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Theology, Modernity, and the German University

> [T]heological science has received a new character. In truth it is confessionless, Protestant only insofar as the freedom of science is regarded as a Protestant demand. All liberations from historical Protestantism are equated with [further] deliverance from Catholicism. [Theology] has accepted the general scientific methods of [its] sister faculties. . . . The apologetic tendency has greatly declined.
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> --Ernst Troeltsch, 1908

Introduction

The German Empire eagerly took part in the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, generously funding a series of exhibitions to showcase its recent economic and industrial advances and its many scientific achievements. Not surprisingly, a major display was dedicated to the German university system, the pride of the new nation and the envy of the world. "As to the promotion of science," the official exhibit catalog proudly proclaimed, "each professor is called . . . to carry forward original research and endeavor to incite his pupils to scientific investigation."[1] To accompany the exhibition, the Prussian Ministry of Culture had commissioned a two-volume octavo-sized collection of essays by leading German professors, each glowingly charting the contributions of German scholarship to various academic disciplines.[2]

[1] World's Columbian Exhibition at Chicago: Official Catalogue Exhibition of the German Empire (Harvard's Widener Library, Econ 5958.93.82), 19

[2] Wilhelm Lexis, ed., Die deutschen Universitäten: Für die Universitätsaustellung in Chicago unter Mitwirkung zahlreicher Universitätslehrer, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1893). That this work was presented at the fair untranslated bears witness to the ascendency of the German language as the lingua franca of academic discourse.

Americans were impressed; indeed, they had been impressed for some time. As is well established, long before the Chicago fair, the "German model" or "Prussian model" university had exerted tremendous influence in the United States. Wissenschaft, Kritik, Lehr- and Lernfreiheit and other German academic watchwords had become virtual commonplaces in elite sectors of American higher education. Led by Michigan, Cornell, and Johns Hopkins, universities looked admiringly to Germany for both inspiration and practical ideas as higher education in the United States experienced a dizzying period of modernization from roughly 1860 to 1900.[3] It was "the age of German footnotes."[4]

Undeniably, a nationalist and triumphalist impulse lies behind the Chicago exhibition: the German government's desire to parade before an international audience the impressive character of its universities and revel in the global attention that they already enjoyed.[5]

However, if one digs deeper, the exhibition's triumphalism is mitigated by other factors--factors which suggest that the very dynamism of the university system had also resulted in certain tensions and dilemmas. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the discussion of the theological faculty (theologische Fakultät), the erstwhile "queen of the sciences" in traditional parlance and customarily the "first" faculty in the four-faculty scheme of academic organization

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[3]See Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 367-412; Laurence R. Veysey, The Emergence of the American University (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 125-33 and George M. Marsden, The Soul of the American University: from Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief (New York: Oxford University Press 1994), 101-12. On the limits of the German university ideal in the United States, see James Turner and Paul Bernard, "The Prussian Road to University? German Models and the University of Michigan," Rackam Reports (1988-89), 6-52.

[4]William R. Hutchison, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 228.

[5]On the political backdrop to the exhibition, see Bernhard Brocke, "Hochschule- und Wissenschaftspolitik in Preußen und im deutschen Reich, 1882-1907: das 'System Althoff,'" in Peter Baumgart, ed., Bildungspolitik in Preußen zur Zeit des Kaiserreichs (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1980), **pp.**

that German universities had adopted (and maintained) from the University of Paris in the Middle Ages.[6] In his essays on the Protestant theological faculty written for the exhibition, the theologian Eric Haupt went to great lengths to demonstrate that theology too was "an integral part of the totality of science," that "a scientific movement" had long been underway in its precincts, and that theological disciplines had every right to lay claim to the mantle of "progress" along with their colleagues in secular fields like chemistry or classical philology. But Haupt also admitted that all was not well. "One often hears the complaint," he wrote,

> that intellectual criticism (Kritik) now almost exclusively occupies the time of [theology] students and the young people are ill-fitted to serve the congregations of the church. The academic theologians will certainly not deny that many imperfections still adhere to their work. But they are convinced that any one-sidedness thus produced will be overcome by further scientific and religious education. . . . In short, we must have patience, and must look for the reconciliation between faith and science, in the individual as well as in the whole church, from a steady cooperation of these two factors.[7]

In other words, Friedrich Schleiermacher's great liberal-theological project of establishing an "eternal covenant" between Christianity and modern knowledge, faith and science, remained a work in progress. Further effort (and patience) was needed. But in truth, Haupt's words only

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[6]The adoption of the "Parisian" model meant that German universities were customarily divided into four faculties: three "higher" faculties--theology, law, and medicine--and one "lower" faculty: philosophy or what in the Middle Ages had been called the arts faculty (Artistenfacultät or facultas artium). On the early history of German universities, see Georg Kaufmann, Die Geschichte der deutschen Universitäten, vol. 1. (Stuttgart, 1888) and Hastings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1936), 211-63.

[7]See the essays by Haupt in Lexis, ed., Die deutschen Universitäten, 171-80, 188-96.

scratched the surface of what by the early twentieth century had developed into a full-blown dilemma: "the crisis of the theological faculty" as it was often expressed.[8] Discussed from the lectern and pulpit, in academic and clerical gossip, and in numerous publications, the increasingly controversial position of the theological faculty in the university had became an acute subject of concern.[9] Did theology really belong in a modern "research university," many asked? Shouldn't universities began to study religion more neutrally, in a strictly positivistic, empirical fashion, and allow theology to be removed to seminaries? What, in sum, was the appropriate role of theological faculties with ecclesiastical ties in a state university system, one in Max Weber's formulation experiencing "a phase of specialization previously unknown" and committed to "progress that goes on ad infinitum"?[10]

The crisis was not simply occasioned by ecclesiastical dissent from the university, as the quote from Haupt might suggest. Its scope was much larger, encompassing questions about the nature of modern critical scholarship (Wissenschaft), new efforts to pursue the academic study of religion scientifically, broader patterns of deconfessionalization in higher education, and, not least, progressive ideas about church-state relations that affected the legal standing of theological faculties within the university.

Today, I want to examine the shape of the problem more closely, calling attention to its deeper historical antecedents and more immediate sources. Then, in an effort to render a broad topic more managable, I want to focus attention on the response to the problem (or at least parts of it) offered by the theologian and church historian, Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), who,

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[8]E. H. Haenssler, Die Krisis der theologischen Fakultäten (Leipzig, 1929).
[9]August Dillmann, Über die Theologie als Universitätswissenschaft (Berlin, 1875) and Ernst Troeltsch, Die Trennung von Staat und Kirche, der staatliche Religionsunterricht und die theologischen Fakultäten (Tübingen, 1907).
[10]Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 129ff.

arguably more than any single figure in Wilhelmine Germany, set the parameters for and determined the course of the academic study of theology and religion in Germany.

The Shape of the Problem

The preeminent position of the theological faculty, the sacra facultas, in the university, a commonplace of the medieval period, continued after the Reformation--an event, it bears remembering, triggered by a professor of theology at a university. To preserve doctrinal purity, theological faculties in the confessionally divided Holy Roman Empire had to be centers of orthodoxy, sending out educated clerics able to refute the religious competition. Theological scholarship and study thus took on great importance, promoting and guarding the confession of the prince, who in Protestant lands shorn of bishops emerged as the new highest church authority (summus episcopus).[11]

The eighteenth and early nineteenth century marks a crucial transition in university history. Growing criticisms of confessionalism, new departures in professorial scholarship, the emergence of dynamic scholarly disciplines like history and classical philology, the establishment of reform universities at Halle (1694) and Göttingen (1737), the challenge to universities by aristocratic and scientific academies--all helped to bring about momentous intellectual shifts--shifts which signaled the diminution of theology's institutional clout.[12]

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[11]Thomas Kaufmann, Universität und lutherische Konfessionalisierung: Die Rostocker Theologieprofessoren und ihr Beitrag zur theologischen Bildung und kirchlichen Gestaltung im Herzogtum Mecklenburg zwischen 1550 und 1675 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 1ff.

[12]Charles E. McClelland, State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 34ff.

In assessing these shifts, one must also attend to political factors, typified in many respects by Friedrich the Great of Prussia (r. 1740-86), who regarded the state not as a bastion of a particular orthodoxy but, among other things, as an agency for enlightenment and toleration. Enabled by this new conception of the political order and by the same cultural currents that inspired "the first servant of the state" to invite Voltaire to Sans Souci, German intellectuals began voicing criticism of the universities, theological faculties in particular. Playing for a Protestant crowd, the redoubtable Christian Thomasius of Halle had already argued early in the eighteenth century that the supremacy of the theological faculty was in fact a Catholic relic traceable to the papacy's intention of achieving clerical dominance over society.[13] Lessing, Goethe, and other non-university literati regularly derided the "guild theology" (Zunfttheologie) of the universities for retarding the development of nobler religious sentiments.[14] A new breed of theologians like J. S. Semler, J. L. von Mosheim, and J. A. Nösselt clamored for reform in theological education, all emphasizing scholarship and irenicism over customary polemical or apologetic tendencies.[15]

A large literature from the late eighteenth century pilloried the "medieval" division of the faculties with philosophy (qua ancillia theologia) on the bottom rung. "The monastic division into faculties, in which philosophy walks behind like a handmaid, must cease," wrote W. A.

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[13]See the material attributed to Thomasius in the entry on "Facultät" in J. G. Walch, Philosophischen Lexicon (Leipzig, 1726), 381.
[14]Carl Schwarz, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing als Theologe (Halle, 1854), 63.
[15]See J. S. Semler, Versuch einer nähern Anleitung zu nützlichem Fleisse in der ganzen Gottesgelehrsamkeit (Halle, 1757); J. L. von Mosheim, Kurze Anweisung die Gottesgelahrtheit, vernünftig zu erlernen (Helmstedt, 1756); and J. A. Nösselt, Anweisung zur Bildung angehender Theologen, 3 vols. (Halle, 1786-89). Cf. J. G. Herder, Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend (Weimar, 1780).

Teller, a key figure in Berlins's secret society for enlightenment, the Mittwochsgesellschaft.[16] The longest section in Immanuel Kant's Streit der Fakultäten (1798) was devoted to "The Conflict of the Philosophy Faculty with the Theology Faculty." The philosophical faculty, which stands "only under the authority of reason," the Königsberg philosopher reasoned, should assume greater leadership in the university. "We can also grant the theology faculty's proud claim that the philosophy faculty is its handmaid," he conceded, but added: "the question remains whether the servant is the mistress's torchbearer or trainbearer?"[17] As the work make clear, Kant assumed the former: philosophy should lead theology, not vice versa. Finally, in his Ueber die Verfassung und Verwaltung deutscher Universitäten (1801-02), the prolific Conrad Christoph Meiners of Göttingen echoed Kant's sentiment, but went a step further suggesting that eventually the philosophical faculty should be considered "the queen of the sciences, the first among her sister faculties."[18] (Incidentally, Meiners also adumbrated a wholly new approach to religion in his book, Grundriß der Geschichte aller Religion (1787), a work anticipating the history-of- religions movevement of the late nineteenth century.)

The accumulating questions about university organization and the theological faculty came to a head at the time of the founding of the epoch-making Prussian University of Berlin (1809-10), an event preceded by theoretical discussions on the nature and purpose of "the university" heretofore unknown in Western history.[19] Adding to the drama was the recent

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[16]Quoted in Adolf von Stölzel, "Die Berliner Mittwochsgesellschaft über die Aufhebung oder Reform der Universitäten (1795)," Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte 2 (1889): 204-06.

[17]Immanuel Kant, Der Streit der Fakultäten, with an English translation and introduction by Mary J. Gregor (New York: Abaris, 1979), 44-45.

[18]Conrad Christoph Meiners, Ueber die Verfassung und Verwaltung deutscher Universitäten, vol. 1 (Göttingen, 1801), 325ff.

[19]The key texts, letters, and memoranda relevant to the establishment of the University of Berlin are found in Wilhelm Weischedel, ed., Idee und Wirklichkeit einer Universität: Dokumente zur Geschichte der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1960).

memory of the French Revolution and the (ongoing) Napoleonic wars, which had resulted in the closing down of numerous universities throughout Europe (many felt the university as an institution had reached the end of its line) and the excision of theological faculties from others.[20] During the discussions in Prussia, two distinct conceptions of the academic study of theology emerged, one articulated by the university's first rector, the philosopher J. G. Fichte; the other by Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Fichte felt that the occasion of the new university's founding provided a historic opportunity for the wholesale reenvisioning of academic theology. He desired to exclude from the university practical training for the ministry altogether, proposing instead that separate, seminary-like institutions be set up to instruct what he called "Volkslehrer," ethical tutors for the common man. The rest of theology--its "scientific part"--could gain admission to the university, albeit on the condition that it obey new imperatives of philosophical and scientific reasoning. "In the [university]," he wrote, "the scientific remainder of theology, which has perished as a priestly intermediary between God and man, would cast off its former nature entirely (seine ganz bisherige Natur ausziehen) and don a new one." The categories of "revelation" and "mystery" should be jettisoned as theology transformed itself into a largely historical and philological enterprise. Theology, he wrote,

> must give up this claim to the sole knowledge of secrets and charms, candidly explaining and openly acknowledging that the will of God can be known without any special

[20]In 1789 Europe had 143 universities; in 1815 there were only 83. See L. W. B. Brockliss, "The European University in the Age of Revolution, 1789-1850," in M.G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys, eds., The History of the University of Oxford, vol. 6, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 89-104. The abolition of theological faculties, particularly in Catholic Europe, as result of the Revolution and the spread of liberalism in the nineteenth century is a theme that has received little attention.

> revelation (ohne alle besondere Offenbarung). . . . It is only on this condition that the material which theology has hitherto possessed can be admitted to our institution [i.e. the University of Berlin].

Anticipating things to come, Fichte also proposed theology could no longer focus on the Christian religion alone, but must develop a "more comprehensive" approach, one that dealt with "the religious ideas of the so-called heathen."[21]

Not surprisingly, Fichte's vision proved too radical for Prussia's newly formed Department of Religious Affairs and Public Education, charged with task of launching the new university.[22] The more influential conception of academic theology came from Friedrich Schleiermacher, an intellectual rival of Fichte's, the first dean of Berlin's theological faculty, and, if we believe Karl Barth, the taproot of all modern liberal theology. Articulated in various official memoranda, in his Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten in deutschem Sinn. Nebst einem Anhang über eine neu zu Errichtende (1808), and especially in his Kurze Darstellung des theologischen Studiums (1811, 2nd ed., 1830), Schleiermacher's conception of academic theology was more in keeping with traditional forms, even if these forms were pressed into the service of dynamic, modern academic ideals, in particular a novel conception of Wissenschaft, rooted in the Enlightenment and in German idealist philosophy, which placed stress on both the unitary and progressive character of human knowledge. Thus, not unlike

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See Francesco Scaduto, L'abolizione delle facolta di teologia in Italia (Turin, 1886). This work touches on developments outside of Italy as well.

[21]J. G. Fichte, "Deduzierter Plan einer in Berlin errichtenden höheren Lehranstalt," in Ernst Anrich, ed., Die Idee der deutschen Universität: Die fünf Grundschriften aus der Zeit ihrer Neubegründung durch klassischen Idealismus und romantischen Realismus (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 150ff.

[22]For details on the founding of Berlin's theological faculty, see Max Lenz, Geschichte der königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität zu Berlin, vol. 1 (Halle, 1910), 220ff, 611ff.

Fichte, Schleiermacher too wanted a theology rigorously "scientific." At one point he even opined that any professor of theology "surely deserves to be derided and excluded from the university who would feel no inner power and desire to accomplish something of one's own in the sphere of Wissenschaft."[23]

At the same time, unlike Fichte, Schleiermacher retained "practical theology," the professional training of future pastors for church leadership (Kirchenleitung), as an essential goal of university theology; he even called "practical theology" the "crown" of the other branches of theology, which in his scheme included historical and philosophical theology.[24] Service to the church was necessary for what in one memorandum he described as "the unification of the scientific spirit with the religious sense" (die Vereinigung des wissenschaftlichen Geistes mit dem religiösen Sinn)--among the most succinct expressions of his lifetime task.[25] Without this goal, various aspects of theological study might as well be handed over to the philosophical faculty for strictly theoretical treatment. In the final analysis then, Schleiermacher offered a twofold rationale for university theology: 1) the scientific improvement of theology and 2)

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[23]Schleiermacher, "Gelegentliche Gedanken über Universitäten in deutschem Sinn. Nebst einem Anhang über eine neu zu Errichtende," in Anrich, ed., Die Idee der deutschen Universität, 257.
[24]"Die praktische Theologie ist die Krone des theologischen Studiums." Schleiermacher, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, I, vol. 6, ed. Hermann Fischer et alia (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 253. Schleiermacher's tripartite division of theology (historical theology, philosophical theology, and practical theology) was somewhat idiosyncratic, at variance with the more customary fourfold pattern (exegetical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and practical theology) offered to students in theological textbooks (or "theological encyclopedia" as they were called in the nineteenth century). For example, see Karl Rudolf Hagenbach, Encyklopädie und Methodologie der theologischen Wissenschaften (twelve editions, 1833-1889). This was the most popular introductory theological textbook of the nineteenth century.
[25]Schleiermacher, "25.Mai 1810 Professor Schleiermacher über die Einrichtung der theologischen Facultät," in Rudolf Köpke, Die Gründung der Berliner Universität (Berlin, 1860), 212.

service to the church, particularly providing intellectual direction for church leadership.[26] This dual purpose found its way into the first article of Berlin's statutes for the theological faculty:

> The theological faculty has the vocation of proceeding according to the teaching of the evangelical church so as not only to propagate the theological sciences in general, but also especially to make competent by means of lectures and other academic exercises the young men who dedicate themselves to the service of the church.[27]

This formulation of the theological task proved extremely influential; it constituted the backbone of Protestant theological education in the nineteenth century.[28]

However, historical forces gathered in the mid- and late nineteenth century to place severe strains on this backbone, effectively challenging theology's legitimacy in the "modern university." These challenges, as we shall see, eventually prompted Harnack's spirited defense of academic theology (a la Schleiermacher) in the early twentieth century. To understand the rhyme and reason of Harnack's defense, the forces I refer to merit a closer look. I shall identify four.

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[26]The rationale is nicely summed up in §5 of his 1811 Kurze Darstellung: "Die christliche Theologie ist der Inbegrif derjenigen wissenschaftlichen Kenntnisse und Kunstregeln, ohne deren Anwendung ein christliche Kirchenregiment nicht möglich ist." See Schleiermacher, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, I, vol. 6, 253.

[27]See "Die Statuten der theologischen Fakultät," in Paul Daude, ed., Die königl. Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin: Systematische Zusammenstellung der für dieselbe bestehenden gesetzlichen, statutarischen und regelmentarischen Bestimmungen (Berlin, 1887), 46, I§1. The "church" here refers largely to the Prussian evangelical "Union Church," established from the joining of Lutheran and Reformed churches in 1817.

[28]On Schleiermacher's general influence for modern Protestant theological education, see Edward Farley, Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 73-98. On the specific influence of his Kurze Darstellung, see the introduction by Heinrich Scholz to the 1910 edition of this work. Cf. the new biography

First, many clergymen of a confessional or pietist stripe never signed on to the wissenschaftlich aspirations of university theology--aspirations, I should say, held not only by liberal-leaning theologians, but by the Prussian Ministry of Culture, especially after Karl von Altenstein became its leading minister in 1817.[29] In the conservative Vormärz era (1815-1848), a large literature exists accusing "scientific theology" of hubristic, indeed godless, pretensions. These accusations intensified after 1835 when David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74), once a student at Berlin, published his controversial Das Leben Jesu, arguing on "wissenschaftlich" grounds for the "mythic" nature of much early Christian doctrine and belief. Such worries continued apace throughout the century, directed in particular against the "historical method" in biblical interpretation.[30] In 1888 when Adolf von Harnack was called to the University of Berlin, his appointment was actively, if ultimately unsuccessfully, opposed by Prussia's highest church authorities, who charged that Harnack's landmark Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte (3 vols.,

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by Kurt Nowak, Schleiermacher: Leben, Werk und Wirkung (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 223-34.

[29]Ernst Müsebeck, Das preussische Kultusministerium vor hundert Jahren (Berlin, 1918), **pp.** Altenstein and his chief aide in educational affairs, Johannes Schulze, for example, were extremely influential in establishing theological seminars in all the Prussian universities. Almost without exception, these were modeled on the philological seminar made famous by F. A. Wolf at Halle and thus they stressed critical and historical over dogmatic or apologetic concerns. The 1838 regulations for the seminar at the University of Königsberg are typical in this regard: "Since this institute in regard to its scientific objective is intended to encourage and disseminate a thorough theological learnedness, its activities are not directed to the subjects of Christian dogmatics and ethics, where learned inquiry must recede in favor of speculation. Rather, the focus of this institute is on the philological and historical (exegetical-critical) aspects of theological study. Dogmatics and ethics are considered only insofar as these disciplines also require or admit a philological or historical treatment." See Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Koch, ed., Die preussischen Universitäten. Eine Sammlung der Verordnungen, welche die Verfassung und Verwaltung dieser Anstalten betreffen, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1840), 843. For more on Altenstein and Schulze and their "Wissenschaftpolitik," see R. Steven Turner, "The Prussian Universities and the Research Imperative, 1806-1848," Ph.D diss. (Princeton University, 1973), **pp.**

[30]Thomas Albert Howard, Religion and the Rise of Historicism: W. M. L. de Wette, Jacob Burckhardt, and the Theological Origins of Nineteenth-Century Historical Consciousness (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 78-109.

1886-89) undermined essential articles of the faith.[31] In 1895 a special Prussian church assembly was called to discuss what for many had become the "most serious question" of the day: "the unholy alienation between theology and church" resulting from the scientific, statist character of the theological faculties. If the church did not regain influence over theological education, one Philipp Zorn complained to his fellow churchmen, then she risked presiding over her own "self-destruction as a church."[32] Many, like Friedrich Bodelschwingh (1831-1910), complained that academic theology, held captive by "state institutions" and the "scientific method," had become a thorn in the side of the church, and he proposed as the solution the establishment of theological faculties more congenial to churchly needs.[33] Others advocated the complete separation of theology and university, and the establishment of independent seminaries.

Second, pious critics of university theology found curious allies in the political Left, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in paticular. Founded in 1875, the SPD had been a minor player in the political scene for most of the Second Reich, suppressed as it was by Otto von Bismarck's antisocialist laws. However, the party's fortunes improved dramatically with the accession to the throne of Wilhelm II, who dismissed Bismarck and lifted the antisocialist laws. By 1912 the SPD had become, astoundingly, the largest party in the German Reichstag. In both its Gotha Program (1875) and Erfurt Program (1891), party leaders expressed their desire for a strict

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[31]Otto von Bismarck and Emperor Wilhelm II sided with the Minister of Education Friedrich Althoff against church authorities to bring Harnack to Berlin. For his role Bismarck was actually awarded an honorary doctorate in theology from the University of Gießen and heralded by the faculty as "the friend of all German universities"! Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, Adolf von Harnack (Berlin: Hans Bott Verlag, 1951), 127.

[32]Philipp Zorn, "Der Staat und die theologischen Fakultäten, Vortrag für die landeskirchliche Versammlung zu Berlin am 8.Mai 1895" (Berlin, 1895) and "Die theologische Fakultäten und die preußische Landeskirche," National Zeitung (16 May 1985), Geheim Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, VI NL Althoff AI Nr. 34.

[33]Friedrich Bodelschwingh, "Eine kirchliche theologische Fakultät" (1895), Geheim Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, VI NL Althoff AI Nr. 35. Cf. a tract by Martin von Nathius, pastor in Barmen, Wissenschaft und Kirche im Streit um die theologischen Fakultäten (Heilbronn, 1886).

separation of church and state (an idea previously floated at Frankfurt in 1848). Point five of the latter program proclaimed that "religion is a private affair," which entailed the "abolition of all expenditure of public funds upon ecclesiastical and religious objects" and that "ecclesiastical and religious bodies . . . be regarded as private associations, which regulate their affairs entirely independently."[34] Not surprisingly then, theological faculties in the state universities became a major target of Social Democratic opposition.

Third, by the late nineteenth century advocates of a more aggressively positivistic conception of science became increasingly critical of theology, arguing that, whatever its former glory, the theological faculty was now an "alien body" (Fremdkörper) in the modern university. This criticism waxed considerably toward the end of the century. Its efficacy is borne out in the numerous rectorial and inaugural addresses by theologians seeking either to justify theology's scientific status or to cast doubts on reigning definitions of science. "[Theology] is now scarcely mentioned in the same breath with the other sciences," Friedrich Paulsen could note in 1903; "numerous representatives of a scientific radicalism are inclined to exclude it altogether; or to relegate it to the past. Theology [they assert] is a science of things of which we no nothing. . . . The theological faculty is a bald anachronism."[35]

Fourth, compounding the plight of theology in the late nineteenth century was the emergence of a new approach to religious study: alternately dubbed the history of religion, the comparative study of religion, the science of religion, or, in German, Religionswissenschaft. Coming into its own as a scholarly field only after mid-century, and largely outside of Germany, it received one of its greatest initial champions in the German expatriate scholar, Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900). "A science of religion," he proclaimed in his Introduction to the Science of

[34]Quoted in Bertrand Russell, German Social Democracy (London, 1896), 137ff.

Religion (1873), "based on an impartial and truly scientific comparison of . . . [the] religions of mankind is now only a matter of time."[36] "He who knows only one [religion], knows none," Müller was fond of saying, an implicit criticism of the theological faculties in his native Germany.[37]

Inspired by Müller and like-minded scholars, and borne by other winds of cultural change, universities began to found chairs devoted to general religious history and comparative religion in the late nineteenth century. The Swiss universities of Lausanne and Geneva added chairs in 1871 and 1873 respectively.[38] To each of the four Dutch universities (Amsterdam, Gröningen, Leiden, and Utrecht) was added, in 1877 and 1878, a chair in general and comparative history of religions, and the tie between the church and university was severed. Similar professorships were established Uppsala (1878), the Collège de France (1880), Brussels (1884), Oxford (1886), Cornell (1891), and Chicago (1892). Even the newly founded Imperial Japanese University established in 1903 a chair for "the science of religion."[39]

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[35]Friedrich Paulsen, The German Universities and University Study, trans. Frank Thilly and William W Elwang (New York, 1906), 384.
[36]Friedrich Max Müller, Introduction to the Science of Religion (London, 1873), 34.
[37]On Müller generally, see Joseph M. Kitagawa and John S. Strong, "Friedrich Max Müller and the Comparative Study of Religion," in Ninian Smart et alia, eds., Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West, vol. 3, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 181-85.
[38]The University of Basel, precociously, possessed a chair in general religion as early as 1840.
[39]On the founding dates, titles, and occupants of these chairs, see Louis H. Jordon, Comparative Religion: Its Genesis and Growth (New York, 1905), 579-91 and Claude Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, 1870-1914, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 123-25. Occupants of these chairs and others working in different quarters of the university produced an impressive general literature on the science of religion in the late nineteenth century. Excluding the voluminous works of Friedrich Max Müller, importance should be accorded to the work of Albert Réville (Paris), especially his Prolégomènes de l'histoire des religions (1881) and his five-volume Historie des religions (1883-88), and that of Pierre Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye (Amsterdam), particularly his two-volume Lehrburch der Religionsgeschichte (1887, 1889). Additional works by Cornelius Petrus Tiele (Leiden), Eugène Goblet d'Alviella (Brussels), Conrad von Orelli (Basel), George Foot Moore (Harvard), among others, should also be taken into consideration.

Conspicuously absent from this list, however, were German universities. Given their reputation for groundbreaking scholarship, this fact puzzled many scholars. In his 1905 work, Comparative Religion, Louis Jordon could thus note that, despite Germany's manifold and growing scholarly accomplishments, "Comparative Religion, regarded as a distinct discipline, has received in that country only very scanty aid, and scarcely a vestige of official recognition. . . . [T]his fact is all the more to be regretted, since the assistance which has reasonably been looked for would, if yielded, have proved to be of the very highest order."[40]

Yet while not quick to establish formal chairs in Religionswissenschaft, German universities were by no means unaffected by the general movement. A case in point was the emergence in the 1880s and 1890s of the so-called "History of Religions School" (religionsgeschichtliche Schule), seated largely at the University of Göttingen. Unlike more radical advocates of the science of religion, the scholars associated with this movement--Albert Eichhorn (1856-1926), Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932), Johannes Weiss (1863-1914), Wilhelm Bousset (1865-1920), and a handful of others--were not given to making sweeping statements about the demise of Christian theology.[41] Rather, their challenge to the status quo was largely methodological. Eschewing dogmatic considerations and making extensive use of the historical methods refined by historians like Leopold von Ranke and Theodor Mommsen, they argued that the religious outlook and stories in the Old and New Testament could not be understood in isolation from the detailed study of other religions of the Near East. This approach contrasted sharply with the then dominant work of Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89), whose New Testament exegesis served largely as a platform to pursue modern dogmatic considerations. At first the

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[40]Jordon, Comparative Religion, 197.

[41]Ernst Troeltsch is often considered the "systematic theologian" of this School. See Troeltsch, "The Dogmatics of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule," American Journal of Theology 17 (July

School confined itself to tracing historical developments within Judaism and Christianity, but it soon expanded its reach to Egyptian, Babylonian, and various Hellenistic religious systems. In doing so, it began to mirror the broader movement toward the comparative study of religion, even if its guiding questions were rooted in biblical exegesis.[42]

The cumulative impact of the religionsgeschichtliche Schule, and its antecedents outside of Germany (combined with the simultaneous, mounting plea among Social Democrats for the separation of church and state), placed acute pressures on German theological faculties, which in the late nineteenth century still largely rested on the twofold Schleiermacherian premise of scientific rigor and church service.

International factors added to the pressure. In 1893 in conjunction with the Chicago's World's Fair, the first World's Parliament of Religions took place, an unprecedented seventeen-day affair of religious dialogue among "the ten great religions of the world." One effect of this meeting was greater recognition of the growth and institutional needs of the comparative study of religion.[43] In 1897 the first international Congress for the Science of Religion met in Stockholm, Sweden, where the progress and future of comparative religious studies were discussed. In these discussions, German universities were found wanting.[44] Similar conclusions were reached at the Congress's meeting in Paris in 1900. Here Albert Réville (holder of the newly founded chair of religious history at the Collège de France) boasted of the new discipline's extensive international

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1913): 1-21 and Troeltsch, Die Absolutheit des Christentums und die Religionsgeschichte (Tübingen, 1902).

[42]Gerd Lüdemann "Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule," in Bernd Moeller, ed., Theologie in Göttingen, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987), 325-61.

[43]Richard Hughes Seager, The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

[44]P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, "Die vergleichende Religionsforschung und der religiöse Glaube, Vortrag gehalten auf dem ersten religionswissenschaftlichen Kongresse in Stockholm am 31.August 1897" (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1898).

progress, but he noted that Germany lagged far behind--a fact he explained as a consequence of the persistence of ecclesiastical ties among German theological faculties.[45]

The implications of the aforementioned developments, in sum, placed theological faculties in Germany in a defensive and uncertain position. "If the religious historical method has in fact arrived," wrote the Halle theologian Max Reischle, "it brings with it a problem for theology. Implicit in the proclamation of its methodology is the contention that the erstwhile activity of theology does not suffice."[46]

Harnack's Response

The debate over Religionswissenschaft and the future of Germany's theological faculties played out in numerous church conferences, academic discussions, and periodicals in the early Wilhelmine period. However, arguably no single event is more important for interpreting its meaning for the German academic scene than Adolf Harnack's 1901 rectorial address at the University of Berlin, "Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten und die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte."[47] At the time of the address, Harnack was not only a highly esteemed theologian and church historian but rapidly becoming one of Germany's leading "public intellectuals." His influence had just been broadened through a popular series of lectures delivered in the winter semester of 1899-1900, later published as Das Wesen des Christentums, often regarded as the quintessential statement of modern liberal Protestantism. What is more, Harnack had become among the principal advisors to Minister of Education, Friedrich Althoff,

[45]Albert Réville, "La situation actuelle de l'enseignement de l'histoire des religions," Revue de l'histoire des religions 43 (1901): 58-74.
[46]Max Reischle, Theologie und Religionsgeschichte (Tübingen, 1904), 21.
[47]Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, vol. 2, 125. The address was given on 3 August 1901. It was later published in his Reden und Aufsätze, vol. 2 (Giessen, 1906), 159-88.

not to mention a favorite of the Emperor, Wilhelm II.[48] In short, Harnack's words carried great influence and symbolic importance; and his reputation was only to grow in the coming decades.[49]

In his address, delivered in the ceremonial Aula of the university, Harnack sized up the problem straightforwardly: should the theological faculty restrict itself primarily to the Christian faith or should it evolve into a faculty for the general study of religious history and comparative religion? Or, at a minimum, should it include professorships of religious science to complement those in the customary subdivisions of the theological faculty?

In principle, Harnack was willing to concede many points to the advocates of Religionswissenschaft. He admitted that religion was a "general concept" experienced by all people at all times, and hence it was a concept worthy of serious and sustained critical investigation. Furthermore, other religions, like Christianity, lent themselves to historical inquiry, and hence their study would entail no major methodological obstacles. Finally, the current situation of the Christianinity, its global expansion and increasing contact with foreign cultures and religions, clearly suggested the importance of the general investigation of religion. With these considerations in mind, Harnack thus recognized why some thought a preponderant focus on Christianity represented an "inadmissible constraint" (unstatthafte Verkürzung) on academic theology.[50]

But ultimately Harnack was unsympathetic to the winds of change. Contending that an "inner reason" (innere Vernunft) resided in the customary fourfold organization of the faculties

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[48]Rüdiger vom Bruch, "Adolf von Harnack und Wilhelm II," in Kurt Nowak and Otto Gerhard Oexle, eds., Adolf von Harnack: Theologe, Historiker, Wissenschaftspolitiker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 23-38.

[49]Stefan Rebenich, Theodor Mommsen und Adolf Harnack: Wissenschaft und Politik im Berlin des ausgehenden 19.Jahrhunderts (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), 116ff, 537ff.

(biblical exegesis, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology), he praised the founders of the University of Berlin for retaining it in 1810, despite pleas to do otherwise.[51] With respect to the theological faculty in particular, he claimed that powerful counterarguments advised against transforming it into a seat for the general study of religion. Religion, he reasoned, cannot after all be studied apart from historical inquiry into the political, linguistic, economic, and social foundations of the civilization of which it is a part. If one tried to isolate the religious dimension of all civilizations and study it severed from its historical context, then only "dilettantism" would result.[52] If such inquiry were located in the theological faculty it might duplicate similar efforts in the philosophical faculty, which Harnack held as the more suitable place for general religious inquiry.

More fundamentally, Harnack made the normative liberal-Protestant argument that Christianity represented the most advanced of all world religions; as such it both encompassed and transcended other forms of religious expression. Reversing Friedrich Max Müller's maxim, Harnack proclaimed that the one who knew Christianity gained the greater capacity to know other religions as well: "Wer diese Religion nicht kennt, kennt keine, und wer sie samt ihre Geschichte kennt, kennt alle." Furthermore, in a pointed rebuke to the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule, Harnack argued that Christianity's similarities with other religions was not the important thing, but rather the degree to which Christianity exhibited superlative qualities that had allowed it to command the attention and admiration of the world. The Bible was the book above all others for Harnack, and neither the Vedas nor the Koran could measure up to it. In it one gained contact with a great variety of religious moods and expressions and with the whole intellectual

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[50]Adolf Harnack, "Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten und die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte," Reden und Aufsätze, vol. 2 (Giessen, 1906), 164-66.
[51]On the history of the fourfold pattern, see Farley, Theologia, 99-124.
[52]Harnack, "Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten," 167.

wealth of the ancient world. Whoever investigates the Bible carefully, Harnack proclaimed, "does not need to study any multiplicity of religion in order to know the way of religion and religious history."[53] Scholars of the Bible, therefore, are less dependent on students of other religions; rather they are dependent on him.[54] In short, Christianity--its texts, history, and theology--represented for Harnack the fullness of human religious expression, not to mention the dominant cultural influence on occidental and increasingly world civilization.

Harnack thus validated the theological faculty's customary goal—in essence, reasserting the twofold task bequeathed to modern theology by Schleiermacher. On the one hand, it should freely pursue scientific knowledge about Christianity--and Harnack adamantly insisted that there be no ecclesiastical constraints on this pursuit. On the other hand, theology was the servant of the church, in the sense that it freely offered the church the results of its scientific inquiry for the task of leading it to purer forms of expression. In the final analysis, Harnack wrote, "we [should] stick by the old task of our theology."[55]

But on an interpretative note, it should be clear that this "old task" was by no means the traditional confessional task of theology. At the time of his address, Harnack had long since parted company from orthodoxy and the confessional churches, whose representatives remained among his foremost critics. Rather, Harnack's "old task" was the formerly "new task" born in the late Enlightenment and institutionalized, as we have seen, by Schleiermacher in conjunction with the founding of the University of Berlin. Harnack now perceived the theological effort of his illustrious forebear to be under attack from more radical elements, and he found himself in a position not unlike those members of the Third Estate confronted by Jacobinism, who sought to

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[53]Harnack, "Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten," 168.
[54]Harnack, "Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten," 168-69. Cf. Welch, Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century, vol. 2, 126.
[55]Harnack, "Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten," 173-77.

preserve their achievements against both reactionary elements on the one hand and hyper-revolutionary ones on the other.

Although one cannot attribute the weakened position of Religionswissenschaft in Germany in the early twentieth century solely to Harnack's influential address, a number of his contemporaries and later commentators interpreted this to be the case, and I am inclined to think there is merit in this view.[56] Whatever the case, an independent science of religion did not gain the institutional foothold in Germany that it did in other lands, even if Germany, as many proclaimed, was the indisputable birthplace of the critical methods for this new field. Still, some inroads were made. For example, the journal Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, founded around the time of Harnack's address, promoted the new field of study to a German academic readership.[57] Individual chairs in Religionsgeschichte were established at Berlin and Leipzig respectively in 1910 and 1912, and they were followed by a handful of others, seated either in the theological but more often in the philosophical faculty.[58] Additionally, the advent and spread of the "science of missions" (Missionswissenschaft), in part a consequence of colonial

[56]To be sure, Harnack also faced formidable opposition in Germany. For example, Martin Rade, editor of the influential Christliche Welt, was a strong supporter of establishing chairs in religious history and comparative religion. "The education of our theologians today is incomplete," wrote Rade in opposition to Harnack, "if it does not include the field of general religious history. It is not enough for someone to give an occasional lecture on religious history in the philosophical faculty." See Rade, Christliche Welt 39 (1901): **pp**. Harnack offered a brief riposte to Rade in Christliche Welt 47 (1901), **pp.**

[57]Published at Leipzig, the journal began in 1898 and was edited by Albrecht Dieterich and Thomas Achelis. Nevertheless, this journal was founded eighteen years after its French counterpart, Revue de l'histoire des religions (1870).

[58]See Ernst Lüder Solte, Theologie an der Universität: Staats- und kirchenrechtliche Probleme der theologischen Fakultäten (Munich: Claudius, 1971), 232 and Adolph Deissmann, Der Lehrstuhl für Religionsgeschichte (Berlin, 1914). In 1933 there were a mere five chairs devoted to Religionswissenschaft in Germany. See Leonore Siegele-Wenschkewitz and Carsten Nicolaisen, eds., Theologische Fakultäten im Nationalsozialismus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 90.

expansion, gave some institutional space for the study of non-Christian religions.[59] Nonetheless, despite some innovations, theological faculties largely stuck with their "Schleieramcher-ian" justifiation and also their traditional fourfold division into exegetical, historical, systematic, and practical branches--an organizational scheme still recognizably in tact today.[60]

Nearly two decades after his 1901 rectorial address, Harnack helped face down a different kind of threat to the theological faculty, this time however its origins were more political in nature. The SPD's opposition to the status quo, in religious policy and other areas, was muted by the wave of patriotic sentiment that swept over Germany after 1914. At this time, political parties of all persuasions largely put aside their differences and rallied behind the Kaiser in the war effort. (Incidentally, Harnack, despite his sympathy for socialism, supported the war, signing the infamous "Manifesto of the 93 Intellectuals" and once opining that the experience of war "was closely akin to true religious feeling and aided many men to recognize the greater importance of ideals over material wealth.")[61]

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[59]See Gerhard Rosenkranz, "Missionswissenschaft als Wissenschaft," Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche 53 (1956): 103-127. Following an earlier example at Halle (1897), a "Missionsgeschichtliches Seminar" was founded at Berlin in 1917 and soon renamed "Missionswissenschaftliches Seminar." In 1935 it was again renamed as "Institut für Allgemeine Religionsgeschichte und Missionswissenschaft." This latter title reflects the reality that the study of missions and non-Christian religions often went hand in hand. See the guide to the "Theologische Fakultät Dekanant," Universitätsarchiv, Berlin. Cf. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Theology and the Philosophy of Science, trans. Francis McDonagh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 360-61.

[60]See, for example, the diagram of theology at the website for the theological faculty at the Humboldt University of Berlin: http://www2.hu-berlin.de/theologie/mindman_2/index.html

[61]Quoted in Douglas F. Tobler, "Scholar between Worlds: Adolf von Harnack and the Weimar Republic," Zeitschrift für Religions- und-Geistesgeschichte, 28 (1976): 211. On the Manifesto and the German professoriate and World War I, see Fritz Ringer's classic study, The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 180-99.

The unexpected Armistice and the Revolution of November 1918 came as the destruction of an entire world order for most segments of the German population. The ending of the Kaiserreich and the abdication of Wilhelm II, Prussia's erstwhile summus episcopus, also created conditions conducive for the realization of the SPD's political objectives, including its church-state policies. Indeed, the reorganization of the church-state relationship became one of the major and most contentious issues in the constitutional deliberations at Weimar that took place in the spring and summer of 1919, preceding the epochal adoption of the Weimar Constitution on 11 August 1919.[62]

Without going into the manifold complexities of these deliberations, two observations hold true with respect to church-state relations. First, despite early proclamations of radical disestablishment along the lines adopted by France in 1904-05, the outcome of church-state deliberations in the Weimar Assembly moved in a moderate direction, resulting in the prohibition of an official state church but also the recognition of the public character of churches.[63] As one churchman later wrote, "How we feared the immediate future of the church when the church-hostile Revolution broke out! And yet how smoothly--if we overlook outbursts and agitation--the deliberations went in the National Assembly."[64] Second, the future of theological faculties, their "right of existence" (Existenzrecht) in the universities, became an important point of debate, pitting radicals, who argued for their abolition, against moderates and traditionalists, who argued for their retention.

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[62]Kurt Nowak, Geschichte des Christentums in Deutschland: Religion, Politik und Gesellschaft vom Ende der Aufklärung bis zur Mitte des 20.Jahrhunderts (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1995), 205ff.
[63]E. R. Huber and Wolfgang Huber, eds., Staat und Kirche im 19. und 20.Jahrhundert, vol. 4 (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 199**X**), 127 and Nowak, Geschichte des Christentums in Deutschland, 209.
[64]Quoted in Daniel R Borg, The Old-Prussian Church and the Weimar Republic: A Study in Political Adjustment, 1917-1927 (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1984), 94.

The gauntlet for this debate was thrown down in November of 1918 in a memorandum on disestablishment drafted by the socialist Alfred Dieterich, who advocated "the abolition of the theological faculties and the transference of the sciences of religion . . . as historical disciplines into the philosophical and legal faculties."[65] Similar views were held by Adolf Hofmann, who became, briefly, Prussia's Minister of Culture after the November Revolution.[66] Eventually, however, more moderate voices prevailed. While the adopted Constitution declared "Es besteht keine Staatskirche" (§137), it also made clear that "die theologischen Fakultäten in den Hochschulen bleiben erhalten" (§149).[67] Thus, an element of continuity was maintained amid a backdrop of fundamental political and social change.[68] Despite the moderate outcome, one should not fail to take note of the extraordinary symbolic meaning of the conflict itself: the venerable "sacred faculty," already gone in many European countries, stood in the wake of Europe's then greatest human disaster before the bar of political and legal modernity in an effort to justify its existence in Germany. That it did so successfully is considerably, if not exclusively, due to the determined efforts, once again, of Adolf von Harnack.

Of the academic figures summoned by the Weimar Assembly for expert advice and consultation, Harnack stands out. Already a highly visible and respected intellectual, his open sympathy for some social democratic causes[69] and his liberal theological views put him in good graces with many members of the Weimar Assembly. Moreover, although a favorite of the Kaiser and a firm war supporter, after November 1918 Harnack recognized--unlike many

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[65]See Dieterich's memorandum in Huber and Huber, eds., Staat und Kirche, vol. 4, 8-13.
[66]Huber and Huber, eds., Staat und Kirche, vol. 4, 3.
[67]Huber and Huber, eds., Staat und Kirche, vol. 4, 129-32.
[68] For more details of the debate over theological faculties, see Walter Delius, "Die theologischen Fakultäten als Problem der Revolution vom Jahre 1918," Theologia viatorum 10 (1965): 34-54.
[69]For example, Harnack had participated with Friedrich Naumann in founding the Evangelical Social Congress in 1890. Harnack served as its chairman for eight years between 1903 and 1911. Tobler, "Scholar between Worlds," 197.

churchmen and academics--that the Kaiserreich was "forever past" (unwiederbringlich) and that the "age of democracy and socialism" was here to stay.[70] For all these reasons and more, Harnack's words on the Assembly weighed quite heavily.

Harnack's advice was sought on a variety of matters pertaining to education, religion, and science; he had a decisive impact on framing issues relevant to the theological faculties. He articulated his views before the National Assembly at Weimar between April 1-4, 1919,[71] but they were even more forcefully and cogently set forth in a short article, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," which appeared in the influential Preussiche Jahrbücher in March of 1919, in anticipation of his own appearance before the Assembly.[72]

Rhetorically savvy and sensitive to the lingering appeal of nationalism, the article reflects Harnack's deep knowledge of and experience with German academic and political culture. At the most basic level, he sought to refute the view that "the abolition of the theological faculties" in the universities logically followed from the Social Democratic platforms of "church and state must be separated" and "religion is a private matter." For Harnack the matter was far more complicated; the current argument for abolition was both unexamined and reflective of a penchant in modern thought to advocate change uncritically. "Religion builds communities [and] are communities," he asked rhetorically, "also exclusively a private matter"? On the contrary, he argued that the public domains of science and politics (Wissenschaft and Staat) must

[70]Harnack, "Politische Maximen für das neue Deutschland, der akademischen Jugend gewidmet," in Harnack, Erforschtes und Erlebtes (Giessen, 1923), 321.
[71]See the proceedings in Verhandlungen der verfassunggebenden Deutschen Nationalversammlung, vol. 336 (Berlin, 1920), 188ff.
[72]Adolf von Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," Preussiche Jahrbücher (March 1919): 362-74.

take supreme interest in the fate of the theological faculties, for their own highest goods were also at stake in the debate over theology's right to exist as a university faculty.[73]

To highlight what in his view were the mutually beneficial relations between science, theology, and the state, Harnack turned to history. Appealing to the liberal, anti-clerical proclivities of many representatives at the National Assembly, Harnack pointed out that recent history made clear that the two most vocal critics of university theology had been Protestant pietists and ultramontane Catholics. Both wanted to relocate theology from the precincts of the university to special ecclesiastical seminaries. Is it not strange, Harnack mused, that those "moderns," who "advocate the abolition of the theological faculties in the name of enlightenment and the neutral state have evangelical pietists and ultramontane politicians as bedfellows"?[74]

Furthermore, Harnack argued that the place of the theological faculty, the hitherto "centerpiece of the intellectual world," occupied a place of preeminent significance for the history of modern German "Kultur." Supporting his claim, he appealed to the lives of Luther, Herder, and Schleiermacher, among others.[75] Although scholars might quibble over details, it cannot be denied, Harnack asserted, that Luther qua "a Wittenberg professor of theology" assisted in the "dissolution of the medieval world" and the "freeing of knowledge" from clerical control, a development of unrivaled importance for present-day universities and intellectual life. Harnack attributed a similar epochal significance to Herder, "a Protestant theologian," who as

[73]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 363.
[74]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 364.
[75]He also mentioned F. C. Baur--as well as Hegel and Schelling, who, though not technically theologians in their mature years, "never denied their heritage in theology." Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 366.

the pioneer of German idealism and nationalism represented the "the blossoming of the distinct character of the German spirit."[76]

Turning to his illustrious predecessor at Berlin, Harnack called attention to Schleiermacher and his influential labors in the early nineteenth century at the theological faculties of Halle and Berlin. Schleiermacher's fame as the author of Reden über die Religion (1799) and as the translator of Plato were perhaps overstated, Harnack argued, because he was just as important "as the organizer of theology, the human sciences, the university and the academy." "In my studies on the history of the Berlin Academy of Science," Harnack elaborated,

> I gained knowledge of numerous memoranda, written over a period of fifteen years in conjunction with the founding of the University of Berlin and the reorganization of the Academy. . . . The result was that Schleiermacher's stature and significance measures up directly next to that of Wilhelm von Humboldt, and he even exceeds Humboldt in organizational acumen and direct influence. Without exaggeration one may say that the internal reconstruction of the human sciences, and the reconstruction of the . . . German universities, were essentially the service of this professor of theology.[77]

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[76]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 365. Harnack attributed the fact that Herder never actually held a chair in a theological faculty to "mere chance," pointing out that efforts were once made to secure one for him at Göttingen.

[77]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 365. Harnack makes reference to his Geschichte der königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1900). On the exaggerated importance of Humboldt for the founding of the University of Berlin, see Walter Rüegg, "Der Mythos der Humboldtschen Universität," in Matthias Krieg and Martin Rose, eds., Universitas in theologia - theologia in universitate (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 1997), 155-76.

From historical examples Harnack turned to the present situation, asking what was the current relationship of "contemporary science to Protestant theology and its faculties." He regretted that the recent founding of the University of Frankfurt am Main (1914) had once again emboldened voices who deemed theological faculties as unnecessary.[78] This had elicited objections from rectors and other faculties throughout Germany, including non-theological faculties. Harnack cited a memorandum from the University of Marburg, where he had once taught, proclaiming that the retention of the theological faculty was "indispensable" for the functioning of a university and along with other faculties theology was required for the "edifice of modern German science and culture." Outside the university, he held, theology would inevitably succumb to "one-sidedness."[79] Harnack reiterated this point several times, noting that theology and philosophy especially stood in need of one another. Could one imagine the philosophical brilliance of a Hegel or Schelling, he mused, apart from the fact both had studied Protestant theology in their youth?

Having made clear his general position, Harnack opined that there were yet more convincing reasons for theology's continuing legitimacy. Here he took his point of departure from Schleiermacher's classic twofold justification of the theological faculty. On the one hand, this faculty served society and the state by provided well-trained, intellectually sophisticated clergymen able to mediate advanced knowledge about Christianity to the German people, thus

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[78]In point of fact, the University of Frankfurt am Main was founded in 1914 without a theological faculty. This was an exceptional development as was the University itself, for the founding endowment had come from private not public sources. The lack of a theological faculty is explained partially by the fact that many of the key donors were Jewish and indifferent to the establishment of a Christian theological faculty. At the time of the founding, Harnack vigorously opposed the absence of a theological faculty, arguing that "our culture is saturated by the spirit of Protestantism, and a university is not allowed to dispense with professorships concerned with [understanding] the roots of this spirit." Noted in Paul Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität Frankfurt am Main 1914-1932 (Frankfurt am Main: Kramer, 1972), 110-37.

[79]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 367.

leading the nation as a whole to a more developed religious and ethical life (which for Harnack meant away from many classic Christian doctrines). Second, it served as the seat of human knowledge about history's most important event--the emergence of Christianity--and its far-reaching implications in the ancient and modern world. The Bible, Catholicism, Protestantism, Harnack argued, had bequeathed to human civilization objects of contemplation of the highest and most important order. For this reason, the work of the theological faculties "will never be exhausted" so long as the "scientific urge" lives on in human beings.[80]

Finally, Harnack sought to defend the theological faculty against three criticisms not directly related to the political concerns about the separation of church and state. First, he returned to the question of whether theology should move in the direction of Religionswissenschaft; referring to his 1901 rectorial address, he again suggested that such a development would result in incurable dilettantism, and that the best place for general religious inquiry remained in the philosophical faculty, where the study of religion could be pursued in conjunction with the study of the language and history of relevant cultures. Second, he sought to refute those who, while admitting the scientific credibility of exegetical and historical theology, rejected that of systematic and practical theology.[81] Against such critics, Harnack reasserted Schleiermacher's point that practical theology was the "crown" of theology; if it and systematic theology were separated from exegesis and church history, then church leadership (Kirchenleitung) and pastoral care (Seelenführung) throughout Germany would be intellectually diminished. Third, Harnack took aim at those critics who argued that theological faculty was an "alien body" (Fremdkörper) in the university because many of its chair holders professed a

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[80]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 368-69.
[81]A classic and influential example of this argument was Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, Die wissenschaftliche und die kirchliche Methode in der Theologie: Ein encyklopädischer Versuch (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1897).

particular creed and had ecclesiastical connections. Harnack admitted that this often posed serious problems, especially when faculties succumbed to church influence by hiring candidates based on their theological views instead of on "scientific ability" alone, as Harnack insisted. But Harnack also contended that creedal commitment per se did not necessarily invalidate the legitimacy of a particular candidate. St. Paul, Augustine, and Luther, he reasoned, all expressed views that many would find unpalatable in the modern university, but should these great teachers therefore be excluded from the university? To the contrary, echoing an argument made by Schleiermacher during the establishment of Berlin's theological faculty, Harnack suggested that a plurality of viewpoints within the theological faculty constituted a positive good. (He even conceded that wrestling with the outlook of a confirmed atheist or an ultramontane Catholic [!] would not do irreparable harm to a student of Protestant theology.)[82]

Summarizing his main points, Harnack emphasized that university theology was by no means an exclusive concern of the church, and hence it should not be expelled from the university on the grounds of "separation of church and state." Rather, he concluded, Wissenschaft and Staat should take a protective interest in maintaining the position of the theological faculty against both its progressive and reactionary detractors. Failure to do so would constitute ignorance of the lessons of history, a disparagement of the German-Protestant spirit, and a misunderstanding of the scientific mission of German universities and the state's role in protecting this mission.

Characteristically, Harnack's words were taken with great seriousness. Shortly after the publication of the article he received a personal letter from Konrad Haenisch (1876-1925), the new Prussian Minister of Culture, acknowledging the importance and timeliness of Harnack's views. "You may rest assured," Haenisch wrote, "that I will immediately attend to this matter

[82]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 370-74.

with great earnestness and scrupulousness. To this end your essay . . . [and] your personal advice as well, is of the highest importance." Harnack also received a letter from Wilhelm Kahl, a delegate at the Weimar Assembly, expressing the opinion that Harnack's article "appeared at the perfect time to aid the resolve of several vacillating spirits (einige schwankende Gemüter). I confidently hope that the theological faculties will be anchored in the constitution itself."[83] That the Weimar Constitution eventually offered such explicit protection for the theological faculties--setting an important legal precedent in the twentieth century and one that has set the German university system apart from that of many Western liberal nations--suggests the powerful and enduring influence of Harnack's defense.[84]

Conclusion

What then are we to make of Harnack's defense of the theological faculty? More broadly, what should we make of the Janus-faced fate of the theological faculty itself, as it alternately sought to accommodate and resist, express and avoid, various modernizing forces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century? Let me hazard four general concluding points for our further reflection.

First, and quite broadly, I hope my topic today makes us think twice about the "grand narrative of secularization," which still dominates many general treatments of modern European and German intellectual history. This narrative offers scant aid to help explain how a theologian like Harnack could emerge in the early twentieth century as arguably the most commanding

[83]Quoted in Zahn-Harnack, Adolf von Harnack, 387.
[84]While the 1949 Constitution (Grundgesetzt) did not offer theological faculties explicit protection, such protections were continued in individual Landesverfassungen, the constitutions of the various German states. Solte, Theologie an der Universität, 112ff. Legal conflicts over the public character of the theological faculties have continued until the present day. See Martin

public intellectual in Germany. Owing in part at least to an entrenched odium theologicum among professional historians, Harnack has largely disappeared from the radar, attended to today mainly by theologians and church historians. But theology is far too historically important to be left to theologians alone, and historians would do well to acknowledge that "secularization," insightful in some respects, can also be a blunt and misleading instrument. At best, it indicates the altered and admittedly diminished fortunes of theology in modern culture. At worst, it implies that theological discourse is therefore unworthy of consideration. [85]

Second, I should reiterate that the protection of theological faculties by the Weimar Constitution set Germany apart from developments in many other Western nations, where developments in state-church relations worked more forcefully against publicly funded theological faculties and/or encouraged their development into seats of the science of religion. For those who insist that Germany has experienced a separate path to modernity, a so-called Sonderweg, the developments I have sketched might provide a measure of reassurance--evidence that German modernity has been freighted with "peculiar" continuities from an earlier time. In this interpretation, the theological faculty as a public institution might appear as an intellectual analog of the Prussian Junker, whose position of power and social influence, if diminished, cunningly survived Germany's political modernization in the nineteenth century.[86]

However, thirdly, it should be clear that Harnack was no defender of theology in any straightforward traditional sense. His was a thoroughly liberal, modern endeavor, neither dogmatic nor apologetic, but devoutly historicist in orientation--insistently Christian, to be sure,

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Heckel, Die theologischen Fakultäten im weltlichen Verfassungsstaat (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1986.)

[85]Thomas Albert Howard, "A 'Religious Turn' in Modern European Historiography?" Historically Speaking 4 (June 2003): 24-26.

[86]Cf. David Blackbourn and Geoff Ely, The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

but only insofar as Protestantism was associated with the unfolding epic of modern civilization and modern science. And it is precisely for this reason that Harnack so eagerly sought political and legal protection for theology from the modern state: theology under the auspices of Staat and Wissenschaft was insulated from the influences of actual churches (a rather peculiar claim when evaluated against the broader sweep of Christian history!) and this, in his view, diminished the possibility of dogmatism and obscurantism. Seen in this light, Harnack's successful efforts to defend theology's academic legitimacy (though, again, ostensibly conservative when compared to more militant scientific and social democratic voices), rests on, and, in a sense, brings to culmination a much greater discontinuity in nineteenth-century intellectual life: the redefinition of Christian theology not as an ecclesial, dogmatic, apologetic, or sapiential enterprise, but as a critical, academic, and, indeed, profoundly statist one.[87] Harnack's argument for continuity--keeping theological faculties as members of the state university--rested on this redefinition of the task of theology, which, though not without critics, had become increasingly normalized in the late nineteenth century.[88] Oddly then, it was precisely this modern rationale for theology as a scientific-statist enterprise that allowed Harnack and others to effectively resist the modern plea of strict church-state separatists who desired to excise theological faculties from the university. Theology after all, he could argue in good faith, was no mere servant of the church but, more relevantly, a necessary and able contributor to "the edifice of modern German science and culture."[89]

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[87] On this point, Ernst Troeltsch, "Rückblick auf ein halbes Jahrhundert der theologischen Wissenschaft," Zeitschrift für wissenschaftlich Theologie 51 (1908): 73ff.
[88]Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, "Protestantische Theologie in der Gesellschaft des Kaiserreichs," in Graf ed., Profile des neuzeitlichen Protestantismus: Kaiserreich, vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1992), 8ff.
[89]Harnack, "Über die Bedeutung der theologischen Fakultäten," 367.

Finally, Harnack's defense of the theological faculty, like most human endeavors, is not without a certain historical irony. Successful and influential though his defense was, it corresponded to a period--inaugurated by the Great War, the ominous chaos of the early Weimar Republic, and the beginnings of Barthian "dialectical theology"--which signaled the collapse of the progressive, optimistic, wissenschaftlich world, in which academic theology had so earnestly sought accommodation to modern culture and modern science.

In the same year that Harnack published his article in the Preussische Jahrbücher, one his former students, the young, Swiss Karl Barth, published the first edition of his famous commentary on Romans, a work, as one Catholic commentator famously put it, that fell "like a bombshell in the playground of the [liberal] theologians." The theological task of the future, Barth would later insist, was not defining "the right, and possibility of theology within . . . the boundaries of the universitas litterarum," for this had only resulted in the "destructive surrender of theology to the general concept of science."[90] Rather, the future task, he wrote in a famous exchange with Harnack in 1923, was one of "repristination," of bringing to life again classical, dogmatic theological trains of thought, albeit "in and for our times," as a means of gaining perspective on and transcending the contemporary intellectual and theological milieu--a milieu in many respects embodied by Harnack.[91]

Able to brush aside what he perceived as the "outsider" challenges of Social Democrats, radical positivists, pietists and ultramontane Catholics, Harnack was at a loss of what to say about Barth, an "insider" to the elite world of Protestant academic theology and German science,

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[90]Karl Barth, Evangelical Theology: An Introduction, trans. Grover Foley (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1963), 15-16 and Church Dogmatics, I, 1, trans. G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1969), 1-11.

[91]H. Martin Rumscheidt, Revelation and Theology: An Analysis of the Barth-Harnack Correspondence of 1923 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 41f.

indeed a former star pupil in his own seminar at Berlin.[92] Here, appearing at the moment of the theological faculty's national, constitutional vindication, was a new, young voice who would reject many of the assumptions that had informed Harnack's defense of the theological faculty. After hearing his former student speak at conference in Aarau, Switzerland, Harnack shuddered, noting that Barth's theology seemed "scandalous" and even "frighten[ing],"[93] While one might admire the intensity of Barth's effort, Harnack confided to a friend, "what seems to be lost entirely is the link between theology and the university."[94]

[92]On Barth as a student of Harnack, see Eberhard Busch, Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts, trans John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 38-44.
[93]Rumscheidt, Revelation and Theology, 15.
[94]Quoted in Zahn-Harnack, Adolf von Harnack, 413.