

Concordia Theological Monthly



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BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTS RELATING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Edited by James B. Pritchard. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1950. \$15.00.

This is a big book. It measures 9×12 inches and contains 527 pages. It has big-name contributors: Albright, Ginsberg, Goetze, Kramer, Meek, Oppenheim, Pfeiffer, Sachs, Speiser, Stephens, John Wilson. It covers the literature of a big territory: the Egyptian, Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Aramaic, and it serves a big purpose: "In this magnificent panorama of the literature of the Ancient Near East the student of the Old Testament or of ancient history, or the lay reader of the Bible, will find reliable translations of the most significant texts found by archeologists in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia." (Jacket.)

The selections from this literature are designed to place "the Old Testament against its environment." An index of four full pages lists the "biblical analogues" according to the Old Testament books as suggested by the various contributors. "By the listings of the latter category neither the translators nor the editor venture any scientific opinion with regard to the relationship between the biblical references and the text cited" (p. 504). In addition references are frequently given to significant discussions of the relationship of the texts to Biblical passages.

Representative examples are given of the various types of literature from the areas surrounding Palestine in this order:

- I. Myths, Epics, and Legends
- II. Legal Texts
- III. Historical Texts
- IV. Rituals, Incantations, and Descriptions of Festivals
- V. Hymns and Prayers
- VI. Didactic and Wisdom Literature
- VII. Lamentations
- VIII. Secular Songs and Poems
- IX. Letters
- X. Miscellaneous Texts

This is a big book, and it fills a big need. A good selection of the vast extra-Biblical literary remains that have been brought to light during the past century through explorations and excavations is presented in a manner that makes for handy reference as well as for systematic study.

WALTER R. ROHRS

CHRISTOLOGIE, Band I. Von Heinrich Vogel. Christian Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen, 1949. 477 S. 6×9. Preis geb. DM 22.50.

A century ago Gottfried Thomasius of Erlangen wrote his exhaustive monograph on Christ's person and work; twenty years ago Emil Brunner of Zuerich wrote a Christology entitled *Der Mittler*; and now Heinrich Vogel, dogmatician of the underground faculty of the *Bekennende Kirche* during the war and since the war professor at Berlin University, has issued the first volume of a Christology in the light of current antitheses. This dogmatical undertaking deserves more than passing attention. Prof. George Gloege of Jena in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (February, 1951, columns 79—89) and Prof. Martin Doerne of Rostock in *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* (two lengthy review articles in the issues of October 31 and November 15, 1951) offer very thorough evaluations of Vogel's Christology. Their extensive and critical analyses have been of great help to this reviewer in his attempt to examine and evaluate Vogel's dogmatical method. The author announces that he will present Christology under the over-all theme: "The Word was made flesh," in four chapters: 1) The twofold name "Christ-Jesus"; 2) the theanthropic person; 3) the Redeemer's unique and predestined way as revealed in His name and person; 4) the Redeemer's work, including also our acceptance of His person, way, and work. We assume that the last point is an adequate summary of Vogel's sentence: "Dieser Weg will in der Erkenntnis wirklich nachgegangen sein, . . . und zwar auf dem Grund der Gottestatsache, dass Person in der Menschwerdung Gottes wirklich [eine Person] werden [musste], dieser Weg wirklich gegangen und dieses Werk wirklich vollbracht werden musste. In dem Ineinander handelt es sich um ein Miteinander, dem dann in der Erkenntnis ein Nacheinander entspricht, so zwar, dass wir in der Erkenntnis der Person, des Weges und des Werkes dasselbe wieder auszusagen haben. . . um das es in der Exegese des Namens Jesu Christi ging." (P. 78.) The first volume comprises about one third of the material announced in the outline. The first chapter is devoted to the twofold name Christ and Jesus, the name Christ as the Old Testament witness to the Messiah's deity and humanity (especially p. 63), and the name Jesus as the "expressible" name of God and also the summary of Christ's person and work. Chapter two is devoted to the person of Christ, but in the first volume Vogel does not get beyond the question: *Cur Deus homo?* The discussion is opened with a beautiful exposition of John's prologue (pp. 100-164). On this exegetical basis he presents the arguments why the Mediator must be true man. The true deity of Christ will be presented in the next volume. He distinguishes between the real (*wirkliche*) and the true (*wahre*) humanity. The former denotes that Christ as man really experienced all the sorrows to which He was subject. The second seems to border on a strange idealism. Christ becomes the "second Adam," not by His theanthropic work, but by the assumption of our nature. If we understand Vogel correctly, he envisions Christ as a sort of ideal man, a repre-

sentative of the human race, the "reconstructed" man (*der wiederhergestellte Mensch*), who will become not by a Bultmanlike process of demythologizing—but really and eschatologically—the future perfected man (p. 453). We have here a peculiar combination and fusion of Christology and anthropology.

Vogel's method is exegetical and kerygmatic. *Ecce Homo!* is his motto throughout the volume. There is none of the liberal *Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, none of the "high Christology" of Dialectical theology, none of the *entmythologisierte* Christ of the Bultman school. Vogel's Christology is in a real sense a commentary of 2 Cor. 5:19. In his opinion all theology is Christology, that is, soteriology. He quotes approvingly Gerhard: *Biblia ita legenda esse, ac si sanguine Christi essent scripta* (p. 30), and Luther: "Also ist das Alte Testament ein Testamentbrief Christi, welchen er nach seinem Tod hat aufgetan und lassen durchs Evangelium lesen und ueberall verkuendigen" (p. 43). Vogel takes the incarnation seriously, because he takes sin, death, the wrath of God, earnestly. We used Vogel's chapter on Christ's vicarious death (pp. 272 ff.) as the basis for our Brief Study "Christ's Death the End of Our Dying" in last year's February issue of this journal. Vogel moves in genuine Lutheran theology when he evaluates and presents the work of soteriology in terms of Christ's twofold obedience (pp. 304-309). There is much more that can be said in praise of Vogel's *Christologie*.

However, we are certain that American Lutheran theologians will not be attracted to Vogel, partly because of the stylistic problems, and partly because of a peculiar type of paradox which is foreign to our thinking. The American theologian becomes weary when he is compelled to re-read sections because he constantly loses track of the author's line of thought. Almost every page contains a sentence which could be simplified and made much more intelligible. More serious, it seems, is the fact that Vogel becomes involved in a series of problematics, which in turn he attempts to solve by a paradoxical method more or less his own. A good example is the following: "Wir fragten nach dem Grund der Menschwerdung Gottes . . . und erkannten die Grundlosigkeit des goettlichen Erbarmens in den ewigen Tiefen Seines Heilsratschlusses als den absoluten Grund der Menschwerdung Gottes, in dem allein wir jenen relativen Grund in der Bezogenheit auf unser Elend erkannten" (p. 164). Another example is the section dealing with "the unity of truth in the reconciliation of the paradox" (pp. 192-217), where he proposes and discusses twenty paradox statements, such as "Der Widerspruch des Menschen gegen Gott wird in der Selbstausslieferung Gottes an den Todesfluch des Widerspruches versoehnt und zugedeckt, indem er aufgedeckt und gerichtet wird" (p. 194). A second criticism is that, restricting himself to the exegetical method, Vogel does not do full justice to the patent fact that each New Testament author has a specific interest and purpose in presenting his Christology, so that, for example, the emphasis in the Johannine Christology differs from that of the Pauline or

the Petrine. Vogel restricts himself almost exclusively to the Johannine emphasis. Thus some of the beautiful facets of New Testament Christology do not receive attention. In spite of its shortcomings, the "scholastic" method of Lutheran Orthodoxy synthesizes all the facets and brings them into a beautiful unit. Our chief censure is that in our opinion a basic theological fallacy runs through Vogel's Christology, namely, his premise that all Christology is anthropology. This statement is loaded. It can mean that all Christology has but one goal, "that I may be His own and live under Him." But the thesis can also imply a subtle existentialism. Dialectical theology maintains that man is not existentially man until in his personal encounter with Christ he has gone through the crisis. According to Barth there can be no doctrine of man without a doctrine of Christ, and so he would say, all Christology is anthropology. But man is man even in his eternal separation from God. There is a doctrine of man not only under grace, but also under the Law, just as there is a doctrine not only of the loving, but also of the "hidden" God. Vogel's material is so voluminous and at times so involved that we were unable to get a perfectly clear picture of his position. We quote approvingly the following: "Gerade in Jesus Christus wird der Mensch nicht als der Gott erkennende, sondern als der auf das abgoettische Abbild seiner Selbst pervertierte Mensch, nicht als der Gott suchende, sondern als der Gott fliehende, nicht als der Gott liebende, sondern als der Gott hassende Mensch, als der gefallene und verlorene Mensch offenbar." This is in accord with the statement in our Confessions that the Passion of Christ without the *pro nobis* is Law preaching. (*Trigl.*, p. 955, 12; Luther, St. Louis, XI:1328.) However, Vogel stresses the Incarnation, or, more exactly, the assumption of the human nature, so much that Christology is in the process of becoming anthropology. The Lutheran theologians of the Orthodox period, especially Gerhard, whom Vogel quotes frequently, present the union of the human and the divine natures always as a *personal* union; Vogel, however, seems to envision the union as a *real* union, a union of *res*, an actual exchange of the deity with the humanity. It seems that Vogel actually equates the reconciliation and the new creation. If this is the case, then Vogel is very close to Barthian dialectics. It is a basic premise of Dialectical theology that paradoxes disappear when a perfect exchange takes place between two absolute disparates, in this instance between deity and humanity (pp. 406 ff.). Does Vogel actually wish to say that the reconciliation is the "reconstruction of humanity"? This is dangerous speculation and when consistently followed will lead to universalism and will ultimately overthrow the very foundation of our faith. Before rendering final judgment we must await Vogel's further publication. F. E. MAYER

REALITIES IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. By Walton Harlowe Greever. 120 pages, 5¼ × 7¾. Copyrighted 1951 by the author. \$1.00.

This little book is the confession of faith of a man who can look back upon more than eighty years of God's tender mercy and is now looking forward to the beatific vision of Him whose salvation his eyes have seen.

In the introduction Dr. Franklin Clark Fry says of the author: "Dr. Walton H. Greever is the man above all others whom the United Lutheran Church in America delights to honor. Dr. Greever is held in affection as the wise Secretary of the Church from the beginning of 1933 to the end of 1946. Editor, professor, pastor, constructive visionary, theologian—he has been all of them. But above all, theologian!" Some of the realities in the Christian religion which Dr. Greever considers basic to faith are the following: God, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the incarnation of the Son of God, the grace of God, atonement for sin, resurrection, eternal life, regeneration, repentance, faith, sanctification, and blessedness. Dr. Greever appreciates the importance of doctrine and does not hesitate to say so. To quote: "The saddest thing in the life of the Church today is not its organizational divisions, but its creedal differences and its creedless digressions."

L. W. SPITZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

SAMPLE PACKET OF CONCORDIA SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON MATERIALS. \$1.00 net. Contents: *The Sunday School Teacher* (lower and upper divisions); *Bible Lessons for Beginners, Primary, Junior, Intermediate, Senior*; *Concordia Bible Student*; *The Bible Student*; *The Adult Bible Class*; *Parish Education*; *Bible Leaflet Folder*; *Teaching Pictures: Beginner and Primary*; *Tiny Tots*; *Child's Companion*; *Young World*; *Bible Stories in Pictures*; *Nursery Department Catalog*.

GENERAL FAMILY PACKET (a Service Package for the Pastor and Church Worker): (A) *General Guidance for the Worker*; (B) *Helping Families*; (C) *Marriage*; (D) *Family Worship*; (E) *Parenthood*; ranging in prices from 5 cents to 25 cents each pamphlet or tract.

From Philosophical Library, New York:

MARRIAGE AND THE JEWISH TRADITION. Toward a Modern Philosophy of Family Living. Edited by Stanley R. Brav. 218 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$3.75.

From Henry Schuman, New York:

GREAT CATHOLIC FESTIVALS. By James L. Monks. 110 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$2.50.

From McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York:

"A MAN CALLED PETER." By Catherine Marshall. 354 pages, 9×6 . \$3.50.

This is a biography of the Reverend Peter Marshall, Presbyterian minister and Chaplain of the United States Senate. It is written by his wife. A well-written book, which provides pleasant reading.

THE CASE AGAINST NEO-ORTHODOXY. By Chester E. Tulga. Conservative Baptist Fellowship, Chicago, Ill., 1951. 64 pages, $4\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$. 25 cents.