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The CTCR Report on
"The Ministry" Samuel H. Nafzger 97

Timeless Treasure:
Luther's Psalm Hymns Oliver C. Rupprecht 131

Original Sin and the Unborn Albert L. Garcia 147

Theological Observer 153

Homiletical Studies 163

Book Reviews 177

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Book Reviews

THE WORD OF GOD: A GUIDE TO ENGLISH VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE. Edited by Lloyd R. Bailey. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1982. Paper. 228 pages.

Eleven scholars have pooled their resources to evaluate nine Bible translations available to English-speaking people since World War II. While each review of an English version provides the historical data surrounding its production, some reviews are more valuable than others as they show at least an awareness of certain implicit presuppositions of the translators. The matter of the plethora of translations is a critical one on both professional and lay levels. This study was needed, even if each essay does not reach its goal with the same success. No evaluations of the American Translation and Philipps, are included. Since parishioners are bound to pop up in Bible class with anyone of these Bibles, the pastor, whether he likes it or not, had better be aware of the general directions of these translations.

Bruce Metzger, who is associated with the Revised Standard Version, was chosen to review it. This is hardly fair, and his essay does not really go beyond tracing its editorial development with a few remarks on the aesthetics of translation. An outside reviewer certainly would have provided a more thoroughly critical evaluation. A more penetrating review is provided by Roger A. Bullard on the New English Bible. Thus, for example, the translation of Job is criticized for "allowing our scholarly instincts to reconstruct hypothetical translations." While psalm headings are removed, non-original rubrics are inserted in the Song of Songs. The "mighty wind" of Genesis 1:2 was understood as Bullard points out, as the "Spirit of God" in exilic times. Such a critical but still appreciative critique should set the standard for all of the other essays. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

The New Jewish Version is reviewed by Keith R. Crim. It is difficult to say from his writing whether he is a Christian or a Jew. This may be beside the point; however, it would have been enlightening to see how Jewish scholars handle pericopes that Christians have virtually made their own. This is not an argument for an official Christian translation or for forcing the New Testament back on the Old Testament, but the reviewer could have greatly enhanced his essay by at least pointing to the problems.

Barclay M. Newman, Jr., reviewer of the New American Standard Bible, does exactly this. Under the heading of "Translation Distortions," he subcategorizes "Attempts at Harmonization" and "Reading the New Testament into the Old Testament." It is hard at times not to agree with Newman that NASB translators have deliberately changed translations to, as he says, "upgrade the image of God." The Jerusalem Bible seems to be little more than an English rendering of the French forerunner. Significant problems do not surface in the review.

W. F. Stinebring in his review of *Today's English Version* seems caught up on what the Jews could or could not have believed in references to the doctrine of immortality traditionally seen in Psalm 23 and Job 19. Instead of offering a profuse statement of gratitude for being asked to contribute his essay, he might have used his space more profitably in trying to locate a general direction in the translation.

James Smart, in an incisive article of regretfully only four pages, dispatches the *Living Bible* with a few short blows. These translators have taken liberties beyond the bounds of decency. A woman who was a sinner (Lk 7:37) becomes a

prostitute. Theophilus (Lk 1:1) becomes "Dear friend who loves God." Theologically problematic is John 1:17 where "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" becomes unacceptably "For Moses gave us only the Law with its rigid demands and merciless justice, while Jesus Christ brought us loving forgiveness as well." Smart points out that "law" here refers to the Torah as God's written revelation and not as God's condemning will. Smart's own verdict on the Living Bible is priceless: "What is astonishing about the circulation of this book is that it is being bought mainly by people who in the past have been concerned that they should have an 'infallible' Bible."

A friendly and persuasive review is provided for the New American Bible by Walter Harrelson. Thus in Genesis 3:6 it is made clear that Adam was with Eve (Hebrew: *immah*, "with her") when she took and ate the fruit. The RSV and NEB do not make this clear. My own misconception about the incident was cleared up. It was not that she ate of the fruit privately and then convinced her husband to do the same, but this was an act of joint responsibility.

The review of the New International Version makes note of the commitment of the translators to the principle of Biblical inerrancy and unity as a factor in translation. Michael Totten, an LC-MS pastor writing in a previous issue of the CTQ, has pointed out that this translation definitely promotes false views on conversion and baptism by a deliberate readjustment of the texts.

There is no doubt that our readers will find this volume stimulating. In Latin there is a proverb that the translator is a traitor — an overstatement, to be sure, but still a warning that it would be better for the pastor to check through the original before preaching. Some translations are downright dangerous. The pastor should have no difficulty in presenting translation problems to the congregation through the Bible class. This collection of essays should provide some interesting discussion and could even boost attendance.

David P. Scaer

THE WORD OF TRUTH: A SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE BASED ON BIBLICAL REVELATION. By Dale Moody. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. Cloth. 628 pages. No price noted.

Moody's credentials certainly suggest that he is well equipped to provide this one-volume dogmatics within the context of the Baptist religion and more recent religious thought. As a forty-year professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, he brings a wealth of theology and experience to his task. His first chapter, a prolegomenon, discusses various historical approaches to the establishment of Christian truth. The remaining chapters cover revelation, God, creation, man, sin, salvation, Christ, church, and the consummation. The place of Christology after soteriology must say something.

Any contemporary dogmatics, to be contemporary, must make use of certain exegetical advances and move from merely quoting Bible passages to recognizing the various pericopes in their original settings. For example, Moody does an admirable job of locating such forms as hymns and confessions. He also focuses on the unique theological contributions of the individual books and authors. Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine motifs are handled separately.

Refreshingly, he hesitates to provide quick dogmatical conclusions where he finds the exegetical evidence inconclusive. Systematicians rush too fast to their

conclusions, and the exegetes frequently do not even have the word "conclusion" in their vocabulary. Moody strikes a pleasant and hence appealing balance for the reader who wants a dogmatic conclusion but not when exegetical study is insufficient.

But the strong point can also be the weakest, at least in certain places. A book with "Biblical Revelation" in the title should normally be expected to come to some sort of firmer position on Biblical inspiration. Matters are here hopelessly confused when inspiration is introduced by a discussion of ecstatic prophecy, a topic quite independent of what the church has commonly called Biblical inspiration. Inspiration is not adequately defined when the Bible is recognized as a book superior to ecclesiastical traditions.

At other points the reader is left guessing. Why does Moody say that the church accepts the virgin conception rather than the virgin birth. Here it seems that Moody holds to the traditional church position in that he clearly says that "there was no human father in Nazareth." But is the distinction between virgin conception and birth all that meaningful and helpful? Since Moody is Baptist, his positions on Zionism, millennialism, baptism, and the Lord's Supper are not surprising. His strong point is making use of the most recent exegetical findings in coming to his dogmatic conclusions. Convincing is the parallel drawn between 1 Timothy 3:16 and 1 Peter 3: 18-19 as the description of Christ's descent into hell. In general, however, His Christology (e.g. resurrection) might have been more historically and theologically developed.

Moody is somewhat aware of Missouri Synod history, but since the former Synod president is referred to in the index as J.A.D. Preuss (sic!) and the seminary president as Robert Preus, he probably does not know that they are brothers. It is too glibly stated that the Reformers "adopted the dictation theory of biblical inspiration" and that the recent synod controversy meant the reinstatement of "the pre-scientific and pre-critical views of the Reformation" (p. 46). In spite of these lapses, Moody has presented dogmatics with the refreshing breeze of exegesis. His method here is impressive.

David P. Scaer

LUTHER AS INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURE: A Source Collection of Illustrative Samples from the Expository Works of the Reformer. Compiled and Provided with Introductions by Hilton C. Oswald and George S. Robbert. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1982. Paper. 126 pages. \$8.95.

MARTIN LUTHER: Companion to the Contemporary Christian. Edited by Robert Kolb and David A. Lump. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1982. Paper. 110 pages. \$8.95.

Both volumes have been prepared by the publishing house of Missouri Synod to assist congregations and their pastors in making the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformer's birth more significant. *Luther as Interpreter* takes portions from the American Edition of Luther's works and arranges them around fourteen subjects, including righteousness, justification, Trinity, predestination, and Christ and the Old Testament. The fifty some volumes of *Luther's Works* in the American Edition are really for pastors. Here is something for the person who wants to taste Luther's thoughts here and there.

Martin Luther: Companion to the Contemporary Christian contains essays by eight pastors who interpret the Reformer's thought and direct it to contemporary church situations. Here is something quite different than a

slavish, paper-and-paste approach in making Luther quotations match current concerns. Armand J. Boehme in "Christian Living in the World" makes Luther sound like a living voice. Did you know that Luther opposed monopolies, price manipulations, false bankruptcies, undercutting the competition, falsifying weights, and deceptive packaging? He also did not oppose interest on loans, just the loan sharks.

In "Nourished with His Body and Blood," Charles J. Evanson sees Luther's doctrine on the Sacrament as hardly exhausted by the visible word concept, derived from St. Augustine. Falsely understood it leads to an increasingly infrequent celebration of the Supper, never contemplated by Luther. Arnold Krugler offers a direct Christology of Luther in "Your Brother is the Eternal God." Herbert C. Mueller, Jr., catches Luther's anthropological concept, seemingly often misunderstood, that the sinner is righteous to and before God. Anniversaries force us to turn back to the pages of our past history. Both these books reopen the past, and both are well suited for lay discussion groups within the congregation.

David P. Scaer

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY: An Introduction. By Vincent Bruemmer. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. Paperback. 306 pages. Index. \$16.95.

A text of this kind, "aimed at introducing theology students with no previous knowledge of philosophy, to some of the basic equipment of conceptual inquiry," has some obvious potential, also for those in general who engage in the theological task from day to day. It represents the distillation of lectures by the author as professor of theology and philosophy at several universities, among them Utrecht, Harvard, Oxford. He aims at guidance for the student, or the reader, in the task of dealing with the nature of concepts and conceptual inquiry -- thus the thought process and the articulating of it. Bruemmer sets down as basic the proposition that to try "to deal with conceptual questions, with no regard for questions of fact and of meaning, would lapse into futile theorizing" (p. 3). In Christian faith one accepts certain things as true not merely because they are verifiable through empirical happening, but because of the respected authority on which these teachings are based, specifically the Word of God. Four themes are carried through: first, conceptual inquiry itself and its guidelines; then, evaluative (or axiological) concepts; next, the epistemological task of knowing or understanding why we believe what we believe; and finally the ontological realities themselves, such as God's existence, a reality basic to the whole of Christian belief. The reader must be prepared to stretch mental muscles to follow Bruemmer, as well as to sit in judgment of some of the theological presuppositions with which he works, among which will be areas of disagreement. Nonetheless the text will be a challenge to the thoughtful individual who is willing to put forth more than the usual effort in dabbling with philosophical categories.

E. F. Klug

CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN THE MODERN AGE. By Brian Hebblethwaite. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 144 pages. Paper.

Brian Hebblethwaite's book is an attempt to seriously consider the objections to Christian moral teaching, to trace them back to major themes in eighteenth and nineteenth century philosophy, and to distinguish for discussion the main lines of criticism advanced by twentieth century moralists. Hebblethwaite rightly notes that for a long time it was believed that morality without religion was impossible. But now secular moral philosophers not only defend and explain morality divorced from religion, they also attack Christianity and Jesus on moral grounds. Hebblethwaite believes any version of Christian ethics must now defend itself on two fronts: (1) It must be able to resist the criticisms and meet the objections of its critics. (2) It must prove itself to be more adequately moral than any rival view. Therefore the author ends the book with a sketch of what a specifically Christian ethic might be.

Hebblethwaite first considers the objections to Christian ethics raised by Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud. Then he moves to investigate more recent critics such as Bertrand Russell and Walter Kaufmann. He then tests the adequacy of such Christian moralists as Barth, Bonhoeffer, and Reinhold Niebuhr. He mounts a probing inquiry into situation ethics and liberation theology, finding the former unable to grasp the structure of morality and the latter in danger of succumbing to Marxist social revolution at the expense of personal values. The strength of his book is that at the end of most of these chapters he lays out the critic's specific objections which the Christian apologist must address and overcome if he is to gain a hearing in the world.

Hebblethwaite expresses the dilemma in modern ethics by rephrasing Plato's Euthyphro dilemma: Is something good because God commands it, or does God command it because it is good? Either goodness is arbitrarily what God commands, so that, if God commanded something monstrous, that would be by definition good; or God commands something that is already good independently of Himself, in which case the moralist need not bring God into the picture. The author resolves the dilemma by saying "human goodness itself reflects the goodness of God. God is its source and goal." So we have two mutually correcting sources of good -- human nature as God created it and God's revelation of Himself. On this basis, Hebblethwaite rejects Kierkegaard's teleological suspension of the ethical. Divine revelation cannot contradict or suspend the ethical. Hebblethwaite believes, therefore, that the human experience of goodness should be allowed to illuminate and correct religious revelation-claims because natural human morality is itself a reflection of the image of God in man. The two are seen to be mutually compatible, because it is the same divine nature that is reflected, however hazily, in human goodness. Since divine revelation has often been misunderstood and misapplied through the years, reasons Hebblethwaite, Christians should take moral criticism of their ethics seriously and be corrected by "human experience of goodness."

The reader will find the book to be a concise overview of the criticism of Christian ethics since the early nineteenth century. It tells us where ethics has come from and why it has moved in the direction it has. However, one will find the author's own solution inadequate, incomplete, and unable to break out of the buzzing confusion of modern subjectivism.

David Witten
Danville, Kentucky

GOD'S WORDS. By J. I. Packer. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1981. 223 pages. Paper. \$4.95.

J. I. Packer, also author of the popular *Knowing God* and *God Has Spoken*, is professor of historical and systematic theology at Regent College in Vancouver. In his latest book *God's Words*, Packer has taken seventeen key words of the Bible and expounded them in his usual devotional yet scholarly manner. The word studies cover most of the range of dogmatics — revelation, Scripture, sin, faith, justification, election, sanctification, death, etc. Much of Packer's material first appeared in the now defunct magazine *Inter-Varsity*. It comes from an era in which biblical word-study was in its hey-day of popularity as a way into theological understanding. The weakness in such an approach is that it does not allow each Biblical writer to be appreciated in his own right as a theologian but superimposes the perspective of one writer upon another.

In an age of skepticism and indifference, the reader will appreciate Packer's conservative approach, especially on such doctrines as revelation, inspiration, canonicity, the devil, justification, and death. Likewise, Packer is keenly aware of the many distortions that exist in the modern mind and seeks to correct them. The popular idea of faith, notes Packer, "is of a certain obstinate optimism: the hope, tenaciously held in face of trouble, that the universe is fundamentally friendly and things may get better. 'You've got to have faith,' Mrs. A. urges Mrs. B.; all she means is, 'keep your pecker up'" (p. 129). Likewise, the Biblical doctrine of fellowship has been replaced with a secular idea of fellowship as a jolly, social get-together. The Trinity is often viewed as "a difficult and unimportant abstraction, a piece of antique theological lumber that is valueless today" (p. 44) and election is seen to be unedifying because it has been the source of so much dissension. Anyone trapped in this modern mindset will find Packer's book to be a fountain of living water.

The Lutheran reader will note a number of weaknesses. For example, one should never discuss sanctification without clearly showing that it is always a return to justification. Justification is the legal basis of sanctification. Justification makes sanctification possible by removing sin's lawful right to rule the sinner. When Christ directed the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more," He was commanding her to live the new life of holiness, but her sanctification would only be possible provided she grasped the liberating hope of justification ("Neither do I condemn you"). In an age where holiness movements take people beyond justification to some higher blessing, one would have hoped that Packer would have emphasized that to grow in Christ means to realize more and more that we are sinners, a realization which will always drive us back to the cross and justification.

Providing the reader can work around some of the Reformed bias, this book should prove to be a valuable aid to both layman and pastor. Accompanied with a copy of the Lutheran Confessions in the other hand, the book could be ideal for Bible study.

David Witten
Danville, Kentucky

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP: An Outline of Its Development and Forms. By William D. Maxwell. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. \$7.95.

The book accomplishes what it claims it will do; it gives a concise outline of

Christian worship from the earliest times down to 1963. The little volume has undergone nine impressions since it was first published in 1934. The author is limited in a paper back of 183 pages, but within those pages he does a creditable job of giving the reader an overview of two millennia of Christian worship. Chapters include "Primitive Worship" (to the third century), "Liturgical Forms in the West," "Liturgical Forms in Churches of the Reformation," and "The Christian Cycle of Prayer" (minor offices).

The book reads well. The author spends a good deal of time on the analysis of the various masses that have developed in the churches of different rites. He is a Reformed minister in the Church of Scotland with definite liturgical and eucharistic interests. He gives adequate time and space to Luther and the German reformers. Lutherans will find, however, that he does not always understand our theology. He is definitely unhappy with Luther's *Formula Missae* (1523) and *Deutsche Messe* (1526) and much prefers Bucer's (Reformed) Stassburg Mass. Yet, all in all, there is much to learn from Maxwell, even about our Lutheran worship and its development. The bibliography is extensive.

George Kraus

CHRISTIAN STEWARDS: CONFRONTED AND COMMITTED. By Waldo J. Werning. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1982. 186 pages. Paperback. \$8.95.

Flowing from Dr. Werning's extensive experience as parish pastor, district and synodical executive, and seminary development officer, this book offers a solid Lutheran Biblical foundation for Christian stewardship, resulting in a practical approach to stewardship education in the local parish. In a day when much stewardship has degenerated into fund-raising, it is refreshing to read a grace-oriented Biblical education approach of giving "from" God's love in Christ rather than a shallow "methods" approach of giving "to" a budget or crisis needs. Werning provides theological roots with a discussion of the new man-old man struggle, God's judgment and grace in the message of Law and Gospel, and the qualities of the Christian steward living the sanctified life based on faith in Christ's atoning death and victorious resurrection from the dead.

Werning then takes a total view of stewardship which included significant items not normally covered in stewardship literature — caring for our bodies in terms of health, nutrition, and physical fitness; identifying and using our abilities and spiritual gifts for the edification of the body of Christ; managing the earth and material possessions in our daily lives; and using our financial resources to carry out the worldwide mission of Christ's Church. The book is written from the perspective of "church-growth" principles, particularly as they reflect Biblical emphases on spiritual growth through the Word of God and outreach from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Dr. Donald McGavran of "church-growth" reputation writes the foreword. The section on spiritual gifts fits within this context. Finally, the book contains several practical sections on how to organize a parish with stewardship as a primary emphasis, how to organize a stewardship committee and follow a monthly planning cycle, and how to evaluate a congregation's stewardship understanding level. The practical materials probably come from a number of settings in the author's experience but are intended to flow out of the theological underpinnings which form the book's greatest strength.

This new book belongs on the shelf of every pastor and thoughtful lay leader as a stimulus to careful Biblical stewardship development in our parishes. It

should form the basis for serious stewardship discussion in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as we face the world of the 1980's and beyond.

Stephen J. Carter

ORDINATION RITES PAST AND PRESENT. Edited by Wiebe Vos and Geoffrey Wainwright. *Studia Liturgica*, Mathenesserlaan 301c, 3021 HK Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 1980. Paper. 151 pages.

Though Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the more apparently divisive issues among Christians, the entire matter of ordination even with the same denominational families is much more slippery. Everybody from Anabaptists to the Roman Catholics ordain, and generally with great fanfare, but there is great disagreement on what it is and where it came from. While *Ordination Rites* is not going to provide the once-and-for-all-time answer, it brings together several essays that will shed light on the issue. The essays were originally presented at the seventh congress of the *Societas Liturgica* in Washington, D.C., in August 1980. The real problem is tracing the roots of the current practice of Christian ordination, even though the current practitioners are hardly of one mind as to what it may be.

Lawrence A. Hoffmann of the Hebrew Union College addresses the question of whether the Jewish rabbis may have practiced something resembling ordination during the early Christian era. If Hoffmann's theory is right, Christians will have to look elsewhere than first-century Judaism to find the origin of their ordination. This Jewish scholar claims that an analogy with Christian ordination forced some scholars to see in Judaism something which really was not there. At this point it could be asked why perhaps an attempt was not made by the congress organizers to find ordination's roots in the Old Testament, as is often done in the presentation of Baptism.

A most useful essay is offered by Edward J. Kilmartin of Notre Dame, "Ministry and Ordination in Early Christianity against a Jewish Background." He finds a number of attitudes to the matter present in the New Testament. The commissioning of the eleven disciples as teachers of a fixed body of material is found in Matthew 28:20. While a charismatic type of authority is posited for the early Pauline communities, a presbyterial order modeled after the Jewish diaspora communities is recognized in 1 Peter 5:1-5. Third John reflects the conflict between a patriarchal-pneumatic community and an emerging monarchical church under Diotrephes. Acts 13:1-3 resembles the Jewish *shaliah* institution, where the Spirit motivates the community to act. The *shaliah* ceremony did not, however, use hands. In Acts 14:23 the appointment of elders by Paul and Barnabas shows that ordination was taking place in some communities within a liturgical setting. In Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders his mention of the Holy Spirit may reflect an earlier service of ordination. The 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 2:6 references indicate that ordination was already an established custom before these epistles were written. Kilmartin favors for these pericopes an ordination performed by the presbyters, rather than an ordination which conveyed the office of presbyter. This reviewer is not entirely persuaded here. Given ordination, according to Kilmartin's interpretation, is not so much the office as the power and love, i.e., the charism, to carry out the office. 1 Timothy 6:11-16 with its mention of confession before witnesses also is derived from an ordination rite. The Pastoral Epistles show a merging of the episcopal and presbyterial forms of church polity in which the bishop is ordained by the elders and remains part of the college of presbyters. (The practice of the LCMS, where district presidents emerge from the ministerium and still remain

part of it, certainly bares a strong resemblance to Kilmartin's assessment of the early church situation reflected in the *Pastorals*.)

One observation by Kilmartin may be instructive. With the passing of the apostles, ordination for the church leaders becomes more prominent to secure recognition of church authority. By the second century a distinction between bishops and deacons was made, but what the nature of that distinction was is unknown. I Clement sees the bishop corresponding to Moses and the deacons to the Levites, and Ignatius uses the model of the Trinity with the bishop resembling the Father as first among the priests and the laity. No Scriptural precedent for this view can be established. By the third century bishops and deacons were chosen by the community, but unclear is whether presbyters were chosen by the bishops, the community, or both.

Kilmartin is listed as a Jesuit, but obviously he is hardly reading into the New Testament pericopes a Roman Catholic view. Though he feels no obligation to set forth one unified view for the New Testament, his summary conclusions are valuable in any current discussion: (1) The ministry derives from Christ's commissioning of His disciples. (2) The earliest human commissioning takes place within a liturgical setting of the community. (3) Later the presbyterium represents Paul in commissioning. (4) The rite authorizes the public proclamation and conveys a charism for this proclamation. (5) In the Pauline communities the charism is conveyed through laying on of hands, but in other communities it may simply indicate the right of public proclamation. No doubt this essay with its more than adequate notes provides immediately useful material for further discussion in the church.

Pierre-Marie Gy, as the author "Ancient Ordination Prayers," provides historical discussion on the earliest rites themselves. His valuable observation is that "ordination confers not only the ministry of sacraments, but also of the Word and pastoral tasks." This remark is noteworthy, when it is considered that Father Gy is Roman Catholic. (It certainly sounds Lutheran.)

Paul Bradshaw's "The Reformers and the Ordination Rites" is somewhat disappointing, as he handles Luther only briefly and gives the impression that the German Reformer should be viewed as simply another Protestant of that period. No evidence is shown in the notes that Bradshaw, an Anglican, is aware of the ample research already undertaken in this area. A final essay by W. Jardine Grisbrook, who is identified as "an Orthodox lay theologian" surveys more recent liturgical developments in the rite of ordination.

These essays open doors rather than provide a final conclusion. Certainly a comparison between Luther and the early church would be most welcome the next time the matter comes up for discussion.

David P. Scaer

KARL BARTH — RUDOLF BULTMANN: LETTERS, 1922-1966. Edited by Bernd Jaspert. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1982. 192 pages. Cloth. \$13.95.

Without question Bromiley is correct in observing that, more through their letter exchange than in any other way, the two giants Barth and Bultmann demonstrate how "an initial solidarity" between the two theologians eroded "until it is finally replaced by a rift that would have a decisive impact on theology for the rest of the century." (p. vii). Barth and Bultmann met very early, during the school year (1908-1909) when Barth was a student at Marburg. The letter

exchange began soon thereafter, but those that are extant today range between the years 1922 and 1966, thus covering the crucial years when the theological methodology of the two friends developed and held sway in theological circles. Friends they were and remained, but, though both owed their debt to existentialist presuppositions, they differed openly and radically on the demythologizing technique which Bultmann applied to New Testament studies. It is perhaps easier to get hold of this gulf between the two — and certainly quicker — by reading this letter exchange than by poring over their respective tomes or some secondary source written in critique of the two. In a long letter written on Christmas Eve, 1952, Barth in no uncertain terms lays it on the line that “the really irksome thing about ‘mythological thinking’ turns out to be its ‘objectifying,’ ” — that is, in the mind of Bultmann — for, says Barth, “I argue in opposition that you are obviously favoring a consistent ‘subjectivizing’ ” (p. 106). Firmly Barth states that he cannot follow along. Yet he retains a sense of humor as he explains his rejection of Bultmann’s methodology (p. 105):

It seems to me that we are like a whale (do you know Melville’s remarkable book *Moby Dick*? You ought to have a high regard for it because of its animal mythology!) and an elephant meeting with boundless astonishment on some oceanic shore. It is all for nothing that the one sends his spout of water high in the air. It is all for nothing that the other moves its trunk now in friendship and now in threat. They do not have a common key to what each would obviously like to say to the other in its own speech and in terms of its own element . . . The continuous offense that you take at me is obviously due to the fact that I do not adequately understand, and take seriously, existential philosophy, or its binding character as an axiom of all possible theological thought and utterance today. I have to admit the charge.

Barth denies the charge of dependence upon *any* philosophical canons of reason whatsoever, whether Kant, Hegel, or Schleiermacher, and yet admits that “occasionally I may cheerfully make use of existential categories,” but without great “zeal,” to the extent of feeling “any consequent obligation to that philosophical approach” (p. 105). Therein, of course, lies the key. Bultmann defends the existentialistic approach to the task of doing theology in the twentieth century; Barth disclaims any debt and yet engages in it anyway, as his stance over against the Biblical text has demonstrated. For him it remains merely a witness and record of the Word, but in no way the Word itself. That Word is to come as some sort of bolt out of the blue to effect the believer’s encounter with God Himself. Through this revelational personal experience the believer becomes captivated by His existence. Whether Barth knew or not, he had his own brand of existentialism or *Erfahrungstheologie* (“experience theology”).

There is something especially soul-revealing in personal letters. Bromiley has seen to it that the letters containing solid theological stuff are retained verbatim; those dealing with less consequential matters are summarized. Exceedingly interesting material is also appended — for example, the letter exchange with the German authorities that demonstrated Barth’s opposition to Hitler’s brand of socialism and the resulting expulsion of Barth from Fascist Germany in the mid-thirties. Indices provide the key to the topics covered by the two friends, one a confessed Reformed theologian, the other professedly “Lutheran,” at least by background. The book is a worthy companion to the volume which appeared a year ago, *Karl Barth: Letters, 1961-1968*.

THE BIBLE IN BASIC ENGLISH. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England. No price given.

The Bible in Basic English has been with us since the early nineteen-forties. It is a translation — not a paraphrase — of the Word of God using 1000 basic words of the English language. This language was produced by C. K. Ogden of the Orthological Institute in England. A word list of 850 words enables one to give the sense of anything, said in English. In order to make the Bible translation more faithful to the original texts, some 150 extra words were added to the 850, thus giving a total vocabulary of 1000 words. These 150 words included 50 theological terms and 100 extra words that were essential to producing the present text.

Generally the translation is acceptable and refreshing. As with most Bible translations, one always profits by the fresh insights the translators bring to their work. One thought did strike the reviewer as he read the text: preachers might do well to read the *Scriptures in Basic English*. There is a marked tendency on the part of those whose craft is words to use words that are unnecessary. This present volume demonstrates the value of presenting the Gospel with a limited vocabulary. Since this reviewer works in a field of deaf ministries, he was doubly interested in the presentation of the Gospel with a limited vocabulary since sign language has a limited vocabulary. The Gospel is clearly and directly offered. Here are some examples:

But if we are walking in the light, as he is in the light, we are all united with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son makes us clean from all sin. [I. John 1:7].

Because Christ once went through pain for sins, the upright one taking the place of sinners, so that through him we might come back to God; being put to death in the flesh, but given life in the Spirit [I Peter 3:18].

That is, that God was in Christ making peace between the world and himself, not putting their sins to their account, and having given to us the preaching of this news of peace [II Cor. 5:19].

The doctrine of justification through faith is also well treated:

Being conscious that a man does not get righteousness by the works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ, we had faith in Christ Jesus, so that we might get righteousness by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law no flesh get righteousness [Gal. 2:16].

For which reason, because we have righteousness through faith, let us be at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ [Rom. 5:1].

Generally the text is dependable. However, as with any translation, there will be disagreements with the handling of certain passages. The limitation of 1000 words does force a certain clumsiness on certain portions of the work. In Acts 16:31 "Have faith in the Lord Jesus . . ." seems to lack the punch of the usual imperative, "Believe in the Lord Jesus . . ." In Genesis 4:1 we read: "And the man had a connection with Eve his wife, and she became with child and gave birth to Cain." One teaching presented very clearly is the resurrection of Jesus. "And he said to them, Do not be troubled: you are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who has been put to death on the cross; he has come back from the dead; he is not here: see, the place where they put him!" (Mark 16:6). The translation 'has come back from the dead' seems clear and strong.

The translation is a work of a committee under the direction of Prof. S. H.

Hooke, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Studies in the University of London. The volume is worth reading and owning if only for the sake of lessons learned in simplicity and economy of language.

George Kraus

NEW APPROACHES TO JESUS AND THE GOSPELS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND EXEGETICAL STUDY OF SYNOPTIC CHRISTOLOGY. By Royce Gordon Gruenler. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. Paper. 291 pages. \$13.95.

The use of the phrase "new approaches" in the title accurately describes what the reader should expect to find here. Gruenler belongs to the new breed of evangelical scholars who are not only acquainted with the newer radical exegesis, but are also quite willing and able to use their procedures in the gospels. He first of all adopts Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of language that words are to be understood not as having absolutely fixed meanings applicable in every situation, but that they are an extension of the person speaking them. Now, the argument is not that language is unstandardized to the point that no one knows what anyone else is saying. Rather, the idea is that speakers are creative in the use of words. These words are an extension of the speaker's personality. Secondly, Gruenler tentatively accepts certain results of Norman Perrin's conclusions about authentic words of Jesus. Perrin, a follower of Bultmann in exegetical method, operates with the principle of minimalism to designate those logia which can with some degree of certainty be attributed to Jesus and not to the early church. The principle of minimalism means that any words attributed to Jesus with parallels in rabbinic literature are not original to Him and were added by the early church. The theory is not without difficulty because scholars of the previous century operated with the exactly opposite principle that authenticity depended on finding such parallels. In any case, Gruenler for the sake of argument accepts the principle of minimalism. Taking the passages found to be authentic by Perrin, he then applies Wittgenstein's theory of language as reflecting the speaker's personality. These passages are identified as the core sayings of radical criticism. Right at this point Gruenler has done an original and ultimately useful task for exegesis and dogmatical theology. Even if the church had only a dozen authentic sayings of Jesus, could the church have a high Christology? Gruenler shows that it could. In these sayings, Jesus presents Himself as *the* One in whom God's kingdom has come. What type of person would go around using so prominently the pronoun "I" in His proclamation of God's activity? Gruenler then goes on to show that the more explicit sayings of Jesus, which Perrin dismisses because of his principle of dissimilarity, indicate the same Christology as the implicit sayings. The evidence indicates that all sayings come from the same person, i.e., Jesus. Though the approach of Gruenler comes across at first as being speculative, it is with great practical advantage for the church in its theology and preaching. Even in such apparently non-theologically productive passages as "Leave the dead to bury their own dead," there is an "astonishing originality of Jesus' concept of self and mission" (p. 61). What Jesus said and how He said it evidences a high Christology. In a practical sense, the preacher is given an exegetical procedure that will further open texts for preaching without resorting to cross-references to Paul or other

New Testament writers. The message of Jesus stands on its own merits in regard to the speaker and the content.

Gruenler has fascinating chapters on the methods of C. S. Lewis, I. T. Ramsey, Michael Polanyi, Gabriel Marcel, and particularly Tolkien. In the chapter, "Jesus as Author of the Evangelium: J. R. R. Tolkien," Gruenler discusses this English writer's deep understanding of language and concludes that Jesus' preaching by its own construction, style, and content created a spell on His audience. The people are drawn into the message by the message itself. This spell belongs to this message now preserved in the gospels. Something is lost when the message of Jesus is divided into abstract truths or dissected by criticism.

Though Gruenler presents a Christology formed from Perrin's minimalism, he is committed to seeing Jesus as the originator of the gospel message. From this commitment he handles in an appendix Robert Gundry's recent *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*, a book causing waves in evangelical exegetical circles. The appendix was written after the original manuscript was completed. Gundry, also an original theologian, gives the impression, according to Gruenler (and he seems to be right), of attributing too much of the gospel material to the evangelist and not to Jesus. Gundry has taken a principle of interpretation and carried it so far that the person of Jesus as the originator of the gospel becomes nearly superfluous. Gundry is also scored for not setting down a principle of distinguishing Matthew's contribution from that of Jesus. In this sense Gundry is judged to be more radical than the recognized and self-confessed radical Perrin.

Rarely is a really original theological book from a conservative or evangelical perspective published. Too often old battles are fought and older positions restated with a trifle more vigor. *New Approaches* ploughs new ground in a new way. Even the reader who is not caught up in current exegetical debates is going to find material here that will help him in understanding the gospel material.

David P. Scaer

CHURCH AND MINISTRY. Edited by Daniel Brockopp *et al.* Institute of Liturgical Studies, Valparaiso, Indiana, 1982. Paper. 137 pages. No price given.

These essays were given originally at the 1981 Institute of Liturgical Studies by three Lutheran, two Roman Catholic, and one Episcopalian theologians and address an issue which continues to be lively in Lutheran circles. Brief mention can be made of three essays. Havener addressed, quite successfully I believe, the relationship between the regular ministry and the presence of multiple gifts in the same church. Agreeing that the offices of the *episcopos* and *presbyteros* were the same, this Roman Catholic theologian suggests that in the pastoral epistles the *episcopos* as a separate office may be emerging. Ralph Querre (ALC) points out that Lutheran ordination liturgies have a more pronounced understanding of this rite than do contemporary Roman Catholic liturgies. Richard Neuhaus (AELC), provides his usual blend of stimulating and irritating assessments. While it is hard to follow his understanding of the church's obligation, always in an ecumenical context, to the body politic, his barbs always have a way of cleaning out the cobwebs.

David P. Scaer

THE READER'S DIGEST BIBLE. Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, New York. 1982. 798 pages. Standard Edition, \$16.95. Deluxe Edition (leather-bound), \$24.95.

The Reader's Digest Bible is a condensation of the *Revised Standard Version*. The philosophy of this Bible is the idea that God and His inspired Scriptures were unprofitably long-winded. The editors who engaged in this condensation process believe that the Bible could greatly profit from a dose of tough-minded editing. This condensation venture of the Reader's Digest Association, which has had much practice in book condensation, has pared down the Protestant version of the Bible by roughly forty per cent; it is 480,000 words shorter. About fifty per cent of the Old Testament and twenty-five per cent of the New Testament have been cut out. The editors contend that nothing of significance was lost by this significant reduction. The editors thereby seem to be saying that they had a better understanding of what mankind needs than the Holy Spirit did!

This condensation Bible project was begun in 1976 with the approval of the National Council of Churches, which holds the copyright to the *Revised Standard Version*. As general editor the Digest recruited Bruce Metzger, Professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, whose task it was to supervise the nine editors who did the pruning and condensing. Whole passages are squeezed to a minimum. A few passages were left untouched, as, for example, the Twenty-third Psalm. God's words to Moses out of the burning bush are boiled down by two-thirds. Violence certainly has been done to the beautiful language and thoughts of the Book of Psalms in this Bible. In the poetic books, chapter after chapter is hacked away. Half of the Book of Psalms has been removed. One reviewer said about the violence done to the Psalms that they could be better called "David's Greatest Hits." Many "immortal" verses have been shorn of their distinctive quality.

Because the chapter and verse numbers have been omitted, it will be difficult to find passages and chapters in this abbreviated Bible. It will also be difficult to ascertain now exactly what has been omitted by *The Reader's Digest Bible*. The choice of the *Revised Standard Version* with its mistranslation of key Messianic passages and its textual criticism favoring the Septuagint at the expense of the Hebrew Massoretic text will also reduce the appeal of this Bible to many Christians.

It has been the policy of the American Bible Society to print the Bible without comment, a policy which was also observed in publishing *Revised Standard Bible*. But the Digest Bible has added introductions to both the Old and New Testaments and their respective books. The views in the Old Testament especially favor the conclusions of the historical-critical method. These introductions would certainly deter many pastors from recommending this Bible, even if they had no objections whatever as to the manner in which God's Word has been reduced.

The Reader's Digest Association was prompted to undertake its condensation venture in order to encourage people to read the Bible who ordinarily would not wade through a book of about 1300 pages (versus the 767 pages which constitute the Digest Bible). Because of its length, therefore, the Bible is too little read. Relative to this matter the reviewer in *Time* wrote: "Undoubtedly so, but such people could use one of the readable modern translations of the real thing (such as the *Good News Bible* or *New International Version*) and skip the slow parts" (*Time*, October 4, 1982). This reviewer agrees with Patricia O'Brien's evaluation of the *Digest Bible*.

With due respect to the good intention of Reader's Digest, there's

something about squeezing the Word down to basics that is alarming. If the point of the Bible is to get the story of God across in 10 or 20 easy lessons, that would be accomplished easily enough. But most people who feel drawn to the Good Book see some splendid nuances in what they read; subtleties take thought and concentration to unravel. In this new version, the messages get plain and crisp. The Lord loses some grandeur, and the reader loses some awe.

One objective of the consensed Bible may have been to counter the growing religious illiteracy fostered by television. We doubt that the *Digest Bible* will counteract that problem. We disagree with the encomium of one of its editors who described this Bible as being "the most valuable version of the Bible available to today's readers."

Raymond F. Surburg

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH: BIBLICAL ORIGIN, HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATION, AND POTENTIAL FOR THE FUTURE. By Hans Schwarz. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1983. 382 pages. Cloth. No price given.

Hans Schwarz dedicates this theological monograph to his former colleagues at Trinity (Capitol) Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio. Though the work is an exegetical, dogmatical, and historical study of the doctrine of the church, it also attempts to provide a blueprint for its future existence. Schwarz has been recognized as belonging to the theology of hope movement. It is not surprising therefore that the church is understood as that symbol towards which all mankind (society) is striving. Thus he can speak of the people of God being separated not even by religious distinctions. The theology of hope is by definition universalistic, and it is difficult not to avoid seeing Schwarz's monograph in this light. The influence of Vatican II is easily recognized. The commission to Peter in Matthew 16 is seen as the church's foundation, but in more than one place the authenticity of these words of Jesus is questioned. The value of this study is that the doctrine of the church is discussed from theological, exegetical, and historical perspectives and can be considered useful from this perspective. These discussions can be enlightening, even if one's eschatology does not lean in Moltmann's direction. For example, do we really want to say that the church's task is to reform society (p. 318)? Peter is given the proper place in the establishment of the church, but the second printing might want to say that he denied, and not betrayed, Jesus three times (p. 34).

David P. Scaer

JUST AS I AM. By Harvey Cox. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1983. Cloth. 159 pages. \$10.95.

I was drawn to this autobiography since the author had been one of the shakers of religious foundations in the 1960's with his *The Secular City*. As with many of the "God is dead" theologians, Harvey Cox has slipped into oblivion. While these men were the theological rage a generation ago, there is hardly a theological student who would care to pursue their thinking with any seriousness today. *Just As I Am* may be the biography of a one-time theological revolutionary but as literature it is not atypical of the life story of Protestant divines.

(Lutheran pastors, unlike their Reformed counterparts, do not understand their lives and careers as *Heilsgeschichte* and are less likely to write these Gospel-like histories of themselves.) Such literature is fascinating because it reveals how a one-time revolutionary thinks of himself. Without claiming to be a literary critic in such matters, these stories all seem to read the same. The autobiographers seem to be obsessed with the influences of others in their theological development. These books are written versions of morning talk shows.

Cox goes back 250 years to pre-Revolutionary days to begin his story. He sees himself almost as a type of reincarnation of his Quaker ancestors, who helped bury, but who did not help defend, the American patriots slaughtered by the British in Paoli, Pennsylvania. It is almost like reading Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. What would have happened if Cox had found anarchists and despots in his genealogy? His Harvard doctoral dissertation, "Religion and Technology from the Renaissance to Present," seems to have had no influence on him and quite clearly on no one else. It did give him the credentials for his theological explorations. His Baptist Free Church spirit provided entrance into black churches and civil rights movements with Martin Luther King. He writes dramatically of his stay in a Williamston, North Carolina, jail for participation in the civil rights movement. A vivid description is given of the poor food and the eating of a cheese sandwich to break the fast. His stay could have been scarcely more than a few days. It must have made an impression on him because he was terrified of the prospects of jail in Iran. No cause took him to Tehran. He was just changing places and unwittingly purchased tax-free booze for an anonymous person at the airport. He boarded an airplane to India before authorities were aware that an infraction had taken place. Such misdemeanors are not of salvific importance, but they do show that even the theologically prominent are really no different than the rest of us.

It is difficult to disagree with Cox's own assessment that he may have peaked too early when, in his early thirties, *The Secular City* in eleven translations became an international best seller. For the present he must continue to live off his past reputation. His *After the Secular City*, scheduled to appear in two years, will not change things. American preachers and theologians (non-Lutheran ones) have understood themselves as prophets to society, even when society is not listening to them. Cox belongs to this colonial American tradition.

David P. Scaer