The Book and the Sword: The Mobilization of Biblical Scholarship 1914-1918

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Abstracts

Lukas Bormann: 'Between prophetic critique and raison d'état. Rudolf Kittel about German Jews in the Great War and Old Testament Hebrews in Biblical Wars.'

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Abstract:

The paper deals with the Old Testament scholar who is best known for his Biblica Hebraica (1906). Today Kittel's name is overshadowed and sometimes even mixed up with the one of his son Gerhard, the famous New Testament scholar and determined anti-Semite.

An autobiographical introduction will present Rudolf Kittel as a liberal conservative Protestant of his times, trained in Kant's critiques and open to changes in the political formation of the German state and society. After his death Hempel noted in 1930, that Kittel didn't deny that "he was open-minded to democratic ideas" and was also criticized by right-wing and anti-Semitic circles because of his views on Jews, Judaism, and anti-Semitism.

Kittel was a committed citizen of the Saxon kingdom. In 1910 he published a book with lectures given to Saxon teachers disturbed by the so called Babel-Bible Controversy in which the public audience saw destroyed the fundamentals of Christian religion. Kittel was asked by the Saxon minister of culture and religion to present a scholarly view on the scientific knowledge about the Biblical history. These lecturers were published and the book became the most successful of Kittel. It was translated in many languages, even into Hebrew by the Jewish publisher Tushyva Warsaw/Vilnius for "the Jewish youth" in 1913. The translator A.S. Hirshberg lauded Kittel as "one of the greatest Christian scholars", who "does not despise it ["our tradition" = Jewish tradition; LB] but rather treats it with great respect".

Kittel's commitment as both a servant of the Saxon state and as a member of the "aristocratic community of scholarship" (Kittel) led him to publish pieces during the Great War, in which he presented his scholarly views on the warfare of the "Hebrews" and also on the participation of German Jews in the "contemporary war". Kittel was not a pacifist, but he was deeply impressed by the prophetic critique of unjust policies and wars in the Hebrew Bible. However, in his lectures and publications he wrapped this prophetic critique and the demand for peace in presenting the heroism of Biblical "soldiers" such as Gideon, Simson and others as paradigms for contemporary soldiers. In 1914 he praised the Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith for their call to the German Jews to stand side by side with their non-Jewish compatriots from 1st of August 1914. He wrote that the shared experiences in the Great War will lead to a better mutual understanding.

When Walther Rathenau, the German minister for foreign affairs with Jewish background, was assassinated in 1922, no colleague of the Leipzig-University agreed in presenting the memorial speech. The retired rector magnificus Kittel took this burden on himself and did what no other in the academic circles of Leipzig dared to do in these years of opposition against the so called fulfillment politicians of the democratic state: to honor Rathenau as one of the "noblest representative of his people".

The paper will analyze the writings of Kittel as an outstanding example of the tensions between rigorous historic-critical Biblical scholarship on the one side and devoted political views on

the other side. Kittel tried to hide his political views behind scholarship, but also put forward the critical voices of Old Testament prophets against the arbitrariness of war.

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Mark Chapman: 'William Sanday, Modernism, and the First World War'

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Abstract:

This paper explores the response to the First World War by a number of prominent British theologians, with a focus on the Oxford New Testament Scholar, William Sanday, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, who had 'converted' to Modernism shortly before the outbreak of war and who was embroiled in controversy with his bishop (Charles Gore) in the early months of 1914. I discuss the ways in which the perceptions of German *Kultur* quickly changed after the outbreak of war as it was subjected to a great deal of criticism inside and outside both the churches and the universities. Such critiques frequently equated German thought with Prussian militarism and had a significant impact on reframing theological discourse during the war. This in turn resulted in a distancing of theological thought from the hitherto dominant form of liberalism on account of its 'Made in Germany' origins. This helped secure more conservative theology, especially in its more Anglo-Catholic form, as the leading strand of theology during and after the war. Liberal Germanophiles such as Sanday were increasingly challenged as the war escalated into a global conflict. By analysing the four booklets that Sanday produced during the war, as well other letters and articles, I trace the development of his thought in its broader theological context both in Britain and Germany as it reflects these general developments. Sanday, who was one of the most important mediators of German thought into England, and who kept up a vigorous correspondence with his German colleagues both before and during the war, remained far more sympathetic to German thought than many other thinkers, and was criticized by many of his contemporaries throughout the war for his relatively sympathetic view of the enemy. After a brief discussion of Sanday's efforts to restore relationships with German theologians after the First World War, which met with limited success, I conclude by outlining the reshaping of English theology in the early 1920s.

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Matthew A. Collins: 'SOTS, SBL, and WWI: Anglo-American Scholarly Societies and the Great War'

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Abstract:

In January 1917, in the midst of the First World War, a small group of biblical scholars gathered at King's College London for the inaugural meeting of the newly-formed Society for Old Testament Study (SOTS). The decision to create such a society had been taken the previous summer at Queen's College, Cambridge, on 29th June 2016, just two days before the commencement of the Battle of the Somme. Thus the origins of this British-based society are to be found firmly (and somewhat peculiarly) planted in the context and conflict of the Great War. As a result, the records and history of the early years of the society afford us a valuable window into the landscape of biblical scholarship of the period. Likewise the detailed minutes and papers of the wartime meetings of the larger and already-established US-based Society of Biblical Literature (SBL; founded in 1880) offer a similar (yet distinct) insight into academic attitudes on the other side of the Atlantic and especially the challenges to biblical scholarship (both ideological and practical) posed by the outbreak of war. Accordingly, in thinking about the wartime mobilization of Biblical Studies, this paper will take as its focus the effect of the war upon British and American scholarly societies (epitomised here by SOTS and SBL) and the response(s) of those societies as indicative of shifts and trends in both wartime and post-war biblical scholarship. In particular, it will be argued that, in both their rhetoric and the practical steps taken towards scholarly reconciliation, these societies may be seen as having actively resisted the idea of "the enemy" prevalent in propaganda material of the time. In doing so, they were subsequently well positioned to play a significant role in the swift reestablishment of international scholarly relations after the First (and indeed later, the Second) World War. Thus it is argued that, during wartime, these scholarly societies performed a potentially unintentional yet vital regulatory function as tools enabling and encouraging the maintenance, sustenance, preservation, and continuity of international biblical scholarship.

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James Crossley: ‘World War I, the Russian Revolution and the End of the Social World of the New Testament’

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Abstract:

This paper will look at the impact WW1 and the Russian Revolution had on tendencies in NT scholarship, particularly how these related world events effectively brought about the end of one era of scholarship. Prior to WWI, social history was a part of mainstream NT and Christian origins scholarship (e.g. Deissmann, Troeltsch, von Harnack, Evangelisch-sozialer Kongress) but it was embedded in battles with Marxist writers on the NT (e.g. Engels, Kautsky) for the soul of the German working classes provoked by industrialisation in Germany and the increasing popularity of the Marxism. 1914-18 had major consequences for the (non-)acceptance of Marxism and radical leftism as legitimate discourses and effectively provided a ‘victory’ for scholars associated with the Evangelisch-sozialer Kongress. Analysis of the social contexts of Christianity would briefly flourish after WWI as an important moment in the development of a specifically ‘American’ form of NT scholarship but this was something of a Pyrrhic victory. The horror of the events 1914-18 partly facilitated the rise of NT form criticism in the 1920s with its Barthian emphasis on the radical otherness of the Gospel. Despite the form-critical promise of Sitz im Leben, it was, in practice, an exercise in illustrating the Sitz im Glauben of Gospel traditions. When combined with other important factors relating to shifting understandings of the German nation after 1918 (e.g. Nazified German nationalism, increasing antisemitism, the emerging power of Soviet Russia and the Iron Curtain later closing through Germany), the impact of WWI on critical scholarship would have long-term consequences because it was not until the 1970s that social-scientific criticism would emerge as a serious form of critique in NT scholarship.

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Timothy Demy: 'For Christ and Kaiser: Caspar René Gregory and the First World War'

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Abstract:

The First World War claimed the lives of millions of combatants and noncombatants. In so doing, the war affected societies in ways otherwise unthinkable. No segment of culture was left untouched and no academic discipline was sheltered safely in the gothic towers and spires of universities. This is as true of religion and theology as it is of literature, medicine, or chemistry. For millions, the war permeated the human experience.

One unusual illustration of the tragedy of the war is the experience of New Testament textual critics Caspar René Gregory (November 6, 1846–April 9, 1917), who was an American-born German scholar. The service and death in the war of Gregory, at the time, a well-known figure in New Testament studies illustrates the effect the war had on one discipline that many people assume was untouched by the war.

Caspar René Gregory was born in Philadelphia and educated at the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton Theological Seminary, and the University of Leipzig. He remained in Germany and taught at Leipzig gaining an international reputation in textual criticism. At the outbreak of the war he enlisted in the German Army as its oldest wartime volunteer at age 67, gained a commission in 1916, and was killed by an artillery shell in April 1917. His commitment to practicing his understanding of Christianity was a key component of his service but his service also shows a mixing of patriotism and nationalism for his adopted country with biblical studies.

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Daniel Inman: '"But I say unto you, Love your enemies": The Justification of the War and the New Testament in British Propaganda, 1914-15'

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Abstract:

In 1911, a group of Oxford theologians wrote a series of essays re-examining some of the core principles of the Christian faith. *Foundations: Christian Belief in terms of Modern Thought* was one of the central documents in an increasingly febrile debate in the Church of England over the evidence and theological value of miracles of the New Testament. By the autumn of 1914, however, the very same scholars found themselves confronting an altogether different challenge: how should the ethical code of Jesus – more specifically, 'Love your enemies' – be interpreted in the light of global war?

In this paper, we examine the use of the New Testament in a series of propaganda pamphlets published by the Oxford University, the so-called *Oxford Papers for War Time,* in the first year of the war. Three of the series' authors were contributors to *Foundations*: B.H. Streeter, William Temple (by this point, rector of St James', Piccadilly), and Walter Moberly. In each of their contributions, these scholars explored how Jesus' precept to 'love your enemy' need not undermine the British

government's commitment to war with Germany. This paper examines their exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount in support of war, but also shows how the *Oxford Papers* can by no means be interpreted as examples of religious jingoism.

Indeed, it was the claim of the authors that the "war remains in the deepest sense a challenge to Christian thought". In the early stages of the war, these papers show an engaging use of the biblical material to, as the authors claimed, "reach, by common thought, discussion and prayer, a truer understanding of the meaning of Christianity and of the mission of the Church to the individual, to society and to the world." Beyond arguing that that the European war was just, the *Papers* advanced: the spiritual quality of Christ's kingdom (combined with a reluctance to attribute its aims to any one nation); the opportunity that the war presented for ecumenism and for an international court after the war's end; and even the use of the role of Mary in the gospels to support the changing role of women in society. Far from being uncritical supporters of the Government in the early stages of the war (like their German colleagues), these Anglican 'Modernists' can be seen to be employing Scripture to advocate radical political and social change.

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Tomás Irish: 'The mobilization of university academics, 1914-15'

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Abstract:

This paper will analyse the mobilization of university scholars and scholarship in Britain and France at the beginning of the First World War. Almost simultaneous to the outbreak of the military conflict in 1914 was the beginning of a cultural war, in which university scholars played a conspicuous role. As early as 8 August 1914, the French philosopher Henri Bergson publicly claimed that the war was a battle of civilization against barbarism, and this binary distinction continued throughout much of the war.

In the decades before 1914, the academic world had become increasingly interconnected. Scholars from different nations corresponded, collaborated, read one another's work, fraternized at international events, and frequently sought solace in the idea of scholarly universalism. The cultural

war that erupted in August and September 1914 split the academic world in two, with formal contacts between belligerents ceasing (until the mid 1920s, in some cases). The wartime split in the academic world centered on a series of events which took place between August and October 1914; namely, the German violation of Belgian neutrality; atrocities committed by the German army in Belgium and northern France in late August 1914 (in particular the burning of the university library at Louvain and the shelling of Rheims Cathedral); and the infamous 'Aufruf an die Kulturwelt' which appeared at the beginning of October 1914. The 'Aufruf' was signed by 93 eminent names in German scholarship, from theology to the natural sciences, who claimed that Germany's culture and military were interdependent and united in the present war. Cumulatively, these events created the narrative that Germany was waging a war on culture itself, and revulsion at the public expression of this idea was at the heart of the breach in academic internationalism and much of the mobilization of scholars that ensued.

Thereafter, scholars mobilized in a number of ways. The early months of the war were characterized by the self-mobilization of scholars, who wrote public manifestos, petitions, pamphlets and books to proclaim the righteousness of their national cause and to denigrate that of the enemy. In Britain and France, this led to a reassessment of German scholarship– held in such high esteem before 1914 – and the publication of books and pamphlets claiming that German claims to intellectual eminence were overblown. By the middle of 1915, much scholarly mobilization of this sort was being increasingly directed by centralized state mechanisms, most notably Charles Masterman's Wellington House propaganda agency in London and the Comité d'études et documents sur la guerre in Paris.

Scholarly mobilization challenged many aspects of academic identities. Some scholars fretted that academics should not be speaking out in such a manner. Others were uncomfortable at the sudden demonization of their erstwhile colleagues (and friends) in Germany. The paper will conclude by presenting some examples of individual reactions to the outbreak of war and mobilization of scholars, with particular emphasis on theologians.

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Paul Kurtz ‘‘Thou shalt not kill, unless …’: The Decalogue in a Kaiserreich at War’

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Abstract:

“Thou shalt not kill.” Yes – yes, you should kill, the more the better. It is the holy duty of the German to butcher as many Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Russians as possible, just as it is the holy duty of these peoples to do the same to the Germans. Hallali!

– Hedwig Dohm[1]

By the 5th century CE, Augustine of Hippo had exculpated those who would wage war or exercise public justice according to divine command or law: “such persons,” he judged, “have by no means violated the commandment, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’” In the intervening centuries, statesmen and clergy alike would adopt, adapt, and expand this line of justification. When fate unleashed the First World War, German nationalism alongside its almost metaphysical veneration of the state had therefore long eclipsed the Decalogue. Yet in a world of cultural Protestantism, the Bible still posed problems. The commandment not to kill thus served as an intersection of various sections across Wilhelmine society. This paper examines the frame of such reflections and examines users and uses alike.

First and foremost, Protestant theologians constituted public intellectuals. Indeed, they occupied a special place within that reputedly conservative professorate, and as such, they mobilized much. Without high borders standing in between academic theology and the people in the pews and with the immediate impact afforded through ecclesiastical events, they could serve all the more as interpreters of the time. Consequently, the internal crisis of modernity theologians felt at the *fin de siècle* reverberated also in international affairs. Concerning the ten commandments, biblical scholars in particular – as one especial class of theologians – addressed with some authority the ways of reconciling war with the word of God.

Rather than rehearse the standard arguments advanced to advocate armed conflict – from self-defense to stately duties – this paper’s second part then addresses the cultural assumptions infused into the framework. Among the many oppositions lying latent in the Bible as a whole, certain sides found emphasis in the effort of mobilization, and higher callings explicitly outweighed any casual reading not to kill. Biblical scholars usually trumped the text either through appeals to greater values or through citation of other passages. Arguments of self-defense thus stressed particularism – particularly in its *völkish* form – over universalism. More than national protection, though, a German Empire that saw itself as rightful heir to the Holy Roman one cast the conflict as an epic battle between culture and materialism. Furthermore, the conflict represented not only a war of the worlds but also a war of the peoples. Like the holy war, the people must be holy. This sentiment spurred calls for higher church attendance and greater moral purpose across the *Deutsches Kaiserreich*. All these interwoven strands made a tapestry of chosenness.

The third and final portion of this paper turns to the voices outshouted by the combative chorus in positions of great power, not only the pacifists among Protestants but also those among

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1 Hedwig Dohm, *Der Missbrauch des Todes: Senile Impressionen*, 1917

women, Catholics, and Jews. Often relegated to the margins, these figures had less access to major publication organs otherwise staunchly supportive of the war effort. Nevertheless, their invocation of Decalogue contrasted the interpretation favored in their time – and perhaps still in ours today.

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Gotthilf Walter, *Der Weltkrieg im Lichte der zehn Gebote und des Buches Rut* (Berlin, 1915)

Fritz Wilke, *Ist der Krieg sittlich berechtigt*? (Leipzig, 1915)

Nathan MacDonald -"Yahweh is Great!": The construction of Israelite Holy War in and around the time of the Great War

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Abstract:

Reviews of the history of scholarship on Holy War are agreed that the works by German biblical scholars during the Great War contributed nothing of significance to the understanding of Holy War. In his introduction to the English translation of Gerhard von Rad's *Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel*, Ben Ollenburger overlooks all the works from the time of the Great War except Hermann Gunkel's *Israelitisches Heldentum und Kriegsfrömmigkeit im Alten Testament*, a work that he characterises as 'of merely anecdotal interest' that 'contributed little distinctive to the study of holy war'. More recently Rüdiger Schmitt bypasses the work of Gunkel, Eißfeldt and Bertholet in the history of research on Holy War characterising them as 'popular' and discussing them as reception

history. They were simply 'theological war propaganda' where self-identification with biblical Israel exposes them as not truly 'academic'.

In this presentation I want to examine whether this – rather convenient – history of work from the Great War is accurate. The scholarly discussion in Germany about Israelite notions of holy war had been prefigured by Wellhausen and came to gestation with Schwally's first volume of the aborted *Semitische Kriegsaltertümer* entitled *Der Heilige Krieg im Alten Israel* at the beginning of the twentieth century. At this early stage into research on Holy War, were the Great War tracts simply abortive works of no significance to later models of Holy War? And how are we to square the with the sense expressed at the time that the Great War had caused Christians to read the biblical passages about warfare with new appreciation.

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Rüdiger Schmitt, *Der "Heilige Krieg" im Pentateuch und im deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerk: Studien zur Forschungs-, Rezeptions– und Religionsgeschichte von Krieg und Bann im Alten Testament* (AOAT, 381; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag)

Andrew Mein: 'Psalms, Patriotism and Propaganda: A Favourite Book in Wartime'

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Abstract:

The outbreak of war in August 1914 saw the beginning of a spate of patriotic publication by academics from all disciplines and on both sides. Biblical scholars were inevitably part of this, and while some preferred to repeat generally-used invective against the enemy or to support of the rightness of their own side's cause, many saw this as an opportunity to bring their own disciplinary expertise to bear on the national crisis. A number of questions arise. What biblical text and issues are prominent in this literature and seen as especially helpful or problematic? How do scholars' critical assumptions about the text shape their understanding of its relevance to the current context? How far do the results of their reflection on the Bible mirror or contradict the typical themes of the propaganda of the time?

The Psalter makes a useful test case for these questions, not least because it was almost the best known and loved of the books of the Old Testament. Individual Psalms were a source of encouragement and support for people during wartime. They might be understood as the patriotic

'war songs' of a chosen people, as Psalm 46 was often sung by advancing German columns in the opening weeks of the war, using the words of Luther's famous paraphrase 'Ein feste Burg is unser Gott'. Equally they were a source of confidence in danger, and of consolation in suffering: thus Psalm 91 is often reported as especially popular among soldiers for its confidence that 'A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee.'

For Old Testament specialists, the book of Psalms offered not only a rich resource for their own reflection on the war, but also an opportunity to reconnect their work with people's experience. And the experience of war also prompted scholars to look at the texts with fresh eyes. In a striking example, Alfred Bertholet, Professor in Göttingen, discusses the timeliness of the Old Testament message: 'I only need to indicate one word, that runs through great parts of the OT as a key word, the word "enemy"'. And here the Psalms provide the parade example. He describes how in the past, when people read Psalm 23, they appreciated the peaceful images of gentle shepherding, while 'you lay a table before me in front of my enemies' was foreign and chilling. 'But', he goes on, 'Today! "Oh Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! " (Ps. 3:2)'. Bertholet is by no means alone in his appropriation of the Psalms for a wartime audience, and in this paper I will investigate approaches to the Psalms taken by a range of writers: German, British, and American, and Jewish as well as Christian. The psalms often figure prominently in work about the broader topic of the Bible and war, but there were also specific publications that addressed the value of the Psalms for the present state of the world.

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Valérie Nicolet: 'Turning the ally into the enemy: French Protestant Scholarship at the Beginning of WWI'

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Abstract:

The position of French Protestant biblical scholarship at the beginning of WWI is a particular one. Not only are they a minority in France, and a minority in serious dialogue with the state and with the

Catholic Church about issues related to the relationship of State and Church, but they are also a minority made somewhat suspicious because of their relationship with German scholarship and the Lutheran Reformation. In this paper, I aim to see whether this particular position influences the way scripture (and in particular the New Testament) is used in sermons and writings by pastors, scholars and lay persons at the beginning of WWI. I will use, among others, sermons by Paul Stapfer, and writings by Raoul Allier. It seems that the specific French context, involving the question of french "laïcité" and the hostility between catholics and protestants at the beginning of the war, should influence the way the conflict and Germany is perceived. Next to the traditional themes present in war preaching (consolation, edification, death)[2], I am 1 exploring which (if any) biblical texts are used to reflect on the status of Germany and how they contribute to shaping the thought and reflection of Protestants faced with a particular position: they are accused of complicity with Germany through their association with Lutheranism and they are the heirs of the separation of State and Church that took place in 1905. A side note of this paper will be to see which role pacifism, advocated by some protestant intellectuals, played in the early months of WWI.

Hugh Pyper: 'A Disconnected Dialogue: Adolf von Harnack, C. J. Cadoux and the Biblical Case for Peace at the Outbreak of World War I.'

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Abstract:
At the outbreak of the First World War, Adolf von Harnack was widely regarded as the leading contemporary scholar of religion by both British and German academics. Once hostilities broke out, his prominence in justifying the actions of Germany and particularly the invasion of Belgium led to a conflicted response in the United Kingdom. Academics sought to acknowledge their debt to him and to the traditions of German scholarship while opposing his interpretation of events. This opposition reflects the cultural divide between Germany and the Anglo-French world which Thomas Mann, for instance, expressed as the conflict between *Kultur* and *Civilization.*

A particular case of this ambivalence can be seen in the work of the Congregationalist scholar C. J. Cadoux. He was an active campaigner for peace on Christian grounds. His book *The Early Christian Attitude to* War, published in 1919, offered a biblical and doctrinal defence of strict pacifism in dialogue with Harnack's work on the same subject entitled *Militia Christi: Der christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, published in 1905. In this paper, Cadoux's work is examined as an example of how political and theological assumptions arising from the different political and religious histories of Britain and Germany could lead scholars who shared a common methodological approach to different conclusions about the early church and about the consequences of such scholarship for contemporary politics. Cadoux's work shows that, perhaps surprisingly, pacifist theological scholarship was possible in Britain during the war, although at a cost.

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[2] See the study by Laurent Gambarotto, *Foi et Patrie. La prédication du protestantisme français pendant la Première Guerre mondiale*, Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1996.

It also sheds light on the role critical and rationalist studies of the Bible played in the rhetoric of pacifism in the early 20th century and the impact that the outbreak of the First World War had on these groups

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Jan Willem van Henten: 'Martyr: Concept, Title and First World War Context'

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Abstract:

It can hardly be a haphazard coincidence that the discussions about the concept of martyrdom and the martyr title came up or got at least a boost during the First World War. Leading German biblical scholars published articles focusing on the origins of the martyrdom idea and the title martyr (esp. Holl 1914; Schlatter 1915; Reitzenstein 1916). In 1914 Karl Holl interpreted the martyr as a witness of God by basing himself on a rather speculative reading of 1 Corinthians 15:15, which he connected with passages from Deutero-Isaiah and Jewish martyrdoms. Martyrs are inspired by the Holy Spirit and characterized by their insensitivity to pain. In the New Testament the martyr becomes a witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as Stephen and the two witnesses in Rev 11 exemplify (Acts 6:15; 7:55-6; 22:15, 20; Rev 11:3). Adolph Schlatter points to the image of the martyr prophet who acts as a witness for the Lord and is murdered because of his unwelcome proclamation. Schlatter assumes that this image has been passed on to the apostles who died as "bloodwitnesses". He also emphasizes the importance of the burial places of martyrs by pointing to the Jewish care for the graves of the prophets mentioned in Mat. 23:29. My working hypothesis in this paper is that this new interest in

the martyrdom theme and the articulations of the martyrdom concept in these and related studied are closely connected with the First World War context. I will discuss these contributions and try to contextualize them by exploring the following leading questions: What are the interconnections between these fresh discussions of martyrdom and the context of the First World War? Are there any explicit references to this compelling context in the scholarly publications? Which perspective on martyrdom becomes apparent if we read the publications in this specific context? Do the biographic particularities of the scholars involved explain aspects of their interpretation of martyrdom?

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George Williamson: '"*Zarathustra*, *Faust*, das *Neue Testament*": Alternative Bibles in World War I Germany'

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Abstract:

According to a November 26, 1914 article in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, when German booksellers were asked which books soldiers had purchased before leaving for the war, they cited three titles above all: the New Testament, Goethe's *Faust*, and Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Whether the soldiers actually read these books, how accurate these reports were in the first place—these questions may never be answered satisfactorily. Nonetheless, these reports would take on a life of their own during the war, shaping the public sense of the spiritual and intellectual forces underpinning the German war effort. For an important segment of the educated elites, these books—*Zarathustra*, *Faust*, the New Testament—came to be seen as complementary rather than mutually exclusive, to the point that readings of one book could shape that of the others. This process had already begun 1914, both in Protestant theology and in the secular humanities, but it acquired a heightened religious and political significance during the war. While previous research has focused on the reception of individual works, this paper will examine the ways in which wartime intellectuals integrated Nietzsche, Goethe, and the Bible into a German cultural-religious canon that would persist after the cessation of armed hostilities in 1918. It will also examine the resistance to such attempts on the part of both secularists and Christian theologians.

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