

Judaism, and the church in the world. "The letter's vision of the Church is bold and impressive" (p. xcvi).

Today the church lives the "scandal" of "ecclesiastical divisions" shown in "the variety of theological convictions, preferences for forms of worship, or cultural distinctives that they express." But God wants something entirely different: unity in worship, in witness, and in social action. True Christians should spare no effort to find every instrument and experience that could bring the Church together to the unity of the Spirit, in Christ.

These two volumes, as the previous ones published in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, deserve a place in the library of Bible students.

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MARIO VELOSO

Massa, Mark S. *Charles Augustus Briggs and the Crisis of Historical Criticism*. Harvard Dissertations in Religion, 25. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990. 220pp. \$16.95.

Charles Augustus Briggs, prominent biblical scholar and ecumenist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, has served as the subject of several previous dissertations and books. In this study, Mark S. Massa seeks to link Briggs to the larger American Christian culture more closely than have previous scholars.

Massa argues that Briggs's story parallels the process of American Protestantism's encounter with intellectual modernism as embodied in historical criticism. At first, in the 1870s, Briggs believed that historical criticism provided the best means of presenting the gospel to the modern world. By the time of his Union Theological Seminary inaugural lecture in 1891, he clearly demonstrated that his understanding of the Bible differed sharply from that of Princeton scholars Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield, who believed that theology was independent of culture. He therefore called for a new theological world view based upon the facts of the historical process.

Briggs's heresy trial brought the inerrancy views of Hodge and Warfield to the ascendancy, because the Northern Presbyterian Book of Discipline did not address issues of world view. After losing his case, Briggs became active in the ecumenical movement, using his historical approach to promote that cause.

In 1898 Briggs left the Northern Presbyterian Church for the Episcopal Church. About the same time, he began taking a strong stand against the younger generation of biblical scholars who were beginning to question such doctrines as the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Jesus. During the last decade of his life he—ironically—nearly began a heresy trial against his former student and Union colleague, Arthur McGiffert. His attempt to steer a course between fundamentalism and radical modernism proved ultimately ambiguous.

Massa has written a valuable study, drawing upon the manuscript collections of such major figures as Briggs, Hodge, and Newmyn Smith, as well as published writings of the period. His secondary sources include those

directly examining the debates in the Presbyterian Church as well as more general cultural studies. These broad-ranging sources enable the author to show clearly the interaction of the church and culture, a viewpoint that Briggs himself would have appreciated.

A number of Massa's arguments are worthy of attention. His understanding of Briggs as one who sought to combine heartfelt piety with scientific rigor clarifies the mediating role of this era of American biblical criticism. That the inerrancy position emerged to canonical status, primarily because of ecclesiastical needs in the course of Briggs's heresy trial, adds a valuable insight into the often-discussed origins of fundamentalism. Briggs's view that historical criticism should be regarded as a symbol of an underlying change in world view helps us identify the cultural as well as theological shift under way in his times.

Although Massa in several places argues that historical criticism involved a changing world view, he never really explains the nature of this new worldview beyond stating that "all historical phenomena" are "products of their cultural milieu and [are] open to critical study and analysis." The history of any phenomenon is, therefore, sufficient explanation of it. Further elaboration of these points would have clarified the revolutionary implications of this new worldview. The book's origin as a dissertation may explain why this larger argument is more assumed than explained.

For those traditions still struggling to come to grips with historical thinking, Briggs's continuing relevance is of little doubt. Massa has enabled us to better understand this historic effort to accommodate traditional Christian values with modern critical presuppositions.

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GARY LAND

Oberman, Heiko A. *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*. Trans. by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart. New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1990 (copyright 1989). xx + 380 pp. \$29.95.

The Luther quincentenary in 1983 brought a flurry of publications on Martin Luther, the great pioneer Protestant Reformer. Just the year before that Luther celebration, Heiko Oberman's monumental *Luther: Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel* was published by Severin and Seidler in Berlin. Having this volume now in English will enrich a wider popular audience with Oberman's valuable insights.

This book is not a Luther biography as such, but includes or touches virtually all significant matters normally appearing in Luther biographies. The author has presented a thematic approach using as its springboard and underlying thread the concept indicated in the book's subtitle, "Man between God and the Devil." A good statement of the author's rationale is found on p. 104: "Luther's world of thought is wholly distorted and apologetically misconstrued if his conception of the Devil is dismissed as a medieval phenomenon and only his faith in Christ retained as relevant or as the only decisive