

amenable to the civil rights narrative" (254). While many black Baptist churches had historically focused on otherworldly concerns, leaders of the Civil Rights Movement created an alternative history in which black Baptists had engaged the social issues of their day, providing precedent for churches to protest injustice. Alan Scot Willis considers how Southern Baptist literature reinterpreted early American history, reconstructing the nation's founders into Christian dominionists, in an attempt to thwart the threat of communism during the Cold War. Finally, Barry Hankins chronicles treatments of the most recent Southern Baptist controversy, noting the different emphases of moderate and conservative historians and providing the most substantial historiographical study of this controversy to date. The essays in this section demonstrate how Baptists, particularly in the twentieth century, have allowed present-day concerns to overwhelm historical accuracy.

The major critique of this volume is its narrow regional and historical focus. Ten of the twelve essays deal specifically with Baptists in the southern U.S. The other two essays discuss colonial New England and early twentieth-century New York Baptists; no mention is made of Baptists west of the Mississippi. Similarly, the essays focus largely on twentieth-century Baptists. Eight of the essays examine subjects limited to the twentieth century, and seven of those focus solely on twentieth-century southern Baptists. While a wider scope would have been welcome, the essays reflect first-rate scholarship and are engaging as a whole. In his introduction, Harper states that he hopes that "these essays will offer fresh perspectives on who Baptists were in the past so that we may more clearly see who they are in the present" (8). *Through a Glass Darkly* successfully fulfills Harper's purpose. This collection provides clarifying portraits of past Baptists and sheds light on the ways Baptist history has been used in contemporary struggles.

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After Enlightenment: The Post-Secular Vision of J. G. Hamann. By **John R. Betz.** Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. xvi + 360 pp. \$121.95 cloth.

A comprehensive re-evaluation of the life and writings of Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788) who gained a certain international notoriety through the writings of Isaiah Berlin as a Counter-Enlightenment prophet and commentator is undoubtedly welcome. Hamann was an outstanding figure

not just in German culture, but also in the European and general transatlantic campaign against the Enlightenment that gained momentum in the closing years of the eighteenth-century and dominated the international cultural scene in the early nineteenth.

Although the author overstates his claim, it seems to me that Hamann, “widely influential in his own day,” has unjustly become a “neglected figure,” and while this book is not quite the thorough, balanced, and detailed re-assessment one would have hoped for, there is much useful research and analysis here as well as thought-provoking discussion. The aims of this distinctly bold intervention, however, go considerably further than just providing that. Agreeing with Alastair MacIntyre as well as Hamann, and in large part with John Gray’s *Enlightenment’s Wake* (1995), John Betz assures us that the “effort of the Enlightenment to ground morality in reason alone has failed.” He also thinks secular postmodernity is merely an unthinking reaction to nihilistic secular modernity, and as a consequence he “steers a decidedly post-secular course (and thus an implicitly eschatological course) beyond postmodernity [. . .] toward Christ.” As the author himself acknowledges, these are audacious claims. For my part, I should explain first of all that I thoroughly enjoyed reading and also benefited from this well-written, provocative book—even if not quite in the way the author intended and despite disagreeing with practically everything he says. Since Betz repeatedly admits that Hamann was a profound and mighty prophet who wrote rather obscurely, I will refrain from laboring the point that it is not easy to extract the latter’s gems of wisdom from his convoluted verbiage. Equally, I will refrain from commenting on these more theological and rhetorical aspects of the book since I regard it as a matter of taste and belief whether one finds insightful the pervasive tendency to assume that Hamann succeeded in breaking down the “spurious ‘wall of separation’ erected by the *Aufklärer* between faith and reason, religion and philosophy” and whether one finds uplifting its frequent poetic eulogies of Hamann’s deep preoccupation with the mystery of mysteries, “the mystery of the mystical body of Christ.” The author is correct of course that Hamann tirelessly predicted that the price of the “strict separation of reason from religious tradition” and of philosophy from theology introduced by the *Aufklärer* would be reason’s own demise and a vast moral vacuum; but the question remains: was this East Prussian prophet right?

What certainly provides matter for concrete and objective criticism, especially given the book’s substantial length, is that in most cases Betz fails to map in a sufficiently complete and detailed manner the many crucial intellectual encounters of Hamann’s career. In some cases, as with Rousseau, the author is perfectly explicit as to the closeness of the parallels between, for example, the two men’s views on education and their common rejection

of the idea of evident general intellectual and scientific progress so prevalent in their time, as well as Hamann's pivotal role as a mediator between the great Genevan and German culture, introducing him to Kant, for example; and yet, he devotes very little space to and provides little detail about Hamann's reading of and attitude toward Rousseau. Still more serious, there is surprisingly little here about Semler, Eberhard, Steinbart and the neologists, the liberal Protestant theologians whose efforts to transform German Lutheranism, and "reduce the content of revelation to the rational terms of a "natural religion," exerted an immense impact on the German cultural scene at the time and against who Hamann fought a life-long war in defense of orthodoxy. Neither do we learn much about Hamann's stance toward Lessing, Reimarus and the so-called "Fragement" controversy of the 1770s. Perhaps most astonishing of all, given Spinoza's pivotal role in separating philosophy from theology and Hamann's close friendship with Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819)—the Counter-Enlightenment philosopher who triggered the Pantheismusstreit of the 1780s, possibly the most momentous of all the great German intellectual controversies of the Enlightenment era—Hamann's views on and response to Spinoza and Lessing's alleged Spinozism are not discussed and Spinoza's name does not even appear in the index. If Hamann was indeed, as the author repeatedly assures us, an uncommonly powerful and relevant critic of the *Aufklärung*, the evidence for this needs to be presented in a more historically aware, detailed, systematic and convincing manner.

Betz envisages Hamann as "in many ways a Christian precursor of postmodern philosophy" of such relevance, power, and centrality to us today that he forces us to choose between secular postmodernity and a post-secular theology. But it remains more than slightly puzzling and paradoxical that the author can be so confident that Hamann triumphantly "saw through and past the Enlightenment's claims regarding the nature and scope of autonomous reason" to its allegedly problematic philosophical grounding when Betz acknowledges at the same time—along with Charles Taylor—that the "citadel of secular reason" still "dominates from a seemingly impregnable position the entire landscape of modern society where questioning religious tradition and authority remains "a matter of uncritical acceptance." (I can only say thank goodness for that.)

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