

Luther's ideas had become common stock among the partisans of the Reformation. Therefore, any idea of a systematic dependence upon Luther appears to be groundless.

These reservations do not lessen the value of *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*. The book sets Calvin's theology in his practical approach to life. It is a clear and excellent guide to the thought of the great reformer. It is too bad it took so long for it to come into print.

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Liechty, Daniel. *Andreas Fischer and the Sabbatarian Anabaptists: An Early Reformation Episode in East Central Europe*. Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, no. 29. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988. 167 pp. \$23.95.

Daniel Liechty is well equipped for producing a work on Sabbatarian Anabaptism. Trained first at Goshen College, Eastern Mennonite College, and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, he supplemented this basic education in arts and theology with travel and research in the "homelands" of Fischer and of the Anabaptist and other groups with which Fischer had contact in Central and Eastern Europe. Study at the University of Budapest in 1979, sponsored by the Mennonite Central Committee, provided Liechty the opportunity for his inaugural work on the topic of the present publication, and the dissertation he presented to the Protestant faculty of the University of Vienna in 1983 constituted the preliminary form of what has become, after "at least three full revisions" (p. 15), the volume now in hand.

Gerhard F. Hasel pioneered the research on the Sabbatarian Anabaptists—i.e., those Anabaptists who advocated and adhered to Saturday rather than Sunday as the Christian Sabbath. In his Master's thesis (1960) and in two subsequent articles in *AUSS* (5 [1967]: 101-121 and 6 [1968]: 19-28), he detailed the Sabbatarian views and arguments of both Oswald Glaidt and Andreas Fischer. Hasel's excellent contribution helped to make evident the need for further investigation of this fascinating, but little-known, facet of Anabaptist history and practice. Liechty has competently met the challenge of this need, though he, like Hasel, has had to depend, not on Glaidt's and Fischer's own writings on the subject, which are no longer extant, but on rebuttals that were made by Valentine Crautwald and Caspar Schwenckfeld.

Fortunately, the two anti-Sabbatarian writers have evidently set forth quite fully and accurately their opponents' views. Their own counter-arguments, however, betray at times what appears to be a lower level of discernment as to precisely what Glaidt and Fischer really meant. This is a facet of the subject, unfortunately, that Liechty has largely skipped over.

Our author has been hampered in other respects of his investigation because of a paucity of good firsthand accounts. Therefore his reconstruction of historical backgrounds to the careers of Glaidt and Fischer, of their relationship to each other and to other reformers, and of their own precise itineraries and activities is necessarily sketchy at points and is also characterized by a substantial amount of speculation—albeit, informed and reasonable speculation. Appropriately, Liechty has in his introduction alerted the reader to the hazards faced in doing his research and to his consequent procedures (see pp. 22-25).

In spite of the handicaps he has encountered, Liechty has pieced together from the available data a rather detailed and plausible account of the activities of Glaidt and Fischer in Silesia ca. 1528-29 and of the latter's subsequent activities in Moravia and Slovakia. Moreover, he has provided substantial information on the early life of Fischer (chap. 2); on Austrian Anabaptism in general (chap. 3); on Schwenckfeld and Crautwald (the first two sections of chap. 4); and on the teachings of Fischer regarding the church, Christology, perfectionism, the Bible, baptism, pacifism, and several other topics (chap. 6). He has even provided an excursus on "The Slovakian Miners' Revolt, 1525-26" as background to Fischer's choice of Slovakia for a main center of his activity after 1529 (pp. 67-70).

Liechty's acquaintance with secondary literature on the topic is thorough, and at a number of points he suggests corrections to the reconstructions of other researchers concerning such matters as the teachings of Hans Hut and various aspects of the Anabaptist experience in Austria, Moravia, Hungary, and Slovakia. A particularly interesting example from the standpoint of the topic of the volume here under review is Liechty's argumentation that Fischer learned his Sabbatarianism from Glaidt, rather than the other way around (pp. 61-62). His evidence and reasoning are fairly persuasive, though he also could have added at least some consideration of the possibility that the two men may have had a certain degree of independence in reaching their conclusions by virtue of their individual study of scripture. I would also question whether Glaidt's "chiliastic tendencies" (in contrast to Fischer's views) are really as "clearly demonstrated" as Liechty suggests (p. 61). In any event, I do not find evidence for the rather heightened chiliasm that Liechty attributes to Glaidt; and I wonder, too, whether Liechty may not possibly have overevaluated the impact of Hut and Hut's eschatology on Glaidt.

All in all, *Andreas Fischer and the Sabbatarian Anabaptists* is a valuable publication indeed. In addition to its wealth of information and the balance with which this information is set forth, it is superb in its readability. It is heavily documented with endnotes (pp. 125-146), and a most helpful feature of these notes is their inclusion of excerpts (quite lengthy at times) from Crautwald's and Schwenckfeld's rebuttal documents. This volume contains an extensive bibliography (pp. 147-162), a scripture

index (p. 163), and an index of persons (pp. 164-166). It lacks, however, a topical index—a feature which would certainly have been helpful. The volume also contains several pertinent appendixes (pp. 113-124) and includes a "Foreword" (pp. 14-15) written by Samuele Bacchiocchi, well known as the author of several publications dealing with the Sabbath.

This fascinating volume by Daniel Liechty deserves wide circulation and careful attention. It is a worthy addition to the series on "Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History."

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Martin, Ralph P. *James*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 48. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988. cix + 240 pp. \$24.99.

Ralph P. Martin, the NT editor of the Word Biblical Commentary, has contributed a valuable commentary on one of the most ignored and misinterpreted biblical books. Martin utilizes extensively just about all the basic sources in English, German, and French up to 1987. No serious student of the Jacobean epistle will be able to ignore the rich bibliographies found at the beginning of the commentary and preceding each section throughout the volume.

Besides its many other strengths, Martin's volume especially deserves a place on the library shelves of the biblical scholar for its valuable "Introduction." The most significant contribution in the introduction is clearly the discussion on "The Role of James in Ecclesiastical Circles."

In this section Martin sketches the trajectory along which the character and role of James has traveled during past centuries. By dealing with the "Content of the Traditions," "Relation to Earlier Traditions," and "Function of Traditions" in Hegesippus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius of Caesarea, he is able to demonstrate how James and the epistle gained ascendancy and authority in the early church.

Without taking away from the valuable contribution of the above, I feel, however, that more could have been said with regard to the comparatively recent discoveries from Nag Hammadi, which have shed light on the traditions about James. Such a detailed discussion could possibly reveal another reason for the difficulty the epistle had in obtaining a place in the canon: i.e., James was a patron of the ethos and beliefs of those "non-orthodox groups." It is therefore a pity that Martin has spent a disproportionate amount of time discussing "orthodox" traditions at the expense of the Nag Hammadi collection.

Martin accurately sets James and his epistle in the context of Palestine and in the *Sitz im Leben* of the social and political unrest before the fall of