Book Reviews


Several years ago the Theological Commission of the Lutheran World Federation requested the director of the Federation's Department of Theology, Vilmos Vajta, to produce a number of studies on the Lutheran confessional principle and its implications for church fellowship. Supported by some of the finest scholars of world Lutheranism, Dr. Vajta has produced two books on the subject which, if read carefully by the pastors and leaders of all Lutheran church bodies, should contribute greatly toward a growth of understanding and fellowship among Lutherans throughout the world.

In 1911 Theodore Schmauck, the last president of the General Council, provided for English speaking Lutherans an excellent and extensive (962 pages) study of The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. In this volume the nature of the confessional principle, its historical development in the Lutheran Church and its contemporary status in the Lutheran Church were thoroughly examined.

Although the volumes edited by Dr. Vajta do not claim to follow in the footsteps of Dr. Schmauck's work, they do give evidence of the fact that there continues to be in most parts of Lutheranism a concern to give expression to the validity of the confessions and confessional principle of Lutheranism.

Church in Fellowship draws together for the first time a comprehensive survey of the ecumenical relationships of the various bodies of Lutheranism and of the various confessional principles which undergird these relationships.

Of particular interest for American readers is the first of the four chapters, which contains an historical review of "Pulpit and Altar Fellowship among Lutherans in America" together with an analysis of the current understanding of fellowship in American Lutheran church bodies. Fred Meuser, author of one of the finest studies in American Lutheran church history, The Formation of the American Lutheran Church, has not only succinctly summarized the various confessional principles to be found in American Lutheranism but has also gathered together almost fifty pages of judiciously selected documents which express the various synodical positions on this matter, including the basic documents on fellowship produced within the Synodical Conference.

Dr. Meuser sums up the difficult state of affairs confronting inter-Lutheran discussions in America today: "Each synod, quite understandably, has hoped that the others would become more like itself" (p. 18).
The format of an essay followed by footnotes and documents is repeated in the succeeding two chapters which deal with fellowship in the Lutheran Churches of Germany and Scandinavia. These two chapters bring concise and well documented answers to such questions as: (1) What is the nature of the Lutheran-Reformed alliance within and between many of the territorial churches of Germany? (2) What is the relationship between the various Scandinavian Lutheran Churches and the Churches of England and Scotland?

World Lutheranism is not alone in its search for a solution to the problem of broken fellowship at the altar. The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has wrestled with the problem of “Intercommunion” in recent decades. In the fourth and final chapter Dr. Vajta sums up the response of confessional Lutheranism to this concern of the ecumenical movement. “The ‘Lutheran’ Church, as a church of Jesus Christ, is called especially today to confess this church outside its own walls. And if it finds members of the body of Christ, to recognize the unity with them. It can do this only by preaching the Word rightly and administering the Sacrament of Christ’s body and blood. For it is just there, ubi et quando visum est deo, that the unity of church becomes a reality through participation in the gifts of the Holy Spirit” (p. 261).

The Church and the Confessions examines the nature of the confessional commitment held by the various bodies of world Lutheranism. Much that is discussed in the chapters dealing with Lutheranism in America and Europe is treated implicitly in Church in Fellowship. Nevertheless, these chapters, by such authors as Hans Weissgerber, Robert Fischer and Eugene Fevold, bring into more detailed historical perspective the various contemporary Lutheran confessional positions found in these two continents.

Of special importance for twentieth century Lutheranism are the essays on the emerging confessional position of the younger Lutheran churches of Asia and Africa. Andar Lumbantobing’s detailed analysis of “The Confession of Faith of the Heria Kristen Batak Protestant” should for decades to come provide Lutheran missionaries with insight into how one Lutheran Church tackled and solved the problem of producing an indigenous confession of faith.

In this book, as in Church in Fellowship, Dr. Vajta has the last word, again framed in an ecumenical perspective.

The church of the Lutheran confession, on the basis of its experience in ecumenical discussion, must point out that the church of Jesus Christ is certainly not marked by a confessionless faith, but that it can be recognized by confessing the apostolic faith with all of Christendom on earth. As long as this can be witnessed to in the ecumenical movement, it is not a unionistic aberration to participate in discussion in which this truth is not unanimously recognized. Quite to the contrary, the witness of the confession in a divided Christendom is an unavoidable responsibility. (p. 187)

James Weis

It’s a long journey back to the headwaters of biblical interpretation but this little volume keeps one in mid-stream and the trip up the river of interpretation through the centuries becomes a pleasant one. Perhaps too few of us have traveled this road back recently. Someone may be obsessed by the notion that what has been going on in Lutheranism in recent decades is unique to Luthers and hardly anyone else has interpreted the Bible before. Others, just as naively, may think that others have possessed the Bible and lost it, but this can never happen to us. Someone may even feel there is no relationship between the tensions of our own time in interpretation and what has transpired in the past.

All of these notions are quickly dispelled by even a rapid reading of this informative volume consisting of eight lectures by a group of competent English scholars. The series has an unusually high degree of coherence and continuity, so that at times one has the impression the book has a single author.

The first lecture by Barrett, “The Bible in the New Testament Period,” begins with Philo’s treatment of the Old Testament, who he says, “was irresponsible; he reads out of his text thoughts which he has first implanted in it.” His motive, however, was never conscious falsification but that of a missionary” (p. 4). The approach to the origin of the New Testament is that of a mild form criticism; the authority of the Gospel tradition “does not consist in the adequacy of the biographical materials which the Gospels contain but in the clarity of the witness they bear to Jesus Christ” (p. 22). This is illustrated by the dubious question: “Who can distinguish with complete confidence between a historical statement that has led to a theological conviction, and one that has grown out of a theological conviction?” (p. 22).

In the second lecture on the Greek Fathers, Chadwick says history repeats today:

In the second and third centuries the Church was the scene of impassioned debate about the problem of historical difficulties of Scripture. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the date of the Book of Daniel, the credibility of the story of Jonah, the dimensions of Noah’s Ark, the discrepancies among the evangelists in respect of the placing of the cleansing of the Temple—these and many like questions were keenly discussed. A disciple of Marcion named Apelles remarked that if the Ark really had been of the size stated in Genesis it could only have contained four elephants and their food.

By his allegorical method, Origen “was able to make Scripture contemporary, more than a remote record of the distant past” (pp. 37-38). Modern divines were these second century theologs! The counterpart is easily seen today in Bultmann and similar methods. Another revelation from the history of interpretation comes from the patristic age when men were “using allegory,” as Kelly says in his lecture, “to dissolve Bible truth into thin air,” and at the same time held presuppositions about the Bible as an inspired book, which pervaded Christendom as a whole in the patristic age” (pp. 41-49).
The chapter on the Bible in the Middle Ages by Smalley is the usual
description of the sad extremes of allegorism which prevailed until the
Reformation. Rupp's analysis of Reformation exegesis in the next lecture
leaves something wanting as to exactness and completeness. Rupp says
that during this age the Bible was "the Great Bomb itself" and praises
the return to language and grammar in interpretation.

The two most significant lectures are "The Bible in the Eighteenth
Century" by Carpenter, and Lampe's "The Bible Since the Rise of Critical
Study," an era which he describes as "the emancipation of the Word of
God from the grave-clothes wound around it by a priori dogmatism" (p.
126.)

The new approach had made it impossible to treat the Bible as a
vast collection of proof-texts. . . . To expound one part of Scrip-
ture in the light of another, without regard for the differences
of outlook and intention between different authors, was a danger-
ous undertaking.

But he adds, significantly, "no doubt. . . the nineteenth-century critics
ignored a good deal of the underlying unity binding together the different
writers" (p. 138).

At the conclusion of his lecture he points up where New Testament
interpretation is today in these words:
Ought we to go on from that point until we reach agreement with
Bultmann that if this is so it does not matter whether the resur-
rection as an historical event ever happened? And, if historical
judgment is irrelevant in this case, should we extend the principle
to the whole gospel and give to the alleged history a symbolical
value only? Or is it not rather the present task of criticism to
map out a third way, where history is respected, and where the
idolatrous craving for certainty and infallibility or a cosy bibili-
cism or the certainty of existential encounter which has no need
to look to scriptural documents or to the history that lies behind
them? (p. 144).

If this is the present position of interpretation it can go anywhere
or nowhere at all. All possibilities are stated in the form of questions.
And in the final "lesson chapter" editor Nineham can only say that "the
past has no single, consistent, or clearly formulated doctrine of the Bible
or way of approaching the Bible, to hand on to us" (p. 145). He points
out no sure way except to say, "To whom are we to turn? The short
answer must be that you cannot turn to anyone except yourself" (p. 160).

At this point the series of lectures leaves one out on a limb, but
much is to be gained from such a perspective of the history of inter-
pretation. One clear lesson is that the common denominator of contention
through the centuries was whether or not the Bible should be taken at
its face value, just as it is today. We recommend this work, or one similar
to it, to our readers, assuming that the more blind alleys they recognize
the more likely they are to follow the method which leads to Truth.
Facetiously, we do not suggest a fourth way of handling the word of
Truth found in a note of Erasmus of a colloquy between one Cannius and
Polyphemus in his day:

Cannius: How provest thou that thou lovest the Gospel?
Polyphemus: There was a certain gray friar which never ceased
to babble and rail against the New Testament of
Erasmus... I laid this New Testament on his pate as hard as I could drive and I made three bumps on his head, as big as three eggs, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Cannius: Truly, this is, as they say, to defend the Gospel with the Gospel (p. 77).

We don't recommend this method but in some cases it could help.

Lorman Petersen


Biblical scholars of our day are very actively engaged in looking for the ties between the Christian message and the historical Jesus. You, a biblical scholar, may know that this generalization does not apply to you. You may not be engaged in a quest for the historical Jesus because you never knew He was lost, or because you believe that you have successfully found Him. Any individual detachment from the attempt to apply the methods of historical criticism to the witness of the Gospels to Jesus does not detract, however, from the truth that this is a major concern of current theological effort. Many reputable scholars have written their approach to the subject; every reputable scholar is reading and reacting to such writings.

Dr. Turner, professor at the University of Durham, has assembled three essays, two of which he had previously delivered as lectures. The first essay presents certain prominent features of motive and methodology among the writers of history, a listing which is apparently intended to be helpful to the student or general reader of history. The second essay attempts to say that the Gospels are not so different from other historical documents that the student of the Gospels would lay aside his historical science in order to understand them. It is true that the Evangelists write history with a motive, with a concern for personal impact—all the material is related to a particular standpoint. This second plane, however, does not force the historian concerned with the Gospels to abandon his normal methods of historical assessment. Turner uses his third essay to register his disapproval of Bultmann's sharp line of contrast between Historie and Geschichte.

The Historical Jesus is J. S. Bowden's translation of Heinz Zahrnt's Es Begann mit Jesus von Nazareth (1960). The German title is more exactly informative of the assertion which Zahrnt makes. The quest is for the historical Jesus, not in order to reconstruct a life of Jesus, but to establish through the study of this historical person the continuity between the proclamation made by Jesus and the proclamation made about Jesus. And Zahrnt asserts that the identity of the earthly Jesus and the Exalted Christ is established in the historical resurrection of Jesus. There must never be an end of historical investigation, but critical historical study has already made clear that post-Easter faith is no more than
the correct understanding of the pre-Easter Jesus, that faith in Jesus is grounded in Jesus himself and not simply in the kerygma of the first community.

Zabrant's concern is not so much to share with his readers the process by which he himself arrived at such a conclusion, as rather to inform his readers of the more than a century old effort through which historical research by theologians, with many successes and failures along the way, has come to such an intellectually honest conclusion. His method is to trace the conflict between dogma and history to the point at which they help each other, instead of fighting with each other. Liberal Theology, the History of Religions School, Dialectical Theology, Form Criticism, Kerygma Theology, all become a part of his story. Each group of theologians devoted to their "discovery" makes its own contribution, but, in the end, each is found wanting because of failure to ask the ultimate questions or to be consistent with its own principles. In Zabrant's opinion, there was no real arrival at the goal of the whole quest until the present day of Kilsemann, Bornkamm, Ebbing, Fuchs, Conzelmann, and others, who have succeeded in going beyond Bultmann.

The Historical Jesus demands to be read. It makes assertions; it evaluates freely; it maintains and supports a point of view; it forces its reader to assent or dissent. Admittedly, Zabrant makes many statements which seem very strange, and the library's copy of the book will shortly be marked with a whole series of question marks in the margins. But Zabrant says that the new scientific investigation of the problem of the historical Jesus is "an indispensable theological necessity" and "a vital interest of the Christian faith" (p. 101). This writer is hesitant to discredit such assertions, for Zabrant has forewarned that a faith which insists on being maintained through a whole series of sacrifices of the intellect is not faith at all, but a series of works (pp. 19-23 et passim).

Turner's book has no urgency about it. It is an extended essay about various related subject matters with occasional summary statements, many of which come as surprises because the reader did not suspect that the material was intended to lead to a conclusion. Perhaps the work is too objective. The author is not strongly enough represented there, and the reader is allowed to remain unaffected.

Ray F. Martens


This book had its beginnings in a series of lectures which the author, then on active military duty in Poland, delivered at Uppsala and Lund in 1939. In this study, Lohmeyer attempts to determine the relationship between Cult and Gospel in the ministry of Jesus as it is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. More specifically, Lohmeyer is interested in ascertaining "... what attitude was adopted in the gospel of Jesus to the problem posed by the cult and to the cult itself?" (page 3).
The author's starting point is the observation that within a century after the time of Jesus temples were desolate and sacrifices were being abandoned. Furthermore, he notes that,

Wherever the Christian Gospel has taken root in heart and home, in palace and cottage, temple and sacrifice have disappeared from the land and life of the peoples (page 2).

This despite the fact that attacks on temples and pulling down of altars were almost unknown in the early church.

Lohmeyer prefaced his inquiry with a brief, but valuable discussion of the Jewish cult. He defines cult as that

... God-directed activity which is based on a revelation regulated by holy rules and pursued by a society which is an historically existing entity and is rooted in such revelation (page 6).

Cult is the re-action of the community to God's actio; it is the community's response to His preceding word. Cult is then examined in its relationship to history, the Torah, political images, and finally, to ethics.

The heart of Lohmeyer's labor is a careful examination of the gospels for any and all cultic references. Mark's gospel is the basic document; Matthew and Luke are considered insofar as they modify the Markan framework. Matthew and Mark, it is found, describe Jesus as "fiercely opposed to Temple and cult" and campaigning actively against them. Luke, however, seems to represent a more restrained attitude toward cult. In his gospel, cult is the God-given ground out of which the "fair flower" of Israel's redemption springs. For Luke, Jesus, rather than destroying cult, fulfills the heritage which found expression in it (pages 57, 59).

The last forty pages of the book are devoted to consideration of the cultic basis and the cultic aims of Jesus' Gospel, followed by a short discussion of the Christian cult which arose from the life and work of Jesus.

The reader will find many values in this study. It provides, first of all, an able introduction to a complex and question-ridden area of New Testament study. The reader will also find that his understanding of an often neglected dimension of our Lord's ministry is deepened. Lohmeyer's exegetical insights and comments are often stimulating; they challenge all of us to continued study of the gospels in depth.

Benno W. Sulewski


Dr. Scharlemann's book was originally presented as a series of five lectures to the Parish Administration Institute at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The original heading of the lectures was "Mining the Message for the Mission." Their purpose was to aid pastors in arriving at the real meaning of a text of Scripture, specifically that of parables.

The author speaks of the meaning of the word parable and shows how important a place parables held in the teaching of Jesus, fully one-
third of it being in parabolic form. Pastors will find the author’s discussion of the interpretation of parables particularly helpful. Noteworthy are the criteria set forth by the author to aid one in determining the point of comparison upon which so much depends. The chapter on the kingdom of God is without doubt one of the most important in the book. In it the author analyzes the concept of the kingdom of God from Old Testament times to the coming of Jesus, who was, in a special sense, the embodiment of the kingdom of God.

Five parables are analyzed, each one of them with special reference to the kingdom of God, for the parable shows the kingdom of God in action. The parables treated are: The Automatic Action of the Soil; The Two Sons; The Barren Fig Tree; The Unjust Judge; The Unjust Manager. Each parable is treated textually, exegetically, and homiletically. Of particular interest is the treatment given the Parable of The Unjust Manager. The author’s remarks on this parable are particularly illuminating and point to the value of the “mining” process which he encourages the pastor to follow. The result of this thorough study by the author is evident in the depth of thought with which the author treats his subjects. In general it may be said that the author’s style is simple, straightforward and lucid and his treatment of his subject is scholarly. In our opinion the lectures as originally delivered to the Pastor’s Institute must have had a profound effect upon their hearers.

Purchase of the book will be justified if nothing else results from its reading but that pastors will follow the suggestions given for “mining the text.” Spiritual enrichment for both pastor and congregation will inevitably result.

George Dolak


This stimulating and informative volume by the chairman of the Bible Department, Bryan College, represents the crystallization of ideas of a number of scholars on the most effective way to study the English Bible. The reader will find here the views of Wilbert White, Howard Kuist, Robert Traina, Joseph Getty, Campbell Morgan, Howard Voss, Emily Werner and others as they relate to the inductive method of Bible study.

The term “independent” Bible study in the title is not used to suggest or foster an independent attitude of self-sufficiency, or vanity, where all outside aid is spurned. “The core of one’s study should be an original firsthand character, but wherever possible a selective and well-timed reference to supplementary aids is desirable.” (p. 15) The author is convinced that the fruits of Bible study are largely determined by how the Bible is studied. Many people fail to engage in personal and direct Bible study because they are ignorant of a sound procedure to follow in dealing with the various books of the Bible, with its thousand-plus pages. The author is convinced that many would-be Bible students are
overwhelmed by problems like the following: Where do I begin? How much do I study at a time? What does it say? What does it mean? How can I study efficiently? How can I remember what I have studied? These can only be adequately answered when the student has committed his life to Christ completely, allows the Holy Spirit to illuminate the mind, and follows a sound and practical method in the study of the Scriptures.

Before setting forth the principles of the inductive method of Bible study, Dr. Jensen acquaints the readers with the different types of literature that are found in the Bible. There is an excellent section in Chapter I on ways to recognize the structural unity of a book followed by a discussion of the basic laws of composition employed by Biblical writers.

Chapter II presents the teaching of Dr. Wilbert White, founder of the Biblical Seminary of New York City, on the inductive method which it is claimed is scientific in character. The inductive method is basically analytical in its approach to the literature of the Bible. Its order of procedure is: (1) Begin with the observable—what do you see? (2) Follow with the interpretative—what does it mean? (3) Do not fail to make application—how does it affect you?

Chapters III and IV consider the principles of the analytical chart. In connection with the discussion of chart making, Dr. Jensen introduces the place of the book survey or book method made famous by Wilbert White, L. W. Sweet, R. A. Torrey and James M. Gray. The author has given a number of examples of how to make charts.

Dr. Jensen concludes his book with two appendices. Appendix I has suggestions for a program of studies which employs the methodology and principles recommended in the book. For any method of study there are some portions of the Bible which are more difficult to study than others. In learning how to construct an analytical chart the more difficult sections of the Bible should be avoided.

Appendix II is a reprint of a student’s crisis experience in method under the great scientist and teacher, Professor Jean Agassiz of Harvard, which has become a classic on the methodology of original firsthand study. The fundamentals set forth in "The Student, The Fish, and Agassiz" likewise apply to Bible study.

The reviewer hopes that many readers of this journal will purchase the book, master its principles and follow them in the study, interpretation and application of the Bible, the Book of Life.

Raymond Surburg


“What does the New Testament have to say about Man—the Man to whom the Christian message is addressed?” No serious preacher or teacher of the Gospel can afford to take this question lightly. For behind every proclamation of the Gospel necessarily lies a picture and an understanding of the nature of man. This book, by an eminent New Testament
scholar at the University of Marburg, attempts to depict man as the New Testament sees him. In the light of the many things said and written about man today—man seemingly never tires of talking about himself—it is refreshing (and sobering) to read what the New Testament says about him.

This work, which originally appeared in German in 1948, was extensively revised for this translation. The study itself is divided into four major sections. After the author states the problem, he gives a description of man as he is viewed by Jesus in the Synoptic kerygma, by Paul, in the Johannine theology, and finally, in the other writings of the New Testament.

"Jesus sees man as an active person standing over against God but failing to fulfill his task which is the service of God." Therefore, Jesus came preaching repentance (metanoia), that is, "that man should turn aside from the wrong way and embark upon the way which is the will of God." Man is utterly dependent upon God because he is created by Him, and while he is the crown of creation this enhances not his special value before God but rather his great obligation to Him.

But man does not fulfill this obligation. He does not do the will of God, in fact, he sets himself in opposition to God. He does this when he withdraws from God’s commandments by changing them to suit himself. He does this when like the Scribes and Pharisees he overlooks his slave position and claims special recognition from God by reason of his achievement. He does this when he refuses to recognize God’s care and will not submit himself to it. Jesus, according to the author, sees man as a historical being caught between his creation in the past and his judgment in the future.

Paul’s picture of man is essentially the same as that of Jesus. However, it is formed on the basis of his own unique experiences, using concepts that he brought with him from his own background. “Paul sees man trapped by the kosmos, standing distinct from God, set in the great antithesis of sarx and pneuma.”

John emphasizes the fact that man not only lives in the world but also that he is of the world. Man shows that he is of the world by manifesting the passions of the flesh. To be “of the world” corresponds to being “not of God”, a characteristic expression of John.

The sinfulness of mankind is something that is clear only to the eyes of faith. The picture of man held by Jesus, Paul, and John is one that is understandable only from a Christian point of view. It is a picture worked out on the basis of the experience of God’s salvation in Christ. Thus, the picture of man in the New Testament is one “that is conditioned by Christian faith, and, therefore, cannot be expected to commend itself to a non-Christian world.”

The rest of the New Testament agrees with this picture with two notable exceptions. These are passages in Acts 17,27-29 and II Peter 1,4. Concerning the former the author states that it “cannot be brought into harmony” with the view of man as presented in the rest of the New Testament. The latter he sees as a “definite expression of the Hellenistic view of man.” This is not astonishing “for both texts in their contexts
and their whole theological bearing belong only to the fringe of the New Testament." Since these texts "appear as strange within the New Testament picture of man," the author concludes that they "are to be attributed to the intrusion of Hellenistic ideas." Outside of these two exceptions, however, the New Testament presents a unified picture of man and his nature.

The pages of this book provide the student of Scripture with a clear but sober picture of man. The study is well written and easy to follow. A question might be raised about the author's concept of fringes of the New Testament and about remarks regarding the interpretation of unclear passages (p. 94), but in spite of the occasional question mark, the study is valuable and deserves the careful consideration of every proclaimer of the Good News of God in Christ.

Arlieh Lutz


Conscientious preachers aspire to skill with words. J. B. Phillips has pointed out that the preacher needs to say the right words, shaped cunningly to pass men's defenses and to explode silently within their minds. In Time ... For Eternity is a volume of sermons which display speech melody, the rhythm of carefully formed phrases and the onomatopoeia of words. Yet mere skill with words is never substituted for preaching the word.

Based on the Eisenach Epistle Lessons in the Revised Standard Version these 68 sermons cover the entire church year. They were preached at the 2,400-member Lutheran Church of the Atonement, Florissant, Missouri, by Justus P. Kretzmann, pastor of the congregation, and George W. Hoyer, professor of Homiletics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Both men have sought out what God had to say in the words of each text to specific people living at a specific time. The description of original sin as a subtracting (pp. 6-7), the declaring of the Gospel as the establishing by God of friendship and fellowship (p. 12), the preaching of the Law as a shifting of blame (p. 75), the reference to Baptism (p. 93), the meaning of scorn in the Christian's life (p. 95), the ways in which Christian love can be expressed (p. 314)—these are all instances of the Word of judgment and the Word of grace being brought to bear penetratingly upon people's lives. This reviewer appreciated the frequent references to Baptism in these sermons, as well as the relating of the sermon to the Introit and Collect for the day.

Creative use of imagination is evident in many of the sermons. Take, for example, the sermon titled Increasingly Religious for the 6th Sunday after Trinity. Look, too, at the themes of the sermons. Here are a few: The Way of Mercy with Misery, That's the Spirit, Count God In, Journey to Mount Zion, God Speaks Sharply, A New Way for a New Day. The play on words in some of the major divisions is not only interesting but beautiful. In the sermon for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany under
the theme, Some Changes Made, we find: I. There've Been Some Changes Made, and II. There'll Be Some Changes Made. In the sermon for Invocavit we have the theme, He Was, As We, and then: I. Remember it in Despondency, and II. Remember it in Complacency. And for the 1st Sunday after Easter the theme is, We Shall Live Also, under which are the major divisions: I. Ours is a Living Hope, and II. Ours is Hopeful Living. Individual sentences reveal the same quality. "Or does your faith limp instead of leap because you complain about His very gifts?" (p. 207). "The Christian credits God with the formation of man and must equally credit God with the reformation of man" (p. 220).

An outstanding feature of these sermons is their smooth and natural use of illustrations. The conclusion of the sermon for the 2nd Sunday in Advent and the sermon for the Sunday after Christmas furnish examples of fine illustrations, illustrations which really illuminate, and which indicate that the authors spoke with a will to be understood.

How well any sermon is understood is difficult for a preacher—and reviewer—to assess with accuracy. Communication through a number of the sermons in In Time... For Eternity may well have been hampered by poor paragraph transitions and by a lack of clear major divisions. The development of the major points was not always easily followed by this reviewer. Some of the sermons seemed scattered, lacking a definite aim, for the connection between important thoughts in a sermon and the stated central thought was not always clear (see pp. 13ff.; 32ff.; 54ff.; 70ff.). Occasional clumsy sentences and jumbled paragraphs also contributed to prevent meaning from getting through (see last paragraph in the sermon for the 2nd Sunday after Trinity).

The uneven quality of the sermons in this volume reflects the preaching done in most congregations in the span of a year. Very few preachers are able to soar up with the wings of an eagle every Sunday. Yet every sermon in In Time... For Eternity points the Law and the Gospel to the real needs of people. What is more, they set forth the Word with a refreshing naturalness and a loving concern for people. This reviewer is convinced that the saints at Florissant were edified.


The Halford Luccock Treasury is a son's grateful tribute to his father, who for forty years served as author, preacher, columnist, commentator, and who was recognized as the dean of American homileticians.

This work contains selections from Luccock's more than 27 books, more than 600 letters of Simeon Stylites of The Christian Century fame, 1,000 Springboards for Sermons, and other published articles.

Of particular interest is the section devoted to Luccock's view of the religious value of creative literature. Maintaining that organized religion can neglect the literature of its time only to its peril, Luccock contends that current literature serves the Church and the preacher in three ways:
1) it discloses the implicit religion of the day; 2) it shows the needs, voids, sun spots, hopes, and despairs of the age; 3) "it holds out to organized religion the sacrament of disturbance" (p. 192).

One urgent need of Christian education is that of getting people to be shocked at the right things, the big things which are truly shocking, the violations of human dignity (p. 193).

By a "vicious unwholesome preoccupation with the wholesome," the Church's message can strike the hearer as being irrelevant because it appears to be out of touch with real life.

A second arresting section of this book contains excerpts from Luccock's card file of sermon ideas. A firm believer in making a seed bed in which sermon ideas can mature, Luccock had a large garden of springboards for sermons. Here is a sample:

A sign in a hardware store window in Grand Central Terminal, New York, read: "Not everything displayed in this window is in stock."

So with many of our Christian profession—often in the window, but not always in stock (p. 394).

Luccock has left us much: his insistence that in preaching the Word be made relevant; his ability to formulate sermon themes that are provocative without being grotesque; the spirit of joy and quiet humor that is the hallmark of his writing. This, and much more, is in this volume.

Henry Eggold


As a kind of benign ecclesiastical Schimpflexicon there probably was no equal to the "Simeon Stylites" column which graced of yore the last page of The Christian Century. It was the fruit of the subtle, facile pen wielded by the late Halford E. Luccock, who for sheer sparkle of writing had few peers.

The writers of the "Pen-ultimate" column, now occupying the Century's last page, Marty and Peerman, have carried on in spritely fashion, sharp, witty, and with amazing awareness of current affairs, especially as these evince theological nuances, and with fresh twentieth-century jargon to match the events and trends, often succeeding to demolish—at least by pen—the easy-going pishposh that passes for religion in our day and to wither with devastating satire the familiar, and often false, American set of values that go along with such religiosity. The old clarity and aptness of "Simeon," however, is not always there, supplanted by the not-always-so-clear mystique which characterizes theological thinking in our day.

One could justifiably question whether columns of this kind, pricking at specific and often unrelated problems and with no intent for continuity should be gathered together under one cover. The punch and pertinency may no longer be there. But, then, this is not true of all the entries;

The Episcopalian attorney, William Stringfellow, has demonstrated quite clearly that he perceives keenly the problems which confront the church in this decade. He writes as one who not only has observed but also has experienced personally the emptiness, the shallowness and the self-serving realities of what he himself has called "American religiosity." Religion today, according to Stringfellow, "has to do only with religion." It has too often almost nothing to do with the Christian gospel as set forth in the sacred Scriptures.

A few brief quotations will help to suggest Stringfellow's approach and style, which, incidentally, tend to encourage a "can't put it down" attitude in the reader.

Protestantism in the city—what is left of it—has become a make-believe haven where the individual is exalted, where religion is meant to confirm and appease his desires and ambitions, where the individual controls his own destiny, where the only limits on a man are said to be those native to his own mentality, volition, health, competitive spirit and luck, where those that get ahead deserve it, and where God is eager to help those who help themselves.

The clergy have become hired spokesmen for religion among men. They have been invited to decorate public life, but restrained from intervening significantly in it. They have been relegated to the literal periphery—the invocations and the benedictions—of secular affairs. The clergy have become the face of the Church in the world; they have become a superficial, symbolic, ceremonial laity.

Candidates for seminary admission in Protestantism have been invited into a community of students and scholars examining the history of religion. Or they have been recruited as those who would devote some time, perhaps their working-lives, to inquiry into the religious situation. Or they have been induced to think of the ordained ministry as a profession and specialty, like social work or medicine or law. They are expected only, though sometimes necessarily, to have an academic interest in the Christian faith. And there has been much emphasis upon the amenities of the "profession of the ministry," that is, clergy salaries and pensions and household allowances and long vacations and social status and the like.

Stringfellow's shortcoming is the same which besets so many modern commentators. He is a calamity howler with questions galore; he has almost none of the answers. Let that not disturb. The four chapters in 93 pages are well worth the time of any student of theology who is interested in understanding contemporary church problems and who desires to carry on a life related ministry.

Paul G. Elbrecht
"The Court decides wisely" is the way some (Christian Century) viewed the Supreme Court's early summer decisions (Pennsylvania and Maryland cases) on Bible reading in public schools, while others (Christianity Today) argued that "we can expect atheistic forces to utilize the Supreme Court decision to further the cause of irreligion."

J. Marcellus Kik, erstwhile associate editor of Christianity Today, wrote his book before the June 17, 1963, decisions, but his argument, based on the ruling of June 25, 1962 against the New York State Board of Regents' 22-word prayer, would undoubtedly remain the same, that a new wave of secularism has been spawned by the Supreme Court's action. His monograph is part of the International Library of Philosophy and Theology, for which he serves as editor of the Biblical and Theological Studies.

No establishment of religion or breach of the wall of separation of church and state could be shown to have existed in the New York case, Kik contends, and for this reason it is his considered opinion that the justices of the highest court are to be faulted for what he terms "subjectivism" and "accommodation to the prevailing climate of sophisticated opinion," indeed, a failure to preserve the intent and spirit of Constitutional guarantees. His concerns are set in helpful historical perspective and should serve to stimulate any reader to ask himself whether so little public reaction was generated by the most recent Court decisions, because there was general agreement and acquiescence on the part of the public, or whether the question of religion in the public schools—or anywhere else for that matter—is a dead issue anyway, and thus symptomatic of prevailing religious apathy.

The attitude of the high court, as reflected by the New York decision, though conceived and framed in friendly spirit now, might eventually lead to absolute enthronement of secularism in our public schools, Kik fears. Needless to say, there is no reason for Americans naively to assume that a beneficent state will everlasting remain so, without due exercise of vigilance on the part of the citizenry, mindful always of the truism, expressed by Emil Brunner and confirmed by history, that the state is essentially "organized selfishness."

As a short, handy source book on the pros and cons of the religious question vis-à-vis our schools, Kik's efforts should provide ready reference. Perhaps the author's solution to the knotty problem, that "the parents, and not the Supreme Court, should determine the measure of religion allowed in the public school," is an over-simplification, but this should not detract from his otherwise scholarly achievement. It is also natural to expect that his views are couched in traditional Reformed theological thinking on the church-state issue.

One quibble on Kik's use of historical material seems justified—his reference to President Madison's views on legislation affecting religion. Kik cites only the earlier, favorable views of Madison, without noting the fact that Madison later modified his thinking considerably on the
very same issue, questioning the validity of expending governmental funds for the aid and sponsorship of religion in any way, even governmental and military chaplaincies. Thus, the foes of religion in the public schools could easily muster all kinds of ammunition from Madison's "Detached Memoranda" to support their position, if they so chose.

E. F. Klug


There is usually more than passing interest when an author who is primarily not a theologian says something about an area that is primarily theological. That interest is heightened when the discussion revolves about such a delicate and hotly contested issue as Church and State. We should like to allay all fears at the outset as regards the possibility of Paul Blanshard's fumbling the handoff, for his adept handling of the factors involved present the reader with a penetrating study of the conflict between "religion" and "education" that is both timely and scholarly.

The author, a nationally acclaimed authority on Church-State issues, adds this volume to a growing list of treatises such as: American Freedom and Catholic Power, God and Man in Washington, and Investigating City Government. These are cited to indicate his continuing interest in an area which has been given many years of thought by Paul Blanshard.

The Great Controversy addresses itself to the problem of education in its constitutional framework as this involves both public and parochial educational processes. In straightforward, thoroughly documented, and unbiased terms the author presents the many and varied issues involved. And this latter factor is not easy considering the technical and emotional aspects of the continuing debate we are witnessing these days.

The volume moves rather forcefully through several stages of legal and denominational viewpoints en route to its climactic final chapter, entitled Truth and Consequences. At this juncture Paul Blanshard marshals his forces to the support of complete separation of Church and State in education, indicating that the judgments rendered by State and Federal Courts have been properly sensitive, reasonably adequate, and practically efficient. While this conclusion might have been suspected all along, especially in consideration of the alignment of data in the text, it should be pointed out that the facts assembled hold more than merely ordinary interest for the conservative theologian. A sampling should suffice:

It is not within the purpose of this book to analyze in detail the shades of rightness and wrongness in the literalist and liberal positions concerning the Bible. (The preceding pages touch the area of inerrancy and authenticity and of the "problems" involved as modern theologians conceive it.)

But it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the cleavage between these two positions is so fundamental that it is bound to
lead to bitter controversy as long as the Bible is used in public schools. In the Puritan communities of Massachusetts in the seventeenth century The Book was accepted as literally accurate in all particulars, largely because sound textual criticism had not yet been developed. Today the great majority of biblical scholars, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, whatever they may think of the validity of certain passages in the Bible, accept the analytical historical methods of Bible study which began to blossom in the middle of the nineteenth century and which have completely transformed the view of the Bible as a static and errorless work. (p. 190)

This provocative passage, presented by as impartial an observer as might be found, still holds a mirror before modern theology, and the image it reflects is startlingly clear.

The reviewer would recommend this volume if for no other reason than that it draws together vital areas that touch the lives of each pastor and each parishioner, and at a time when clear thinking, sound theology, and level headed approach are of such dire necessity. The implicit warning issued by Paul Blanshard is that we have not yet seen the end of the great dilemma, nor have we fully grasped the significance of the events occurring before our eyes. It seems appropriate to add that a recognition of the problems and an acquaintance with the facts is an apt starting point. And for this purpose Religion and the Schools: The Great Controversy, is admirably suited.

W. N. Wilbert


By the other America the author means the 24% of our population who have demonstrably substandard incomes. (Less than $2,500 for a family of four per year.) He is concerned not only with the slum derelict but also with the industrial rejects, the agricultural workers, the aged, the minorities, the Appalachian hillbillies, and the impoverished farmers.

Chapters on these subcultures are more than descriptive. One of the important aspects of this book is an analysis of the “invisibility” of poverty, the reasons why educated and concerned Americans overlook the enormous culture of want and desperation in a country of unprecedented wealth. Worse than a lack of income, according to the author, is the pessimism, hopelessness, defeatism, and despair which plague the other America. That mental illness is rarely found among the poor, the poor are lazy and just don’t care about getting ahead, poverty is primarily non-white and rural, and similar myths are exploded.

The reader might not agree with the remedy suggested—more Federal aid—but he will not doubt the author’s sincere concern for these people. While the approach of the book is sociological, the clergy of the Lutheran church who think and plan almost exclusively in middle class terms would benefit especially from the reading of this book. No serious minded Lutheran can read the book without asking why our church, which has one of the greatest contributions to make toward alleviating the despair
and pessimism that grips this segment of our society, seems to have so little concern for reaching into this culture of poverty which constitutes one fourth of our population.

Arthur E. Graf


Recently coming to Union Theological Seminary in New York as professor of systematic theology, Scotsman MacQuarrie has won a reputation in the British Isles and in America as a "summarizer" of theological and philosophical thinking. His courses at Union on Christology and on Bultmannian Theology, as well as the course which constitutes the basis of this volume, substantiate this acclaim.

Dr. MacQuarrie has a way of presenting in clear and direct manner the most difficult and controversial theological issues. Like his lectures, this book is easy to follow, even though it reveals thorough scholarship and personal mastery of contemporary philosophical and theological thought.

While the author’s approach is valuable for people wishing to acquaint themselves in a general way with contemporary religious thought, it tends to oversimplify crucial issues by a cursory and somewhat cavalier treatment. Certain highly influential men are given equal space with men of somewhat lesser influence. Barth and Heidegger, e.g., receive what amounts to equal consideration.

Certain groupings of men and movements may be questioned, as for example the separation of the existentialists from the philosophers of personal being. The latter are discussed in chapter 12, and the former in chapter 22. The intervening chapters deal with other movements: contemporary realism, Roman Catholic Theology, Logical Empiricism, the Theology of the Word. This separation tends to obscure the development from the philosophies of personal being to existentialism. Of course, any arrangement might be considered arbitrary, and this criticism may find valid disagreement, especially since Dr. MacQuarrie does describe the personal being philosophers as precursors of existentialism.

Of a more significant nature, the author, in comparing men and movements, frequently makes oblique and generalizing references to a certain philosopher or theologian which would seem to do injustice to him. A man is summarily referred to in a way which could lead to misunderstanding.

The author himself recognizes the difficulty of his method when he says in his introduction: "It must always remain something of an impertinence to attempt to summarize in a few paragraphs complex ideas for the proper expression of which their authors required several volumes."
Nonetheless, the book is extremely valuable as a reference work and for the reader who wants to acquire a quick and comprehensive overview of current theological thinking. The Selected Bibliography is excellent.

B. F. Kurczewo


This book is described as "a monthly scheme for men and women." It is not a book which teaches us how to pray, but intends to help one to pray. It is written in the belief that prayer is fundamental to the life of the Christian; in the belief that "our own prayers will only prove satisfying and meaningful when they include all the main kinds of Christian prayer"; and based on the conviction that "for the vast majority of people, prayer ought to begin in the mind, and that words are only meant to sum up or to express ideas which have previously been reflected on."

The book is divided into four parts, each of which is useable for one week. In scope, the series' themes cover the whole of Christian thought from "God on High," to "The Christian Life." In each of these sections the author provides the user with much varied material, including material to ponder, with a set prayer at the end to collect one's thoughts. Ancient prayers of the Church and some of the author's own prayers make up the contents.

This prayer scheme will be helpful to many people and will help to provide the foundation for a vital prayer life.

Daniel Brockopp


This booklet is written in the belief that "the reach of music for the ultimate realism and final discoveries is in fact, the effort to find and to know God." With this in mind, Halter has written a book for anyone who is interested in music and its relation to man and to God.

The chapters are interestingly divided into: Music and Three People; Music and Three Powers; Music and Three Persons; and, Where God and Man Meet. Throughout all of these chapters, Halter shows his great knowledge of music itself and his ability to make it understandable to the ordinary reader. More important than this, it is his understanding of the relationship of music and theology which makes this a valuable book and worthy of being read by pastors and laymen of our church.

To this reviewer's knowledge, this is the third booklet which Concordia has published by Carl Halter. The other two booklets, of a more practical nature, have met with wide success in our circles, as this book no doubt also will.

Daniel Brockopp

This booklet is another in the series of guides available for the Christian wedding service. It covers nearly all items necessary for a proper service, from a brief list of recommended wedding music, to guest lists and check lists for preparations.

A particularly strong point of this manual is its recommendation for a printed order of worship to truly make the service one of congregational participation. Examples of printed orders are given. It is to be regretted that the form of the order often leaves something to be desired liturgically; and that the music listed in the order is not of the same high caliber as the music listed in another part of the booklet.

Throughout the booklet the author emphasizes that the wedding service is an act of worship and God is the focal point of the service. This is as it should be. For this reason, it seems to this reviewer that some of the statements in regard to positioning of attendants (p. 15) are out of keeping with the desired character of the service and tend to emphasize man rather than God.

This booklet can be of help to the couple as they prepare for their wedding service. We are in need of publications such as this which will emphasize the liturgical character of the wedding service in all its aspects, and even of publications which will indicate proper procedure and form for nuptial enecharists. It is hoped that Concordia will continue to publish books on this and other “forgotten services” of the Church.

Daniel Brockopp


These two books complement each other nicely. McKenzie, who appears well read in theology for an emeritus social science and psychology professor (Paton College, Nottingham, England), is writing for an audience much larger than just theologians. Belguum, a Northwestern Lutheran Seminary professor (Minneapolis), addresses specifically the pastor in this result of his experiences while on a research fellowship at Galesburg State (Illinois) Hospital under the direction of Dr. Hobart Mower of the University of Illinois.

McKenzie offers a rather thorough study of the legal, ethical and religious factors in the use of the concept of guilt. Belguum reviews the current practices employed by pastors in dealing with the problem of guilt and suggests a means of making the confessional functional.

Both men are justifiably concerned by the fact that some pastors yield entirely to secular psychotherapy in handling and considering the problems of seriously guilt-ridden parishioners. Clergymen especially should be able to recognize the distinction between subjective or unreal-
istic guilt on the one hand, and objective or realistic guilt on the other. Both authors, moreover, assert in no uncertain terms that psychology has no means or technique to dissipate feelings connected with objective guilt and that the answer lies alone in the New Testament redemption and forgiveness.

In considering the origin of guilt feelings McKenzie employs, qualifiedly, the Freudian concepts of super-ego and ego-ideal as indications of an infantile or negative conscience. He suggests that development of an adult or positive conscience is necessary for true maturity. Despite this somewhat elaborate explanation we still need, in this reviewer’s judgment, a thorough-going study of conscience and its development which is more solidly based on Scripture.

The discerning reader can readily recognize the several points, such as original sin and total depravity, at which McKenzie is at issue with Scripture. However, his discussion of religiously healthy guilt feelings and of egocentricity as the principle characterizing the sinful nature of the sinner which must be forgiven more than sins is very stimulating.

Belgium’s monograph is easily read and also very thought-provoking for the pastor who is willing to face the possibility of hypocrisy and guilt hidden in feelings underneath the facade of his own pose as well as that of members of his parish.

He effectively makes the point that insight and understanding of one’s problems, as advocated by secular psychotherapists, are just not enough for a full solution. This is being recognized in secular circles, as Belgium documents with one reference, and as evidenced more recently by one such psychotherapist, Nicholas Hobbs, in the American Psychologist (November, 1962).

To treat the problem of guilt, the pastoral use of the Office of the Keys must be truly functional, Belgium believes. He has diagrammed the essential elements of the confessional in a circular fashion which is relatively simple to follow, remember, and use.

At one point in the circle repentance and confession are shown as leading to humility and consequent restoration to personal integrity. Next, confession and amendment of one’s life bring about reconciliation with God and man, together with restoration to the community. To make the circle complete, amendment and repentance give a new lease on life, which is the validation of the functional confessional and a restoration to one’s vocation as a Christian.

Put these two little books together with Paul Meehl’s chapter on valid and displaced guilt in the Concordia Seminary (St. Louis) symposium volume on What, Then, Is Man? and you have a reasonably comprehensive picture which can help any pastor in his concern for the handling of guilt feelings in evidence among his parishioners.

Allen Nauss