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Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890-1917 by Leroy Ashby (Review)

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several summaries of his theology. The special merit of Gerrish's work is that it responds to a pressing question: why bother reading Schleiermacher when a passing reference would seem to suffice? Schleiermacher called a person who combined Christian commitment and critical inquiry a "prince of the church." In applying the title to Schleiermacher himself, Gerrish suggests that his work deserves reconsideration by those who were told either that it was too critical to be truly churchy or too churchy to be truly critical.

The book is suited to its audience. Moreover, those who teach Schleiermacher in colleges, seminaries, and graduate schools may find in it some hints about how to gain a hearing for him.

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JAMES O. DUKE

Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890-1917. By LEROY ASHBY. American Civilization Series. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984. xiii + 313 pp. \$37.95.

In this richly documented work Ashby builds on recent studies of progressive social welfare and educational experiments to explore some neglected aspects of the "explosion" of child-saving activity that occurred from the 1880s to the First World War. Between two splendid interpretive chapters are five case studies that illuminate the motives, strategies, conflicts, achievements, and (occasionally) failures of little-known reformers on the front lines of such work. E. P. Savage's Children's Home Society of Minnesota, the orphanages run by women of the National Benevolent Association (Disciples of Christ), John Gunckel's Toledo Newsboys' Association, the Ford Republic outside Detroit, and the Good Will farm of G. W. Hinckley in Maine reflect the diversity of the gospel of child-saving. But Ashby also highlights important commonalities.

Throughout the work he stresses the continuing vitality of the voluntaristic tradition at a time when government's role in social welfare was expanding. Much of progressive reformers' energy flowed into the work of private organizations and agencies like those studied in this volume. In fact, while augmenting its power, many reformers harbored a deep ambivalence toward the state. The influence of religion, especially the Protestant Social Gospel, is prominent in nearly all these cases. Ashby acknowledges that personal needs and ambitions, a nostalgic evocation of the village family, anxieties about crime and disorder, and the desire for social control animated these crusaders. He shows how children in these years came to represent both hope and (if neglected) threat in the nation's future. However, he argues persuasively that reformers' efforts rested also, and more importantly, on experience with the

harsh realities of dependency and delinquency and “a keen sense of obligation and service” (p. 210).

Ashby also probes differences among reformers over the relative merits of home placement and institutional care, their failure to distinguish dependency from delinquency, and the beginnings of the shift from the “heroic” to a “more prosaic” phase, that is, from amateurism to professionalism. The book is unusually engaging: its characters come to life in a swiftly moving story. It does no harm that Ashby considers these experiments some of the era’s finest achievements.

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JACOB H. DORN

William Barclay: The Authorized Biography. By CLIVE L. RAWLINS. Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984. xviii + 791 pp. \$29.95.

Clive L. Rawlins’s biography of twentieth-century Church of Scotland notable William Barclay (1907–1978) is informed by the belief that Barclay was a widely admired, widely disliked, but misunderstood man. The proper context for understanding Barclay, he argues, is teaching the Bible in everyday situations. Barclay’s primary concern was always: What is the everyday meaning of the Bible for ordinary people? Barclay himself was, in a deep sense, an ordinary man, and he worked to bring the biblical message to ordinary men and women. Hence Rawlins approaches Barclay through his everyday life in order to get at his mind and purpose. He finds Barclay to be a man of “startling opposites” (p. ix), a complex man whose apparent ordinariness masked his deep grasp of religious reality and underlay his world-wide popularity.

This biography is based on family papers, correspondence, Barclay’s academic papers and published writings, and other documentation the author has been able to acquire. Unfortunately, Barclay kept no diary, and most of his personal papers were destroyed. Rawlins obviously admires his subject but tries to write objectively. He intends neither to glorify Barclay nor to exaggerate his significance. The sometimes wearisome detail of the flow and course of Barclay’s life (too often the technique of unimaginative biography) is used in this account for a purpose: Rawlins attempts to distill the spirit from the flux of everyday life.

Barclay excelled as a preacher who emphasized discipleship manifested in “practical goodness” (p. 179) rather than in doctrinal rigidity. His verbal skill early marked him as a producer of eloquent, detailed, logical sermons and eventually won him his reputation as a speaker, popular religious author, and commentator and translator of the New Testament.