

Wege über die Christologie zu einer Macht werden kann, die für die Sittlichkeit nicht nur im Postulat existiert, sondern sich in der Wirklichkeit als eine solche Macht erweist“ (S. 159).

Nach der ausführlichen Kritik, die *E. Bizer* dem Buch in seinem Aufsatz „Zur Methode der Melanchthonforschung“ (Ev. Th. 24 (1964) S. 1–24) gewidmet hat, bleibt beim gegenwärtigen Stand der Luther- und Melanchthonforschung in der Hauptsache nichts mehr zu sagen übrig, denn die dogmatischen und methodischen Prämissen der an sich scharfsinnigen und in sich folgerichtigen Abhandlung R. Schäfers halten der Frage ihrer Angemessenheit an den Gegenstand der Untersuchung tatsächlich kaum stand. Die fundamentale dogmatische Voraussetzung liegt in einer Christologie, deren Mitte offenbar von der Vorstellung besetzt wird, das „Verstehen des geschichtlichen Menschen Jesus“ finde seine konkrete Erfüllung im Sich-Verstehen zu einem Leben im Sinne des Verhaltens Jesu, was zumindest durch den Hinweis des Vf.s auf eine solche „Anschauung des Lebens Jesu“ nahegelegt wird, „daß die Bewegtheit des Menschen Jesus im Gewissen vor Gott sichtbar wird, der Glaubende in sie hineingenommen werden kann und so im eigenen Gewissen Gott wahrnimmt“ (S. 159). Diese christologische Prämisse, welche auf die Gestalt des ‚historischen Jesus‘ abstellt, deren Wesen der Glaube ergreift, sofern im Glauben „eine Art in Wort Gottes vorgegebenen Existenzentwurfs, der nicht nur gewußt, sondern vor allem gelebt sein will“, angenommen werde, und Gottes Wort sein „Maß an der Existenz Christi, an dessen Leben und Leiden“ habe (S. 15), gewinnt auch keine größere Sachnähe durch die mehr als problematische Behauptung, sie liege in der Konsequenz der tropologischen Christusanschauung Luthers, als deren Grundelemente auch der Vf. Kreuz und Auferweckung Jesu Christi gelten lassen muß. Es dürfte in der Lutherforschung zudem noch nicht oder nicht mehr als über allen Zweifel erhaben gelten, daß die tropologische Exegese der Christologie der produktive Grund der in einem präzisen Sinne reformatorischen Theologie Luthers ist, so daß unter diesen Bedingungen die an sich schon nicht unbedenkliche methodische Prämisse, Melanchthon daraufhin zu vernehmen, was er von Luther nicht rezipiert hat, erst recht problematisch fruchtbar werden muß. Wird im Modell vorausgesetzt, daß nur eine tropologische Christusanschauung die bruchlose Kontinuität zwischen Glauben und Handeln gewährleistet, so kann am Ende, wenn Melanchthon daran gemessen wird, nur das Versagen seiner Theologie konstatiert werden, denn es ist sicher richtig, daß er bereits in den *Loci* 1521 dazu neigt, die Satisfaktionslehre als hauptsächliches Interpretament der Christologie heranzuziehen. Aber gerade die immanente Bündigkeit, mit der die Gedankenführung in R. Schäfers Untersuchung nach einer Variante innerhalb des gestaltenreichen Typus der Imitatio-Christologie gravitiert, erregt den Verdacht auf einen unveräußerlichen Wahrheitsgehalt in der Satisfaktionstheorie, den auch für Mel. zu bergen sich noch immer lohnen möchte.

Wuppertal

Hans-Georg Geyer

H. Jackson Forstman: *Word and Spirit. Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority.* Stanford, Calif. (University Press) 1962. 178 S., \$ 4.75.

„The purpose of this essay is not only to describe Calvin's conception of the authority of the Bible, but also to ask the question, What does it mean? and to evaluate how the conception actually works out.“ (p. 6) Such is the author's own statement of purpose. He goes about his task by developing in Part I Calvin's doctrine of authority. Calvin is moved by a passionate concern for knowledge, for certain knowledge, both about God and about man or self. To be certain or authoritative such knowledge must be from God. It has been given in the Scriptures which are the work of God's Spirit both in inspiring and directing the writers and in illuminating the reader. On both sides it is the inseparable work of Word and Spirit, hence the title of this book.

But what is the significance of this double working? It is in fact that „the human element in each instance has been so circumscribed that it is no longer a real peril to the authority.“ (p. 19) Man is removed from the process of God's self-disclosure without being removed, i. e., without being cut-off, as I understand

Forstman, from a full and sufficient knowledge of God and himself. From this understanding of God's self-communication in the Bible Calvin of course developed a massive biblical theology. All authorities, ecclesiastical and human, are derivative and subordinate. Reason is an authority but not an independent one; rather it is an instrument of the intellect providing valuable support for theology. This reviewer wonders, however, if Forstman plays down Calvin's rationalism a bit too much.

The perennial question about the key doctrine in Calvin's thought is asked but left unanswered, and rightfully so I think, on the ground that Calvin sought a biblical theology in which no one doctrine could prevail. He also sought to transmit knowledge, the knowledge of faith, in polemical contrast to the Roman Catholic idea of implicit faith without knowledge.

At the end of Part I and throughout the succeeding two parts on Spirit and Word, Forstman develops his fundamental, analytical distinction between the knowledge of faith and the wider knowledge of the world. He demonstrates that two epistemologies are at work, two distinguishable activities of the Holy Spirit. In regard to the Word, the author says, "Calvin operates with two separate conceptions of knowledge corresponding to the two conceptions of the work of the Spirit." (p. 89) A similar distinction has been worked out by Edward A. Dowe, Jr., in his book, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, with reference to the knowledge of God as Creator and as Redeemer. Forstman, who refers often to Dowe as well as to other contemporary Calvin scholars, but who resolutely and admirably sticks to Calvin's own statements for his exposition of Calvin's thought, goes a level deeper in asking about the authority for that knowledge.

Calvin does believe in a dictation theory, although not in the rigid sense of his followers and certain modern conservatives (see the Epilogue of the book for a discussion of these figures), and he believes in the non-contradictory character of the Bible. The Bible offers us certain knowledge about many things, including the world in the objective sense, but it especially offers us the knowledge of Christ. Faith in Christ, understood as personal trust and commitment, is in fact the chief work of the Spirit. Here is the basic knowledge for Calvin. The other wider knowledge of things is really an opposite pole in Calvin's thought although he does not stress the distinction in his writings. It is at this pole that the problems of literal inerrancy arise, as clearly revealed in the examination of Calvin's exegesis in Part III.

Forstman shows us that Calvin had, and had to have, a theory of accommodation in order to reconcile all the difficulties of the Scriptures. He also employed figures of speech as explanations of the Bible's meaning. He could not admit error without sacrificing his doctrine of authority and his own certainty. Yet central is always the knowledge of faith which is "more a persuasion than a cognition." (p. 100 f.) It is the knowledge of God's gratuitous mercy toward me and results in both selfknowledge and participation in Christ. It is kerygmatic. The "wider knowledge" remains objective, outside us, is didactic. "In the last place - if we may borrow the language of Paul Tillich - the knowledge of faith may be called theonomous, and the wider knowledge heteronomous." (p. 105).

This distinction between two types of knowledge is most helpful. It results in one side of Calvin which is very close to Bultmann and the existentialists and in another side very close to the fundamentalists. Nor does Forstman seem convinced that the Barthian dialectic preserves the best of both worlds. He does, happily, show no inhibitions about pointing out Calvin's own inconsistencies in exegesis and even in theology. Calvin does have implicit faith, just like the Roman Catholics, but it is directed toward the Bible rather than the Church. Faith is in a real sense obedience, unquestioning but as a work of the Spirit.

One could say much more about such a book and about the author's aims. Let this analysis suffice, and let the student take it up as the very valuable introduction to Calvin that it is. Let the scholar not neglect it either, for it will provide him insight into a fundamental area of Calvin's thought.

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