

Edward A. Gosselin: *The King's Progress to Jerusalem: Some Interpretations of David during the Reformation Period and Their Patristic and Medieval Background* (= *Humana Civilitas* Vol. 2). Malibu, Calif. (Undena Publications) 1976. VII, 131 S., \$ 16.00 (paper \$ 12.00).

The main interest of the author of this study in medieval and Reformation exegesis is „to explore the sixteenth-century Protestant understanding of David, as it was expressed in Protestant Psalms commentaries“ (p. 2). In terms of the scope and disposition of the book, this primary interest is understated. Only the last two chapters (V–VI) deal with concepts of David which are developed by Melancthon, Calvin and Theodore Beza in their exegesis of the Psalms. Chapters I–III, over half of the body of the book, are devoted respectively to the exegetical treatment of David by Augustine, Nicholas of Lyra and Lefèvre d'Étaples. Although the author intends for their views of David to provide only „a useful historical background and setting for the Protestant images of the prophet“ (p. 2), Gosselin's analyses of these pre-Reformation views merit attention in their own right as instructive samples of various medieval hermeneutical approaches to the Psalms.

In terms of the thesis of the book, however, Gosselin is correct in describing these first three chapters as background. The efforts of the medieval exegetes are downplayed in order to set the stage for what the author terms the Protestant rehabilitation of David (p. 5). All three pre-Reformation Psalms commentators are censured by Gosselin for their failure to appreciate the faith and integrity of David in his own Old Testament setting. Augustine allegorizes David in New Testament dress; and even when Augustine shows concern for the historical David, his is a „hollow faith, without real substance“ (p. 17). Gosselin praises Lyra as a precursor of the Reformation view of David, but even Lyra's David bears primarily ethical and pastoral rather than theological significance for the church. Lefèvre's David is a „puppet“ (p. 55), who functions only as a mouthpiece of the Spirit and thus remains himself a „religious pigmy“ (p. 58). Although Gosselin provides helpful, if sometimes hypothetical, insight into the historical reasons for these distinctive treatments of David, his negative evaluation of their achievement vitiates his otherwise illuminating analysis of their exegesis. Gosselin might have tempered his assessment of pre-Reformation exegesis if he had tested it against other strands of the tradition such as Jerome and the Victorines.

In contrast to these pre-Reformation exegetes, Gosselin finds in the commentaries of his selected Protestant reformers „the full recovery of David as a real man of faith and as a theological spokesman, on the same plane, both to his own people and to Christians“ (p. 67). This full recovery is based on Gosselin's view that the Reformers perceived an identity between the faith and promise of the Old Testament and the faith and promise of the New Testament. As a result of this perceived identity, David became immediately theologically relevant to the church, and the Old and New Testaments no longer had to be forced into agreement by the use of allegory, moral exhortation, or pinpoint prophecy. The author is indebted to J. S. Preus, *From Shadow to Promise*, for this insight into Reformation exegesis and Gosselin admits that his treatment of Luther in Chapter IV is only a summary of Preus. Gosselin does compare the Psalms exegesis of the early Luther with his preface to the German Psalter of 1528 and finds in the mature Luther the same identity between the faith of the Old and New Testament people which Preus discovers in the second half of the *Dictata*. Nevertheless, Gosselin's criticism of Ebeling and Rupp, based derivatively on Preus instead of on his own examination of the early texts, does not advance the scholarly discussion of Preus' thesis.

When the author finally arrives at his own analysis of the Reformation views of David in Chapters V and VI, it remains for him only to demonstrate that Melancthon, Calvin and Beza have the same concept of David as theologian which he had postulated on the basis of Preus' analysis of Luther. Unsurprisingly, Gosselin argues that these Reformers see a basic identity between David and themselves because they are all members of a faithful remnant of God's people

which possesses a forward-looking concept of promise, hope and eventual deliverance. Gosselin does show persuasively that Melanchthon, Calvin and Beza see in David an example of true faith in God's promises who can serve as a model for believers in the Protestant churches. He also demonstrates how David, while still persecuted by Saul, served the Reformers as a model of the proper political stance of Protestants in time of war and persecution. On this point Gosselin finds significant differences in the Reformers' use of David. Melanchthon is more ambiguous than Calvin about the necessity of following David's example of restraint in the face of persecution. This insight accords well with the results of recent research into Lutheran resistance theory. Beza not only invokes David as a model of political behavior for the Huguenot leaders during the French Wars of Religion, but he also employs David's kingship as the justification for the Huguenot revolt and as the promise of Huguenot success in establishing a divinely ordained government.

Gosselin is more convincing when he exposes the differences in the Reformers' political use of David than when he argues for the theological identity which they see between David and Protestants. For example, Gosselin argues that „because David's trust was placed not merely in the expectation of the promised Messiah, but also in the promise of eternal salvation, his faith was that of the Restored Church“ (p. 79). The texts cited from Melanchthon's *Commentary on the Psalms* do not support this assertion and, furthermore, such an assertion actually detracts from the author's main thesis that the Reformers theologically rehabilitated David because they took seriously the Old Testament setting of his faith rather than making David a member of the church. Gosselin's thesis suffers from this inconsistency because he attempts to apply Preus' thesis, which deals only with the young Luther, to the Psalms exegesis of the later Reformers. In spite of a well-placed caveat (p. 77), Gosselin does not take seriously enough the way in which, for example, Melanchthon applied a Lutheran theological hermeneutic to his exegesis of the Psalms: „Ut universa doctrina Ecclesiae in duas partes distribuitur, videlicet legem et Evangelium, ita discernantur et Psalmi“ (*Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. 13, col. 1018).

There are other difficulties as well which, when recognized, mitigate the sharp contrast between medieval and Reformation exegesis drawn by the author. In spite of Lefèvre's use of the traditional exegetical category *synagoga fidelis*, which since Cassiodorus denoted those Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, Gosselin maintains that „Lefèvre, unlike Luther and, especially, Melanchthon and Calvin . . ., does not distinguish David and the faithful Jews from the unfaithful Jews“ (p. 63, n. 42). In explaining why the concept of the remnant church was adopted by the Reformers, Gosselin makes the observation: „It is also true that seldom, if ever before, had there been occasion to perceive such a historical parallel between the situation of the post-Advent Christian Church and the pre-Advent, faithful remnant“ (p. 90). The popular use of this concept in the ecclesiological debates of the later Middle Ages deserves at least to be mentioned and, preferably, studied for the light it might shed on the way in which the Reformers employed it.

The most disconcerting aspect of Gosselin's study lies, however, in its main thesis: the traditional exegesis of David and the Psalms suffered from a „glaring deficiency“ (p. 80) which was overcome by the Protestant rehabilitation of David. This value judgment on both medieval and Reformation exegesis is as unnecessary as it is inappropriate. Gosselin confesses, but does not account for his bias, when he explains the title of his book: „After observing the welcome extended to the Jewish king and prophet by each of our Prereformation (*sic*) commentators, we experienced some relief when, at least metaphorically, the Protestant exegetes (especially Theodore Beza) escorted the ancient king into his holy city“ (p. 6). Even when one acknowledges the impossibility of absolute historical objectivity, it is not evident why Beza's political use of David should be evaluated as superior to Lyra's pastoral and ethical use of David. For the pre-Reformation exegetes, David was also in Jerusalem and spoke instructively from his holy city to the church of their day

in clear tones which the author has helped modern readers to hear and to appreciate. Unfortunately, these tones are almost drowned out by Gosselin's insistence upon imprisoning David in a Protestant Jerusalem.

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Christoph Demke Hrsg.: Thomas Müntzer. Anfragen an Theologie und Kirche. Ed. i. A. des Bundes der Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR, Berlin (Evangelische Verlagsanstalt) 1977. 85 S., geb., M. 6,-.

Christoph Demke legt ein ebenso schmales wie inhaltsschweres Bändchen vor, das – aus Studienseminaren des Bundes der Evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR 1975 aus Anlaß des 450. Todestages Thomas Müntzers hervorgegangen – viele beachtenswerte Denkanstöße zur Beschäftigung mit Müntzer liefert. Daß für die Endfassung Elligers große Müntzer-Biographie nicht im erforderlichen Maße herangezogen werden konnte, kann nur bedauert werden.

Joachim Rogge behandelt (7–19) „Müntzers und Luthers Verständnis von der Reformation der Kirche“, meldet den Differenzierungsbedarf für beide „Reformatoren“ an (7), wendet sich gegen das schablonenhafte Chiffrenbild, das beiden zuteil wurde, scheint zu Recht bei Müntzers „Theorie oder Handlungslehre?“ (10) den Schwerpunkt auf diese zu lenken, da er nachweist, daß Müntzer keine ausführliehen exegetischen Einzelstudien anstellte (11), betont den Stellenwert der Apokalypik bei Müntzer (13) und meint abschließend, beide „Reformatoren“ unterschieden „sich hauptsächlich durch ihr differenziertes Wortverständnis“ (17).

Rudolf Mau wendet sich (21–44) „Müntzers Verständnis von der Bibel“ zu und konstatiert „das erstaunliche Ausmaß der faktischen Präsenz [im Text gesperrt] der Bibel in nahezu allen Äußerungen und Gedankengängen Müntzers“ (21), auch wenn er zu Recht zögert, Müntzer als „Schrifttheologen“ (22) anzusprechen sowie die Bedeutung des „innerlichen Wortes“ für Müntzer zureichend würdigt (24 ff.). Letztlich ist zumindest im Extremfalle die Schrift für Müntzer durchaus „entbehrlich“ (28), wenn auch andererseits nur die vom unmittelbaren Reden Gottes im Herzen Ergriffenen – im Gegensatz zu den nicht-müntzerischen „Schriftstehlern“ – das Ganze der Bibel, die Bibel in ihrem Kontext adäquat verstehen können (31 f.). Daher wird für Müntzer die Bibel zu einem „Lehrbuch von Zeugnissen geistlicher Erfahrung“, zu einer Vorbildersammlung und letztlich zum „Gesetz“ (33 f.), wobei ihr Wert als Kontrollinstanz für die inhaltlichen Erfahrungen der Auserwählten gewahrt bleibt (36 f.), wenn auch nicht ihr, „sondern dem aktuellen Geistgeschehen in den Auserwählten“ „wirklich zentrale Bedeutung“ zukommt (36).

Hochinteressant ist ferner der Beitrag von Wolfgang Ullmann (44–63) „Das Geschichtsverständnis Thomas Müntzers“, der alle methodischen Schwierigkeiten dieser Fragestellung klar im Auge behält. Der Hinweis, daß Müntzer in besonderem Maße den vornizänischen Vätern verpflichtet ist (49 u. ö.), ist durchaus gelungen. Wichtig ist zudem ein Hinweis auf die antihumanistische Haltung Müntzers, die z. T. noch ungedruckte Materialien (51; N 32: Lit.) beinhalten. In der „welterfassenden Offenbarung Christi“ sieht Müntzer die Möglichkeit zur Scheidung des Christentums und des [sozio-ökonomisch interpretierten] Heidentums (55). Das totale Scheitern des offenbarungstheologischen Geschichtsverständnisses Müntzers wie der vollkommenen Reformation ist mit Müntzer zu Recht dem seit der Zeit des Humanismus festzustellenden universellen Versagen der Universitäten wie der theologischen Fakultäten durch Ullmann zugeordnet worden (56). Überspitzungen sind dem Autor freilich nicht fremd, die zumindest dem gesamteuropäischen Konnex nicht gerecht werden, z. B. 58: „Ich meine dies, daß die entscheidende theologische Kontroverse des 17. Jahrhunderts nicht zwischen Katholiken und Protestanten, sondern zwischen Sozinianern und der Universitätstheologie aller Lager ausgefochten worden ist.“

Abschließend beschäftigt sich Siegfried Bräuer (65–85) mit „Thomas Müntzers Weg in den Bauernkrieg“. Auch Bräuer entlarvt die Vorstellung vom „Bauernführer Müntzer“ als „zählebige Legende“ (65). Die Behutsamkeit, mit der Bräuer