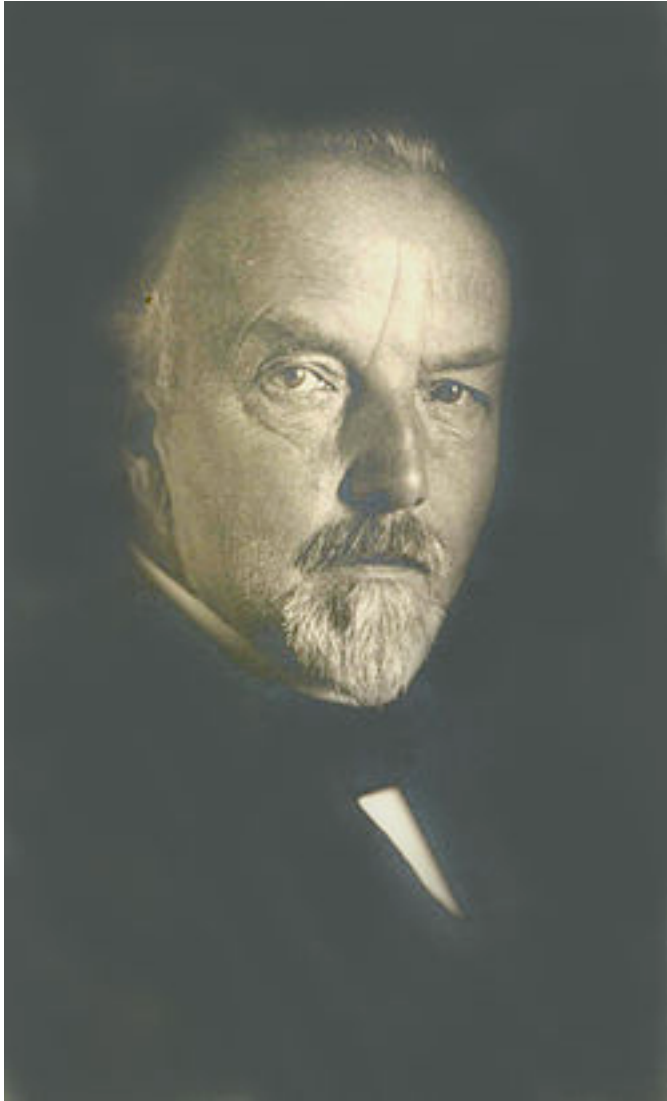
[Drews denies that] a Jew cannot be driven by liberty and courage... [Drews mentioned the] fights for freedom of the *Maccabees*, the fatal defense of Jerusalem against the Romans and the last desperate fight of the Jews in the *Bar Kokhba wars* [the third and last Jewish war against the Roman army, that

led to the final destruction of the Jewish state in Palestine]. [In the same vein, Drews referred to the courage of those] poor Jews of the *medieval Ghetto* who preferred to endure a thousand dead rather than renounce their faith, and climbed, still self-controlled, to the stakes...[the Jewish prophets] impassioned by freedom and courage...[who] never feared jail, exile, or death...[In the course of the progress of the Jewish religion] the desert god Yahweh of the Old Testament has *become larger, more tolerant, more humane, more friendly*...[so that] from an angry and authoritarian god he changed *into a merciful god*, who is all goodness and love, *the god from the Psalms, the Proverbs and the Wisdom writings*. [emphasis added][126]

Contrary to other Free Religion devotees who parroted the slogans of the NSDP propaganda, Drews engaged in a real discussion with Jewish intellectuals and scholars, and was able to deliver an *encomium to Jewish faith*, which, on one hand, brought to light its differences with Free Religion, but showed meanwhile respect to people who had other thoughts.[127]

Drews died on 19 July 1935 in Illenau bei [Bühl](#), [Baden](#) at the age of 70.

Re-evaluation of Arthur Drews by Bernhard Hoffers — *Ein Netter Kerl (A Good Guy)*



Arthur Drews, Karlsruhe

Germany has been struggling with the legacy of the Nazi era, and is still in the process of [rehabilitating](#) its exceptional scholars. Bernhardt Hoffers, in his *2003 biographical eulogy*, took up the challenge of restoring Drews's reputation, that he felt had been *unfairly tarnished*. He stressed the following facts.

A philosophical gadfly

He highlighted that Drews, during his life, had been an irritant, continually *encroaching on the turf* of many specialists in German universities: in theology, philology, astronomy, mythology, music criticism, psychology. Specialists didn't welcome his interference, and *resented him as an outsider*. Drews had been a “maverick”, his philosophy stood outside of academia, which didn't accept his

dilettantism [*Abweichungen von der communis opinio*]. “Hartmann was not in vogue”, either, and Drews's dependence on this old professor was another hindrance. Drews created no "school" and had no followers in Germany. He had to remain a teacher in his "Technische Hochschule" in Karlsruhe for the rest of his life.

Das ignorieren and das Totschweigen

His “support of Wagner” and “opposition to Nietzsche” did nothing to improve his standing. He met with the studied *indifference* [*das Ignorieren*] and the *silence* [*das Totschweigen*] of the academic pundits, while his international public popularity and press coverage were increasing. Even the University of Karlsruhe, in the very town where he lived and taught, didn't want to mention his name.

[His treatment at the hands of academics was similar to those of William B. Smith in the US, John M. Robertson and later George A. Wells in England, and Paul-Louis Couchoud in France.]

A resurrection

After his death his name “nearly vanished”, practically forgotten. He was mentioned in the German media mostly for having advocated the “need for a religion renewal”, and in the literature about Wagner and Nietzsche. His work was omitted or grossly misrepresented and discredited in major German reference books.

His books in Germany are now hard to find. However, his book on *Plotinus* is still in demand, the *Christ Myth* is widely available in the English-speaking world — although still subject to “deprecating and distorting comments from academics” — and Hermann Detering, of *Radikalkritik*, continues to make the *Denial of the Historicity of Jesus* still available, championing the cause of a unique German thinker.

Drews had been fighting all his life for acceptance and recognition in Germany, and a “promotion to a University professorship.” In spite of his “enormous scholarly output”, and his “popular fame”, he never was able to obtain a

university position. One has to understand why, at the end of his life, Drews was expressing a “hope for a renewal of Germany”.

Integrität, from a netter Kerl

Hoffers, for the sake of fairness, remarked that Drews “never was a member of the Nazi party”, and “spoke early against the growing antisemitism” in the 1920s . He never was involved in any action against Jewish intellectuals, artists, and academics.

[Whereas, for instance, a philosopher like [Heidegger](#) was more visibly active in the Nazi movement, as Rüdiger Safranski has described in detail in *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, 1999]



Martin Heidegger, successor to Husserl in Freiburg, joined the Nazi party

Hoffers emphasized that ““As a scholar, Drews had always been objective and honest”.” He had “integrity” [*Integrität*], and never used the dirty tricks of which he himself was a victim. In spite of scholarly differences, he maintained a “friendship with Schweitzer” for a while. He was a polyglot, collected Japanese prints. He was a gifted, energetic man, with a “tremendous capacity for work”.

And he gained the esteem of [van den Bergh van Eysinga](#), the leader of the [Dutch Radical school](#), who viewed him as *a good guy* [*ein netter Kerl*]

Drews's ideas still valid

In conclusion, Hoffers urged scholars to renew an acquaintance with Drews's books. Claiming that the arguments developed in his work were outmoded or refuted [*überholt*] is unjustified. As a parting shot, Hoffers asks a pertinent question:

Is it really true that the question of Jesus's historicity has been absolutely clarified and is moreover uninteresting, as can be heard in discussions with theologians? (*Ist es wirklich so, dass die Frage nach der Historizität Jesu absolut geklärt und obendrein noch so nebensächlich ist, wie man in Gesprächen mit Theologen zu hören bekommt?*).

Hoffers concludes that Drews's life was a fascinating chapter of the *Zeitgeschichte* (history of our times). It is high time to redress the balance and “restore a truer image” of Drews, whose reputation has been “unfairly maligned” in the 20th century.

A complete biography of his life and work is yet to be produced, and should be tackled now, when there are still documents and witnesses around.[\[128\]](#)

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[Wikisource](#) has original
works written by or about:

[**Arthur Drews**](#)

Notes

1. ^ **a b c d** ["Bruno Bauer", by Douglas Moddach, 2009, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(SEP\)*](#)
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4. ^ **a b c** [Arthur Drews, "Idea and Personality: Settlement of the Religious Crisis" \(Last chapter 14 of "The Witness of the Gospels", Part IV of *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, 1912\)](#)
5. ^ See also ["Evidence for the historical existence of Jesus Christ"](#)
6. ^ See also the Christian definition of ["Historical theology"](#)
7. ^ **a b** [Letters from Arthur Drews to G.J.P.J. Bolland 1904, regularly published in German from 1890 to 1904](#)
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18. ^ [Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 2d ed. 1913, Ch. 22, p. 451](#)
19. ^ [Peter De Mey, "The Christ Myth Theological Debate", ca. 2004](#)
20. ^ The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) records the usage of *myth* (M19, i.e. mid 19th c.), *mythic* (M17, mid 17th c.) and *mythical* (L17, late 17th c.), all liberally used by George Eliot, J. Frazer, J. M. Robertson and A. Drews.
- However, *mythicize* (M19, "turn into a myth"), *mythicist* (L19) or *mythist* (M19), and *mythicism* (M19), are not found in the scholarly literature until popularized in the early 1940s.
- Mythify* (E20, "construct a myth") is rare. Many words are built on *mytho-*: *mythoclast* (L19), *mythomaniac* (M19), *mythogenic* (M20), *mythotheology* (E20), *mythographer* (M17, "a writer or collector of myths").
- By contrast *mythology* (LME), *mythologize*, *mythologist*, *mythological* (all three E17) are much older.
- Mythos* (M18, "a body of myths", and M20, "a recurrent theme" or "a standard plot") is literary and can sound pretentious.
21. ^ [a b R. Joseph Hoffmann, Response to "Stevenbollinger" of Aug. 18, 2012, in "Mythicism: A Story of Bias, Incompetence and Falsehood", in *New Oxonian*, May 22, 2012](#) as a part of "The Jesus Process: Maurice Casey"
22. ^ Hoffmann quotes George Rupp, former president of Columbia in 1979: "Christian theology is in disarray; it has neither a goal nor a purpose," and adds "trends follow fads with such dizzying speed, [George Rupp] wrote, that the discipline is more like a carousel gone wild than an academic discipline." [R. Joseph Hoffmann, "The Jesus Problem: Liberal](#)

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- 128.^ [Dr. Bernhard Hoffers, "Arthur Drews \(1865 – 1935\)"](#) - a eulogy and biographical lecture, Karlsruhe, April 2003 (in German). Klaus Schilling's English summary: ["Bernhard Hoffers' April 2003 Lecture about Arthur Drews"](#)

External links

- [*The Christ Myth*](#) — Burns translation of the 3d edition (1910) at Internet Archive. Also available as a [PDF version](#), digitalized in 2010.
- [*The Legend of Saint Peter: A Contribution to the Mythology of Christianity*, \(1910/1924\)](#) — [Klaus Schilling's summary in English](#). Full German text at [*Die Petruslegende*](#)
- [Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, \(1906\)](#), in 20 chapters (Transl. W. Montgomery, 1910, London. [A new translation](#) is based on the 9th German edition (1984) in 25 chapters, (2001, Fortress Press). [Ch. XI, "The First Skeptical Life of Jesus"](#), is on Bruno Bauer.
- [*The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*, \(1912\)](#) — Transl. Joseph McCabe
- [Isaiah 53](#) - ESV
- [Psalm 22](#) - "Why Have You Forsaken Me?" - ESV
- [Wisdom of Solomon](#) - Oremus
- [Sirach](#) - New Advent
- [*The Denial of the Historicity of Jesus in Past and Present*](#) — [Klaus Schilling's summary in English](#). Full German original [*Die Leugnung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Karlsruhe \(1926\)](#)
- [Edwin Johnson, *The Pauline Epistles*, 1894](#)
- [Albert Kalthoff, *The Rise of Christianity*, \(1904\)](#) — 1907 translation at Internet Archive.
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- [John Mackinnon Robertson, *Christianity & Mythology*, \(1900-10\)](#)
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- Van Manen's views on Paul are presented as Part II of [Thomas Whittaker's *The Origins of Christianity, with an Outline of Van Manen's Analysis of the Pauline Literature* \(1904-1933\)](#), p. 65-216. Includes Van

Manen's analysis of Acts, Romans, and 1 & 2 Corinthians.

See also [Hermann Detering, "The Dutch Radical Approach to the Pauline Epistles", 1996](#), providing references for Van Manen's 15 articles in [Encyclopaedia Biblica](#), including ["Old-Christian Literature", 1914](#), ["Paul & Paulinism"](#), [Romans](#), [Philippians](#), [Philemon](#), [Shepherd of Hermas](#), and [Rome \(Church\)](#) (all signed "w. c. v. M.")

- [Robert M. Price, "The Evolution of the Pauline Canon", 1997](#)
- [Shirley Jackson Case, *The Historicity of Jesus: a Criticism of the Contention that Jesus Never Lived, a Statement of the Evidence for His Existence, an Estimate of His Relation to Christianity* \(1912\)](#)
- [Frederick C. Conybeare, *The historical Christ, or, An investigation of the views of Mr. J.M. Robertson, Dr. A. Drews, and Prof. W.B. Smith*, \(1914\)](#)
- [Maurice Goguel, *Jesus The Nazarene, Myth Or History?* \(1926\)](#). Also available in [Peter Kirby's presentation on *Christian Origins*](#)
- A. D. Howell Smith, *Jesus Not A Myth* (1942)]. Not easy to find. An analysis of Howell Smith's arguments is presented in Archibald Robertson's *Jesus: Myth or History?* See also [a series of five posts on Vridar](#).
- [Archibald Robertson, *Jesus: Myth or History?* \(1946\)](#) - A review of the major scholars involved in the public debate from 1890 to 1940.
- [Walter P. Weaver, *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century: 1900-1950* \(1999\)](#)
- [Robert M. Price, *The Christ-Myth Theory And Its Problems* \(2011\)](#) - Amazon listing and reviews
- ["Plotinus", by Lloyd Gerson, \(2008\)](#) - *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- [Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, \(1999, Harvard UP\)](#) - Amazon listing & reviews

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