

excessively negative evaluation of the historicity of the biblical narratives. It would be difficult in the extreme to write any kind of history of Israel during the times of the kings using this commentary as a basis for its historiography. This commentary is mainly useful for its up-to-date review of the literary-critical theories on the deuteronomic history and their application to individual passages in Kings. It is generally inferior, however, to previous commentaries on Kings and to the other new volume in this same series (Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther) reviewed elsewhere in this journal.

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Oberman, Heiko A. *The Roots of Anti-Semitism: In the Age of Renaissance and Reformation*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1984. xii+ 163 pp. \$13.95.

This volume is an eminently readable English translation of Oberman's *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus. Christenangst und Judenplage im Zeitalter von Humanismus und Reformation* (Berlin: Severin und Siedler, 1981). The author originally intended to write on the topic "Luther and the Jews," but found it necessary to broaden the scope to "Europe and the Jews" (pp. ix-xi). The publication is divided into three main divisions, with six chapters in each.

In Part I (pp. 17-64), the author covers broadly, in five chapters, the attitudes towards the Jews just prior to, and concurrent with, Luther's own expressions concerning them, his sixth chapter being devoted to the topic "Luther Speaks Out." The earlier chapters in this main division give attention to the stance and remarks of such prominent figures as Johannes Reuchlin, Johannes Pfefferkorn, and Desiderius Erasmus.

The era was one of considerable social ferment, and in Part II (pp. 65-87) Oberman duly takes note of the social situation as evidenced in social protest, anti-Jewish sermonizing, agitational literature, etc. Among his six chapters in this division of the volume, the following topics are included: "Luther and the *Zeitgeist*," "Agitation and Jew-Baiting," and "Fear of the Jews: Between Piety and Superstition" (chaps. 9, 11, and 12, respectively).

Luther's own expressions and attitudes receive a significant portion of Oberman's treatment, especially in Part III (pp. 93-137). Among specific topics treated in this final main division of the work is "The Harshness of the Old Luther" (chap. 16), a topic which has gained an increasing amount of attention in recent years.

This somewhat slender volume is well documented with endnotes, and five short indexes cover "Persons," "Places," "Subjects," citations of "Authors/Editors," and citations to the "Weimar Edition of Luther's

Works" (pp. 152-163). Fortress Press is to be commended for making available to an English-reading audience this short, but penetrating, work by a well-known Reformation specialist.

(Note: For some brief earlier references in *AUSS* to the German edition, see the special Luther issue of *AUSS*—vol. 22, no. 1, Spring 1984—, pp. 140, 141. These references were made in conjunction with discussion of the topic, "Luther and the Jews.")

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Pals, Daniel L. *The Victorian "Lives" of Jesus*. Trinity University Monograph Series in Religion, vol. 7. San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University Press, 1982. 223 pp. \$20.00.

Critical investigation of the life of Jesus and the systematic treatment of the gospels as historical documents amounted to perhaps the greatest and certainly the most controversial achievement in NT scholarship of the nineteenth century. This new style of reading the basic Christian texts quickly began to affect the religious conceptions of believers; and by chronicling a phenomenon of the Victorian religious publishing industry, Pals has developed a method of studying its progress in British public opinion. Gospel criticism became "a sort of vogue" during the 1860s and beyond, and what had been academic issues in Germany already for half a century became in Britain the subject of wide public concern in sermons and periodicals, and in the high-minded Sunday afternoon reading of thousands of respectable mid-Victorian households. A succession of best-selling attempts at a satisfactory narrative version of the life and times of Jesus maintained the focus of debate on the gospel sources and upon the historical figure of Jesus at a time when basic changes in the relationship between reader and Scripture had to be accommodated in the minds of educated Christians.

By a wide definition, thousands of publications of all sorts might be counted as Victorian "Lives" of Jesus, and Pals deals directly with scores of them. Most were imitations of a few influential works, and need to be considered only in general. By scanning the leading journals of this period for notices and reviews, Pals has selected the more interesting and important examples, in quantity sufficient to establish the limits of the genre. He offers in this monograph, which has been adapted from his 1975 University of Chicago doctoral dissertation, a survey and digest of extensive reading in shelves of mainly forgotten piety and argument, encountered frequently at Victorian rhetorical lengths that are now quite out of fashion.