

the detective work of history, T.'s careful scholarly treatment of each letter offers its own drama in attempting to reveal the turbulent post-Nicene struggles with Arianism that characterize Julius's papacy. In Letter 2, the most extensive treatment from Julius himself, we discover a mind and temperament that are distinctly procedural. Julius finds Arian attempts to avoid debate and review every bit as problematic as their actual theology, and considers their reliance upon imperial power rather than church order to be symptomatic of the weakness of their case. In the turmoil of Julius's theological affairs of state, T. gives us a strong beginning for his series in early papal correspondence, throwing light on the circumstances that strengthened the juridical role of the bishops of Rome.

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Schleiermachers Kirchengeschichte. By Simon Gerber. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. 2015. Pp. xii + 524. \$164.

Gerber's intention is to show that Friedrich Schleiermacher was an influential historian of the church and he succeeds rather admirably. Gerber divides Schleiermacher's history of the church into four periods with the first covering the time of Christ to approximately 400. This period includes some of the most exciting and miraculous times, yet towards the end of the period the emphasis which had been on miracles was being replaced with dogma. The second period spans approximately 400–1000 and covers the time of decisive theological controversies. It also includes the time of the church fathers, the increasing importance of dogma, and asceticism, the last of which Schleiermacher believed to be at odds with Christianity's living spirit. Protestants traditionally treated the centuries prior to the Reformation as the highpoint of papal tyranny, but Schleiermacher regarded this period as one of expansion and consolidation. The final period discussed is from the Reformation to the present and involves the major conflicts between Catholicism and Protestantism. Yet, Schleiermacher's approach was to see some kind of unity, just as he thought Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin were of one spirit.

Schleiermacher sought to reduce the tension between theology and history and he tried to show that errors and misunderstandings stemmed from human beings and not from the "common spirit of the church." History was not a compilation of facts and that theological history should be "organic" to reflect the living elements. G. knows Schleiermacher's church history well; this book appears as an extension of his work as editor of the *Kritische Ausgabe*, a volume of Schleiermacher's lectures. Gerber's book suffers from two flaws: he knows so much about church history that Schleiermacher sometimes recedes into the background, and G. undermines his own claim by suggesting Schleiermacher's importance does not come from his lectures on church history but from his writings. Schleiermacher may not be regarded as a great Protestant Church historian, yet his influence is reflected in the church histories

written by his followers: August Neander, Ferdinand Christian Bauer, Karl Hase, and Karl Hagenbach. Those wishing to understand an important but neglected aspect of Schleiermacher's work should read this book.

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At Play in Creation: Merton's Awakening to the Feminine Divine. By Christopher Pramuk. Collegeville, MN: 2016. Pp. vii + 138. \$17.95.

This book comprises a series of retreat conferences based on the author's more academic study, *Sophia: The Hidden Christ of Thomas Merton* (2009). Pramuk is becoming one of my favorite authors of "Mertonia" because he identifies a central hermeneutical key in Merton's life and thought, one that will likely have a lasting significance: the divine feminine.

A notable artist once suggested that one can view Merton's life as "starved for the feminine." This book of meditative reflections engages this dimension of Merton's thought. According to P., Merton's prose poem, *Hagia Sophia*, provides perhaps the central and unifying theme of his life and thought. This poem arises out of Merton's encounter with the Russian sophiologists and encapsulates what may seem on the surface to be a disparate attempt to bring the various dimensions of sophiology together. For many Merton scholars, this poem also contains a premonition of his future affair with the nurse. Despite what one makes of Merton's romance, in the context of his attempt to pursue and articulate the divine feminine as expressed 15 years earlier in *Hagia Sophia*, one wonders whether his projection of the divine feminine onto her was inevitable.

However, this event in Merton's life forms only a small part of the author's reflections. He also focuses on the social dimensions of divine Wisdom in the discernment of the hidden and oppressed in various parts of the world, but particularly women and children. A reflection on the Holocaust victim Etty Hillesum speaks to the strength of her spirit and other women like her who kept true to their faith and dignity in deplorable and impossible circumstances.

What is also refreshing in this book is the author's own personal experiences. One is aware that Merton's influence on him is deep and has become a part of his concrete living and praxis. Merton was notoriously intuitive, as one former archbishop once told me; he had a way of discerning movements prior to the rest of the community. This was corroborated by Pope Francis's positive comments about Merton to the US Congress last September. Reading this book makes me keenly aware that to the extent his intuition about divine Wisdom is accurate, then we can anticipate Sophia rising.

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