

Vom evangelischen Blickpunkt gesehen, fällt auf, daß es gerade diese Charakteristika waren – die Sündenkatologe sowie die Aufzählung der Werke der Barmherzigkeit und alles dessen, was dem Menschen zu guten Werken verhilft, damit er an der Wirksamkeit der Gnade Gottes aus eigener Kraft mitwirken könne –, die dem Reformwerk Luthers am Katechismus zum Opfer gefallen sind. Zu den Untersuchungen von J. Geffcken, J. M. Reu, J. Meyer u. a. bietet das angezeigte Werk wichtige Ergänzungen für die Kenntnis der auf die Reformatoren gekommenen Katechismustradition.

Erlangen

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Gustav A. Benrath: Wyclifs Bibelkommentar. (= Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, 36). Berlin (W. de Gruyter & Co.) 1966. XII, 414 S., geb. DM 58.–.

Dr. Benrath studies the surviving parts of Wyclif's lecture-commentary on the whole Bible. He had to work on the manuscripts, since none of the components has ever been printed. The remains of the Old Testament postills have only just come to light; the derivative character of the work as a whole accounts for the early editors' neglect, as Dr. Benrath says, and makes it unlikely that any scholar will undertake the task in the foreseeable future. Nor need he. The present study is thorough and meticulous enough to satisfy curiosity on the subject. If students continue to handle the manuscripts, it will be for occasional reference, not in order to re-investigate the contents. First of all, Dr. Benrath establishes the dating of the *Postilla* by a careful comparison of crossreferences and allusions. My discovery of Wyclif's *principium* or inaugural lecture, given when he incepted as doctor of divinity at Oxford in 1372, which is embedded in the *Postilla*, serves to divide the earlier part, representing the lectures he gave as a bachelor, from the later, more authoritative teaching of the fully fledged doctor. Dr. Benrath has fixed the dates more precisely and has corrected my impression that the *Postilla*, as we have it, reflects the exact order in which the lectures were given: the Apocalypse-commentary, now placed at the end, belonged to the bachelor's course. It seems certain, therefore, that either Wyclif or a pupil regrouped the lectures into their present form. The 'torso', to use the author's phrase, and its missing members, were produced before Wyclif put forward those controversial views which would lead to his break with the Church. Dr. Benrath specifies Oct. 19, 1376, as a *terminus ante quem* for the lecture on Mc. ii, 1–12, and agrees that the papal schism of autumn 1378 probably marks a limiting date for the whole *Postilla*. Secondly, reading what survives in the light of Wyclif's sources, he has disentangled the original and personal from the traditional. As the latter far outweighs the former, his task called for a skill and patience which will be appreciated only by those who have themselves wrestled with medieval exegesis. The result does not add to our knowledge of Wyclif's ideas, whether philosophical or theological, or of his reform programme. It does illuminate their development, or perhaps rather disclosure, during the years when he lectured on Scripture in the schools. Dr. Benrath is an informed and painstaking guide. His enthusiasm carries us with him through the journey. He stops to point out the essential whenever we risk being overwhelmed by detail. His account of 'theological excursions' in the *Postilla* has especial interest. For instance, he shows us a development in Wyclif's struggle to square the doctrine of transubstantiation with his philosophical realism, and fits the two stages marked in the *Postilla* very neatly into a contemporary account of Wyclif's changes of mind and final rejection of the doctrine. The final chapter on 'Realism, Biblicism and Criticism of the Church' makes this difficult subject as clear as it can be. He brings out the connexion between the three strands, a three-fold cord which can hardly be broken, in Wyclif's approach to contemporary problems, as no one has done before. The reader has scope for his own industry and imagination: Dr. Benrath does not identify the majority of Wyclif's quotations in the passages he prints. References to the 'state of innocence' (pp. 231, 289)

should be noted as important, and even more so those to 'dominion by grace' (pp. 39, 213, 227, 233, 303): it has been suggested that Wyclif lost interest in his theory of dominion in his later years; these passages prove that he had it in mind when he prepared his *Postilla*. But we have a splendid apparatus here. The Latin text of all significant passages referred to is printed either in footnotes or in an appendix, with manuscript variants. An appendix on the dating of the so-called *Quadraginta sermones*, which throws light on that of the *Postilla*, reads as a fine bit of detective work. The indexes and bibliography are admirable. The texts strike me as almost wholly free from mistakes and misprints. The only serious one that I noted was on p. 370: in his translation (p. 268) Dr. Benrath rightly prefers the reading 'indebite', which he rejects in the Latin.

My criticisms turn on shades of opinion; the facts will stand firm. Dr. Benrath has not realised quite how commonplace Wyclif's strictures on the clergy were. If he had, he could have shown even more effectively the difference between Wyclif and other critics: Wyclif called for a remedy in the shape of disendowment of the Church and he contested papal authority. Poverty and meekness must be imposed by force.

His modesty has prevented the author from tackling two major questions: what authority, if any, did Wyclif wish to substitute for the *magisterium* of the Church when he interpreted Scripture? What did politics count for in his development? Dr. Benrath defends him from the charge of political opportunism on the grounds that his *Forty Sermons*, dated 1376-9, are not political in content; but that does not disprove the view that he took part in a propaganda campaign on the Duke of Lancaster's behalf in 1376. A better line of defence, if defence be needed, emerges from the book as a whole: we see Wyclif developing the logic of his ideas. This to my mind is Dr. Benrath's most exciting contribution to Wyclif studies. Why should admirers of Wyclif feel shocked because he tried to implement his programme by political action, instead of just talking and writing at Oxford?

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Ferdinand Seibt: *Hussitica. Zur Struktur einer Revolution.* (= Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte, hg. v. Herbert Grundmann und Fritz Wagner, Heft 8). Köln und Graz (Böhlau) 1965. VII, 205 S., geb. DM 28.-.

Bei der Erforschung der hussitischen Bewegung standen sich bisher zwei Hauptrichtungen gegenüber: eine vorwiegend von Angelsachsen und Deutschen vertretene, die theologische Texte philologisch interpretierte, und eine meist von Tschechen getragene, die mit historischen Schlüssen nationale und neuerdings soziale Gruppen rekonstruierte. In Deutschland ist es seit langem um die Hussitenfrage so still geworden, daß hier kaum registriert wurde, wie man sich anderswo um die Überwindung dieser Gegensätze bemüht. Erst Ferdinand Seibt, in Deutschland zur Zeit der einzige Sachkenner, hat in einer Reihe von Aufsätzen auch bei uns zulande die Diskussion neubelebt. Er fördert sie am kräftigsten durch die vorliegende Münchener Habilitationsschrift, in der die früher getrennten Methoden miteinander kombiniert werden: Philologische Textanalyse unter sozialgeschichtlichem Aspekt. Das Hauptergebnis der Arbeit, dem man ohne Vorbehalt zustimmen muß, ist eine strukturelle Differenzierung der hussitischen Bewegung: Sie war nicht, wie früher allenthalben angenommen, ein harmonischer Dreiklang aus religiösen, nationalen und sozialen Motiven, sondern ein Gegeneinander zahlreicher sozialer Gruppen mit recht verschiedenen geistigen Horizonten und Zielen. Im einzelnen untersucht Seibt eine Reihe von Briefen, Urkunden, Gutachten und Traktaten und weist sie drei städtischen Gruppen zu: den Prager Magistern mit ihrer theologischen Lehre vom gerechten Krieg; den Prager Städtlern mit ihrem nationalistischen Programm der Sprachnation; den Kleinbürgern mit ihren Vorstellungen von sozialer Umschichtung. Auch diese Zuordnung von Gedankenkomplexen zu sozialen Gruppierungen ist – mindestens im ganzen – einleuchtend begründet und ein guter Ausgangspunkt für weitere Forschungen.