

Theologia Crucis: Studies in Honour of Hermann Sasse. Edited by H. P. Hamann. Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1975, 136 pp., n. p.

This limited edition *Festschrift* is a tribute to "the Adelaide chapter" of Sasse's life, the work he has accomplished and the influence he has exerted in Australia since moving there in 1949. Presentation of this volume coincided with Sasse's eightieth birthday. Its eight essays have, with one exception, been written by men who worked closely with Sasse in Adelaide as co-faculty members of Luther Seminary; the exception was written by one of his former students.

I suppose that when one thinks of Sasse one's mind turns immediately to two foci in his mature teaching: the centrality of the "theology of the cross," and his belief that the only Christianity worthy of the name is confessional Christianity. "I believed strongly," he wrote, "that the future of Christianity depended in Germany and in the world on those churches which still dare to confess their dogma."

Inevitably the essays vary considerably in quality, but Sasse's foci never seem too far from the surface. And, understandably, Lutheranism is not lost to view for very long either. J. T. E. Renner, "The Shadow of the Cross in the Old Testament or Who Has Known the Mind of the Lord?" (pp. 19-31), focuses attention on parts of Genesis, Deuteronomy and Hosea where divine inscrutability is prominent and relates that transcendent inscrutability to Biblical themes of redemption. V. C. Pfitzner, "Continuity and Discontinuity: The Lucan View of History in Acts" (pp. 33-49), interacting with a large number of contemporary scholars (a few of whom he misinterprets), quite properly defends Luke as both historian and theologian. In "*De Scriptura Sacra*" (pp. 51-59), S. P. Hebart thinks through the relation between "God's original speaking in His multiform Word" and "His ongoing speaking in His Word of oral preaching and teaching." He concludes that the Scriptures constitute the necessary link, so that "we can now say that the written word of Holy Scripture is God's Word in all its parts as a whole." Following up on Sasse's work, P. D. Pahl traces "A Bodily Influence in the Sacrament—In the Fathers, in Luther, in Modern Lutheranism" (pp. 61-69). Developing the doctrine of "Two Kingdoms" H. P. Hamann, in "The Church's Responsibility for the World: A Study in Law and

Gospel" (pp. 71-87), insists that a proper distinction between law and gospel entails the conclusion that the Church *per se* should not be involved in social reform, in improving the world—however much individual Christians will in fact transform it, and ought to influence it, by virtue of their responsibility under God to the state. E. W. Janetzki, "The Place of the Historic Confessions in Christendom Today" (pp. 89-105), surveys some recent creedal developments and defends the importance of adhering to the confessions. These, he argues, "desire less praise and commendation and more study and use"; and he believes that the only alternative to confessionalism is "subjectivism, libertinism, and the eventual disintegration of the Christian Church." No doubt there is some truth in what he says regardless of one's ecclesiology, but he writes with the *Volkskirche* tradition uppermost in mind and does not interact with the "believers' church" tradition. M. E. Schild briefly and helpfully surveys "Luther's Interpretations of Daniel and Revelation" (pp. 107-118). In "Reconciliation: The Proclamation of the New Reality" (pp. 119-133), D. Ch. Overduin briefly touches on a number of Biblical and confessional treatments of reconciliation and notes some ethical implications.

The *Festschrift* includes a photograph of Sasse, a brief description of his work during his Australia years, a bibliography of his writings available in English, and indexes of Scripture references, authors and subjects.

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