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## Book Review. - Literatur

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## BOOK REVIEW

**VERHÄNGNIS UND VERHEISSUNG DER GESCHICHTE: UNTERSUCHUNGEN ZUM ZEIT- UND GESCHICHTSVERSTÄNDNIS IM 4. BUCH ESRA UND IN DER SYRISCHEN BARUCHAPOKALYPSE.** By Wolfgang Harnisch. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969. 362 pages. Paper, DM 44.00; cloth, DM 48.00.

Apocalyptic is one of the major concerns of current Biblical scholarship. Its role in the formation of early Christian thought is hotly debated; its very character is under discussion.

Harnisch rightly feels that one must define apocalyptic by a careful study of the documents in their historical context. The present volume does that for two important texts, Fourth Esdras and the Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch. The former is part of the Old Testament apocrypha, the latter is not. Both date from after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; both raise the question of God's faithfulness and man's destiny. Man is responsible for his punishment because of Adam's sin. Punishment must follow. But this pessimism is swallowed up in the conviction that the ultimate purpose of God is to usher in the new age of blessing. Man is not inexorably tied to sin; he can elect to live in such a way as to pass muster into the new age. The pessimism about the present world is balanced by a subdued optimism about the possibility of man's participation in a better future.

This overly simple summary does not do justice to the book. This dialectic of history is argued out with a careful examination of the two texts under discussion, with a wealth of material from parallel material in the Old Testament, and with a running evaluation of modern scholarship on the points at issue.

Originally a Marburg dissertation written under Ernst Fuchs, the volume is No. 97 in the series *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, edited by Ernst Käsemann and Ernst Würth-

wein. Specialists in intertestamental literature and New Testament students will both find this work of significance.

EDGAR KRENTZ

**NAG HAMMADI BIBLIOGRAPHY 1948 to 1969.** By David M. Scholer, edited by George W. Macrae. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971. xvi and 202 pages. Cloth. Price not given.

About 27 years ago some peasants digging in a cemetery near modern Nag Hammadi, Egypt, about 60 miles north of Luxor and in the vicinity of ancient Chenoboskion, unearthed a jar with 13 codexes. Like pages of manuscripts of the Greek Old Testament used to stoke latter-day fires at Sinai, some of the leaves of this precious "library" were either torn up or burned in ignorance of their value and the rest sold later for a very small sum in Cairo. Publication began piecemeal (much remains to be done), and various systems of identification complicated reference to the documents. These factors, together with the large bulk of secondary literature that has appeared especially in periodicals, encouraged Scholer to plan and execute this grand central station of Coptic Gnostic research. Scholer's contributions on the new discoveries include publications of plates, transcriptions, translations, discussions, and book reviews and account in chapter 6, the main body of the book, for 1,169 bibliographical items. The 1,256 other numbered items cover Gnosticism in general, previously known texts, Gnostic schools and their leaders, Gnosticism and the New Testament, and Qumran and Gnosticism. For further details on Coptic language and literature see this reviewer's *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*, 3d ed. (Concordia Publishing House: St. Louis, 1970), pp. 169—173.

The expertise that has gone into the styling of this book complements well the care with which it has been edited. Not the least of its values is the ease with which the student may now locate the publication in which



a given page or section from one of the newly discovered documents is either reproduced or discussed. This is volume 1 of *Nag Hammadi Studies*, edited by Martin Krause and others. Future volumes in this series receive here a splendid advance testimony to their probable excellence.

FREDERICK W. DANKER

**UMWELT DES NEUEN TESTAMENTS.**

By Eduard Lohse. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971. 224 pages. Paper. DM 15.80.

**DIE THEOLOGIE DES NEUEN TESTAMENTS NACH SEINEN HAUPTZEUGEN JESUS, PAULUS, JOHANNES.** By Werner Georg Kümmel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969. 312 pages. Paper. DM 16.80.

**ETHIK DES NEUEN TESTAMENTS: EINE EINFÜHRUNG.** By Heinz-Dietrich Wendland. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970. 134 pages. Paper. DM 9.80.

*Das Neue Testament Deutsch* has been the most successful and widely used of the more popular commentary series in German. Some of its volumes have gone through more than ten editions since the publication of the first edition in the third decade of this century.

The three volumes listed above belong to the new *Ergänzungsreihe* to the series, being Volumes 1, 3, and 4 respectively. Volume 2 is to be a general introduction by Peter Stuhlmacher, while Volume 5 (a history of early Christianity) has already been published in a revised edition by its author Hans Conzelmann. The series is designed to give in coherent and organized fashion the historical and theological information necessary to read and understand the New Testament. The volumes presuppose that the reader has interest, but no special knowledge or training. Pastors and students will find them useful surveys to review and refresh their knowledge, others will find them useful introductions to the history and theology of the New Testament.

Moreover, in general works it is required that they be accurate and not spin out novel theories. These three volumes meet this formulation. Lohse's volume gives a good introduction to the historical, cultural, social, and religious aspects of the Mediterranean world. The first section gives a brief history of the Jews from the Persian period to the second revolt (Bar Cochba), then surveys the religious movements and trends in Judaism, and concludes with a good section on the social life of Palestinian Judaism, the nature of temple and synagog worship, and the theology of Judaism as reflected in the scribal and rabbinical traditions. As might be expected, the discussion of Hellenistic Judaism is not nearly as good as that of Palestinian Judaism. Qumran receives good treatment, while the Hellenistic literature is sketchily treated. One would not get the impression that the Jews carried on a strong apologetic (Aristobulus), wrote drama (Ps.-Ezekiel), and appropriated much of their artistic and cultural environment.

The last (and smaller) section of the book is devoted to the Hellenistic-Roman world. After surveying the political and social world from Caesar Augustus to Marcus Aurelius, Lohse discusses the religious currents of the ancient world. Cults, oracles, astrology and popular piety, mystery religions, and philosophic religions are all passed in review. As so often happens, the discussion of the Stoa is far better than that of Epicureanism (Lucretius is not even mentioned); Skepticism and the middle Academy are not treated at all. The book concludes with a discussion of Gnosis, with special attention paid to the Hermetic Corpus.

Lohse makes frequent reference to the New Testament, calling attention to the significance of the material he presents. His bibliography of German works will be useful to German speaking readers. The small errors of fact (for example, the implied misdating of the Flavian amphitheater in Rome, p. 154) or the very rare misprint (for Antonius Pius read Antoninus Pius, p. 153) do not mar what is a good book.



Kümmel called himself in 1954 a representative of "critical biblicism" in his approach to the New Testament. This volume bears that evaluation out. For him the task of New Testament theology is to let the various voices in the New Testament come to expression, even where they differ, and only then to ask about what unity there may be. That means that it must use the historical method.

Kümmel divides his presentation into four sections that cover Jesus, the earliest church, Paul, and John. Each section contains a description of the basic theology, structured according to Kümmel's view, of the respective writer. Jesus is the proclaimer of the Kingdom. He calls for belief in God as Father, for radical response, and raises a personal claim. He anticipated His death, as the words of institution make clear.

The section dealing with the earliest church presents Christology as response to the resurrection. Jesus is the ruling Lord whose advent is waited for and prayed for. The longest section in the book is devoted to Paul's theology. Paul is the first "theological thinker" of the church. His theology is largely cast in a form that is apologetic. Paul's own theology must be understood against the background of Jewish two-ages eschatology. In this light the righteousness of God has the character of power or force. By faith the Christian lives in the new age that is the beginning of the end-time. Other motifs, such as ecclesiology and the sacraments, are interpreted out of this theological matrix.

The last section, dealing with Johannine theology, is based on the gospel and epistles. This theology shows how faith views Jesus in the light of Johannine eschatology. Throughout this sketch Kümmel adopts what are surprisingly conservative positions. He finds more historical Jesus than many do; he does not view kindly the idea of a large redaction of John; Colossians is genuine Paul.

Kümmel finds the unity of these theologies in the common conviction that divine salvation is present in Jesus and that it will

be finally consummated by the coming of Jesus in glory. While this unity does not mean uniformity, it does mean recognition of the same act of God in Christ as determinative for human life.

Wendland's book, the most compact of the three, is also useful. He first discusses what he means by the term "ethic" in relation to the New Testament. There is nothing to correspond to a philosophic ethic. There is no interest in an analysis of sociological relationships per se. Rather the constitutive factors are belief in the revelation of God's will, made clear in the sending of Jesus Christ and in the founding of a new community (the church), whose life is determined both by the kerygma and the eschatological hope.

Against that background Wendland discusses the ethics of Jesus, the earliest church, Paul, later Paulinist theology, James, John, and the Apocalypse. Common themes run throughout: the commandment of love, the critical view of this world, the churchly character of ethics, and its eschatological dimension.

These volumes show that the *Neues Testament Deutsch* will have an even greater impact than it did. In supplying some supplemental material that works synthetically rather than analytically, as running exegesis must, this series will serve well the wider public for which it is designed. I suspect that some of these five supplementary volumes will be translated. It would be a good thing. They enrich the literature.

EDGAR KRENTZ

*FOR A WORLD LIKE OURS: STUDIES IN I CORINTHIANS.* By James L. Boyer. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1971. 153 pages. Cloth. \$3.95.

Boyer of Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Ind., provides a useful tool for teaching 1 Corinthians to youth and adult study groups. Although it shows some interest in millennial speculation in chapter 15, in general it stands in the mainstream of Christianity. It could be a helpful book for many people.

EDGAR KRENTZ



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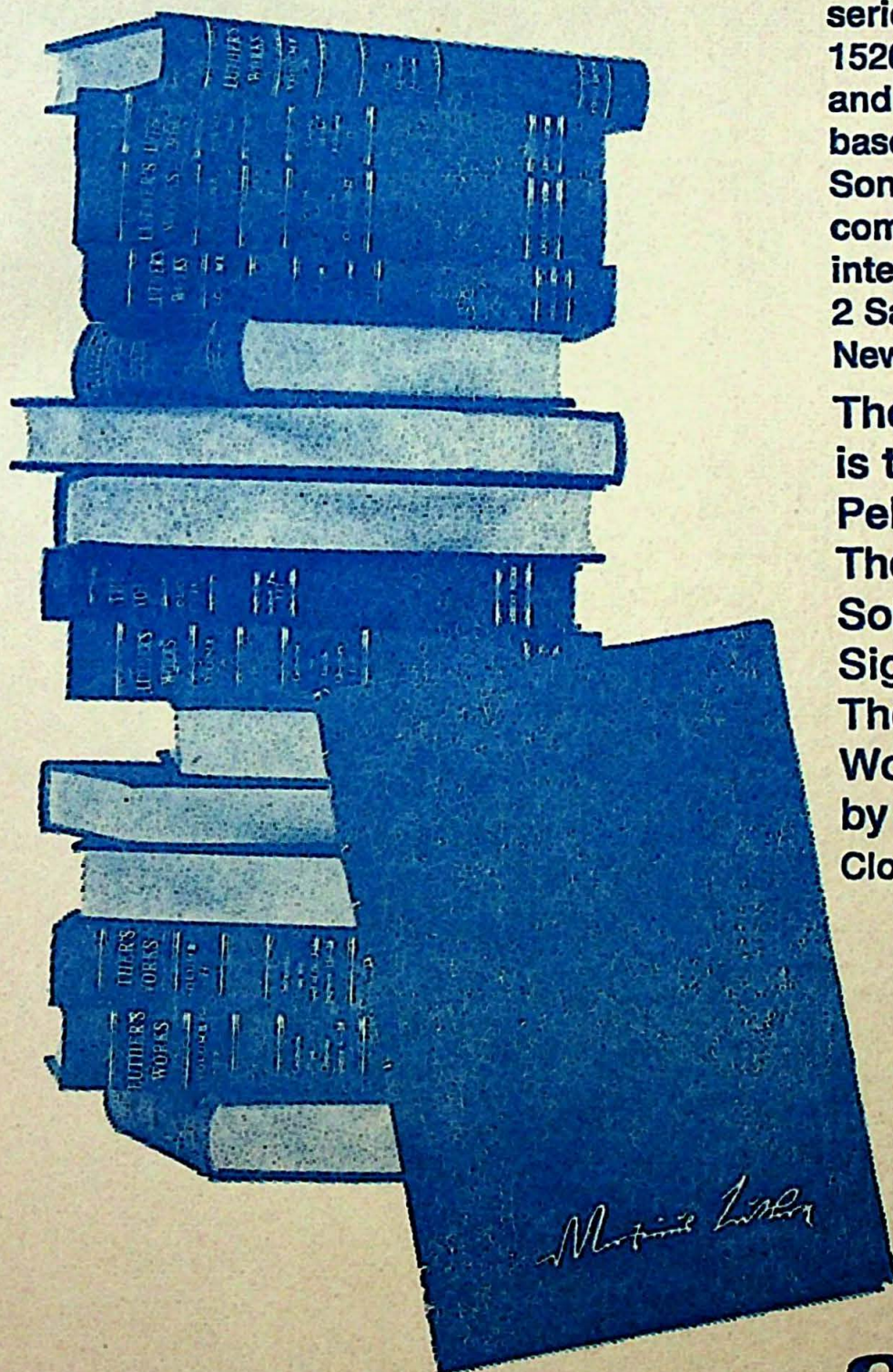
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