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Book Reviews

EMANUEL HIRSCH UND PAUL TILlich: THEOLOGIE UND POLITIK IN EINER ZEIT DER KRISE. By A. James Reimer. Translated by Doris Lax. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995.

Emanuel Hirsch and Paul Tillich were among the most brilliant philosophical and theological minds of the twentieth century. Having become warm friends in their youth, they were gradually led apart by diverging theological, personal and ethical concepts, and especially by opposing political views, so that their ties were broken for twenty years. It was not until after World War II that they met again and renewed their early friendship.

Politically, Hirsch was a fervent nationalist and became a Nazi. Tillich was a Marxist and a socialist who was forced to leave Germany after Hitler's takeover. Both men came from Lutheran parsonages and were molded by philosophical idealism. In theology, Hirsch had been strongly influenced by the liberal Luther scholar, Karl Holl, and Tillich by the mediating theologian, Martin Kähler. In their differing views regarding the philosophy of religion, Hirsch stressed the transcendence of God, and Tillich his immanence.

From the standpoint of a conservative Lutheranism, both men were outspoken liberals and were very critical in their approach to the Scriptures and the Confessions. Hirsch was a Luther scholar in the sense of the intensive but rather one-sided Holl School. Even though this school of interpretation did not always yield acceptable conclusions to Missouri Synod Lutherans, Hirsch's involvement with Luther gave his work a much more positive stamp than did the work of Tillich. It also provided Hirsch with positive moral values and led him to rebuke Tillich's sexual promiscuity (pages 54-55). It was Tillich's political and moral radicalism that led to serious conflict with the Consistory of Brandenburg and Tillich's change from a theological to a philosophical chair (page 54).

Idealism lies dangerously close to enthusiasm, and both thinkers became caught in its web: Tillich with his notion of the proletariat as a divine manifestation, and Hirsch in his identification of law with God's law as understood by National Socialism (page 55). Reimer comments tellingly: "In [Hirsch's

letter to Tillich], it is ironical that Hirsch accused Tillich in 1921 with the 'sanctification' of the proletariat; ironically, in 1934 Tillich accused Hirsch of sanctifying the National Socialist movement" (page 55). In both cases something human was falsely deified. Hirsch bent idealism in the direction that God was separate from "spirit," whereas Tillich derived God out of an autonomous spirit (page 51).

Hirsch misrepresented Luther's "Two Kingdoms" doctrine. He opened with a flawed definition of the church as a "fellowship of consciences," and moved on to differentiate between the "visible" state and the "invisible" church. "The state and law belong in the earthly-natural life, the kingdom of God contrariwise is a spiritual quantity, the fellowship of consciences experienced as a quickening power. The separation of these two powers was the important recognition of Luther" (page 203). Hirsch thereby promoted a false dualism and helped dichotomize Luther's doctrine, diminishing the responsibility of the secular power toward God and moving the state toward moral autonomy. In the undersigned's judgment, it was this distortion of Luther, more than anything else that Hirsch wrote to support the National Socialists, that encouraged the totalitarianism, racism, and belligerence of Hitler's government. Like his teacher Karl Holl, Hirsch regarded morality *Sittlichkeit* as the essence of the Christian religion. This moralism hindered the proper distinction of Law and Gospel, which, again, undercut the doctrine of the two kingdoms.

In spite of Hirsch's blemishes, Reimer strives for impartiality. Rather than constantly denouncing Hirsch, he tries to be fair to his difficult subject and to understand why he wrote or acted in the way that he did. However, at times he becomes very critical of Hirsch (page 109). Even in his analysis of Hirsch's questionable position on the "Arian Paragraph," Reimer defends Hirsch from false charges, though he inexorably calls him to account for his errors (pages 116-118). Reimer even tries to be charitable toward Ludwig Müller, the hated Reichsbishop who made so much trouble for Wurm and Meiser. Considering the partisanship of many previous writers (W. Niemöller, Scholder, Cochrane, Hamm), who sought to destroy those whom they discussed, it is

refreshing that Reimer allows Hirsch's denial that he had joined the Thuringian German Christians to stand: "Always, the word of Emanuel Hirsch must remain the word of Emanuel Hirsch" (page 116). Such charity is instructive to other historians.

The occasional references to Paul Althaus by Reimer present a misleading picture of the noted Erlangen theologian. Reimer seems to have no independent knowledge of Althaus, but only mentions him in clichés. For example, Reimer uncritically follows the schematization of Klaus Scholder, who regularly lumps Althaus together with Hirsch, Gogarten, and Stapel (page 36). Reimer ineptly calls these all "political theologians." In fact, Stapel was not a theologian and Althaus was not a political theologian (although he wrote several articles and pamphlets on political ethics during the late 1920s and 1930s). Reimer is naive when he remarks, seemingly disparagingly, that "Hirsch and his comrades Kittel and Althaus had underneath an ambivalent attitude toward the Enlightenment" (page 149). That would, of course, be true of almost all theologians of all persuasions and not simply of these three men. Nor does this in itself make Kittel, Hirsch, and Althaus into "comrades." Reimer follows Erickson's rather arbitrary grouping of these three theologians who supported Hitler, but goes farther and speaks of them as "Nazi theologians." This is incorrect, for Althaus was at no time a member of the Nazi party. In fact, Althaus belonged to the theological faculty at Erlangen, the only one in Germany that had neither Nazis nor German Christians among the regular professors and that remained "intact" until the collapse of Nazism in 1945. To the best of this reviewer's knowledge, the claim that Althaus joined the *Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen* in 1933, which Reimer borrows from Zabel, is without foundation and unreliable (page 91).

This book is recommended for readers who are interested in the experience of Germany under the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich and in the perception of those experiences as debated in the political ethics of Hirsch and Tillich. Both Hirsch and Tillich were giants of the twentieth-century theological scene. No doubt most Americans would prefer reading the book in its original English form (*The Emanuel Hirsch and Paul Tillich Debate: A Study in the*

Political Ramifications of Theology [Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1989]) rather than in this translation into German. The advantage to using the German translation is that peculiarly German matters are described more precisely in the German language.

Lowell Green
Buffalo, New York

THE DESCENT OF GOD: DIVINE SUFFERING IN HISTORY AND THEOLOGY. By Joseph M. Hallman. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

Hallman's work stands as a valuable contribution to theological study and as a provocative encouragement for other authors to bridge disciplinary boundaries. The subtitle of the work indicates the sweep of his survey: he traces the theme of divine suffering from Anaximander (*circa* 610-541 B.C.) to Alfred North Whitehead (A.D. 1861-1947). Hallman suggests that the "high" conciliar christology of Nicaea and Constantinople "seems irrelevant to contemporary Christian faith's concern for perfecting the human"; he proposes to trace a divergent, minority tradition that "attempted to adhere to the portrait of the biblical deity as one who suffers and changes" (pages xi-xii).

Hallman provides the reader with a stimulating anthology of readings from this "minority tradition." From the urgent plea of Augustine that we "imitate a humble God" to Whitehead's description of salvation as God saving "the world as it passes into the immediacy of his own life," the material here pleads with the reader to ponder anew the descent of God. It is hard to imagine a reader not approaching the question of divine suffering from a new perspective after having read this book. And yet, the strengths of the volume as an anthology point to its weaknesses as a survey.

Writers who have made significant contributions to the understanding of divine suffering are often all but omitted from the discussion. Martin Luther is mentioned only twice, almost in passing. This circumstance is disappointing for anyone who had hoped to find in this book either confirmation or refutation of

Marc Lienhard's claim that Luther's description of "the suffering of Christ on the cross certainly constitutes a break with tradition"; that no previous theologian had dared to attribute to Christ the *Anfechtungen* to which humans are exposed; that Luther "envisages in a radical fashion the feeling of abandonment and damnation in the consciousness of Jesus Christ" (*Luther: Witness to Jesus Christ* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982], 116).

In his discussion of the patristic period, Hallman is guilty of a more serious omission. His examination of the suffering of God moves from father to father without adequate adjustment for differing models of godhead and personhood. The survey borders on misrepresentation when statements concerning the suffering of the Father or of the Logos are not evaluated within the often complicated and sophisticated theologies and christologies of the respective sources.

Hallman anthologizes with a purpose: in the end he suggests that incarnational christology might "live again" if divine perfection can be conceived of as "perfection in change" (page xiii). The question that now needs to be asked is whether a god who always changes is really all that different from a god who never changes—and whether either of these gods can be the God of the incarnation. The greatest contribution of Hallman may be in forcing us to ask that question again.

Jeffrey A. Oschwald
Taiwan

ADOLF SCHLATTER: A BIOGRAPHY OF GERMANY'S PREMIER BIBLICAL THEOLOGIAN. By Werner Neuer. Translated by Robert W. Yarbrough. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995.

There are theologians and writers of whom we are largely unaware, much to our disadvantage. Within our own Lutheran heritage one might mention the major figures of nineteenth-century Lutheran confessionalism, such as Vilmar, Theodosius von Harnack, Harless, Kliefoth, and the great historian/exegete Theodor Zahn. From the English tradition of the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries one might mention the magisterial efforts of J. B. Lightfoot and H. B. Swete, not to mention Westcott and Hort. One would have to include in this litany Adolf Schlatter, the Swiss born pietist-scholar, whose work on theological method and biblical exegesis remains largely unknown to American scholars and students. In his forward to this book Mark Noll notes that Schlatter was never accorded the respect he deserved, even in Germany where most of his work occurred. Schlatter was too conservative in his approach and conclusions for the German university environment in which he worked and he was too scholarly for the popular pietism of the general German public. As is most always the case, the problem of translation from the German to the English virtually ensures obscurity in the United States. All the more, then, is this book a most welcome addition, and with more promised to come from Baker Book House.

While a technical biography of Schlatter is forthcoming in Germany, this book is presently the only biography of Schlatter. Werner Neuer, scholar at the Institute for the Study of Missions and Ecumenical Theology in Tübingen, presents what he calls a "sketch rather than a complete portrait" of Schlatter: "I have chosen to focus on those matters that throw light on Schlatter as a *person* and as a *Christian*. Schlatter the *theologian* and his theological writings proper recede into the background by comparison" (page 14). While one may regret this choice of scope, it does offer an introduction to Schlatter and his life that is accessible to student and layperson alike. Sixty photographs and numerous excerpts from Schlatter's writings render the account more vivid and immediately interesting.

Born in 1852 in St. Gallen, Switzerland (his home can still be seen across the street from the beautiful Baroque Cathedral of St. Gallen), Schlatter inherited an interest in the Christian life and academic pursuits. One of his great-grandmothers was a direct descendent of Joachim Vadian (the Reformer of St. Gallen), and his grandmother, Anna (who was significant force in the German "Awakening") corresponded with such theologians as Schleiermacher and de Wette. Coming from this background, Schlatter was never identified with any particular confessional movement, which may have made his work broader in appeal

and influence.

Schlatter is perhaps best remembered for his staunch opposition to the "science" of Enlightenment thinking, which dominated much of German theology at the time, as well as for his conviction that Judaism was the most proper background for understanding the New Testament.

A pervasive theme of Schlatter's life and work is the high appreciation of nature that he received from his family and the Swiss alpine environment. His systematic work especially reveals his strong sense of the unity between creation and redemption.

Schlatter's academic career began at the University of Bern, but escalated significantly at his next post, the University of Greifswald. Here he primarily taught New Testament exegesis and Judaica. While at Greifswald he made two of his most important contacts. First, he met Hermann Cremer with whom he established the noteworthy journal, *Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie*. Second, he taught Wilhelm Lütgert, his most accomplished and distinguished student. A major turn in Schlatter's career came when he was called by the German government to a recently established chair of systematic theology at the University of Berlin to counter the theological liberalism of Adolf von Harnack (who was also at Berlin). Although personally happy at Greifswald, Schlatter accepted the chair. Because of Schlatter's orthodoxy von Harnack greeted him skeptically. But Schlatter's becoming personality, along with his unassailable scholarship, earned him von Harnack's personal friendship and professional respect. Schlatter is finally known for his long-held position as Professor of New Testament at the University of Tübingen (1898-1922). Even after his release from academic life in 1922, Schlatter's work remained prodigious until his death in 1938.

This reviewer first encountered Schlatter in his *Anfänge der christlichen Martyrien*, a pre-World War I publication. The preface was a remarkable apology for Kaiser Wilhelm, whom Schlatter depicted as a virtual new Charlemagne. Schlatter was never a political ideologue, but this preface marked him as a man of his times. Nonetheless, his scholarship and attentive honesty

concerning the biblical text elevated him above the theological discussions of post-World War I Europe. Schlatter had extensive correspondence with Karl Barth and even more with Emil Brunner. Schlatter was aware that Barth's Neo-Orthodoxy did not do justice to the creation themes of the Bible. At the same time, Schlatter's interest in Judaica competed with the new existentialist doctrines of Bultmann and his disparagement of the Old Testament and history. From the beginning Schlatter was an out-spoken opponent of the new National Socialist regime of Hitler. No doubt his strong Christian piety and his respect for the Jewish antecedents of the New Testament helped preserve him from this momentous historical temptation. Now that scholars again recognize the importance of Judaism for New Testament study, Schlatter is being appreciated in Germany. It is time for us in the United States to learn of him as well. This book makes a small but welcome invitation to that task.

William C. Weinrich

MARTIN LUTHER IN TWO CENTURIES: THE SIXTEENTH AND THE TWENTIETH. By Helmar Junghans. Translated by Katharina Gustavs and Gerald S. Krispin. St. Paul: Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation Reformation Library, 1992.

In 1991 Helmar Junghans, a prominent Luther-scholar in Europe and editor of the *Lutherjahrbuch*, toured the United States and gave a series of lectures that have been collected into this one volume. The six essays cover a broad range of topics. In the first essay, "Luther's Development from Biblical Humanist to Reformer," Junghans provides a useful review of Luther's training in Erfurt, his acquaintance with the fathers of the church, and his understanding and use of the Bible. The second essay, "Wittenberg and Luther: Luther and Wittenberg," is a delightful piece in which the author demonstrates the importance of examining the relationship between the man and the location. Junghans concludes: "Studying Wittenberg and Electoral Saxony is of extraordinary importance because this was the actual historical place where Christ called Luther to serve him" (page 28).

The third essay, "The Center of the Theology of Martin Luther,"

is an excellent introduction to Luther's thought. Junghans begins with a survey of research on Luther by briefly examining the work of such Luther-scholars as Köstlin, Ebeling, Holl, Harnack, Elert and Althaus. He then proceeds to present his own assessment of the structure of Luther's theology according to the following outline: (1.) God works everything (2.) through his Word (3.) in a process (4.) toward salvation (page 33).

The fourth and fifth essays were the most useful to this reviewer. The first is a short biography of Thomas Müntzer, and the second relates the story of how the former German Democratic Republic tried to claim Müntzer as one of its own. Both essays are filled with insight into a subject about which Lutherans in America know little. The same is also true of the final essay, "The Christians' Contribution to the Non-Violent Revolution in the German Democratic Republic in the Fall of 1989." While the rest of the world had to be content to watch the fall of the Berlin Wall on television, Junghans was there. In this essay he recounts the vital role that the German church played in the revolution. One cannot read his words without sensing his conviction regarding the profound influence that the church had in promoting peace during a potentially violent moment in history.

The Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation Reformation Library is to be commended for making these essays available. The LBFRL, founded in 1983, has collected over twenty thousand primary sources from the sixteenth century which are available to researchers.

Paul J. Grime
Saint Louis, Missouri

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA. By Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.

The story of Christianity in the United States and Canada is indeed a long one. It spans five hundred years, millions of square miles, thousands of cultures, hundreds of denominations, and dozens of major themes. It demands great skills of the master

historian. Noll, Professor of Church History at Wheaton College, takes up and meets these challenges. He tells the stories of ordinary Christians as well as leaders, heroes, and villains. He emphasizes the often neglected tales of African-American Christianity, stories of women of faith, the missionary movement in the United States and Canada, and the role of Christianity in American and Canadian literature. He places the whole story in the context of the international events and movements that influenced and shaped the church in North America. He corrects the bias of previous historians, who looked at history through the lens of their own times. For example, he reminds critics of seventeenth-century puritanism that "the number of executions for witchcraft in New England was proportionately less than in most of the countries of western Europe" (page 51).

The author provides other contexts often ignored by those telling the same story. He analyzes the contemporary church and briefly discusses trends and movements affecting Christianity in the United States and Canada. His chapters are organized around themes, allowing the story to unfold on its own terms rather than around an artificially supplied chronology. Best of all, each chapter begins with a hymn from the period and theme being discussed, helping the reader to catch the flavor of spirituality throughout the passing years.

The structure of this work is very friendly to readers. Noll provides detailed supporting bibliographies at the end of each chapter, rather than cluttering the text with footnote numbers and scholarly apparatus. The work is well illustrated with photographs, paintings, maps, posters, charts, and graphs. The tone and vocabulary of the work are such that the average undergraduate student may read it at a comfortable pace.

Noll commendably states his approaches and working assumptions in the introduction of the work. He does not apologize for presenting the "history of Christianity" rather than the "history of religion" (page 3). He tells the story from the Christian perspective. He gives movements on the fringe of Christianity "a charitable benefit of a doubt" (page 4), considering them Christian if they call themselves Christian. He also does not hide the fact that historians, especially of religion,

are also preachers. It is good for students of historical scholarship to remember that much of what they read is interpretation.

Inevitably, the work does have its weaknesses. The history of North American Lutheranism is given very little attention, even when its small numbers are taken into account. There is no mention, for example, of the contributions of the sons of Henry Muhlenberg, who served in prominent military, scholarly, and governmental roles during and after the Revolutionary War. The influence of non-Christian religions upon recent liberal Christian thought is left out of the discussion. The profound effect of the door-to-door evangelism conducted by the non-Christian Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses movements receives no attention. Yet a work of this scope cannot be expected to discuss everything.

In spite of these minor flaws, Noll has produced a valuable textbook on the history of Christianity in America. The work will give the reader a suitable overview of the history of the faith on the North American continent. It will prove useful to students of history who desire to acquire an understanding of the forces which have challenged and shaped of their own denominations and the common Christian tradition.

Robert E. Smith
Fort Wayne, Indiana

TRUE FAITH IN THE TRUE GOD: AN INTRODUCTION TO LUTHER'S LIFE AND THOUGHT. By Hans Schwarz. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996.

The editors at Augsburg Fortress are to be commended for the consistently high quality of their publications translated from German Luther scholars. In recent years this has included the wonderful three-volume Luther biography by Martin Brecht (1985-93) and the indispensable handbook to Luther studies by Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (1986). However, one needs to go back thirty years, to the publication of Paul Althaus' *The Theology of Martin Luther*, to find a work of the same quality dealing with Luther's theology in a comprehensive manner.

Schwarz's *True Faith in the True God*, although not without its merits, fails to fill this significant void. Although both the biographical and theological portions are eminently readable, the book has two major methodological faults. The first is endemic to this sort of scholarship, namely, the temptation to confuse the author's ideas with the founding father's ideas. It is not easy to discern where Luther's ideas stop and where Schwarz's ideas begin. In this regard, both Althaus' and Lohse's books are superior.

The second fault contributes to and justifies the first. Schwarz asserts that Luther and "modern industrial society" would find their religious concerns mutually incomprehensible (page 9). In an attempt to make Luther more understandable, Schwarz substitutes Luther's fear of condemnation with "the fear of meaninglessness, the fear of losing our jobs, the fear of finishing life empty-handed" and "that we are driven by anxiety" (page 9). Here the categories of existential philosophy have replaced Christian soteriology.

Lohse addressed this type of error in his above noted book: "Our discussion of every point of Luther's doctrine [should] be faithful to the way in which Luther himself practiced theology, especially on the basis of his understanding of the relationship of people to God. In his lectures on Psalm 51 Luther says, 'The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and condemned, and God the Justifier and Savior of man the sinner. Whatever is asked or discussed in theology outside this subject is error and poison' . . . Only on this basis can we succeed in avoiding . . . the danger of an attempt to reinterpret Luther in order to make him existentially relevant to a particular contemporary situation" (Lohse, page 144).

Those looking for an existentialist presentation of Luther's theology may be pleased with Schwarz's book. Those interested in an objective presentation of Luther's own concerns will be better served elsewhere.

Martin Noland
Oak Park, Illinois

BAPTIZED INTO GOD'S FAMILY: THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT BAPTISM FOR TODAY. By A. Andrew Das. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991.

This book is one of the most helpful which this reviewer has come across in recent years. Written in a popular, easy-to-read style, it explains and defends the position of the Lutheran Church on infant Baptism without being overly polemical in style. In catechetical instruction of both youth and adults in twenty-eight years of parish ministry, the undersigned used almost every argument that Andrew Das employs in his book. The reviewer only wishes that at that time he had this book to give to those who had the most difficulties with the doctrine of infant Baptism.

Das' clarification in the introduction that Baptism is Gospel rather than Law lays some very important groundwork. The opening chapter on original sin and its relation to John 3, dealing with being "born of water and the Spirit," are very good. The section that explains the meaning of "all nations" in Christ's command to baptize, as well as the chapter on circumcision and its relation to infant Baptism, are very clear and well-documented. The chapter that examines the scriptural references to "whole households" being baptized is excellent and contains some very convincing arguments for the practice of infant Baptism from the beginning of the church of the New Testament. The treatment of the Jewish practice of proselyte baptism by Das, as well as the testimony from the records of the early church, show that the Baptism of infants was nothing strange or uncommon to the minds of the earliest Christians of Jewish background. Chapter nine adds further convincing arguments for infant Baptism based upon the scriptural use of phrases such as "all nations," "to all that are afar off," "you and your children," the "small and the great," and "from the least to the greatest." The "Summary of Biblical Material" forms a very good outline to use in a class where the doctrine of Baptism, and particularly infant Baptism, is being discussed. Every pastor ought to have several copies of this book in his own library and the library of the congregation.

James W. Kalthoff
Saint Louis, Missouri

see the book as written to Christians in Ephesus—or everywhere—or directed obliquely at the church in Jerusalem (pages 244-245). He rightly extracts Paul's goal in writing from 1:8-15 and 15:14-24: "to cultivate spiritual fellowship with the Roman Christians in order, having been sustained by this fellowship, to journey further on to Spain" (page 239), thus fulfilling his ministry to Gentiles for the sake of Israel (page 240). And he rightly interprets the substance of the letter, from 1:16 to 15:13, as Paul's refutation of criticisms lodged against "his" Gospel by Jewish Christian "contra missionaries" (for example, pages 5-6), who followed Paul as a sort of "truth squad" and with whom he can be seen to be contending in Galatians, Philippians, and Corinthians, as well as in Acts. Thus, Romans 9-11 is no excursus but a central issue in the argument about the righteousness of God, and chapters 12-14 are not an "appended ethical section" but pertain to the "verification" of righteousness and the shape of the manifestation of it in the life of the Roman Christians.

Finally, Stuhlmacher interprets Romans as a man aware that philological, literary, tradition-historical, and historical exposition is not enough; exegesis owes the church theology. In the Old Testament, Paul heard the living voice of God speaking things that pertained to his day. Stuhlmacher senses his own responsibility to confess and testify by expounding the living authority of scriptural doctrine (Romans 6:17 and 16:17; page 95), which may also be called "the gospel" and the righteousness of God (page 31).

Despite disagreements over various details and emphases (the implication that the Pastoral Epistles were not written by Paul on page 18; the discussion of "the natural knowledge of God" on pages 44-45; the discussion of "still sold under sin" in 7:14 and the whole handling of chapter 7 on pages 114-116), these strengths make this commentary informative and stimulating reading. Even the interpretation of 11:26 ("consequently all Israel will be saved") as a future mass conversion of Jews to Christ rather than as summarizing "in this manner (11:17-23) all Israel (believers in Christ) will be saved" is very carefully argued by Stuhlmacher. It finally becomes a question of whether 9:7b

PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS: A COMMENTARY. By Peter Stuhlmacher. Translated by Scott J. Hafemann. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster Press, 1994.

Peter Stuhlmacher's 1989 edition of *Der Brief an die Römer* is here made accessible to English-speaking readers through a translation prepared by one of his students, Scott J. Hafemann. That series, and this commentary, might be characterized as "popular" because it does not necessarily assume a knowledge of the biblical languages on the part of its readers. Stuhlmacher's *Romans*, however, is challenging reading, whether for pastor, student, or the interested and capable layperson. For Stuhlmacher brings three great strengths to his task, each of which has a most salutary impact on the contents of this volume.

First, he has a very evident, very Teutonic mastery of the primary literature that testifies to the broader *context* of Romans, namely, the rest of Paul's epistles, the rest of the New Testament, the Old Testament, the literature of early Judaism, and the writings of Hellenistic and Roman historians and philosophers. For example, on page 84 he moves deftly from Genesis 3 to 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch to 1 Corinthians 15 to explain the background of Adam (and Christ) as corporate figures in Romans 5:12. And he calls on information from Tacitus and Suetonius (page 200) to portray the burden of taxes and duties (Romans 13:1-7) after A.D. 55. On page after page, Stuhlmacher quotes or cites pertinent parallel passages.

Secondly, Stuhlmacher is committed to explain Romans, the whole epistle and each paragraph in detail, in connection with the historical situation in which Paul wrote. "The concrete constellation within which the letter to the Romans stands has often been underestimated in research on Romans," he writes (page 242). This has led some to see the contents as Paul's "testament" (G. Bornkamm) or a compendium of Christian theology (Melancthon). Without denying the broad and lasting significance of the contents of Romans for the churches, Stuhlmacher explains the entire letter and each pericope in detail in the context of a sound reconstruction of the historical circumstances and the purpose Paul had in writing. He soberly rejects fanciful theories that would do away with chapter 16 or

controls 11:26 or not—indeed, of where God's selection of Israel as the particular people through whom he would reveal his salvation fits into a Bible that starts with Genesis 1 (not 12) and goes through to Revelation 22 (not Revelation 7:8).

And so we must say that the book is informative and stimulating reading for the *discerning* reader. This is not a book to give to a Christian who wants to learn what Romans says. For that purpose we recommend Nygren (which is in Stuhlmacher's bibliography) or Franzmann (which is not). So much of what Stuhlmacher does in this volume is superior to most commentaries on Romans that one hesitates to criticize very much. But, in addition to the matters referred to in the preceding paragraph, the way in which Stuhlmacher expounds righteousness and law, particularly the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (8:1) causes concern.

Briefly put, Stuhlmacher joins Schlatter, Käsemann, and Wilchens in espousing a "comprehensive interpretive perspective" (page 32) that combines the idea of the righteousness of God as *gift* from God and the righteousness of God as God's *salvific activity* in and through Christ (page 31), including, ultimately, "verification" in the "lifestyle" of Christians as the body of Christ in the world (page 185 and the following exposition of 12:1-15:13). This perspective, he says, "includes that of Luther's within it, but also goes far beyond it" (page 32). Connected with this inclination to blur the line of distinction between justification and "how we now live" is the line of interpretation that restores "law" as directives for behavior to a role in the life of Christians (page 68, on 3:31, speaks of "instruction for believers to lead them in the Spirit of Christ along the path of righteousness"; one may compare page 119 on 8:2 and pages 210-211 on "love is the fulfillment of the law" in 13:10).

Whether Stuhlmacher's very carefully worded statements on righteousness and law do encompass and surpass Luther without contradicting or abandoning him for a Law-Gospel-Law scheme is open to debate. With repeated counsel that the reader be discerning, the reviewer applauds his attempt. For there are, indeed, exegetical depths to be explored in the phrases "righteousness of God" and "law" equaling Torah.

Is there a sound Lutheran (biblical-theological) explanation of "the righteousness of God" that encompasses gift, saving activity, and divine attribute? Is there a way to explain Paul's (and Jesus') use of "law" that connects to Torah as "divine instruction for life, pointing to Christ"? The undersigned thinks so, and, regardless of whether we embrace all that he says or not, the careful philological, historical, and theological exposition found in Stuhlmacher's *Romans* can stimulate us to plumb the depths of Paul's "gospel and Jesus' preaching," a mystery formerly sealed up but now made manifest (Romans 16:25-26).

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GENESIS 1-11: FROM EDEN TO BABEL. By Donald E. Gowan. *International Theological Commentary.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988.

This volume is representative of Eerdmans's "International Theological Commentary" series. Its aim, according to the editors, is to move "beyond a descriptive-historical approach to offer a relevant exegesis of the Old Testament text as Holy Scripture."

Gowan is faithful to the focus of this series. He seeks to bring the text of Genesis to bear upon the human condition and to treat the text as Holy Scripture. His prose carries the reader along without the pauses and asides, which so often mark the commentary genre, and his familiarity with the standard literature is transparent, yet not obtrusive.

The chief disappointment, however, is in the substance, which detracts from such a laudable purpose and sprightly literary style. It is in the commentary on the final form of the text that the major flaw of *Genesis 1-11* becomes apparent. In case after case the meaning of the text turns out to be entirely compatible with our current cultural assumptions! Put differently, the inferences that Christian communities have drawn from the text for nearly two thousand years are now, with scanty textual justification, understood as meaning just the opposite, or are silent on the matters that had previously been viewed as clear teaching of the

text. One example will illustrate. On page 37 the question is raised as to whether Adam and Eve would have lived forever if they had not sinned. Gowan's answer? "This is irrelevant, because it corresponds to nothing in any human life we know anything about. We know of no one who lives forever or who has barely missed the chance to do so" — not a very satisfying answer either as exposition of the text or as explorative of an issue. This question is scarcely "irrelevant." The text itself poses this question, and, from the perspective of historic Christianity, also gives an answer.

On this and the other key issues — *creatio ex nihilo*, creation of man and woman, the flood, and others — this commentary is precisely in sync with contemporary fancies. No doubt the student of Genesis in the twenty-third century will categorize this volume as "late-twentieth century exegesis" as he surveys the history of interpretation. It would be preferable for that future student, and for the present-day student, to let the text make its own claims. If a person finds those claims unacceptable, the text still has to be dealt with squarely. If, by God's grace, those claims are understood in their truth, then the text can fully function as "Holy Scripture."

Dean O. Wenthe

I BELIEVE BUT I HAVE QUESTIONS. By Jane L. Fryar. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994.

This book explores the process of spiritual growth — how to apply the Christian faith to everyday life. According to the introduction, the book comes from the author's own struggles with sin and temptation. No matter how hard she tried to fight sin and follow God, she found herself attacked by spiritual arrogance — looking down at the failures of others and glorying in her own holiness. Finally, God opened her eyes to a grace-based lifestyle that receives from God the power of forgiveness needed to live out the Christian life. This book focuses, therefore, on what God has done and is doing in the lives of his people in Jesus rather than on what God demands us to do for him.

The first four chapters are foundational, dealing with the basic

topics of spiritual birth, sin and grace, Baptism, and the need for God's Word and the Sacraments. Among the other themes are Bible study, worship, Christian giving, the need to join a congregation, and how to know God's will for one's life. Each chapter concludes from a series of questions and answers with a suggested reading from Scripture.

Well-illustrated and written with a thoughtful attitude and a great deal of humor, this book has some real depth. Each topic could easily take up its own book (and often does!). Still, the author manages to deal with each issue in a simple manner, with her eyes always focused on the cross of Christ and his grace. The chapter entitled "Why Didn't My Problems Disappear When I Became a Christian?" was exceptionally insightful. This reviewer appreciated the observation that the "whys" of life are often more a question of "Can I really trust God in this situation?" than anything else. While encouraging anyone interested in spiritual growth to purchase a copy of this book, it would be especially good for new Christians or other members of a congregation.

James E. Butler
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CHRISTIAN MORAL JUDGMENT. By J. Philip Wogaman. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster-John Knox Press, 1989.

Ethics, it can be argued, is largely a quest for distinctions and principles that assist in the clarifying of moral judgments. J. Philip Wogaman, Professor of Social Ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., has made a major contribution to that endeavor with his *Christian Moral Judgment*. The book, an expanded and revised version of the 1976 edition, critically examines prevailing approaches to the Christian moral life and offers subtle distinctions, or moral "presumptions," to assist in charting a more discerning course in moral decision-making.

At the outset, Wogaman argues that all ethics, whether religious or philosophical, is grounded in some conception of what is ultimately of value. Without such a grounding, ethics, with or without God, has no basis on which to proceed. Christian ethics, therefore, is no less serious a partner in ethical dialogue

than its philosophical counterparts, as some skeptics have claimed. Rather, believers simply offer a differing "faith" or vision of human existence and provide, therefore, a distinctive account of the moral life. The task for believers, as it is for all engaged in the discourse, is to propose and defend reliable sources of authority for moral claims.

Wogaman suggests that the task is complicated for the believer because large numbers of people have lost their uncritical confidence in the four traditional sources of Christian authority, namely, the Bible, the Church, natural law, and custom and tradition. This erosion of moral authority has challenged Christian ethicists to discover new resources that can provide justifiable guidance in moral judging. While Wogaman acknowledges that the certainty afforded by the traditional sources cannot be restored, he does not conclude that relativism is the inexorable result.

Instead, Wogaman argues on behalf of "presumptions," or biases, as reliable "rules of thumb" until they are shown beyond a reasonable doubt to be misdirected. For example, he provides five presumptions of human authority, sources that have proven themselves reliable in the past and upon which the Christian can confidently depend in reaching moral conclusions. Here he returns to traditional sources, albeit with reduced expectations. The biblical witness, because of its "intrinsic capacity to interpret reality profoundly and persuasively . . ." remains a crucial starting point for the Christian. In addition, the community of faith, including one's church body and pastor, rightfully serves the believer as a presumptive authority. Tradition, technical and factual expertise in the area under moral investigation, and the covenants of civil society round out the constellation of human authorities available to the Christian ethicist. Again, these authorities are not thought to be infallible, but dependable, such that a burden of proof must be borne by contrary viewpoints.

Further, the Christian should hold four positive moral presumptions drawn from the faith: the goodness of creation, the value of individual life, the unity of the human family, and the equality of persons in God. In practice the first "bias" places the burden of proof on any proposal endorsing suicide, euthanasia,

or abortion; the second presumes against capital punishment; the third against racism and nativist immigration policies; and the fourth against sexism and grossly inequitable economic policies. Wogaman develops the influence of negative, polar, and ideological presumptions as well, but these suffice to illustrate his approach.

The strengths are obvious. His presumptions retain close ties to traditional sources of authority and function effectively to provide a reasonable and faithful point of departure in Christian ethics. As they do in the spheres of jurisprudence and executive decision-making, presumptions in the moral life help us effectively to determine the procedures, principles, ideological commitments, empirical models, authorities, and priorities which we will rely upon in choosing a moral course of action. With characteristic clarity and attention to detail, Wogaman presents a subtle argument on behalf of his presumptions in theory and practice.

The approach, however, is not without difficulties. For example, the choice of presumptions themselves is problematic in that Christians might not agree on their selection or implications. Further, and perhaps more importantly, it would be helpful for Wogaman to clarify even further the relative value or weight to be accorded his presumptions. Precisely how does one gauge the relative authority of one's sources when they are found to conflict? Wogaman is well aware of this dilemma, and addresses it directly. Presumptions do not afford us the certainty of absolutism, but they do enable us to avoid the pitfalls of situationalism. When presumptions conflict, one must finally look to one's "center of value," but this center may vary in our perceptions and cannot be exactly defined for all. In essence, choices to override one presumption with another or to make an exception must be based on a commitment to bring about the greatest good. Beyond this, Wogaman rightly suggests, it is virtually impossible to go.

Christian Moral Judgment attempts to defend a Christian approach to ethics which offers reliable distinctions to assist in moral decision-making. As always, Wogaman's analysis is skillful, sophisticated, and comprehensive. In the absence of

moral certainty, his presumptions offer a thoughtful set of Christian principles which guide the believer in discerning the moral course of action. His presumptions, as he would be the first to admit, do not offer absolute rules of conduct. However, they do suggest a useful and important place to begin.

Terrence Reynolds

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GIVING GOLIATH HIS DUE: NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL LIGHT ON THE PHILISTINES. By Neal Bierling. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992.

Much archaeological work has been done in the Philistine region in recent times. At last report there were some two hundred archaeologists working full time in Israel not primarily trained in biblical studies but in ancient Near Eastern literature. Trude and Moshe Dothan have published a book on their lifelong study of the Sea Peoples. Excavations which have unearthed Philistine material have been carried out at many sites, including Ekron, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Tel Qasile, and Timnah. In short, interest in Philistine culture runs high.

The people who lived in the region which we call Philistia were certainly much more cultured than we once thought. Their pottery is very beautiful and unique. Bierling has summarized the evidence but has not conveyed the caution of the professionals. He reviews references to Sea Peoples in Egypt and recounts Homeric stories about tribal groups who might somehow be connected. He links all these things with the unique pottery involved to suggest that the Philistines (only one of the many Sea Peoples) came from somewhere connected with Greece. No one doubts a connection—but where, when, how, and with whom? His evidence for “somewhere” stretches from Turkey to Crete and beyond. Archaeological evidence offers little to support the Philistines coming from western Turkey, even though Homer might suggest some connections.

The bulk of this book is a detailed study of passages in the Bible related to the Philistines, with many references to extra-biblical sources accessible in Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* plus a

few newer texts. Bierling does a better job here, though archaeological finds are mentioned less often. Layers of destruction attributable to the Assyrians and Babylonians have been found at many sites. Ekron, surprising, where Bierling served as an area supervisor, was a major center of oil production during the century before Babylon destroyed it, having over one hundred olive presses and many altars. Unfortunately, for this period from 1000 to 600 B.C. less has been found in archaeological contexts that might show the uniqueness of the Philistines or how they interacted with Judah.

The title of this book is misleading. There is precious little about Goliath. Bierling even admits that Goliath may have been related to those who lived in Palestine before the Philistines came. Archaeological studies help to illuminate some of the time periods involved, but most of the book is written using literary sources. The book is very helpful if one wants to learn about the Philistines in the Bible but overstates how much one can learn about them from the currently available results of archaeological studies.

Thomas H. Trapp
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WINDOWS ON THE WORLD OF JESUS: TIME TRAVEL TO ANCIENT JUDEA. By Bruce Malina. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster-John Knox Press, 1993.

This volume offers valuable insights into the cultural norms of ancient Judea and how such understanding impacts our exegesis of the New Testament. Bruce Malina, a Professor in the Department of Theology at Creighton University in Omaha, is known for his previous research on cultural anthropology and its application to the study of the New Testament. This book presents his insights in a very simple and non-technical format: he offers sixty-one brief case studies, which he then uses to illustrate and explain the cultural behavior of ancient and modern Jews in the Middle East. These "windows" address the following areas of culture: honor and shame; general interpersonal behavior; in-group relations; intra-family relations; out-group

relations; loving kindness; common values; and the concept of time. He uses both biblical texts and some apocryphal texts to illustrate how the aspects of culture discussed in each "window" are also visible in New Testament times, and how they contrast with modern American culture.

Malina's insights are, for the most part, balanced and helpful for exegesis. The reader will sense, though, that much of the author's research is founded upon observing modern Israeli Jews and applying these insights to Jews and Christians of the first century. Such a methodological leap is not without problems. Malina interprets biblical teaching and behavior as inordinately influenced by culture, as opposed to theology. His numerous short case studies make this volume interesting reading for the layman, but laborious for the pastor or scholar. The succinct summary at the end (pages 171-175) is certainly the most valuable part of the book for the pastor who wants his exegesis informed by the culture norms that are often assumed by biblical writers.

Charles A. Gieschen

ISLAM: AN INTRODUCTION FOR CHRISTIANS. Edited by Paul Varo Martinson. Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1994.

ISLAM: AN INTRODUCTION FOR CHRISTIANS, LEADER'S GUIDE. By Irene Getz. Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress Press, 1994.

According to reliable statistics (1993), Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States. Mosques now number upwards of 1100, eighty percent of which have been established in the last twelve years. Adherents number some four million, soon to exceed the Jewish communion of six million in the United States.

Numbers aside, Islam presents Christians with a jumble of mixed feelings. We cannot help but acknowledge the tenacious loyalty that Islam commands from immigrants of Muslim countries and from growing numbers of African-Americans – and we sense that this loyalty is a critique of our culture and of the

(seeming) inability of Christianity to provide the moral and spiritual fiber of our society. At the same time, we cannot avoid the questions and suspicions triggered by memories of the Iranian hostage-crisis, or the bombing in New York of the World Trade Center. Islam is an undeniable, growing, and certain part of life in this country.

This book was produced originally by the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany and the Evangelical Church in Germany (in 1990) and is here translated and edited for English readers. It is generally a model of clarity. It presents sections on the faith and life of Islam, Islam in North America, the various movements within Islam, Islam and Christianity, and a Christian view of Islam. To make the book an even more helpful resource, appendices provide comparative chronologies and calendars, a glossary of terms, indices of quranic and biblical references, a fine bibliography, and a listing of Muslim and Christian organizations. Particularly appreciated in this book, in addition to its review of Islamic teaching and history, were its insights into the diversity of Islam, the difficulties that immigrant Muslims face in Western society, and especially its discussion of the relation of Christianity and Islam (Bible and Qur'an, Jesus and Muhammad, Trinity and Allah), as well as its appreciation and critique of Islam.

The purpose of the book is not merely to inform, however. It is also to sensitize Christians to the religious and cultural convictions of their Muslim neighbors, so that tolerance may give way to sharing and witness. (As to methods of witnessing, the reader is also well served by Lochhaas, *How to Respond to Islam*.) In addition, there is occasional pastoral reflection on, for example, the complexities of inter-marriage. Not to be neglected is the accompanying leader's guide, because it turns the book into an educational tool, with study-suggestions, discussion-starters, a variety of schedules (study in a retreat or in four, six, or twenty-two sessions), and ideas for enrichment.

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CANON AND THEOLOGY: OVERTURES TO AN OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY. By Rolf Rendtorff. *Overtures to Biblical Theology.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

Most volumes of the "Overtures to Biblical Theology" series have been studies of specific theological themes, such as land, blessing, suffering, ministry, and holiness. Breaking that pattern, this volume is an anthology of eighteen articles by Rendtorff, the distinguished Professor (now emeritus) of Old Testament at the University of Heidelberg. Most of the articles have been published elsewhere in a wide variety of publications (English, German, Dutch, and French) and likely are not available to all readers; the remaining five appear for the first time in English.

The title of the book accurately identifies canon and theology as the themes that link the articles, though there is considerable variety in their content. Some, for example, are largely methodological, critiquing and suggesting approaches to Old Testament theology. Of particular interest among these is his evaluation of Vischer's christological approach to the Old Testament. Other discuss the Old Testament as Scripture for both the Jewish and the Christian communities, and the implications that discussion has for Old Testament theology. Still others study specific themes (covenant, creation, prophecy) or pericopes (Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 20) and their relationship to both canon and theology. Of special interest to one concerned with the missiological implications of the Old Testament is the article on the relation of the universalist (monotheist) understanding of God and the particularist revelation to Israel: "Israel's God reveals himself to all human beings as Israel's God, that is to say as the One who made himself known to Israel first and enduringly as himself." This understanding not only provides a helpful context for the New Testament, but roots the mission of God clearly in Scripture as a whole, including the Old Testament.

Not all of Rendtorff's observations and conclusions are equally convincing, nor will all share the critical context of his scholarship. His concern for canon and theology, however, is a welcome challenge for all students of Scripture.

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