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Book Review

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BOOK REVIEW

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LUTHER: RIGHT OR WRONG? AN ECUMENICAL-THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF LUTHER'S MAJOR WORK, THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL, BY A ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOLAR. By Harry J. McSorley. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969. 398 pages. Cloth. \$9.95.

McSorley, a Roman Catholic priest and professor of ecumenical theology and ecclesiology at St. Paul's College, Washington, D. C., is a graduate of Bucknell University. He attended the universities of Munich, Heidelberg, and Tübingen, where he continued his studies under both Evangelical and Roman Catholic scholars. The present volume, originally published under the title *Luthers Lehre vom unfreien Willen nach seiner Hauptschrift De servo arbitrio im Lichte der biblischen und kirchlichen Tradition*, is the result of his five years of doctoral study, with which he in 1966 earned the degree of doctor of theology from the University of Munich.

In view of the controversial character of this dissertation and its extensive documentation—there are 1,516 footnotes, 18½ pages of select bibliography, and an index of 574 names—the reviewer in justice to the author should ask for equal time. McSorley can, of course, justify his recourse to this elaborate apparatus of theological scholarship because he is dealing with one of the most important points of theology, so recognized by Luther. We are reminded of his words to Erasmus: "You and you alone have seen the hinge on which everything turns. You have aimed for my jugular vein."

Having defined the terms relevant to his subject, McSorley traces the doctrine of free or nonfree will in the Biblical understanding of freedom and bondage according to Ro-

man Catholic theology in the pre-Augustinian Fathers, Augustine, early conciliar and papal teaching, early scholasticism and Thomas Aquinas, and in the Neo-Semipelagianism of the late scholasticism. He then takes up Luther's early reaction as he turns from a Neo-Semipelagian understanding of free will to that of *servum arbitrium*. With that the stage is set for the confrontation of Erasmus' *De libero arbitrio* with Luther's *De servo arbitrio*.

McSorley contends that in his main thesis Luther was in full accord with the church's doctrine of the free and the unfree will (p. 353). Erasmus, on the other hand, he believes, "was merely reflecting the theological unclarity of his time when he listed the Neo-Semipelagian view as one that could be held by Catholics, even though he knew that it was not the 'probable opinion'" (p. 289). He says: "The popes of Luther's day certainly did not censure the late Scholastic theologians such as Biel, who had—most probably unwittingly—departed from the teaching of the Catholic doctrine of the Second Council of Orange. In this sense again it could be said that the popes of Luther's time did not teach that we are saved solely by the grace of Christ" (p. 273). McSorley continues: "Without prejudice to a correctly understood and necessary doctrine of papal infallibility, then, it is quite proper to see even this doctrine as leaving great room for fallibility in the church and in the papacy. History can provide us with innumerable examples of the fallibility of the infallible church of Christ." (Ibid.)

McSorley mentions Luther's doctrine of nonimputation of sin (p. 189) but does not discuss it any further. He cites Luther's writing on the freedom of a Christian in order to show that Luther also believed in

freedom. He does not, however, discuss the difference between the good works that a Christian does by divine grace to the glory of God and the works with which Jesus glorified the Father by accomplishing the work that the Father gave Him to do (John 17:4). He concludes: "The biblical concept of man's slavery to sin, as found in Luther's main work, has been accepted by the Lutheran confessional writings as well as by most contemporary Protestant theologians, to the exclusion of the necessitarian argument. Between *this* concept of *servum arbitrium* and the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church there is no difference which is capable of justifying the separation of the Churches" (p. 369). A question remains: Are we saved by the merit of our own works done by divine grace or solely by the merit of the works of Jesus Christ done for us and in our stead? Luther's concern regarding man's will cannot be fully appreciated apart from his so-called tower experience and his understanding of Rom. 1:17. But an adequate discussion of this crucial article of faith would probably have taken McSorley beyond the scope of his thesis.

LEWIS W. SPITZ SR.

SEELSORGE IM VOLLZUG. By Eduard Thurneysen. Zurich: EVZ-Verlag, 1968. 250 pages. Cloth. DM 2380 (\$5.95).

Some 20 years ago Thurneysen published a volume on the doctrine of pastoral theology with the title *Die Lehre von der Seelsorge*. The present volume emphasizes the practical application of that doctrine, though it, too, submits various theological principles on which the practical cure of souls should be based.

The author explains that preaching, proclaiming the Word of God in whatever form, including the administration of the sacraments, is sowing the seed, but he insists that sowing is not enough, for the crop must also be tended and harvested. The distinction between sowing and reaping, he cautions, must not be pressed, for they belong together. He defines *Seelsorge* ("cure of souls"), in distinction from public preaching, as the pastoral care of the individual.

The greater part of the volume is devoted to the pastor's concern in the area of marriage counseling, visiting the sick, and comforting the dying and the mourning. It is quite obvious that the author has European rather than American situations in mind, though it is equally obvious that human problems are much alike in Europe and America. Therefore the American pastor can learn some important lessons from the ripe experience of his aged European colleague, though he may not always be ready to follow him in every case, particularly in the area of marriage, where the author, it seems, is inclined to make some concessions to a situation ethics that is not in harmony with Scripture.

The author aims to be evangelical in his pastoral suggestions, keeping Christ in the center of his counseling. He does, however, raise a serious question that calls for clarification when in praising the pastoral labors of the Blumhardts at Bad Boll he says that their Jesus was neither the God-man of early church orthodoxy (*der Gottmensch der altkirchlichen Orthodoxie*) nor the "historical Jesus" (p. 61). For unless his Christ is the God-man of orthodoxy, He is not the Christ of Scripture with whom the dying and the mourners can be comforted.

LEWIS W. SPITZ SR.

THE BIBLE AND HISTORY. Edited by William Barclay. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 371 pages. Cloth. \$6.50.

Barclay has coordinated the work of four scholars to produce a work that should be interesting and valuable for nonprofessional readers of the Bible. The contributors all relate the text of the Bible and the history it reports to the expanding knowledge of the ancient world provided by archaeological research and the study of the texts recovered. The editor himself provides a short introduction on the Biblical view of history.

John Paterson surveys the Old Testament world from its beginnings to the Babylonian Captivity; Edgar Jones continues the discussion through the Exile and the postexilic period. Paterson is a more exciting writer than Jones — or perhaps his material is more

novel to one who is not a professional student of the Old Testament. The insight from the Nuzi documents, the understanding of Semitic nomadic life, the nature of ancient Near Eastern religion and the new knowledge about Hurrian, Hittite, and Old Babylonian culture and history make for great illumination. Both scholars presuppose that this evidence and that of the Old Testament must be evaluated critically. They agree that the critical reconstruction of Old Testament history is correct, that is, the dating of the exodus in 1290 B. C. under Rameses II, the placing of II Isaiah in the period of the Exile, and so on.

Hugh Anderson's discussion of Judaism in the intertestamental era is competent and informative. He brings order into an era that is very confusing to laymen. Gordon Robinson's account of the New Testament appeared the weakest in the book, being pedestrian and at times incorrect. Philosophy had not "degenerated in a love of words and novelty, an airing of opinions, and a toying with current fancies and fashions in thought," in spite of the obiter dictum on page 265. The North Galatian theory is cavalierly dismissed as if it were not even academically respectable (p. 327), an opinion not shared by many (including the undersigned). Even more serious, Robinson concentrates so much on Jesus and Paul that little is said about post-Pauline Christianity.

Still, on balance, this is a useful book. It has good aids in the form of maps, chronological charts, and short bibliographies. It will illuminate the Biblical world for many laymen and busy pastors.

EDGAR KRENTZ

ELIZABETH AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION: THE STRUGGLE FOR A STABLE SETTLEMENT OF RELIGION. By William P. Haugaard. Cambridge: University Press, 1968. xv + 392 pages. Cloth. \$12.50.

The year 1563, not 1559, is the focal point of Anglican Haugaard's treatment of the religious change in the early years of the reign of Elizabeth I. Convocation met in

1563. It dealt with the Articles of Religion, took a look at the 1559 Book of Common Prayer, and prepared a second book of homilies.

Haugaard is correct in assessing religion as a dominant force in Elizabethan England. Correctly, too, he recognizes and elaborates on the key role that Elizabeth played particularly by reining in the "precisians" (his term for "the nascent puritans"). Sir John Neale and Dr. Powel M. Dawley were excellent guides. After he has shown, for instance, that Elizabeth was not the "supreme plunderer" of the church, Haugaard nevertheless must conclude that doctrine and liturgy, not "the antiquated and unjust system of church finances," were the limits of church reform under Elizabeth. It was Elizabeth who insisted on the ornaments rubric in 1559.

Haugaard has found a considerable Lutheran influence on the Articles of Religion. Hardwick has been of help here. A surer grasp of the Reformation on the Continent would have saved Haugaard from several errors. To speak of "the Wittenberg Concord between Melanchthon and Bucer" does violence to Luther's dominant role. On the same page (266) there is a statement that causes one to raise a number of questions. It reads: "The doctrines regarding the Lord's Supper of this group of mediating theologians span a wide range, but the chain runs from Melanchthon, whose views touched those of Luther, through Bucer, Calvin, and Peter Martyr to Bullinger, whose views touched those of Zwingli."

Elizabeth did not deny the real presence in the Sacrament (p. 254); in this she agreed with Richard Cheyney, the only "Lutheran" among her bishops. Her concept of her responsibilities as "supreme governor" of the Church of England coincided with Melanchthon's concept delineated to Henry VIII in the dedicatory preface of the 1535 edition of the *Loci* (p. 271). Perhaps the entire volume influenced Elizabeth to a much greater extent than generally recognized. Haugaard did not use Zeeveld; had he done so, he could have seen a more direct link between Elizabeth and Melanchthon. He neglected to note, too, the dependence of Article XVII of the Ar-

ticles of Religion on Luther's preface to the Romans.

However, Haugaard must not be faulted too severely, nor is it the intention of this reviewer to downgrade his contributions. His analysis of the Eleven Articles (1561) and the "General Notes" (pp. 346—48), for instance, illuminate areas not adequately recognized before. His characterizations of the Elizabethan bishops are excellent. Incidentally, we look forward to the production of his study on Nicholas Heath. The notes and documentation Haugaard provides are with rare exceptions useful. He mentions nine men in his preface whose reassessments of the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, written since about 1955, have been helpful. He takes his place beside them as the tenth but not the least.

CARL S. MEYER

READINGS IN MEDIEVAL HISTORIOGRAPHY. Edited by Sneros Vryonis Jr. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968. 458 pages. Paper. \$3.75.

This collection of readings represents the three cultures which clashed in the Mediterranean basin during the Middle Ages. Under Latin writers the editor has included Augustine, Einhard, and Liudprand of Cremona; under Byzantine are Procopius, Michael Psellus, and Anna Comnena; under Muslim are Al-Baladhuri, Ibn Khaldun, and Usamah ibn Munqidh.

These selections are of particular value to the student of history, for they offer interpretations of one culture by another. Liudprand's account of his stay in Constantinople in 968 offers an interesting picture of a cultivated Westerner to the Byzantine East. He was not impressed. Anna Comnena's Byzantine view of the Franks at the time of the first crusade is famous: "They talk too much." And the Syrian author Usamah ibn Munqidh writes vividly of the first clash of the Muslim and Latin cultures.

The collection reinforces the obvious — that every history is simultaneously an interpretation, for which reason no definitive history of any event will ever be written. The historian's job is safe — and dangerous.

CARL VOLZ

THE LETTERS OF POPE INNOCENT III CONCERNING ENGLAND AND WALES: A CALENDAR WITH AN APPENDIX OF TEXTS. Edited by C. R. Cheney and Mary G. Cheney. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967. Cloth. 308 pages. \$26.90.

In this volume the editors have assembled over 1,200 letters or traces of letters drawn from the papal archives and from repositories in England, France, and the United States. The letters are listed in chronological order and have references to manuscripts or printed editions. The appendix contains more than 200 letters printed for the first time. The purpose of the present volume is to describe every letter of Innocent III addressed to a recipient in England or Wales, or which directly concerns these countries. The Calendar describes each letter's general import, together with the occasion of its writing, its recipient, and manuscript information for the scholar who wishes to pursue the study. The end pocket contains a large (34" x 27") facsimile of letter No. 962, the famous bequest of England as a fief to the pope by King John.

The study covers a period not only critical in Anglo-papal political relations but also of highest significance in the history of church government. One can only applaud the publication of such an impressive monument to industry and scholarship and hope that such studies will be undertaken for the letters of other medieval popes.

CARL VOLZ

VIA VITAE: LEBENSERINNERUNGEN. By Wilhelm Stählin. Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1968. 743 pages. Cloth. DM 38.00.

This is more than a biography of a prominent German churchman; it reflects an era of German political and ecclesiastical history spanning eight decades that include some of the most turbulent years of human experience. The autobiographer recalls his own experiences as a child in a home, poor but proud, in which his widowed mother (the father died leaving him an orphan before he had reached the age of 3 years) valiantly

labored to rear her children as Bible-believing sons and daughters of a Lutheran pastor and missionary. Family status and respectability was regarded as a matter of ultimate importance. *Standesbewußtsein* (class feeling) is the German word. The author adroitly relates his experiences as a pupil at school, as a student at the *Gymnasium* and the university, as a vicar and then pastor in various parishes, as an army chaplain in World War I, as a professor at the University of Münster, as bishop of Oldenburg, and for most of the time as a prolific writer. He confesses his departure from the rigid Biblical posture of his childhood. He eagerly demonstrates his profound interest in liturgics and in various efforts made toward liturgical reforms. He admits his unhappiness in the Evangelical Church, of which he was a member, and takes pleasure in recounting his associations with Anglican and Roman Catholic churchmen. The accounts of his numerous travels could serve as guides to many beautiful scenes of Europe. America, it seems, did not have the same attraction for him, for no journey to America is reported. He was at one time a member of a Lions Club, but discontinued his membership. He found the Lions too American. It is obvious that Bishop Stählin would not have been happy as a member, not to say the president, of a Lutheran church-body in America.

The clear and forceful German of this eminent writer makes the reading of these memoirs a pleasure. The publishers, too, must be commended for having done a splendid printing job. Very few typographical errors have escaped the sharp eyes of the proofreader. Perhaps attention should be drawn to the word *creditor* (page 647), which should probably read *creditor*.

LEWIS W. SPITZ

SAINT BENEDICT: THE DIALOGUES OF GREGORY THE GREAT, BOOK II.

Translated by Myra L. Uhlfelder. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1967. Paper. 49 pages. 75 cents.

Book II of Gregory's *Dialogues* is significant because it is our main source for the

life of St. Benedict and because it served as a model for much medieval hagiography. The translator has done church historians a notable service by offering this inexpensive edition of Benedict's *Vita*.

While reading through these pages one is transported to a foreign world, populated with devils and marked by extraordinary miracles. A prayer by Benedict produced water from a rock; an iron tool came up from the bottom of the river; a vision of a lovely maiden was extinguished by rolling around in a thicket of thorns, and Benedict was never troubled with this malady again! For Gregory and for the men of the Middle Ages there was nothing inherently suspect about miracles. The value of this "mythology" lies in the acknowledgement by Benedict of his own human frailties in the face of temptations, and of the strength offered by God to conquer them.

The translator has provided an introduction (13 pp.) to Latin Christian letters up to A. D. 600.

CARL VOLZ

THE PROPHETS SPEAK: LAW OF LOVE — THE ESSENCE OF ISRAEL'S RELIGION. By Samuel J. Schultz. New York: Harper & Row, 1968. 159 pages. Cloth. \$5.00.

Schultz, a professor of Bible and theology at Wheaton College, introduces his subject as follows: "Addressed primarily to college and seminary students, pastors, and laymen who consider God's Word the infallible rule for faith and practice, this book focuses attention upon the central theme of the entire Bible — the law of love." After several chapters on the nature of the prophetic movement, Schultz traces the law of love in Israel's prophets from Moses to Malachi and concludes with a chapter on Jesus. By the "law of love" Schultz seems to mean man's love relationship with God and with his fellowman.

In many ways the book seems to function more as a survey — from an explicitly non-critical perspective — of the books of the Old Testament rather than as an investigation of the Old Testament's interpretation of "love." This is no minor defect since one

of the most striking things about the word "love" is that only Hosea of all the preexilic prophets uses this metaphor to define the relationship between God and man, and even he does not use it to describe man's attitude toward God. While Deuteronomy does use "love" with regard to both God's and man's activities within the covenant, it seems both ambiguous and anachronistic to classify this as "*the law of love*." As William Moran has persuasively shown, the Deuteronomic use is indebted to sovereign-vassal ideology as found in the Amarna letters and Assyrian treaties, where fidelity (love) necessarily issued in benefactions by the sovereign and obedience by the vassal. Incidentally, if Moran is correct, his insight can give us a new appreciation for the roots of Jesus' admonition, "If you *love* me, keep my commandments."

It is difficult to regard this book as a substantive contribution to Old Testament theology.

RALPH W. KLEIN

SOLI DEO GLORIA: NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES IN HONOR OF WILLIAM CHILDS ROBINSON. Edited by J. McDowell Richards. Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1968. 160 pages. Cloth. \$5.00.

Robinson taught church history for 41 years at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. The nine essays in this volume are a garland of thanks for this teaching.

Oscar Cullmann presents a short restatement of his views on redemptive history in the first essay. Two others, John Leith's study of Calvin's argument against idolatry and T. F. Torrance's examination of the special factors playing into theological persuasion, fall into the realm of historical and systematic theology. Torrance defines theological persuasion as bringing others "to the point where they submit their minds to the inherent rationality of the divine revelation" (p. 131), though he states that the rationality of this revelation is of a different order from that in science.

The other six essays are all by New Testament scholars. F. F. Bruce analyzes the early Christian creed "Jesus is Lord," stress-

ing its early (Palestinian) origin and its focus on Jesus as the risen and enthroned One. His article is outstanding. Bo Reicke briefly reviews the Pauline teaching on justification, stressing the Christological orientation of Paul's thought. G. Eldon Ladd studies the Pauline view of the law, emphasizing its eschatological role. Joachim Jeremias' contribution is a translation of a German article, first published in 1965, dealing with the parable of the virgins in Matthew 25.

Robinson has two sons who are professors of New Testament. Each contributed an article. William Childs Robinson Jr. discusses the relation of the Word, the cross, and power according to 1 Cor. 1:17—2:5. The cross calls to concrete "secular" existence that lives out of love and not under sin. His brother, James M. Robinson, contributes an essay on the concept world in modern and New Testament theology. It is a contribution to hermeneutics and its understanding of language.

The volume has a *curriculum vitae* and a bibliography of Robinson's works. It is a valuable contribution to theology and a worthy tribute to the man whom it honors.

EDGAR KRENTZ

THE GOSPEL PARABLES. By Edward A. Armstrong. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969. 220 pages. Cloth. \$4.50.

This work is a happy combination of scholarship and the ability to write graceful English. The author is a retired Anglican priest whose pastoral concerns are evident.

On the one hand Armstrong accepts the value of critical historical study; on the other he is skeptical about some of its assured results. Thus he argues that the tendency of scholars to restrict their interest to the parable's form and meaning in its original *Sitz im Leben Jesu* is an unnecessary and restrictive limitation on the use of the parables. In general Armstrong feels the tradition is reliable.

The exposition of the parables themselves discusses the parables by content types: nature parables, human activities, bridal parables, work and wages, lost and found. Thus they are categorized according to the type of

imagery employed rather than according to the intent of the parable in Jesus' proclamation (such as, for instance, judgment preaching).

Preachers should find this a helpful volume. It will illuminate the first-century background, and it offers many comments that will open up preaching values in Jesus' parables.

EDGAR KRENTZ

WESSEN UND FUNKTION DER THEOLOGIE. By Hans-Lutz Poetsch. Bremen: Verlag Stelten & Co., 1969. 100 pages. Paper. No price given.

HOW MODERN SHOULD THEOLOGY BE? By Helmut Thielicke. Translated by H. George Anderson. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969. 90 pages. Cloth. \$2.50.

At a gathering in Dortmund, Germany, in 1966 some 20,000 people rallying around the motto "No Other Gospel!" declared modern theology to be the sheep's clothing in which the ancient foe was currently camouflaging himself. The volumes by Thielicke and Poetsch, spokesmen from the *Landeskirche* and Lutheran Free Church traditions, respectively, are samples of the growing literature of that continuing public controversy between "parochial piety" (*Gemeindefrömmigkeit*) and "university theology."

Thielicke offers four of his St. Michael's Church (Hamburg) sermons. Here he seeks to show — by actually doing it — how "modern" theological scholarship opens up New Testament texts to assist the parish pastor in the proclamation of the Gospel. He does this with four texts that are supposedly hot potatoes: Paul's encounter with the philosophers of his age, the Easter pericopes, the miracle account of the stilling of the tempest, and the Matthean apocalypse about the end-time.

Rather than mediate between the modernist and conservative postures he proposes to show that there are third (and fourth and fifth?) alternatives vis-à-vis these two equally frozen fronts. He capitalizes on the motto of the 20,000 at Dortmund and shows in these four models of contemporary preaching that critical Biblical scholarship helps one find and formulate the one-and-only Gospel for the church in one's own time.

Poetsch, however, is more of the opinion that it is an either/or: *Either* the university theology with its largely humanistic "scientific" (*wissenschaftlich*) canons of what can or cannot be God's Word, *or* a theology of, by, and for the church whose a priori conviction is that the Bible is God's Word.

Just what is theology? Poetsch asks. His answer seeks to demonstrate that if it is true to its *proprium*, it finally cannot be a "science" as the 20th-century spokesmen for university theology seek to maintain. Taking his cue from Luther, Poetsch consciously focuses on "biblical revelation" or "divine revelation" as the *proprium* of theology. In place of human rational canons from the university for the discipline of theology, this *proprium* inserts "a pneumatic dynamic, which cannot be categorized, schematized, or systematized in any philosophical manner" (p.83). To ignore this pneumatic dimension — as university theology does — is to have abandoned the *proprium*, to have committed the final sellout, namely, surrender to the saeculum. The last half of the book sketches the contours of a pneumatic theology so conceived.

This reviewer concurs with Poetsch in the need for evaluating all theologies — whether academic or parish in their provenance — by the critical yardstick of the *proprium* of Christian theology. But the question remains whether Poetsch, for all his recurrence to Luther, has yet zeroed in on Luther's notion of the *proprium*. Poetsch's own rhetoric suggests this. His favorite term for the *proprium* is "divine revelation." He poses it as the antithesis to the humanistic concern for science (*Wissenschaftlichkeit*) operative in German university theology. Apart from the question of whether that term is itself "biblical," this reviewer would ask: Does this really specify the *proprium* that Luther himself appropriated from the Scriptures as he opposed the university theology of his age? That theology too was "scientific" according to its own lights, yet for Luther what made it antithetical to the Word of God was something else — not its humanism, not its philosophical rationalism, but its legalism. And for Luther the Bible had shown him that the

antithesis to this *opinio legis* is not "divine revelation" but the Gospel.

If Poetsch were to clarify this in his next book, he would carry through to completion the Lutheran critique of university theology which he began. Concurrently a refocusing on this *proprium* would allow him to avoid his inappropriate critique of those Lutherans who "systematize" the distinction between Law and Gospel as a hermeneutical tool for understanding God's revelation. At least on one occasion Luther himself reportedly said that this distinction constituted his own breakthrough to the *proprium* (WA TR 5,210).

EDWARD H. SCHROEDER

THE CHURCH AND JESUS: A STUDY IN HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY. By F. Gerald Downing. Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1968. viii and 199 pages. Paper. \$3.75.

This important book deserves careful study and evaluation. Its author is concerned with the methodology used in current historical investigation of the New Testament. It thus follows in the sequence of works by Alan Richardson, T. A. Roberts, and D. E. Nineham.

Downing's contribution is made in his careful elucidation of the historical problematics with which the New Testament scholar deals. In this section of his book he makes clear that the problems, historically speaking, arise the moment one tries to describe the "historical primitive church" or the "historical Jesus." The role which Galilee plays in the history of the early church, for example, is quite unclear and hotly debated. The circularity of historical reasoning seems to make any progress impossible.

In the second major section of the volume Downing argues that the sources available to the historian also raise problems. The choice of evidence, the use of statistical analysis, the limitation of the canon, and so on all point to the fact that "we have very little evidence that is beyond reasonable dispute" (p. 74). Moreover, the extrabiblical material often raises as many problems as it solves. The fallacy of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* can easily mislead the Biblical scholar. Scholars

like Ethelbert Stauffer who emphasize the extrabiblical material do not seem to make significant gains.

The historically ambiguous evidence is used by scholars in ways that show that their historical criteria are inadequate. This section examines the most radical and conservative scholars to show that there are no criteria currently used that will satisfy. "It becomes very easy to build a picture of the Church of Jesus that positively pleases its author; or, negatively, one that displeases some opponent" (p. 130). There is no adequate control.

Does such lack of agreement mean that an author concerned with historical method can only give a *consilium desperationis*? In his third section Downing attempts to make a positive contribution. He first studies the nature of history philosophically, concluding that "scientific standards of description and explanation are only indirectly relevant . . . to the writing of history" (p. 169). History must set its own standards of such a sort as to make the writing of history both honest and possible.

Theologically Downing argues that history is important for faith and refuses to place a chasm between faith and history. Indeed, commitment argues for a greater need of carefully written history. The only hope is to extend Hott's principle of textual criticism into the writing of history, that is, to work out every possible reconstruction in great detail — and then discard those that are not plausible.

The book has only a few errors of printing. P. 35, note 32, read Hanson for Houson; p. 76, n. 42, read text for test. This reviewer anticipated some discussion of G. Schille's reconstructions of early history in chapter 2; still, the omission is not a major fault.

The book is designed to clarify a problem (which it does excellently) and point the path for the future discussion. It should be useful in many respects, not the least that it may bring about a responsible dialog between exegetes and church historians about the problems and methods that they share.

EDGAR KRENTZ

THE SUCCESSION NARRATIVE: A STUDY OF II SAMUEL 9—20 AND I KINGS 1 AND 2. By R. N. Whybray. Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1968. 120 pages. Paper. \$2.65.

Whybray compares the Succession Narrative with strict historical narrative, national epic, moral tale, and historical novel. In terms of the criteria he establishes, the Succession Narrative is found to be a historical novel with a concern for political propaganda. Of special value are the criteria he has isolated in this connection and his portrayal of David as a tragic figure. Wisdom connections in the Succession Narrative are seen in the use of proverbs or wisdom literary techniques, in the living human examples of the principles of life enunciated by the wisdom school in Proverbs, in the importance placed on wisdom and counsel in the narratives themselves, in a sapiential theological perspective of life where retribution grows out of man's own evil acts yet with Yahweh as the hidden director of destiny, and in the general attitude of the author of the Succession Narrative toward the cult. The Joseph narrative is cited as purer form of the historical novel in which the central figure is more idealized. Joseph is "too good to be true" and David "too human to be true." Whybray concludes by drawing some useful analogies between the David-Solomon era and the Twelfth Dynasty of Egypt, between the Egyptian novel (including the royal novel) and the Succession Narrative, and between the Instruction of Amenemhet and the Succession Narrative. Whybray does not claim any direct literary connections between Egyptian texts or Proverbs and the Succession Narrative, but he does make a strong case for the thesis that the Succession Narrative grows out of the court circles where wisdom thinking was a vital part of the educational system and that in this context the concept of a historical novel may be in place.

NORMAN C. HABEL

STUDY GUIDES TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Numerous religious publishing companies offer study guides to the Old Testament designed for laymen. Two recent guides are

one-volume texts, *Invitation to the Old Testament* by Jacob M. Myers (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1966) and *A Christian's Guide to the Old Testament* by John B. Taylor (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967). The first of these is by a competent Lutheran professor who offers a primer in the leading characters, events and ideas of the Old Testament by tracing them according to the sequence of the Biblical books. It is an excellent text for a lay theology course. Taylor's work is a brief topical summary of Old Testament history, introduction, messages, and study methodology.

Recent study guides on the various books of the Old Testament include *Isaiah: A Study Guide* by D. D. Garland (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968); *Studies in Leviticus* and *Studies in Numbers and Deuteronomy* arranged by Grace Saxe and revised by Irving L. Jensen (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967); *Ancient Israel* by Charles Pfeiffer, *The Books of Nahum and Zephaniah* by T. Miles Bennett, *The Book of Obadiah* by Don W. Hillis, and *The Book of Nehemiah* by Ralph G. Turnbull in the Shield Bible Study Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968); *The Book of Genesis (Chapters 1—11)* by William G. Heidt, *The Book of Leviticus* by Geron F. Fournelle, *The Book of Psalms* by R. A. F. Mackenzie, *The Book of Ezekiel* by James L. Turro, and *Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Lamentations, Obadiah* by George Montague in *Old Testament Reading Guide* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1968). The Moody Press series is a self-help textbook in which the student can write his own answers to the suggested study questions. The Zondervan and Shield Bible Study Series offer a summary interpretation of the textual units of each Biblical book. All three of these series reflect a strong conservative stance. The Old Testament Reading Guide represents the finest in Roman Catholic scholarship and is the best of these series for laymen today. Each book in this series has a fine introduction, running commentary, and translation of the Biblical book being treated.

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