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Theology, Department of

1-1-2012

Schroter: Johann Salomo Semler's "Hermeneutik des Christentums"

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Published version. *Theological Studies*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (December 2012): 977. [Publisher Link](#). © 2012 Theological Studies, Inc. Used with permission.

an Asian metaphor, reading this volume is like being treated to a full course Asian theological dinner: the partakers are so overwhelmed by the richness, diversity, and high quality of courses that they resolve to savor each one more mindfully at a later date.

Being a Festschrift to mark the 25th anniversary of the FABC's Office of Theological Concerns (OTC, formerly known as Theological Advisory Commission—TAC), this work contains essays written by a diverse and well-qualified group of theologians to showcase FABC theology at its finest: from the very architects of the FABC documents (such as Edmund Chia and Vimal Tirimanna) to seasoned theologians recognized as authorities in Asian theology (e.g., Peter Phan, Aloysius Pieris, and Michael Amaladoss), and other scholars who add more focused perspectives—such as feminist theology and migration—that have particular relevance for Asian theology.

Despite the diversity of the collection, one can note particular emphases that recur in the work and give coherence to this multifaceted view of Asian theology. For example, the so-called “triple dialogue” (with the underprivileged, other religions, and Asian cultures) is reflected upon and strongly advocated in practically every essay. Other noteworthy and striking emphases are the spirit of *kenosis* that should mark the church if it is to become a more effective instrument of God in Asia, the quintessentially Asian value of harmony, regnocentrism, and migration.

The book certainly shows that the different Asian local churches have come of age theologically and have something priceless to offer the universal church.

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AUFKLÄRUNG DURCH HISTORISIERUNG: JOHANN SALOMO SEMLERS HERMENEUTIK DES CHRISTENTUMS. By Marianne Schröter. Berlin: Gruyter, 2012. Pp. xi + 413. \$168.

Semler (1725–1791) was one of the most productive German theologians of the Enlightenment period, and yet

he remains one of the least read due to his often-dark conceptual language and his infamous verbosity. Schröter shows in her remarkable dissertation that Semler developed a new way of theologizing with his four-volume hermeneutics. He argued that only if readers free themselves from the presuppositions of dogma and church can they read the texts of the Bible as expressions of religious beliefs of people of a certain time and context.

“Enlightenment,” one could say, comes about through a process of historicizing a text, as the title indicates. Consequently, Semler differentiates between the “word of God” and “revelation,” that is, between the historically contingent expression of religious experiences and the rational truth contained in it. This hermeneutic rejects not only the Lutheran orthodox view of verbal inspiration but also the mystical interpretation of the Bible by the Halle Pietists. Hermeneutics, as Semler saw it, not only historicizes the text and emancipates the reader but also enables a truly individual experience of God with the help of understanding the text. Semler's theological agenda was less about dogmatic propositions than about a new style—a “more liberal style,” as he himself called it—of doing theological research. Only such a hermeneutic theology, he was convinced, could overcome confessional divides and become a reconciliatory hermeneutic.

S.'s study is the first in-depth analysis of Semler's hermeneutics, and it succeeds brilliantly in systematizing a thinker who, according to the eminent historian of Protestantism Emanuel Hirsch, “had the worst style a German of genius ever had” (*Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie*, vol. 4 [1954] 50).

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MY JOURNAL OF THE COUNCIL. By Yves Congar, O.P. Edited by Denis Minns, O.P. Translated from the French by Mary John Ronayne, O.P., and Mary Cecily Boulding, O.P. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2012. Pp. lxi + 979. \$69.95.

The French original of the diary that Congar kept during the Second Vatican