

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

Preserve the Unity of the Spirit

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER SR.

The Secret of God's Plan — Studies in
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Book Review

Vol. XLI

July-August 1970

No. 7

BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63118.

CHRISTOLOGIE UND GOTTESLEHRE: ÜBERLEGUNGEN ZUR THEOLOGIE VON R. BULTMANN UND D. SÖLLE.

By Uwe Gerber. Zurich: EVZ-Verlag, 1969. 80 pages. Paper. 8.80 Swiss francs.

The three essays in this volume are the author's probationary lecture for the theological faculty at Basel, a lecture on Bultmann's understanding of language that arose out of the discussion of Bultmann's Christology (the subject of the first lecture), and his inaugural lecture in Basel (dealing with a German representative of the "death of God" theology).

The writer is a strong critic of Bultmann in these essays. Bultmann's soterio-anthropological Christology falls short when measured by the doctrine of God, the Biblical doctrine of man, and the historical Jesus. Bultmann's view of language is not adequate to the understanding of the Word of God as concrete happening. Both Bultmann's Christology and his view of language are problems which current theology must work to overcome.

The essay on Sölle examines the effects of the "death-of-God" on the understanding of Jesus' death as substitutionary. Gerber questions the adequacy of Sölle's exegetical work and suggests the danger of turning Christ into a mere idea. The *humanum* in Christ's work and person is in danger of being lost.

The three essays are useful contributions to an ongoing debate. EDGAR KRENTZ

DER BRIEF DES PAULUS AN DIE GALATIER. By Ragnar Bring. Berlin: Luthersches Verlagshaus, 1968. 253 pages. Paper. DM 24.00.

Galatians looms large in the landscape of New Testament theology. The basic problem which confronts Paul in the Galatian churches, whether the Gospel requires or

even allows any kind of addition, is one that must be rethought by every generation of theologians, indeed by every individual pastor and teacher in the church. Luther called this letter his "Käte von Bora," thereby underscoring his high evaluation of this book.

Swedish theologian Bring aims at a kind of middle-ground commentary between a scientific-philological interpretation and a popularization of Paul's thought. His objective is to describe "how Paul thought and what he wanted to say in his letter" (p. 7). The historical background is sketched in minimal fashion, with some problems mentioned but not resolved (for example, the location of the readers in central Asia Minor or in the southern coastlands). One finds opinions on other disputed questions, if, for instance, Gal. 2:1-10 describes the same event as Acts 15. (Bring holds that it does.)

This interpretation by a systematician is naturally interested in the theological significance of Paul's great letter. Thus, in commenting on Gal. 3:10, Bring discusses the Law as that which man cannot by himself fulfill, but which is nonetheless good. In 4:4 Bring presses the word *ginomai* as opposed to *gennaō* to argue for "a view similar to that which Matthew and Luke represent in their accounts of the virgin birth" (p. 173). Here philology seems to be overpressed in support of a doctrine which is clearly taught in Matthew and Luke, but at best only hinted at in Gal. 4:4. Bring's comments force one to look closely at the text and to reach for some of the philological work that he himself does not do.

Bring agrees with many scholars in seeing 5:13 and not 5:1 as the point at which Paul turns from his doctrinal argument to parenthesis. In general the volume reminds one of the much more slender volume by J. P. Koehler.

Written originally in 1958 and translated into English in 1961, the volume is from the same series as Anders Nygren's *Romans*. It deserves careful reading.

EDGAR KRENTZ

THE DYNAMICS OF CONFESSION. By George William Bowman III. Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press. 113 pages. Cloth. \$3.50.

This is a little book which is impressive more for the importance of the author's thesis than for the profundity of his treatment of it. It is the author's contention that what he calls Protestantism has made a serious theological and pastoral mistake by de-emphasizing the practice of private confession. He believes that the opportunity to confess one's sins openly is a great aid to both mental and spiritual health. The lack of such a possibility, as is the case for large numbers of American Christians, creates a great gap in the plan for pastoral care.

This reviewer appreciated the rather good overview given on the subject in this book. The author touches briefly on most points which seem important: the definition and aims of confession, the historical practices, and the psychological factors involved in a valid use of the confessional. In his efforts to point up the importance of this practice, he comes close to overstating his case by implying greater benefit from the use of confession than can be validated. But perhaps that can be forgiven under the circumstances. Especially appreciated is the avoidance of the error of equating pastoral counseling with private confession. The author rightly sees these as two different things with somewhat separate goals, and therefore with distinctive rules to guide their use.

The main disappointment with the book is that it stops far short of full treatment of the issues presented. The reader who has done some investigating of this subject himself will be disappointed to find that the more complex issues are barely touched. For example, the author asserts that the confessor must distinguish between realistic and unrealistic guilt feelings. However, he does not grapple with ways to distinguish

between the two from a theological viewpoint. In fact even the most practical question of all is not answered satisfactorily. When one tries to find suggestions for reintroducing the practice of private confession into the life of a parish, he is left without answers. The last chapter, which attempts to speak to the prospects for more and better use of this valuable pastoral tool, says nothing about the parish. Bowman speaks only of how to train the clergy in the use of confession, and even what he says about that is very sketchy. As a rather basic statement on the need for the confessional and some of the ramifications of its use this book will prove helpful. One would hope that some author might pick this matter up from here and take it farther.

KENNETH J. SIESS

EARLY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. By Günther Bornkamm. Translated by Paul L. Hammer. New York: Harper & Row, 1970. [xiii] and 193 pages. Cloth. \$5.95.

Bornkamm, professor of the New Testament in Heidelberg, is probably best known in America as one of the Bultmann school who turned to a renewed quest for the historical Jesus. In addition to his *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), only a few scattered essays have been Englished, the best known being the two studies of Matthew that appeared in the volume of collected essays that he put out on Matthew together with two students, Gerhard Barth and Heinz Joachim Held (*Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963]). These volumes might awaken the impression that Bornkamm has dealt primarily with the gospels, both form-critically and redaction-critically, and the historical Jesus.

The present volume will help to show the versatility of Bornkamm. He recently published a volume on Paul for the general audience of interested and educated laymen that greeted his *Jesus of Nazareth* so enthusiastically in Germany (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1969). Behind that volume lie 25 years of the most exacting and acute philological and historical Pauline scholarship.

The first two volumes of his collected essays dealt primarily with Paul (16 of 24 essays). Eleven of those essays are translated here. The first two are general, treating the concepts of God's Word and man's word in the New Testament and "Christ and World in the Early Christian Message." These two reveal affinities with the existential understanding of the concept "Word of God" familiar in Ebeling and Fuchs. (Incidentally, the date, the title, and the initials of von Arnim are wrong in the reference to the *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* in footnote 27 on page 27; they were better in the original German.)

Four essays deal with the Book of Romans. "The Revelation of God's Wrath (Romans 1—3)" is an outstanding contribution to the understanding of these chapters. Bornkamm makes excellent use of Wisdom and Philo in this essay. "Baptism and New Life in Paul (Romans 6)" discusses the relation of Pauline eschatology and ethics as it surfaces in his baptismal theology. The concluding sentences are typical: "In baptism everything is given to us for this and for the future life; nothing remains that we have to add to it. The obedience of believers cannot penetrate further than to what has happened to us at the beginning. It takes place in the constant 'crawling-under-baptism' (Luther)." The essay on "Sin, Law and Death (Romans 7)" argues the view that Rom. 7:7-25 is a description of man under the Law, man unredeemed described from the standpoint of the redeemed man. "The Praise of God (Romans 11:33-36)" examines the great doxology that concludes Romans 11 form-critically and theologically.

Three essays relate primarily to 1 Corinthians: "Faith and Reason in Paul," "Lord's Supper and Church in Paul," and "The More Excellent Way (1 Corinthians 13)." The final two examine aspects of early Christian worship and the great hymn in Phil. 2:6-11.

Anyone interested in Pauline theology will find this book an important contribution. Each essay discusses a significant topic significantly. This reviewer recommends their reading.

EDGAR KRENTZ

CHRISTIANITY: THE WITNESS OF HISTORY — A LAWYER'S APPROACH.

By J. N. D. Anderson. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1969. 110 pages. Paper. \$1.95.

This work in four chapters is in the tradition of classical apologetics and Christian evidences. The author is professor of Oriental laws at the University of London.

He argues successively for the historicity of Jesus as presented in the gospels, for the rational adequacy of the New Testament interpretation of Jesus as the unique Son of God, for the significance of Jesus' death (no one single interpretation does it justice), and finally that the resurrection is a fully historical happening.

Anderson writes gracefully and clearly. He is convinced that the intellectual and the experiential are not mutually exclusive in Christian faith. This little book might be a useful point of departure for discussion with people whose concept of truth is dominated by scientism. It might well be added to parish libraries.

EDGAR KRENTZ

THE BOOK OF JUDGES and NOTES ON THE HEBREW TEXT OF THE BOOK OF KINGS. By C. F. Burney. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1970. 38 (Prolegomenon), cxxviii, 527 (Judges), xlviii, and 384 (Kings) pages. Cloth. \$19.95.

The reprinting of these two volumes (bound in one) makes available Burney's first-rate philological and textual notes. In both commentaries he acknowledges his great indebtedness to S. R. Driver, and in Kings he follows the format of Driver's *Notes on the Hebrew Text . . . of the Books of Samuel*. First published in 1903, the Kings commentary is primarily a discussion of lexicography, syntax, and textual criticism, not to mention Burney's fine control, for his day, of historical and archaeological data. Burney considered the needs of beginners in the study of Hebrew; his notes are still valuable in this area since systematic treatments of Hebrew syntax even today are rather weak. For more than 20 pages he discusses the characteristics of the ancient versions. Recent work on the

Septuagint would call for some revision here, but Burney did sense the extraordinary importance of the variants between the "regular" Septuagint and the Lucianic text. Because of the frequent expression "unto this day" the author decided that the main part of Kings was pre-exilic, a position shared in large part by William Foxwell Albright against Martin Noth. In addition to this excellent commentary on Kings, Biblical students also have those of Montgomery-Gehman, John Gray, and Martin Noth (incomplete at his death). Tadmor's forthcoming commentary in the *Anchor Bible* will bring the Assyriological data up to date.

The commentary on Judges is more conventional in style and is a considerable improvement over George Foot Moore's volume in the *International Critical Commentary*. First published in 1918, after Burney had spent considerable time on Assyriology, this commentary also has philological merit today although it antedates the important finds at Ugarit and Mari. Noth's theories of a Deuteronomistic history and of a league gathered around a central sanctuary call for considerable updating of Burney. Burney, for example, still isolated J and E material in Judges.

Albright's Prolegomenon follows his own inimitable style, lavish with praise but constantly referring to his own articles published (or still planned!) on matters of detail. Albright believes that the man who wrote Deuteronomy also wrote the Deuteronomistic history, thus ignoring the differences most scholars see between these two works. High praise is given to Paul Lapp's survey of the relation between archaeological finds and the traditions of the conquest published in this journal, XXXVIII (1967), 283—300.

RALPH W. KLEIN

JERUSALEM IN THE TIME OF JESUS.

By Joachim Jeremias. Translated by F. H. and C. H. Cave. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969. xvi and 405 pages. Cloth. \$9.00.

Like some richly textured and colorfully patterned piece of fabric, this book pleases its beholder and will give long service.

I

In part one the author discusses "Economic Conditions in the City of Jerusalem." Boasting only about 25,000 inhabitants, ill-situated in a remote highland, far from any major trade route, lacking any precious mineral or agricultural wealth, required to import most of its food, Jerusalem was nevertheless a thriving city. Not because of the sheep and cattle grazing in the hills, not because of related industries (hides, wool), not because of stone cut from quarries round about and exported, not because of olive trees yielding their abundant oil, but because of its political and religious significance Jerusalem flourished.

It was an impressive city. The Herods were enthusiastic builders, and Pontius Pilate contributed a much-needed aqueduct (out of temple funds). Thousands were engaged in building and allied trades, such as maintenance, then as now a big business.

The great complex of buildings and the staff of priests were supported by the temple tax. Besides the annual payment of the didrachma (the first tax), every good Jew was committed to spending a tenth of the produce of his land in Jerusalem (the second tax). Furthermore, the population of the surrounding territory paid a general tax, and some of that revenue was spent in Jerusalem. In addition there were sundry other sources of income, such as sacrifices and offerings, redemption of vows, bequests and the produce of land owned by the temple. Finally, Jerusalem enjoyed a booming tourist trade.

Jerusalem boasted many wealthy citizens, among them the members of the royal court, priestly aristocracy, landowners, merchants, tax-farmers. In part two Jeremias describes their sources of income and manner of life. Jerusalem had a middle class of small industrialists, craftsmen, and shopkeepers. Those connected with the temple (such as bakers of showbread and makers of incense) and with the tourist trade (such as caterers and tavern owners) did very well. The ordinary priests fall into this category.

The poor included, of course, slaves and day laborers. But in addition there were

many subsidized persons. Scribes (rabbis) were not paid for exercising their profession. Some, like Paul, did manual work. But in the main the scribes lived on subsidies, as Jesus was apparently supported by devoted women (Luke 8:1-3). Scribes who were also priests or who worked in the temple probably drew a regular income. Besides the scribes there were many beggars, and in Jesus' day the city was full of idlers.

The cost of living was high because of some of the factors already described and because Judea had to find 600 talents annually during the years of Roman rule. Taxes were therefore burdensome.

Charity was important in the life of Jerusalem. Besides private almsgiving there was the charity of religious communities. The Essenes, for example, had agents in every city to provide their travelers with necessities. The Jewish community as a whole was organized to provide both a daily and a weekly dole. It is usually assumed that it served as pattern for the twofold Christian arrangement described in Acts, but Jeremias raises the question as to which was pattern for which.

There was certainly tension in the city because of the striking contrast between the large number of poor and the very wealthy lay and clerical aristocracy.

Part three, "Social Status," opens with vivid and detailed description of the various ranks of the clergy: the high priest, the chief priests (the captain of the temple, leaders of the weekly and daily courses of priests, seven temple overseers, three temple treasurers), the ordinary priests (some 7,200 strong), the Levites (singers, musicians, temple servants and guards, totaling about 9,600).

Against Schuerer Jeremias argues that high priests were not the nearest blood relations of the one high priest but simply the archpriests who because of their functions in the Jerusalem temple stood at the head of the ordinary provincial priests.

In New Testament times the Sanhedrin or Senate consisted of 71 members, who fell into three groups: chief priests (the high priest presided in the Sanhedrin), the scribes

(mostly of Pharisaic position), and the elders or lay aristocracy (mostly Sadducean).

The scribes were derived from every social class including the priestly. Even some men with pagan blood in their veins became scribes. After several years of study in the tradition and in the method of interpreting the Law, a student would be ordained by the laying on of hands and admitted to the ranks of the scribes, who handed down decisions on ritual matters and acted as judges in criminal and civil proceedings. Henceforth he had the right to be called rabbi, a title which was in the first century coming to be reserved for ordained scholars.

Jeremias stresses that the scribes were keepers of esoteric doctrine on cosmogony and theosophy, the sort of thing that fills the apocalypses. Other interpreters have thought that legal materials such as are found in the Talmud represented the esoteric teaching of the scribes, while the apocalypses were the religion of the people, but Jeremias believes that the opposite is the case. Nevertheless, he approaches the ordinary interpretation when he recognizes that the entire oral tradition was an esoteric body of knowledge until it was set down in writing by R. Judah in the Mishnah ca. A. D. 200. As keepers of divine esoteric knowledge the scribes were the heirs and successors of the prophets.

The Pharisees for the most part were not aristocratic but lower- and middle-class laymen without scribal education. Jeremias stresses that they were not only pious individuals but members of religious associations or communities devoted to living according to the rules on tithes and purity laid down by Pharisaic scribes. After a probationary period of one year a man might be admitted to a Pharisaic community which had its scribal leaders and its assemblies, especially on the eve of the Sabbath in connection with a fellowship meal. The Pharisaic movement originated in the temple and was in fact an effort to raise to the level of general practice the regulations laid upon the priests.

The book closes with a section on "The Maintenance of Racial Purity." The author believes that the whole community at the time of Jesus was dominated by the funda-

mental idea of the maintenance of racial purity. Here he treats genealogies and legitimacy of ancestry, despised trades and Jewish slaves, the notion of Israelites with slight or grave blemish, Gentile slaves, Samaritans and women, showing how only the Jewish male of pure ancestry belonged to the true Israel, and only for the true Israel would all the promises of the future age come fully true.

The above is an X-ray, indicating the bones of the book, which is fleshed out by constant argument with other interpreters and by a mass of citation of primary sources.

II

The difficulties with the sources for reconstructing Jewish life in Jesus' day are well known. Josephus exaggerates and for the sake of his Roman and other non-Jewish readers translates Jewish customs, terms, and ideas into their near equivalents with more or less accuracy. The Talmuds and Mishnah surely contain traditional material. However, they are written from the point of view of the Pharisees in post-Destruction days, and it was the Sadducees who wielded the more power in legislation and jurisprudence while the temple stood. Many of the apocalypses and pseudepigraphical books of esoteric teachings are difficult to date or have been interpolated by Christian redactors, and they can be used only hesitantly as sources for ideas current in Jesus' day. With the Dead Sea Scrolls we know where we stand chronologically, since the community was destroyed by the Romans during the war of A. D. 66 to 70, and Jeremias has for this revision of his book brought the Qumran literature to bear on his subjects. (This first English edition is based on the third German edition.)

Jeremias' father was a pastor in Jerusalem, and so from a child the author has known the sacred sites and the sacred languages. He is an incomparable master of the sources. His indices to primary works fill 40 columns of 40 lines each. He also knows the secondary materials and challenges them where they conflict with the results of his own research. Furthermore, he not only cites the evidence but he interrogates it, seeking corroboration of disputed points in different branches of the literature, bringing to bear

the Qumran writings, Philo, Josephus, Targumim, Tosephta, Mishnah, and Talmuds. Thus his book is a primer on the use of the sources.

He has little on the politics of Jerusalem, its history, geography, or archaeology. These matters are presented only as they affect the social and economic picture, which he reconstructs almost exclusively on the basis of literary records.

The book is an encyclopedia on select and enormously important aspects of the life of the Jewish people in Jerusalem and beyond at the time of Jesus. At first one is almost tempted to say it is a "mere compilation" of passages out of Jewish sources serving to delineate social classes and economic life. It is nothing like a travelog with picturesque descriptions of the physical surroundings or charming customs of the natives. It has nothing hortatory or immediately edifying about it. It is just details, details, details. And the details are not managed in such a way that they lead to some religious or ethical point that the author is anxious to make. It is almost a bald recitation.

But just precisely the unadorned recitation of details is what gives the book its special force. There emerges not only a clearer picture of social conditions, so that the reader finds light being shed on the knowledge of the New Testament which he himself brings to the book. That does happen. Jesus' parables about stewards and banquets, the community life of the early church, and its charitable system are illuminated. Also, the book provokes thought on special topics, such as the penetration of Hebrew culture by Hellenistic via tourism and foreign trade.

But the heaping up of materials on social and economic life should have an especially powerful and salutary effect on anyone suffering from a case of Docetism. The book is a kind of commentary on "born of a woman, born under the Law." In the same way the book has an antiromantic effect, jarring the reader with the strangeness of that ancient world, the unattractiveness of its life, the psychic distance between us and them, the oriental Jewish character of the Gospel setting.

But most of all the book makes clear that the Jews of Jesus' day were doing their very best to live before God in righteousness and purity. The whole society was geared and organized to promote purity. Priests, theologians, and pious laymen were a serious interlocking directorate attempting to think through and act out the fact of chosenness and holiness. To be God's and godly was to be pure. By his eating with tax collectors and prostitutes, by his consorting with women publicly, by his choice of disciples and the manner of his own life, by his word of forgiveness and positive acceptance of the outcast, Jesus set himself against a complex and powerful religious, social, and economic system. Jesus' intention and activities, reported in our gospels, become clearer and the reader feels again their offensiveness. And Jesus' uniqueness emerges once more from a study of this volume.

By its meticulous reconstruction of the context of Jesus' ministry this book offers us the opportunity to recapture the boldness of Jesus' stunning challenge to his society, to review Jesus' strong affirmation of God's outreach to the sinner. It is a piece of pure academic scholarship, and yet it is, unintentionally or not, a call to renew our own vision of the church as a new community created and sustained by divine forgiveness.

ROBERT H. SMITH

MYSTERIOUS OMISSIONS. By Hugh T. Morrison. Chicago: Disciples Divinity House, 1969. 56 pages. Cloth. Price not given.

The author expresses the opinion that Jesus was no Galilean carpenter in the time before his public ministry but that He lived in Judea, became popular with the Essenes, and was baptized by John, whom he imagines to have been an authoritative Qumran preacher. Then the Qumraners all flocked to Jesus' banner, burying their writings in caves when they abandoned their monasteries in favor of Jesus. They buried the writings instead of destroying them utterly, in case they changed their minds about Jesus and decided to return to the old monastery!

This slender story is embellished further

with some flights of imagination which depend on Mark's having been an Essene. The reason he left the first missionary journey was that Paul the Pharisee made an invidious remark about Essenes.

This fanciful tale is a grim reminder of what easily happens when people undertake to study the Bible arbitrarily without any adequate historical method.

ROBERT H. SMITH

THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH ACCORDING TO THE JEWISH INTERPRETERS. Vol. I: *Texts*; xxiv and 572 pages. Vol. II: *Translations*; lxxvi and 612 pages. By Samuel R. Driver and Adolf Neubauer. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1970. Cloth. \$22.50.

The first edition of this work in 1876 was instigated by Edward Bouverie Pusey, who seems to have wanted reassurance that no hermeneutical objection could be raised to his interpretation of Isaiah 53 as the *locus classicus* for the vicarious suffering of the Messiah. The texts were collected by Neubauer, a Jew, while Driver, a Christian, made the translations. The texts range from the Septuagint to the commentary of Luzzatto in 1867. The Jewish exegetes construed the text either (a) of the future Messiah or (b) of the Jewish people or (c) of the prophet Isaiah himself.

Despite its repetitiousness, the collection is a valuable source book for the history of Jewish exegesis. Interestingly enough, the interpretation of the servant as the people of Israel which came to predominate in Jewish circles is a widely held opinion in contemporary exegesis for both Jews and Christians. While the discussion of the identity of the servant still continues, it will never again take the form of a debate of Christians with Jews, as it was for Pusey.

It must not be overlooked that only the Septuagint of all the Jewish interpretations cited in this work comes from pre-Christian times. Perhaps further finds will someday elucidate more fully the history of the exegesis of this text from the 6th century before Christ to the time of the evangelists.

RALPH W. KLEIN