here. What is particularly distinctive of Ebeling's "introduction" to Luther is that he concentrates on the underlying structure of Luther's thought rather than on particular themes or doctrines. The structure is antithetical: philosophy-theology, letter-spirit, Law-Gospel, etc. Ebeling is at pains to show how these antitheses are inclusive rather than contradictory of each other. "Only a practiced ear can appreciate its [Luther's theological] harmonies" (p. 33). The antitheses are required by true theology, theology of "decisive assertions" (p. 245).

For Luther theology was nothing if not a message, an "assertion," addressed to man in a crisis-situation. It was thus an "existential," "practical" theology (p. 228), "a truly theological theology" (p. 77). It was meant to meet real, not academic, problems. As such, it has a certain relevance for us today, and we read Luther best when we read him speaking to us and for us. The author's purpose, therefore, is perhaps best described as an effort to transpose Luther into the twentieth century rather than to transpose himself into the sixteenth.

Ebeling writes of his subject with assurance and even with some veneration. His appreciation for Luther's theology is great, and his promise of a novel approach overcomes our reluctance to sift through the familiar categories once again. His interpretation of Luther, and indeed of the Reformation, as a "speech-event" (*Sprachereignis*: "linguistic innovation") is incisive (pp. 27-28, etc.). But despite his success in disclosing the structure of Luther's thought and setting it into a new and clearer relief, Ebeling's implied claim that the basic premises of Luther's theology are the basic premises for every true theology will not satisfy all readers. As Luther faces his critics, every objection is resolved in his favor. In other words, some treatment of Luther's limitations would reassure the skeptical. Moreover, even under Ebeling's skillful handling, this peremptory voice from the sixteenth century often speaks with a strange and distant accent.

JOHN W. O'MALLEY, *University of Detroit*

W. Fred Graham. *The Constructive Revolutionary: John Calvin and His Socio-Economic Impact*. Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1971. Pp. 251. \$7.95.

It has been nearly a decade since anything significant has appeared in English concerning the social ethics of the Genevan Reformer. John Knox Press issued a translation of Andre Biéler's *L'humanisme social de Calvin* but although this was a gem it was only a summary of his other more important works on the economic and social thought of Calvin. Thus Graham has rendered an important service to Reformation Studies and to social history. His is a work that corroborates the position of such scholars as Brinton and Little who contend that Calvinism is one of a few great revolutionary ideologies of modern European history.

Briefly, the book consists of three parts - the Genevan scene at the time of Calvin (5 chapters), the influence of Calvin on the city life (5 chapters), and the later and more comprehensive influence of Calvin on the Western World (2 chapters). In some respects, I think that chapter XII might have made a better introduction to the book since it provides a very concise and provocative account of "where we are" in modern secularity and how we got there.

There is no question but that organized religion in its various forms of institutionalization, from the religious commune to the most formal "high church," has been struggling with its social identification. By this I mean that the question has been repeatedly raised about the nature of the relationship of a religious community (an *ecclesia* or church) to the "secular" order, i.e., to society, the civil domain, or the state.

Calvin faced a similar problem and sought to delineate the implications of the Christian proclamation found in the gospels for man's life in society. In a careful, concise, and often refreshing manner, Professor Graham details the history of the process by which the French expatriate and his ideas and ideals gained ascendancy in Geneva. There is a balance evident between an idealistic and a materialistic reading of history as there is between an historical and a theological methodology used in understanding Calvin.

Probably the central difficulty in Calvin's self-understanding and his response to correlating the gospel to commerce, organized charity, wage and price levels, education, family life, and government is his reluctance and often rigidity to accept compassionately a corrupted human nature and then to encourage the improvement of the commonweal. Graham ultimately attributes this weakness to Calvin's Christology in an all too brief portion of one chapter (X). In his words, "Because Calvin saw God as withdrawn from man at man's worst moments, Calvin could also be withdrawn, unsympathetic at the sight of man in 'the stink of filthy flesh' failing in his response to the love of God in Jesus Christ." (p. 182) This partial involvement of God in human nature, as Graham interprets it, leaves Calvin open to the charge of Nestorianism. But Graham soon qualifies this by noting the enormous lack of clarity in most of post-Chalcedon Christology. This is indeed cautious, but he would have enhanced his treatment considerably if he had studied the appropriate materials (esp. Chapt. 3) of E. David Willis' *Calvin's Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin's Theology* (E. J. Brill, 1966). Willis and McDonald have dispelled the myth of Calvin's Nestorian tendencies.

Similar caution occurs in chapter XI when discussing the Weber thesis. This protects Graham from refuting Weber on the basis of a limited reading of the Weberian corpus. Calvin was not the father of capitalism or economic individualism nor did Weber clearly claim such. David Little in *Religion, Order and Law: A Study in Pre-Revolutionary England* (Harper, 1969) has rendered the best analysis of this question.

There are a few more minor deficiencies, e.g., the interesting but unessential material in chapters one and two, repetitions on pp. 42, 56, 60, 105, the understatement regarding non-Calvinists and commerce (pp. 77 ff.), use of Babel's 1916 work in VI, fn. 27, instead of his 1960 work, confusing fn. 13 of chapter VII (p. 230) in reference to Monter's work.

The basic thrust of the study remains terribly relevant in its implications for those continuously challenged by the problem of how to combine concern for fallible mortals with a passion for social righteousness. As a model of careful historiography, of the capacity to transcend myopic subjectivity, and of a refreshing history of ideas, this monograph deserves extensive reading.

JOHN R. MEYER, *Hamilton, Ontario.*