

work by Gerhard F. Hasel on this subject has apparently been overlooked (see his articles in *AUSS* 5 [1967]: 101-121; and 6 [1968]: 19-28).

There are some "extras" in connection with major reformers in the fact that Eberhardt deals with certain aspects of their work and theology which are not commonly noted in general histories. For example, Luther's study of the book of Daniel and his discussion of Sabbath and Sunday (and also Carlstadt's attitude toward the Sabbath) are treated.

Occasionally, one becomes puzzled at the organization of this volume. For the most part, the chapters seem coherent; but now and then, a better topical arrangement or chronological sequence (or both) could probably have been chosen. For instance, although Chap. 7 deals with the crisis in Luther's Reformation between 1522 and 1526 and Chap. 8 reaches down through the Anabaptist Münster episode and even deals with Menno Simons, Chap. 9 moves back to the development of the Lutheran Reformation from 1522 onward to 1555. It would seem that Luther's break with Erasmus, his marriage, and perhaps other items treated in this ninth chapter should really have been brought to attention earlier. One is more amazed, however, that in this same chapter, Zwingli's death in 1531 is treated after notice of the Nuremberg Concord of 1532 and the Schmalkald Articles of 1537 (see pp. 184-186). Especially puzzling is the following remark at the end of a section entitled "Die Entstehung der 'Schmalkaldener Artikel'" and dealing with events of 1537 and 1538: "Inmitten dieser Entwicklungen starb Zwingli einen tragischen Tod auf dem Schlachtfeld bei Kappel" (p. 186). The author does, of course, place the death of Zwingli correctly in the year 1531.

Despite such chronological and other minor difficulties, this volume affords an excellent introduction to the history of the Reformation era. The problems are truly minimal when compared with the very real value furnished. In addition to the comprehensive treatment given in the main text, an extensive section of notes (pp. 367-638) provides a further massive wealth of material. Selected to a great degree from authoritative source collections and recognized scholars in the field, these notes are virtually a source book in themselves.

A glossary of terms is included in the volume (pp. 639-643), followed by a list of abbreviations (pp. 644-645). There is also a helpful chronology of main events (pp. 646-658), covering the period from Wyclif's death in 1384 to the year 1794; and this is followed by an index of personal names and subjects (pp. 659-670) and a fairly comprehensive bibliography (pp. 671-685). The concluding items are the Table of Contents (pp. 687-695) and the imprint information (on the final, unnumbered page).

For those who read German, this book is highly recommended.

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Fridrichsen, Anton. *The Problem of Miracle in Primitive Christianity*. Translated by Roy A. Harrisville and John S. Hanson. Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg, 1972. 174 pp. \$5.95.

This is a long overdue translation of the French original published in 1925. Fridrichsen was Professor of NT at Uppsala and the revered mentor of many leading NT scholars of today.

His purpose in this book is not to renew the conflict over the explanation of the miracles, i.e., supernatural or natural, but to examine their place in the life of early Christianity. There is no question concerning the connection of miracles with Jesus. The question is how were the miracles of Jesus considered by the early Christians in the light of the fact that in this period magicians, sorcerers, and charlatans were very numerous and their reputation was not high. The early church fathers from the second century on faced the accusation that Jesus was a magician and used secret arts to perform his miracles. Did this problem of miracle appear in primitive Christianity, and are there traces of this problem already in the NT?

Fridrichsen's approach to this problem is through form criticism especially as it relates to the development and modification of the tradition from its origin to its literary form as presently found in the NT. He seeks to distinguish what he calls the popular elements of the tradition from the later redaction. With specific reference to his topic, the former present miracles as they reflect popular faith, naive and bereft of reflection, while the latter expresses an evaluation and criticism of thaumaturgy.

According to Fridrichsen miracles are intimately bound with the origin of the church and its eschatological nature. Jesus himself considered miracles as an integral part of his messianic activity. Yet miracles were subordinate to the fundamentally moral character of Christianity. But in such a milieu in which Christianity arose, problems were bound to arise as people identified this aspect with other magicians and charlatans who claimed miraculous powers.

Fridrichsen sees in John the Baptist's question (Mt 11:2-6) criticism against Jesus by the followers of John. John had heard of the "works" of Jesus (his healings and exorcisms) which led him to doubt the messianic character of Jesus. Jesus answered by quoting Isaiah, which is to say that his miracles were not those of a popular thaumaturge but were the fulfillment of prophecies, thus showing himself to be "the one that is to come." This very type of answer was given by Justin, Tertullian, and Lactantius to the same objections.

Criticism of Jesus' miracles (exorcisms) is implied also in the Beelzebub pericope. Jesus' command for silence to the demons is interpreted as originally the triumph of the exorcist over the demon, an indication that the demon's power is broken and he has become subject to the exorcist. But the command for silence to those he healed demonstrates the distinction between Jesus and other healers who sought publicity. The Temptation Narrative is seen as a controversy between those in the church who sought for and promoted miracles and those who "felt the need to set limits to pious fantasy because they recognized that the wild growth of the prodigious represented a danger within and without" (p. 124). The first two miracles are not messianic but the very type that suited popular thaumaturgy. In Mk 2:1-12, Fridrichsen sees vs. 9 as an interpolation in which the redactor is opposing the belief that miracle legitimates spiritual power by actually inferring that forgiveness is the real miracle, whereas healing is secondary. Lk 10:17-20 and 1 Cor 13 both seek to put miracles in their proper subordinate role, in the first to salvation and in the second to love. A warning against false prophets (Mt 7:15ff.) is really against miracle-workers.

Fridrichsen's main thesis is no doubt true. It is inevitable in the NT milieu that such a problem would arise. The quality and character of Christian

miracles would have to be distinguished from those of the Jewish and pagan world. Whether all of his explanations are as valid as his thesis is an open question. Especially that of the Temptation Narrative can be explained differently. While written almost half a century ago, this work still provides insights that are profitable for us today.

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SAKAE KUBO

Hanson, Richard S. *The Future of the Great Planet Earth: What Does Biblical Prophecy Mean for You?* Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg, 1972. 123 pp. Paperback, \$2.95.

Because Hanson writes in reaction to the popular misuse of Bible prophecies, he is at pains to show that the prophets of old did more than predict the future. "What makes a person a prophet is not what he sees of the future, but what he sees of the truth" (p. 121). With regard to the apocalyptic books of Daniel and Revelation, he explains that the purpose of the former was to assure the Jews living at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes that the end of suffering was certain, and the purpose of the latter was to show that God, not the emperor, is the one who controls the world and will be with his people all the way. This leads Hanson to reject the popular view that the book of Revelation is "history written in advance with all the details spelled out," as if "our age is *the* age that holds the key to understanding—as though the Bible were written for our time alone" (p. 90).

Although Hanson acknowledges that Revelation gives "the outcome in advance," he basically is caught in a false dilemma, preterism or futurism. He clearly chooses the first in order to avoid the last. He rightly exposes the fundamental weakness of futurism, which takes, for instance, the names of ancient nations out of Eze 38-39 and applies them to nations of today: "they are ignoring the history between then and now" (p. 90). This awareness of historical perspective prevents Hanson from being caught in the modern delusion of interpreting the founding of the new state of Israel in 1948 as a fulfillment of Bible prophecies. Although he admits that there are some signs that seem to suggest it, he finds that "there are also things that do not fit. The restoration of Israel pictured in many of those visions is a restoration that happens because the Messiah appears. But where is the Messiah in the modern State of Israel?" (pp. 48-49).

Unfortunately, Hanson ignores the opportunity to work out the deep, central focus of all Bible prophecies, the spiritual and Christo-centric nature of the true Israel of God in the setting of Biblical eschatology. This failure comes tragically to light in his incredible misunderstanding of Armageddon, the final battle between heaven and earth when the Antichrist launches his final attack upon the people of God. He states: "Armageddon is what happens when the kings of the world meet on the field of combat—when nations rise against nations and make war together" (p. 116). Here the great climax of the long-standing controversy between Christ and Satan (in Rev 16, 17 and 19) is superficially secularized into a war merely between nations. The basic defect of Hanson's book lies in the field of eschatology, of which he speaks only incidentally. There is no co-ordination and systematization of the Biblical data with regard to the final war between good and evil.