

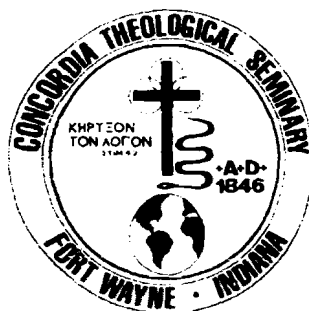
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# Book Reviews

## I. Exegetical Studies

**HANDBOOK OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM.** By Richard N. Soulen. New expanded second edition. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1981. 239 pages. \$9.95.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1975 and contained 191 pages. The second edition is revised and augmented and has 239 pages. Here the reader will find a comprehensive guide for basic terms and concepts. Over 600 terms, phrases, names, explanations of common abbreviations, notes on major methodologies, biographical sketches of key figures in biblical research history, analytical outlines of fundamental critical problems, a list of bibliographic tools, plus a simplified guide for writing an exegetical paper, constitute the contents of this useful and instructive volume.

It is especially a useful handbook for students beginning the critical study of the Bible. Professor Soulen endeavors to be objective in his presentation of the materials. It is a book which can save the Biblical student a great deal of labor in plowing through books and articles written from the historical-critical position. The volume is characterized by conciseness and concreteness. It is written with clarity and precision. Pastors will find it helpful in refreshing what they may have forgotten and acquainting themselves with what constitute recent developments in Biblical studies which are constantly seeking but never seeming to arrive at the truth.

Soulen claims in the preface to this second edition that the "field of Biblical criticism has undergone a change so radical as to be described by one noted New Testament scholar as nothing less than a second revolution, analogous to the introduction of the historico-critical method into Biblical studies two centuries ago" (page 5).

Over forty articles have been added to the first edition, including those on canonical, criticism, semiology, structure, sociological interpretation, reception theory, rhetorical analysis, theological interpretation, Biblical (theology) movement, linguistics. Another forty topics were revised or expanded. Bibliographies for all major articles are new. Serious students of Biblical studies cannot afford to be without this exegetical resource and informative tool.

Raymond F. Surburg

**THE RENDERING OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.** By Dale Patrick. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1981. 148 pages. \$8.95.

This is volume 10 in the Fortress Press series, *Overtures to Biblical Theology*, edited by Walter Brueggeman and John R. Donahue, S.J. The author of volume 10 is Associate Professor of Old Testament and Religious Thought at the Missouri School of Religion in Columbia, Missouri. *Overtures to Biblical Theology* is described by Fortress as "a series of studies in biblical theology designed to explore fresh dimensions of research and to suggest ways in which the biblical heritage may address contemporary culture." In the series forward the two editors, one a Protestant and the other a Roman Catholic, tell the reader that in Old Testament scholarship much remains unsettled: "The certainties of the older biblical theology *in service* of dogmatics, as well as of the more recent theology movement *in lieu* of dogmatics, are no longer present. Nor is there on

the scene anyone of the stature of a von Rad or a Bultmann to offer a synthesis which commends the theological engagement of a generation and summons the church to a new restatement of the biblical message."

Dr. Patrick in this volume is described by the editors as attempting to avoid the temptations of supernaturalism and historicism, which they claimed he has done with consummate skill. Supernaturalism is said to freeze and violate the vitality of the text and, on the other hand, historicism is described as unable to make any meaningful interpretation which can claim any authority. The reader is warned by the editors that the material offered by Patrick in his book "is bold and experimental. Its arguments will not be adapted easily to Old Testament theology, either in the mode of Eichrodt or of von Rad. Indeed, his work is likely to be misunderstood by those who will insist on either of those standard ways" (p. xiv). It is the contention of Patrick that the God of the Old Testament is rendered or set forth as a *dramatis persona* of the biblical story. It is the thesis of this work that the God-language of the Old Testament must be understood as conforming to those principles that govern the mimetic arts. Patrick claims that God is "enacting his identity" in interaction with other human beings. God plays various roles in His dramatic action, and at times he intervenes at critical junctures to effect a satisfactory solution.

The hermeneutics employed in this volume departs radically from the normal rules for Biblical interpretation that have characterized a sound understanding of Scriptures for nearly the past two thousand years. To Christians who take the text seriously, the methodology employed in this book will be totally unacceptable.

Raymond F. Surburg

**THE TRANSLATION DEBATE.** By Eugene H. Glassman. InterVaristy Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1981. 131 pages. Paper. \$4.25.

The main concern of this book might be phrased, "What makes a Bible translation good?" The author of this book dealing with the philosophy or theory of translation to be employed by Bible translators, has since 1974 been on loan from the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to the United Bible Societies as a translation adviser. In this seven-chapter book Glassman traces the history of translating Scripture, beginning with the Biblical authors themselves, many of whom quoted and translated each other. He utilizes insights obtained from cross-cultural communication and describes what in his opinion constitutes a good translation. The reader will find an excellent discussion of the differences between two divergent schools of Bible translation, namely, the traditional (the formal correspondence method) and the latest, the dynamic equivalence method, employed now by the American Bible Society and the United Bible Societies. Dr. Eugene Nida has devoted much time to Bible translations, has written a number of books dealing with the art of translation, has served as supervisor of those translating for the American Bible Society, and has been the chief advocate of the principle of dynamic equivalence.

The author defends translations that are paraphrases, such as *The Living Bible*, *Good News for Modern Man*, and those translations that employ the dynamic equivalence principle. Glassmann quotes Nida: "For the most part such expressions as literal vs. free, translation vs. paraphrase, and words vs. sense are essentially battle cries for those who wish to defend their own work or criticize the work of others." It is Glassman's contention that the traditional formal correspondence method cannot do justice to many Biblical passages. In chapter 6 he presents his views as to how a combination of both methods can do

justice to what the original language has and what the receptor language requires so as to be properly understood and at the same time to remain faithful to the original author. About 180 different Biblical passages are cited in 15 different Biblical translations and versions. Not only people engaged in Bible translation but pastors rendering the Biblical languages into the vernacular in connection with preaching and Bible class work will find the book useful and suggestive.

Raymond F. Surburg

**MATTHEW: A COMMENTARY ON HIS LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL ART.** By Robert H. Gundry. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 652 pages. Cloth. \$24.95.

Every once in a while there comes along a book whose value is destined to outlast the generation in which it was written. Dr. Gundry may have authored such a book in his commentary on Matthew. His published doctoral dissertation, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, a jewel in itself, traced the evangelist's theological motives by contrasting five different ways in which the Old Testament was cited. From that fascinating study, it seemed inevitable that Gundry would be compelled to undertake a more thorough literary analysis of the entire Gospel.

While fully affirming the authority of the divine word, the author places Matthew's Gospel side by side with Mark and Luke in order to detect the evangelist's theology by isolating his unique literary style. The basic conviction is that Mark, or at least the source behind it, is the original base material for the Gospels and that Luke is dependent on both Matthew and Mark. The major aim is not defending Marcan priority, but appreciating the theological contribution of Matthew. I. Howard Marshall has already done this work with Luke and Ralph Martin with Mark. Of the three Gundry is the most thorough, and in a verse by verse analysis very few stones are left unturned. The technical term for this type of study is redaction criticism, a method of which F. F. Bruce says on the book's jacket that "conservative scholars have shown unnecessary timidity." Gundry with full appreciation of historicity and reliability constantly addresses questions of literary form to the Gospel account. His answers are theologically fascinating and stimulating. It might even be said that Gundry is more effective and adept in the use of this method than were the original radical theologians with their anti-historical bias. The commentaries of such prominent scholars as Stendahl and Schweizer are pale in comparison to Gundry's meticulous scholarship, literary lucidness, and theological awareness. Usefulness for pastors especially in their preaching and Bible classes is an extra bonus.

A few examples taken from Gundry should be allowed to speak for themselves. Central for his investigation is 1:21, where the child of Mary is called Jesus and Emmanuel, i.e., God saves and is with us. This theme that Jesus is God and Redeemer is traced throughout the Gospel and is so convincingly presented that the reader can come to no other conclusion than that Matthew, as much as the Fourth Evangelist, had a highly developed theology of Jesus. If the reader has ever wondered why Joseph's genealogy and visitation from the angel in chapter one is followed by a visitation from the wise men in which the divine child's mother is mentioned but not Joseph, Gundry provides an answer. The issue is not that Joseph may have taken sailor's leave, as some have naively suggested, but rather that Jesus is dependent on His mother for His human existence and not on Joseph. Throughout the book tidbits are offered to correct time-honored but nevertheless wrong impressions. The phrase "two years and under"

means in the Hebrew idiom children under one year old. It was commonly held that Jesus was two years old at the time of the flight to Egypt. Such discourses as do not belong to the theological narrative of the book are placed in a slightly smaller print as the author's chief purpose is identifying the evangelist's theological plan and not providing an atomistic commentary with all sorts of detached and frequently useless information. The slaughter of the innocent children is seen as preparatory for Jerusalem's predicted destruction. This in turn is seen as an appearance of the final judgment. (Martin Luther concluded that the untimely death of the innocents was God's punishment against their unbelieving parents.) As Gundry's doctoral dissertation concentrated on Matthew's use of the Old Testament, much of this material is woven into the book's fabric.

One of the great chasms in theology exists between exegesis and systematic theology. The former frequently presents a mass of Biblical data in no recognizable form, and the latter perpetuates conclusions seemingly based on hoary traditions without undergoing the difficult and uncongratulated work of sifting the exegetical evidence. Thus many radical exegetical works fall under the weight of their own obfuscation, and the conclusions of dogmatical works seem light years away from the raw New Testament data. Gundry successfully bridges this chasm. No one can question his exegetical meticulousness. He identifies such Matthean peculiarities as his penchant for using "night" and "teach." At the same time he is theologically observant in that he can see the Satanic temptations of chapter four as an attempt by Satan not to cause Jesus to doubt that He is God's Son, but rather as an attempt to lure Him into misusing that divine sonship confirmed at His baptism. The statement that Jesus "opened up His mouth" in beginning the Sermon on the Mount is connected with Jesus' own words that man shall live by every word that comes from God's mouth. Matthew's reader knew just from his literary style that it was God delivering the sermon's message.

Though Gundry is primarily an exegete, he cannot help but let a slight dogmatical prejudice glimmer through at certain places. His denominational affiliation or origin is not stated, but he seems to have a Reformed-Calvinistic bias. Concerning the words of sacramental institution, the reader is informed that the language is sacrificial without a fuller discussion of the atonement. The sacrament is said to benefit because the believer follows Jesus' command to eat and drink. *Au contraire!* Here the exegesis points to the fact that the believer who participates in the sacrament actually receives the Christ's sacrificial blood. The sacrament and not fulfillment of the command is the source of forgiveness. The concept of Christianity as obligation plays a part in Gundry's book not really demanded by the evangelist, at least not quite in the terms that Gundry sees it. Seeing "Jesus' baptism by John as a model of righteousness" and not as a real inclusion in God's wrath also comes from this same bias. Gundry avoids comparing the children of 19:13-16 to the infants of Luke 18:15-27. The title for this section, "Accepting Young People in the Church," seems an obviously artificial and contrived avoidance of the implications of this pericope for including infants in Christ's kingdom and hence baptism.

Each reader will find himself disagreeing with Gundry in certain places. I for one found myself disagreeing with his inability to find a stronger Christological motif in the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of chapter thirteen. This is, of course, what makes reading Gundry such a challenge and pleasure. At every point he gives you something to chew on. F.F. Bruce, on the book's jacket cited previously, calls this commentary "an epoch-making book in the evangelical study of the New Testament."

David P. Scaer

CHI RHO COMMENTARY ON JAMES, JUDE. By Henry P. Hamann. Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, Australia. 104 pages. Paper. No price given.

The Chi Rho Commentary Series provide serious exegetical materials for the lay audience. Dr. Hamann in his commentary on James and Jude does this admirably and thus demonstrates the Reformation principle that no theological issue is so complex that the laity cannot be drawn into the discussion. Both these epistles have a checkered history in the church, and widely varying opinions concerning their dates and authorship have made their interpretation more complex. James, according to Hamann, was written around 50 A.D. for Palestinian and Syrian Christians by a brother of Jesus, i.e., a son of Mary and Joseph. Hamann does not hesitate to present a variety of interpretations before setting forth the option he finds most adequate. For example, in regard to 1:16-18 with its reference to God's creative activity, the view favored is that of regeneration within the wider resurrection context. Hamann adds that such a doctrine shows that the writer of James "is a Christian and is a sign of a far greater amount of Christian content in this letter than Luther was prepared to allow." In the age-old "Paul-James controversy," the author backs away from the time-worn view held still by Dibelius that James was a corrective to Pauline libertine theology. On the contrary, Paul uses James. Hamann might have been slightly more definitive on some issues, i.e., the Lord's raising up the sick man (5:14). No salvific power is attributed to the oil, but the equally important and troublesome issue of whether the Lord heals in every case is not discussed. Jude is authored by the brother of James and Jesus, but no definite date is given, being placed sometime before the writing of 2 Peter.

During his guest lectureship at this seminary in 1979, Dr. Hamann presented much of his materials to the students in his successful seminar on James. Those students will certainly appreciate having his views in print. The price is estimated as being in the vicinity of three dollars. Since the publisher is Australian, orders may perhaps most easily be made through the seminary bookstore. A bibliography will direct pastors to the more detailed commentaries for help with the thornier issues in what must be considered the most controversial book of the New Testament canon.

David P. Scaer

## II. Systematic Studies

TRUTH IS TWO-EYED. By John A. T. Robinson. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1979. 161 pages. \$6.95.

This book grew out of Robinson's Teape lectures given in 1976 in India. Robinson in these lectures attempted to enter into dialogue with Hinduism using the Christological formulations already set forth in *The Human Face of God* (Westminster Press, 1973). In his earlier work Robinson attempted to set forth in a modern mode the Chalcedonian formulation that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Robinson criticized the Alexandrian formulation of *enhypostasis* in that the "Logos-flesh" formula does not in reality unite the divinity with a real human being but with flesh. The Antiochene formulation with its hebraisms does not satisfy Robinson either. For this formulation, in an attempt to preserve the divinity of Christ, suffers from the real communication of the divine with the human. This is even more docetic to Robinson than the Alexandrian formulations. Robinson wants to make Jesus Christ fully man and in that

humanity to carry the imprint of the divine. This idea he attempts to expand in his dialogue with Hinduism. Robinson rather than Chalcedon, however, shows the marks of docetism.

Robinson's ontological framework is basically Whiteheadian. That is to say whatever is envisioned by God is not real until it occurs or comes to be. All being is in process. Ontologically speaking in substantive language, we have no absolutes. Thus, the eternity and continuity of the Christ must be viewed in terms of a contemporary model which attempts to appropriate the Einsteinian model of physics rather than the Newtonian (pp. 22-25). However, Einstein's model is really not an enemy to theology if properly understood. It suffices to point out here that Einstein provides a better model to speak of a *creatio ex nihilo*, the preservation of creation, and miracles. His system does not by any means throw everything into question. It humbles scientific absolutism. But what we need to see is Robinson's docetism in his appropriation of Whitehead.

Since in the Whiteheadian model what is real is what occurs and since what occurs carries its own determinacy, how, then, can the Christ, the Logos, be eternal (John 1:1-3)? The Logos for Robinson is what God envisions in order to exemplify his complete eternity in humanity. Thus when the Christ came to be, he exemplified in his total humanity the divinity of the Logos. In this way the Logos is eternal and divine. "Jesus is not just a man doing human things divinely but a man doing divine things humanly" (p. 119). By this formulation Robinson thinks that he has kept the Chalcedonian formulation. The Word is eternal (for he springs forth from God) but totally human (for he is what he is in the world). Christ, in Robinson's reading of St. John and Hebrews, is the perfect Son, who, through his perfect obedience, suffered in conformity to the Father's will. In this way his divinity shone forth. Jesus leads us to live a totally human life (p. 118).

But why does Robinson call the truth two-eyed? In dealing with all forms of religions Robinson perceives two visions of the truth. In the first vision the individual's personality is not dissolved in his unity with the Eternal. In the second, the unity of the personal with the Eternal can only be achieved if the individual can be emptied of his personality. The first viewpoint, according to Robinson, is closer to Christianity and the latter to Eastern religions (pp. 10-11). He attempts to gain from both view-points. Robinson does not want to give up the uniqueness of Christ. Yet he wants to maintain a less personal viewpoint for the individual. This he finds in Jesus. For Robinson what is unique about Jesus is his giving up his ego in service to the personality of the eternal (p. 122). This idea of giving up the self to unify oneself with the eternal Robinson finds more prevalent, however, in Hinduism. But let us see in what kind of tension Robinson places himself.

I would label Robinson's position "docetic humanism." It is humanistic for only in the activity of the human does the Eternal shine forth (p. 100). Jesus' perfection as the exemplified Logos lies only in his willingness to let the Eternal shine forth completely in his humanity. Thus the Logos is human *par excellence* in that he is even subject to sin (p. 100). But does the Logos, the divine second person of the Trinity, take all human frailties, suffering, and sin to himself and affect them? The Logos is only exemplified for us in Robinson's scheme by Jesus accepting completely the Father's will. He did so by taking up all human burdens and sufferings. But how is sin and evil dealt with? How is it affected? It is here that Robinson is a docetist *par excellence*. Robinson at this point senses in the theology of the cross a supreme offense to Hinduism, Buddhism, and other forms of religion (p. 44). In Hinduism the gods never really become active in the flesh nor affect in this reality of the flesh the meaning of the individual. Their "avatars"

(incarnations) do not leave any imprint in history, for they are really not incarnations. If we keep this fact in perspective, we can understand the statement made by Vivekananda, a Hindu theologian, "Christ was God incarnate; they could not kill him. That which was crucified was only a semblance, a mirage" (p. 50). While Robinson wants to maintain the touching of the Eternal in the flesh, he chooses to stress Christ's "avatar" (p. 124). That is, Jesus as the Christ becomes the eternal paradigm whereby we discover how God becomes in a universal manner human. Thus we have a model that does not affect reality *per se* in a complete substantive manner. But this is docetism! The Bible clearly, preaches a Son that not only obeys but also affects reality in His death. The Eastern way is only a way of accepting suffering and through this acceptance overcoming it by moving beyond it (pp. 74, 94). But this says nothing of the very real love of God where the Eternal touches, confronts, and overcomes the power of death in the crucifixion of Jesus, true God and true man.

At one point Robinson refers to a "Christian Arts and Communications Centre" in Madras that espouses some of his directions. He then states: "And this was actually founded by the Missouri Synod, the most conservative wing of the American Lutheran Church, many of whose members would probably be horrified to know what their money is being used for" (p. 135). Indeed, we are horrified, for no docetic Christology can provide a solution to the human condition. Only Christ, the crucified Lord, who rose from the dead, can do so!

Albert L. Garcia

**THE EVANGELICAL FAITH. Volume Three. THEOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT.** By Helmut Thielicke. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. Cloth. 484 pages. \$22.95.

In a publication statement, the evangelical conservative scholar, Bernard Ramm, notes of Thielicke's second volume that "it is better to read carefully one great treatment of theology than twenty mediocre ones." Now emeritus professor of systematic theology at the University of Hamburg, Thielicke belongs to one of the vanishing breed of theologians who organize their theology into comprehensive systems. He belongs with Emil Brunner, Regin Prenter, Gustav Aulen, and, of course, Karl Barth, who were all part of the rebirth of theology between the two great wars.

Thielicke's third volume was published in German in 1978 and thus it reflects, as much as possible, the current scene. Bromiley is the translator without peer. Thielicke wants to operate within the Lutheran tradition. He is obviously well acquainted with Luther and refers to him frequently. It would have been better if Luther were quoted according to the specific writing, with the date, instead of merely cited according to the Weimar Ausgabe. While Thielicke sincerely thinks of himself as being within the Lutheran tradition, he is best understood as a Lutheran within the neo-orthodox movement. Such a generalization may be fraught with the dangers of unfair judgments, but it does provide a framework in which to place his theology.

It is striking that Thielicke's dogmatics is called *The Evangelical Faith* with no mention of "Lutheran" in a manner not dissimilar to Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith*. It is striking but not surprising, since this dogmatical treatise is directed to the German situation, where the distinction between Lutheran and Reformed is a historical matter which is not really doctrinally valid anymore. Thielicke accepts the philosophical presuppositions, common in German



theology since the eighteenth century, that history as past event cannot really be known and thus cannot then form the firm and real basis for theological discussion (p. 197). Here the starting point for theology is the same as it is for Barth. But, unlike Barth, Thielicke weaves into theological discussion the Bultmannian exegetical heritage. Always in the background, but nevertheless clearly silhouetted, is the understanding that the historical Jesus remains unavailable to scholarly research. History presents no firm conclusions. The early Christian community with its faith provides the substructure for faith and the historical problem is circumvented.

The theological guide for dogmatics is provided by the Word and Spirit, in a way clearly reminiscent of Barth. The Trinity is not discussed as an eternal, permanent reality, but as the relationship of the Word and Spirit to the world. One wonders whether Thielicke's *Pneuma* is really identical with the church's Holy Spirit. One hesitates to present isolated sentences to demonstrate a point, but the reader can evaluate this reviewer's conclusions for himself: "The Word of God exists only as an attested Word, attested by men." "Third, the Holy Spirit is the power or revelation and appropriation of the Word." The revelatory modalism, so characteristic of Barth, seems to be true also of Thielicke. Just as there is a hesitancy to establish a certain history behind the "Word," so there is no attempt to find anything eternal and permanent behind that same "Word." Thielicke operates with the "Word of God" theology characteristic of Barth, which sees the "Word" active in creation, incarnating itself in Jesus, then in oral tradition, then in the Scriptures, and finally in preaching. The advantage of the Scriptures over subsequent "Word of God" is not qualitative but a matter of closeness to the events in history.

One entire section is given over to the repudiation of verbal inspiration, especially as it is held by the Missouri Synod (pp. 191-4). It is problematical whether the Synod should consider itself honored or amused by this attention. As a paradigm for verbal inspiration Thielicke cites Pieper's *Dogmatics*. It would have been better to have set forth an argument against the sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran theologians directly and not against a disciple of two or three centuries later. In addition, it might have been better to cite Robert Preus, who, while sympathetic, is not blindly uncritical of that period's research. It is not difficult to conclude that the author's living sources in this matter may have been less than fully objective in presenting the Synod's theological situation in the 1970's.

A favorite principle for Thielicke is one credited to Melancthon that Christ is known in His benefits for us. No one can squabble with this, if it is used to describe the life of faith; but as a principle, even as a minor one for theology, it tips the entire theological task into subjectivism. For example, it is applied to the understanding of the Lord's Supper, and Thielicke explicitly distances himself from Luther's teaching of a sacramental presence in the elements. All the plaudits in that section go to Calvin. In the discussion of the end times, the final resurrection is placed into a category of time not known to us now. The resurrection may end the kind of time we experience now, but does it really belong to another time? The question raised is whether it really happens.

Solid comprehensive theology books are infrequently published. Monographs have become the usual means of expression. Thielicke's dogmatics is a welcome addition to the libraries of those who want to do serious theology. Without a training in classical theology (e.g., Pieper, Schmid, Krauth, or any of the classical Lutheran or Reformed dogmatists), however, much of Thielicke's discussion would miss its intended mark. It can be expected to serve

the standard dogmatics in many of the Lutheran seminaries standing to the left of the Missouri Synod. But unless the standard theology is known, the deviation cannot be fully understood, much less appreciated.

David P. Scaer

### III. Historical Studies

**THEOLOGIANS IN TRANSITION.** Edited By James M. Wall. Introduction by Martin E. Marty. Crossroad, New York, 1981. 207 pages. \$14.95.

For the last fifty years *Christian Century* has, every ten years or so, injected a "How My Mind Has Changed" series. This book compiles the twenty-one essays that appeared during 1980 and 1981. Marty, an associate editor of *Christian Century*, provides the introduction, attempting to give some justification for running a series on the changing views of notable (and some not so notable) theologians and then repeating the series within the covers of one book. There is a bit of self-consciousness evidenced by some of the authors, who sense that the whole process might be "an invitation to narcissism" (Peter Berger), or a kind of defense mechanism which explains that it has been a matter of growing rather than mind-changing that has been going on (Langdon Gilkey, James Gustafson), or just plain assertion that there has been no change at all, at least not a conscious one (Schubert Ogden, Jose Miguez-Bonino). One writer feels compelled to state his views in a new credo fitting the times (Robert McAfee Brown).

Now and then there are rather dramatic confessions, like Gilkey's admission that he has begun to lose faith in science and reason as the sources in which to find the answers for man's deepest needs and to turn to the sacred religious sources instead. Even Rosemary Ruether indicates that she has lost some of her strident feminist sharpness. The only admitted conservative, Bible-committed scholar in the group is Carl F. Henry, and he does not appear to have changed much. Could it be that so-called "scientific theology" gropes and stumbles around, in the process of writing and selling books, but actually contributes little, if anything, to man's deepest needs, for it seems to know little about Law and Gospel, the two chief doctrines of the Word of God, and yet purports to be "doing Christian theology"?

E. F. Klug

**LUTHER. An Experiment in Biography.** By H.G. Haile. Doubleday, New York, 1980. 422 pages. \$14.95.

The experiment so-called is to write Luther's biography beginning in the year 1535, when Luther would have been 52 and, in a sense, in the prime of life, but also the time when his years and illness began to weigh him down. Add to this experiment Haile's effort in the first chapters to take a look at Wittenberg in 1535 through the eyes of bright young papal legate, Petro Paolo Vergerio, a Venetian, more than a little impressed with Luther's accomplishments at reform of the church — so much so, in fact, that in some respects he ended up "himself a protestant" (p. 16).

Haile has not written the usual kind of biography of Luther; new sod has been turned up. Himself a professor of German at the University of Illinois, Haile has worked with primary sources, for the most part maintaining scholarly objectivity. That is not to say that Haile does not have his presuppositions which distort Luther's position now and then. For example, he states that Luther's

position on the text of Scripture takes for granted "the human, hence fallible authorship" (p. 332). Haile shows his leanings as well when he treats Luther on the Lord's Supper, especially with his soft touch on Capito and Bucer at the time of the Wittenberg Concord, 1536. Luther is blamed for "oscillation in mood" and being "very much the victim of his momentary emotional state," rather than Bucer for what history has revealed to have been a vacillating, compromising, ambivalent view on the Sacrament (p. 145). The same shortfall happens in the analysis of Luther's confrontation with the shifty Agricola on the antinomian question; the end result is that Agricola comes off looking better than the facts indicate (p. 222ff.). Be these things as they may, Haile sets the pieces of Luther's mature years into excellent perspective. Because Luther fulminated furiously against the Jews, Haile does not fall into the easy trap of Bainton, who concludes that Luther was by this time senile and half-crazy (p. 292). Haile details better than anyone else has ever done the facts concerning Luther's near fatal illness at Smalcald in 1537, opining "that uremia led to neurological complications after Schmalkalden, so that many of his utterances reveal an underlying irritability," but then adding immediately that "Luther can at no time in his life be dismissed as senescent or unaccountable" (p. 296). What Haile might have added with regard to the Jewish question was that for Luther the issue, especially towards the end of his life, was an entirely theological one; at no time can the charge of anti-Semitism be sustained. "Luther knew what he was doing," as Haile says (p. 164). He might have gone on to explain more clearly what it was that Luther knew he was doing.

A review tends to isolate points of variance. This tendency ought not in this case detract from the overall excellence of Haile's work. Without question it is one of the best biographies on Luther to appear for a long time.

E. F. Klug