

Review of Bruno Bauer's *Trumpet of the Last Judgment*

Max Stirner

January 1842

What should not be tolerated, equalized, and reconciled with everything else? We have endured this accommodation, this easy acceptance which, as it can be imagined, has brought us to a state of exhaustion, which has divided our inner hearts, and which only needed intelligence to let us know that we have spent our honorable time in useless attempts to bring about concord and unity. The accusers are right: "How can one reconcile Belial with Christ?" The devoted Zealot has never known any other goal than exterminating the spirit of the new age which is pregnant with threatening storms. He is just as the Emperor of the heavenly empire who thinks only of the "extermination" of his enemies, and as an Englishman he only wants to have no fight except the crucial one of a fight unto death. We allowed the Zealot to rant and to rave, and saw nothing in him but—a humorous fanatic. Did we do right with this? Insofar as the Zealot in the face of common sense always lost his case, and even if reasonable folk do not particularly rebuke him, we could then, in confidence, leave the affair to the sense of those who lay down the rules, and so be confident in following this sense. But this toleration has rocked us into a dangerous slumber. Admittedly, the complaining Zealot didn't do us any harm; but still, the believer and the whole flock of the religious were behind the complainer, and—what is the worse and the oddest—we ourselves were also set behind him. Indeed, we were liberal philosophers and didn't let anything impose upon thinking: thinking was the all in all. However, how stands it with belief? Should it somehow give way to thinking? Heaven forefend! There can be no enmity assumed between the freedom of thinking and belief! The content of belief and that of knowledge is one and the same content, and whoever would injure belief would not understand himself and would be no philosopher! Didn't Hegel himself take the purpose of his lectures on the philosophy of religion to be the reconciliation of reason with religion? And would we, his disciples [*seine Jünger*] want to subtract anything from his belief? That would be far from us! Know, ye faithful hearts, that we are fully at one with you regarding the content of belief, and that we have only set ourselves upon the beautiful task, of which you have so misjudged us, of defending disputed beliefs. Or do you still more or less doubt this? Observe how we justify ourselves to you, and so read our conciliatory writings on "Belief and Knowledge," and on the "Piety of Philosophy against Christian Religion," and dozens of similar writings, and you won't have any further malice against your best friends!—

So then, the good-hearted, peaceful philosopher fell into the arms of belief. Now, who is so pure from this sin of belief that he would cast the first stone against the poor philosophical sinner? The period of sleep-walking was so universal, so full of self-deception and illusions, the press and urge after reconciliation so general, that only a few held themselves free of it, and these few perhaps without any support. It was the time of peaceful diplomacy. Just as the diplomacy of this time it was understood that there was nowhere any real enmity, but everywhere irritation and a seeking of advantage, a purposive incitation, with persuasion balanced by a sugary peacefulness and a friendly mistrust, an artificial sensibility, a serious and willful earnestness by means of superficial balancing and juggling acts, a thousand fold phenomena of driving self-deception and illusion in every area. "Peace at all costs" or better "agreement and accommodation at all costs," that was the paltry heartfelt need of these diplomats. It might here be the place to sing a little song, if this would not be forbidden, of this diplomacy which has made our whole life so feeble, and which has by its skillful hypnosis lulled our reason to sleep in a drowsy trustfulness, and has left us staggering about—

But beyond this, we are now prepared to announce a book, a book which has been anticipated by our previous remarks, and which is the final and definitive overthrow of the diplomacy here discussed:

The Trumpet of the Last Judgment against Hegel the Atheist and Antichrist. An Ultimatum. — Under this title appears an small work of eleven Bogen, published by Wigand, whose author is not difficult to discover by anyone who knows his literary work and from it his scientific point of view—that which motivated him to address "His Brothers in Christ" and to say that "We would remain still concealed, so that it would not appear as if we sought any other honor than a Heavenly Crown. When the struggle, which we soon hope to see end, when the lies receive their punishment, then we will personally encounter him and warmly embrace his decision." This book is an excellent mystery! A man of the most devout fear of God, whose heart is filled with anger against the despicable pack of young Hegelians, turns back to their teacher, their origin, Hegel himself and finds—horrors! That the whole revolutionary wickedness, that is now bubbling forth from his depraved students had already been in this morose and hypocritical sinner, who had been long taken as a keeper and a protector of the Faith. The author, with righteous scorn, just the Clergy from Constance dealt with Huss, tears the priestly garments from him, and, painting him in flames as the devil, sets a paper hat upon his shaved head, and hounds this greatest of heretics through the streets of an astonished world. Such a confidant and versatile philosophical Jacobean has never been hunted down. It was the undeniably excellent and radical attack by this determined Servant of God that he has seized upon and bitten Hegel. This servant has served well, and out of the right instinct, has never lost sight of and never lost the smell of this Arch-Heretic, and the Anti-Christ of their Christ. Unlike those of "good intention" who hold a lightly-held belief, and neither with faith nor with knowledge would wish anyone harm, he, on the contrary, holds, with inquisitorial severity, the heretic in sight until he is caught. He does not allow himself to be deceived and duped—as dummies so often are—and can rightly claim that he be considered the best expert regarding the dangerous aspects of the Hegelian system. "You know what protective steps must be taken, don't look for any other!" The wild beast knows quite well that he has most to fear from Man.

Hegel, who would and has elevated the human spirit into the all-powerful Spirit, and has impressed this teaching upon his students that no one has to seek salvation outside of or beyond themselves, but rather are each their own Savior and Deliverer, has never made it his particular

interest to lead a so-called “small war [*kleinen Krieg*]” and to hack out of its fortress the egoism which in a thousand fold forms liberates individuals. One can reproach him for this disregard, and charge him that his system lacks all morality, and it could really be said that he lacks any charitable sense of advice [*Paränese*] or pedagogical paternity—which could cultivate pure heroes of virtue. This man, whose task has been to overthrow the whole world by constructing a new world, a world for which the old had no space, has, as a school master, aroused the base ways of the young, and the course of malice and anger at moral teaching and the rotting huts and palaces—all of which, nevertheless, must collapse as soon as Heaven gathers up its comfortable [*wohlgenährten*] Olympians and casts them out. But that is of little concern for the one who can only feel exhaustion from wishing to have the emptiness of a life outside of himself. But this is not so with the brave person, who only requires one word—the Logos, for in it he has all and can create all out of it. But because this Master, this powerful creator of the word, on occasion falls into a rage over this or that minor restriction and the loss of this or that reward, he loses his control, and then, unrestrained, he destroys the nature of the whole world, and separates God from his Throne, and scatters the whole host of angels into nothingness, those who do not know that they have been overthrown by “The Trumpet of the Last Judgment.” So now, after the death of the “King” a busy activity develops among the “garbage collectors [*Kärrnern*].” But did not a few dear little angels survive? “I could just eat them up, the lot of them.” To find any comparison to them would be indeed quite grand! But if only to make it more down to earth, something more appropriate might be fitting!

“You waver to and fro, please try descending,
 A bit more worldly-like your sweet limbs bending;
 Though gravity, I grant, sits well on you,
 I’d like, just once, to catch you smiling, too;
 I’d cherish the delight of it always;
 I have in mind the way that lovers gaze,
 A dimpling near the lips, and it is done.
 You, lad I like the best, so lean and tall,
 That curate’s mien becomes you not at all,
 Give me a little wanton wink, come on!
 You need a decent naked fashion, too,
 That long enfolding robe is over-prim –
 They turn around—now for a backward view!
 I could just eat them up, the lot of them.”⁽¹⁾

The lust for affirmation has increased, and individuals, by order of the World Spirit [*Weltgeist*], have been admonished to go forth and continue the work of Hegel, an order which occurs and is exemplified in the conclusion of his Lectures on the History of Philosophy:

It is my desire that this history of Philosophy should contain for you a summons to grasp the spirit of the time, which is present in us by nature, and—each in his own place—consciously to bring it from its natural condition, that is, from its lifeless seclusion, into the light of day.

However, the Philosopher himself does not help the present world to solve its problems: “How the empirical present day is to find its way out of its discord, and how things are to turn out for it, are questions that must be left up to it and are not the immediate practical business and affair of philosophy.” He merely extends the heaven of freedom over the world, and now “leaves” it to others as to whether or not they would wish to cast an idle glance heavenward. The matter is, however, quite otherwise with his followers. Since this “empirical present day is to find its way out of its discord,” and in that they belong to this empirical present day, then they must, as the first of the enlightened, enlighten others. But at first they cringed and turned from this task, and became diplomats and peaceful mediators. What Hegel had completely and wholly torn apart, they thought to rebuild again in its particulars. He had not been particularly clear as to his rejection and destruction of each and every particular. He was often as dark as Christ himself when it came to details, and, as it is said, in the darkness there are whisperings, and in it much allows itself to be interpreted and re-interpreted.

It is likely that the dark decade of diplomatic barbarity is over. It had its good aspect and had to happen. We first had to absorb all of the old and sick things and then expel them so as to despise them, and so learn of our ownership and ourselves. But now, as we climb strengthened and revitalized from the humiliating mud bath which has soiled us with all sorts of prudential impurities, we cry out “Let the barrier between us be torn down! Let there be war to the death!”

Anyone who now would be diplomatic and would seek “peace at all costs” should take care that he doesn’t fall between the swords of combatants and becomes a bloody victim of his own “well-meaning” half-measures. For us, the time for reconciliation and sophistry is past. The “Trumpet” has sounded the full battle cry of the last judgment. It will sound in some drowsy ears, but some will not awaken, and some will still imagine that they can remain behind the battle lines, and some will think it only a meaningless noise which is but wasted on war and not spent upon peaceful words—but there is no longer any hope for them. If the world stand armed against God, and the noisy thunder of battle breaks out against the Olympian himself and his army of sheep, then only the dead will be able to sleep, for the living will not surrender their position. We wish no more diplomatic “reconciliations,” no mediators, no settlements, but only that each hostile camp should stand over and against each other, and that the godless will stand face to face against those who are God-fearing, and they will know that they are opposed to one another. And here, I repeat, in the sharpness of this enmity, the religious zealots will have the advantage; for they never have had any instinct for friendship. There could be no more skillful and at the same time a more righteous way of unveiling Hegel’s great heresy, than that of this author, who, with faithful zeal, has sounded the doomsday trumpet of the last judgment. They wish no “reasonable resolutions” but a war of annihilation [*Vernichtungskrieg*].” They have a right to this.

But what can the God-fearing Hegel find vexing? With this question we will come to the book itself. God-fearing? Who threatens them more with destruction than he who annihilates fear? Yes, Hegel is the real advocate and creator of that bravery before which cowardly hearts have trembled. “*Securi adversus homines, secure adversus Deos* [Confidant adversaries of men and gods],” so Tacitus described the ancient Germans. But their confidence, as the God’s adversaries,

went astray and was lost, and the “Fear” of God then nested itself in their broken natures. But finally, because they have found the word, they have re-discovered themselves, and now have mastered their chilling fears. Henceforth, they will no longer divide the eternal word, and will struggle and fight so that it will become one again and immanent in all. They have found the eternal word and it cannot be destroyed. An authentic German, *securus adversus Deum*, has spoken it, the liberating word: Self-satisfaction [*Selbstgenügen*], the Absolute Sovereignty [*Autarkie*] of free men. The French were the first to emphatically declare the world historical idea of Freedom, and we have now been freed by the French from all sorts of ideas about fear and respect for authority, and have seen these ideas fall into nothingness, into absurdity. But once again, these ugly hundred-headed Hydra ideas have re-appeared—and, once again, has not brave self-confidence shriveled up in the face of countless fears? The French have brought us a salvation which is as little complete and stable as that which the fiery signs of the Hussite Bohemian storm once gave to the German Reformation. The German alone is the first to proclaim the historic task of Radicalism, for only he alone is radical, and he is alone is—without injustice. None are as determined and as ruthless as he is, for he does not simply overthrow the existing world, he overthrows—himself. Wherever a German circles and destroys, there must a God fall, and a World be violated. Destruction is the task of the German, and the smashing of the temporal his eternal role. Here there is no fear or despair: He not only drives out the fear of the spiritual, and this and that reverential fear, but he drives out all fears, even reverence itself and the fear of God.

Escape, you timorous souls, from that inward fear of God contained in your love of God, escape from that fear which you neither have words nor common thoughts. Hegel is unmoved by your pleas, for he has transformed your God into a corpse, and so has turned your love into abhorrence. The “Trumpet” has sounded out the true purpose of the Hegelian system—which, hidden under its Old Testament formulations and hesitant expressions, is that “modern thinking, in all of its anxiously contrary movements still rests firmly upon the presupposition that truth and error can be reconciled.” “Away!” calls out the “Trumpeter,” in angry scorn against all such thinking, “Away with this lust for reconciliation, with this sentimental slop, with this crooked and false worldview: only the One is true, and if the One and the Other were set together, the Other would fall into nothing. Do not come to us with this anxiously sophisticated timidity of the Schliermachian school or that of the Positive Philosophy; away with this foolishness, which only wishes reconciliation because error lives within them, and they haven’t the courage to tear it out of their hearts. So tear it out, and throw away those whose forked tongues like those of snakes, filled with quick flatteries and mediations, away with them!”—even if is a witty diplomacy. Your honest voice, heart, and nature are louder and stronger than that spirit-paralyzing diplomacy.

The Trumpeter, as he should be, is a righteous serf of God, and so rejects Hegel’s God as surely the as devout Turk of Allah would seek every means against Hegel, the blasphemer.

The *Preface* is devoted to this diplomatic perversion, in which the “Old Hegelians” are greeted with the words: “They always have the word of reconciliation on their mouth—but “adders” poison is under their lips.”

But now, we “will face them with the mirror of the system and see if they can recognize themselves in it. We will find out! They will be compelled to answer! They must answer. We pledge before the fact that Göschel, Gabler, Rosenkranz, and particularly Henning—and the rest will answer, for they are guilty before their government . . . the time has come when further silence is a crime.”

A “philosophical school” has also developed which would refute Hegel with a “Christian and positive philosophy.” However, having only love for itself, it has, on its own, proceeded to oppose the foundations of Christian truth—it has had as little success and influence among the believers as among unbelievers. If we complain, and the government looked about for a doctor, did it find one among these positive philosophers? Has the government trusted a cure to one of them? No! Others are sought out! A Krummacher, a Häavernick, a Hengstenberg, a Harless, must be placed before the breach!

A third set of opponents to Hegelian philosophy, the Schliermachians, are equally dismissed: “They are themselves hooked upon the lure of the Evil One, for they would like to present the appearance of being philosophical themselves. Yet they do nothing to encourage this appearance. They deserve the word: “I know your work, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. To then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” Their enthusiasm for the “churchly life” is indeed recognized by the Trumpeter, but to him they are not “earnest, fundamental, comprehensive and diligent enough.” They have even found “nothing to set against the blasphemous declarations” of Bruno Bauer (*die evangel. Landeskirche Preussens und die Wissenschaft*).

But finally, it came to Leo, “who first had the courage to publicly step forth against this Godless philosophy, to formally accuse it and to make the Christian-minded government take notice of the pressing danger threatened by this philosophy to the state, Church and to all morality.” But Leo is also rebuked insofar as he was insufficiently stern, and his work still “penetrated with some secular leavening,” which provided him with much hair splitting. The conclusion is cheaply constructed with psalms anathematizing the Godless.

The *Introduction* [to the Trumpet] reveals to us the real intention of the raging man: “The hour has now struck in which the last, the worst, and the proudest enemy of the Lord will be brought to earth. This last enemy is also the most dangerous, these “Wild Men”—these people of the Antichrist—have dared to declare the non-existence of the Eternal Lord, and this in the full light of day, in the market, before all Christian Europe, in the light of the sun which has never shone upon such wickedness. They have practiced an idolatrous adultery with the Whore of Reason while they have murdered the Anointed of God. But Europe, once filled with Holy Zeal, strangled the Whore, and then bound itself into a Holy Alliance so as to cast the Antichrist into chains and to once again set up the eternal alters of the True Lord.

But then came—No!—but then was scented, nursed, protected, sheltered, indeed honored and paid, a man who was stronger than the French, that enemy from without which had been conquered, and he gave new foundation to the principles of Hell, and raised them into the power of a law. Hegel was called forth and fixed at the center of the University of Berlin! He had, with the attractive powers of philosophy over German youth, secured his introduction.

One cannot believe that this mob, with which the Christian state in our times is compelled to struggle against, is fixed upon any other principle or other teaching than that set out by the Master of Deceit. It is certainly true that this younger school of Hegelians is quite different from that first which gathered itself about its master, for this younger school have openly cast away all godliness and modesty and struggle openly against Church and State. They have inverted the cross and threaten to upset the throne itself—such opinions and deeds of which the older school might appear incapable. But if the older school did not rise up to these things, to this devilish energy, it was only the result of chance circumstance, for fundamentally and in principle, if we go back to the actual teaching of the master, the latest disciples have added nothing new—they have

only torn away the thin veil which briefly concealed the thought of the master have revealed—shamelessly enough—the system in its nakedness.”

Accepting the charges against Hegel’s system, it is now incumbent upon us to examine more closely the actual contents of the book. The reason for this is that in order to present a review of the work that is not lost or wasted upon the reader, and so it is requisite that the order of the work itself be directly laid out. We know of no better way to do this, since the author’s memory might not have taken in all of the significant passages in Hegel’s work that could have been criticized.

In addition, as announced on page 163, the Trumpet is to be followed with a second part, which will show “how Hegel would prove that the character of the religious consciousness, a particular phenomena of self-consciousness, arises out of the inner dialectic of self-consciousness,” and at the same time “Hegel’s hatred against religious and Christian art and his disintegration of all positive legal codes.”⁽²⁾

In the first chapter, “The Religious relation as a Substantial” the Trumpeter presents Hegel as one who has “drawn a twofold cover over his work of destruction.” One is the cover under which Hegel, who speaks countless times of God, and under which he almost always appears as if he understands God as that living God, Who was before the world exited, and so on. The older Hegelians (a Göschel at their head) stay at this viewpoint. But there is yet a further cover which is set up: that religion is a dialectical substance-relationship, in which the individual is related to the universal, which as substance, or—as it is said—absolute Idea as to that which has power over it. Accepting this, the individual spirit will abandon its particular uniqueness and set itself in unity with the absolute Idea. The most powerful spirits (Strauss and others) have handed themselves over and are captured by this view. “But,” it is finally said, “more dangerous than this [Pantheistic] view is the thing in itself, which is immediately present to every open and expert eye if it but exerts itself to a certain extent: this is set forth as the understanding of religion as being nothing more than an inward relationship of self-consciousness to itself, and that all powers, which exists as substance or absolute idea are but appearances differentiated from self-consciousness, being merely religious images objectified out of self- consciousness.”

After this, the content of the first chapters is evident. (2) The Ghost of the World Spirit. (3) Hatred Against God. (4) Hatred of the Established Order. (5) Admiration for the French and Contempt for the German. (6) The Destruction of Religion. (7) The Hatred of Judaism. (8) Partiality for the Greeks. (9) Hatred of the Church. (10) Contempt of Holy Scripture and Sacred History. (11) Religion as the Product of Self-consciousness. (12) The Dissolution of Christianity. (13) Hatred Against Fundamental Scholarship and the Usage of Latin. (As the Trumpeter has it, “a comic supplement”).

The announced second part, for which the author might wish a comprehensive memory, since he lacks no other talents, should be immediately reviewed after it appears, for then, perhaps, something might be found and added to what he has already written. Now, finally, why is it that we should honestly consider this book a Mummery? Perhaps because no God fearing person can be so free and intelligent as the writer is. “Who cannot have the best, is truly not the best!”—

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Max Stirner
Review of Bruno Bauer's *Trumpet of the Last Judgment*
January 1842

Stepelevich, Lawrence S. "Addenda: II C." Translated Essay. In *Max Stirner On the Path of Doubt*, 188–197. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2020. See English original for translator's preface. All footnotes Stepelevich's.

German Source: *Telegraph für Deutschland*. Red. von Karl Gutzkow. No. 6-8. Julius Campe, Hamburg, Januar 1842, pp. 22-24, 25-28, 30-31; *Kleinere Schriften* hrs. John Henry Mackay (Berlin: Bernhard Zack, 1914), pp.11-25.

theanarchistlibrary.org