

BOOK REVIEWS

The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary, by James Montgomery Boice. Five volumes in One. Ministry Resources Library series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985. Pp. 1487, incl. subject index.

James Montgomery Boice, pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, began near the end of 1970 his expositions of the Gospel of John, presenting them on his Sunday morning radio program "The Bible Study Hour." Some of this material appeared in print earlier, either in pamphlet form or in various periodicals.

The outline of his rather sizable commentary is governed by the outline of the Gospel itself: Volume 1, The coming of the Light (John 1-4); Volume 2, Christ and Judaism (John 5-8); Volume 3, Those who received him (John 9-12); Volume 4, Peace in storm (John 13-17); and Volume 5, Triumph through tragedy (John 18-21).

The purpose underlying this commentary is the same purpose with which the apostle John wrote his Gospel: "If one will believe [the accurate record and evidence of Jesus Christ's extraordinary claims] and approach the record honestly with an open mind, God will use it to bring that person to fullness of faith in the Lord Jesus as God's Son and his Savior. This was John's purpose in writing his Gospel. It is my primary purpose in writing these studies" (p. 21).

Given their format and purpose, these essays are really sermons, full of biblical exposition, relevant challenge and meaningful illustration. These illustrations are derived from the Scripture itself and from the lives of believers past and present, writers, scientists, philosophers, physicians and generals. Boice the preacher *instructs* (about the sacrament of Holy Baptism, contra the Roman Church, John 1:29-34), *corrects* (regarding deifying either change or the status quo, John 2:12-17), *indoctrinates* (concerning how to wor-

ship God, John 4:23-24; the image of God, John 11:35-37; Christ's definite atonement, John 11:51-52, 19:30), and *comforts* the Lord's sheep (in terms of the problem of pain, John 9:2-3; restoration after sin, John 21:15-17).

Among the very well-written expositions is that on John 21:17, "Christ's Next-to-Last Word." It deserves reading by every seminarian, minister and professor of theology, not least for this valuable exhortation:

So here is my word to preachers. You above all men have been given the task of feeding Christ's sheep by a careful, regular, and systematic teaching of the Bible, but you will never do this unless you are convinced of the truthfulness of every word you find there. So settle this first. Is this book the very Word of God in the whole and in its parts? Has God spoken infallibly in its pages? If not, seek another profession. If He has, then proclaim this Word with all the strength at your disposal (p. 1469).

Boice himself expresses deep appreciation to his Session and congregation, who encourage him to spend a significant amount of his time in serious Bible study and exposition. What an example for other ministers and congregations alike!

As an "expositional commentary" this volume resembles in genre those authored by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Written out of Calvinist persuasion, with fine pastoral tone and English style, it will serve the Reformed pastor quite admirably. Our reservations in recommending this commentary concern the homiletic method (namely, that these sermons lack organizing themes from which flow textually governed divisions whereby the exposition may be organized and governed), and the apologetic argued throughout (namely, that "reasons for faith create a climate in which belief can be born," p. 1133). These are not enough, however, to prevent us from thanking God for such faithful and stimulating Bible teaching as James Boice offers us here.

Nelson D. Kloosterman

The Trinity in the Gospel of John: a Thematic Commentary on the Fourth Gospel, by Royce Gordon Gruenler. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986. Pp. 159.

No doctrine is more unique and fundamental to Christianity than that of the Trinity; it marks off the Christian faith from all other religions. At the same time, in consequence, none is more essential to man's salvation, which embraces the totality of our existence for body and soul, for time and eternity.

We must acknowledge, to our shame, that often this teaching has been slurred over and sloughed aside as so arcane and incomprehensible that we can do next to nothing with it when proclaiming the "good news" which by renewing our lives brings life and peace and hope. Not so the early church and its fathers, whose pastoral solicitude for their flocks compelled them in obedience to Scripture to engage in the Trinitarian and Christological controversies with arch-heretics who perverted the gospel. In their wake followed Calvin who eradicated the last traces of subordinationism when reflecting on who God is and how He works salvation and judgment to fulfil his eternal purposes. Others followed in his footsteps. Warfield has carefully documented the "coequality" of the Father and the Son and the Spirit in his lengthy essay, "The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity," while somewhat later, when confronted with the invasion of a renewed unitarianism in main-line American churches, J. Gresham Machen did not hesitate to condemn this defection as "another gospel" which is no gospel at all. The battle-lines may be shifted in contending for the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints; the warfare continues unabated.

Of all this the writer, professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, is not only aware; he in his involvement as a theologian with basic Christian issues has experienced a change of mind and heart which, while returning to the classic Christian faith, opens new and rich perspectives for our understanding especially of the Gospel according to St. John. He explains at the outset something of the pilgrimage which led him to write also this "thematic" commentary.

After a long flirtation with process theology that endured during the 1960s and ended in the early 1970s, I returned to the centrality of the Word as the focus of my exegetical and theological studies, but not without a sense of the social nature of God that is vital to the process school as well as to biblical revelation. But where God is seen in unitarian terms by most process people and is thought to be dependent upon us and our universe for his social experience, I came to see with new appreciation how impressive is the biblical disclosure of God's Triunity and the revelation that God as

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is essentially social and inexhaustibly dynamic quite apart from the the created world. Scripture implies that God is the divine Community who is at once one and plural in everlasting love and fellowship. It is this Triune Society of divine persons in absolute unity that is original and archetypal and leaves its stamp of dynamic oneness and plurality on everything that is created . . .(vii).

Much of this not entirely new to those who have steeped themselves in the Reformed theologies of Kuyper, Bavinck, Warfield, etc. At the same time refreshing perspectives are opened which God's people can ill afford to miss when reflecting on God and his relationship to creation and the created order in which He works salvation. This teaching is not the fruit of abstract philosophical or theological reflection; it is living water drawn from the well of Holy Scripture to restore the soul which thirsts for the one, only, true God in whom we live and move and have our being.

To demonstrate this the writer has taken pains to write his commentary in the form in which it appears. It is, as the sub-title clearly indicates, a "thematic" commentary. Hence we must not expect the usual verse-by-verse with word-by-word exposition. While by no means neglecting the "trees," he seeks to survey with us the rich "forest" of John's message concerning the eternal God who has become man for us and our salvation in Jesus the Christ.

Here are terms to which the reader is asked to pay closest attention, e.g. *disposability*, by which each person of the Trinity makes himself, without losing any quality of deity which all three share equally and without impairment available to the other. Carefully he seeks to guard himself, as he explains and exegetes, from any kind of tritheism as well as from subordination of the Son and the Spirit to the Father. Such care, he insists, is demanded by the very words of this Gospel itself. It is this *generosity* (self-giving love) of each person to the others which works a full salvation and is to be reflected now by those who as disciples rejoice in that divine love.

Gruenler for the sake of clearer understanding of John's gospel has arranged the material in five chapters. The first is, as an introduction and basis, on "The Social Nature of God." Then follows the commentary in four successive chapters, the first on chapters 1-7; then on 8-12 and 13-16 and finally 17-21 which section, and not the least ch. 17, he regards as the culmination of the self-revealing activity of God as the God with and for us in Jesus Christ,

including also the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This "disposability" of the three persons as one true God sovereignly works salvation for all who believe ("know" God and his Son) and in turn make themselves available in "service" to God and each other. This comes into sharpest focus, according to the author, in the last and culminating section which deal with the trial, death and resurrection of our Lord.

The common theme of the Passover and the cross focusses upon divine disposability on behalf of a sinful world. The final and redeeming irony of the trial is that inadvertently both secular and religious factions, aiming at disposing of the disposable King, actually create the conditions by which the rejected Son and King of the divine Community brings the new society into being. Jesus affirms that God is sovereign over historical events and weaves even the most extreme rejection of divine hospitality into a compound good (134).

Thus the disciples through him are called into faithfulness to his commands from which springs their disposability to serve the living God, each other and their fellowmen by self-giving generosity which is the hallmark of love.

In the "Appendix" Gruenler discusses the historicity, date and authorship of this fourth gospel. Insisting that every commentator works with his own presuppositions when reflecting on the Scriptures, he does not seek to get "behind" the record but deals with it in the form in which it appears on the sacred page. Admitting that "it is a very risky business" (144, 147) to claim a final answer, he sees no reason why John as well as the synoptics could not have been penned at an early date, perhaps even in the late fifties or early sixties, rather than in the eighties or nineties of the first century. This would harmonize, he is convinced, with the high Christology found also in Paul's writings.

All in all, this is a unique and valuable contribution to the growing mass of literature on the fourth gospel. It brings not so much a structural unity into purview as a unity of message. And for preachers and people this is valuable indeed. Here true "fellowship" which manifests itself in a life of generous ministry to others is seen as rooted in God himself. Some of the terms used again and again are self-explanatory; a few others (as a repeated use of the word "irony") could have been defined more explicitly since that word is used in a variety of ways in common speech.

The chief value of this work is that, by dealing in depth with the

"theme" which he sees running throughout the entire Gospel, the writer sets again and again in sharpest relief that without a correct biblical view of the divine Trinity we can never rightly understand, appropriate and live as those called by God's self-giving grace in Christ Jesus. Along with verse-by-verse commentaries on John's gospel it deserves an honored place in every minister's library. It provides a much-needed remedy for those who either deny the essential trinitarian character of the God of full salvation or have dealt with it much too traditionally and cavalierly.

Peter Y. De Jong

Exposition of the Epistle of James and the Epistles of John, by Simon J. Kistemaker. New Testament Commentary series. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986. Pp. 425, incl. indices.

Someone has said that writing commentaries today is the art of repeating in a new way what others have already said. Before ministers and other Bible students invest in a book, they want to know that the purchase will add to the storehouse of knowledge already on their shelves. This is a fair test for any book, including a commentary.

This volume continues the *New Testament Commentary* series begun by the late Dr. William Hendriksen, a series widely acclaimed for its clear exposition and readable format. As with his previous commentary on Hebrews published in 1984 (a review of which appeared in *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 1:1, 94-96), Dr. Kistemaker organizes his remarks into three categories: 1) verse by verse comment; 2) doctrinal or practical considerations; and 3) attention to Greek words, phrases and constructions.

The introductory materials regarding each epistle considered in this commentary are assembled quite handily. Students will find most of the basic questions answered in a suitable, preliminary fashion. More detailed study would require the use of NT introductions and more definitive secondary literature, referred to in the footnotes. The commentary avoids going into these too deeply, yet summarizes the choices adequately and accurately.

The reader will appreciate the verse by verse commentary for its

clarity and readability, enhanced by the organization of the page and crispness of type. Brief chapter summaries are provided to help retain the unity and development of biblical thought.

As with his earlier work on the epistle to the Hebrews, Kistemaker follows the text of Scripture rather carefully. This practice is a great help to someone who wants to teach or preach the *text* of Scripture rather than something *about* the text.

But this feature occasions, especially at one point, considerable discomfort for the reviewer. A noteworthy difference between the commentaries of Dr. Hendriksen and these of Dr. Kistemaker is that the former generally provided his own translation of the Greek text, whereas the present author relies on the New International Version as his starting point for interpretation. It is therefore all the more regrettable that Dr. Kistemaker avoided taking issue with—or at least alerting us to the danger in—the extremely questionable NIV translation of James 2:21 and 25: “Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous [*edikaioothee*] for what he did [*eks ergoon*] . . . was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous [*edikaioothee*] for what she did [*eks ergoon*] . . . ?”

The initial danger lies in the words “considered righteous,” which are a weak translation of the Greek verb *dikaiooo*. The NIV translates the same verb in vs. 24, “is justified,” just as it has in other NT passages (cf. Rom. 3:24, 26, 28 and 30, for example). The danger intensifies with the translation of the Greek preposition *ek*. Although in vss. 22 and 24 this preposition is translated “by means of,” the NIV translates *ek* differently in vss. 21 and 25. Not only within this passage, but also with regard to similar Greek phraseology throughout the NT, the NIV translation is inconsistent (compare James 2:21, 25 with Romans 4:2 and Ephesians 2:9, for example).

Here, the NIV by its translation-as-interpretation seems to impute to faith a notion of causality: Abraham and Rahab were considered righteous *for* what they did. If one is considered virtuous for one’s generosity, the connection between the act and its evaluation is one of cause and effect. This would seem to be the meaning of the author’s comment that “Abraham was considered righteous in the sight of God, because he trusted him . . . ,” even though the quality of that faith is further identified: “. . . to the point of sacrificing Isaac the son of promise (Gen. 22:2,9)” (p. 95).

Again, as with his commentary on Hebrews our author draws

out the text's meaning by pointing to other Scripture parallels or by relating its point to some contemporary issue, either doctrinal or practical. Unfortunately, it is particularly the sections involving "practical considerations" which suffer most seriously from dangerous overstatement.

For here we learn of God's loving provision for "the poor" (pp. 74-75), that "Jesus identified with the poor because he himself experienced poverty from the day he was born in Bethlehem until the day he died outside of Jerusalem," and that "as a class, the poor place their faith in Jesus much more readily than do those who are rich" (p. 79). Dr. Kistemaker argues that James' warning in 2:5 against insulting the poor implies "that those who insult the poor insult Jesus Christ, the protector and guardian of the poor" (p. 78). Moreover, his application (pp. 66 and 393) of Galatians 6:10 to *the church* as provider of material assistance to the needy in society (in contrast, say, to non-ecclesiastical associations of believers doing this) is arguable. Galatians 6:10 exhorts: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." To insist that this warrants an institutional program of ecclesiastical social-welfare and social action is to hide significant questions from view. For example, what does the Holy Spirit mean here by "do good"? Does that really mean that we must give money and food to all men? If one seeks government legislation to convert modern welfare into responsible workfare, isn't that part of "doing good" to those outside of the household of faith? Is it then the church's duty to prosecute such legislation? What are the limits to the competence of the institutional church? Are there any?

The point is that sweeping assertions like these, crowned with the exhortation that "unless preaching of the gospel is accompanied by a program of social action . . . faith is dead" (p. 89), are not clarified fully enough by other biblical teaching to be helpful. For the unformed and uninformed Bible student who is not aware of the full biblical teaching concerning both "the poor" and the nature of the church, they are dangerously simplistic.

In connection with these applicatory sections of the commentary, this reviewer remains curious as to why some passages received application and others did not. Perhaps some indication of those criteria could be included in future editions of the commentary. For example, "practical considerations" are offered concerning I John 2:8b ("the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining"), but omitted for I John 2:4 ("He who says, 'I

know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him").

Finally, perhaps the inaccurate and anachronistic statements confusing the Greek text of *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* with the Textus Receptus could be corrected in future editions (cf. pp. viii and 173, note 35).

In our judgment, the Bible student will find in this commentary little that is new but much that is useful. And this seems consistent with the purpose of the *New Testament Commentary* series, which is to provide a clear, concise exposition that is neither too detailed nor too superficial.

Nelson D. Kloosterman

The Great Reformation, by R. Tudur Jones. Dowers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity Press, 1985. Pp. 288.

The book before us for this review lives up to its subtitle. It is indeed a "wide-ranging survey of the beginnings of Protestantism." If you are looking for a current introduction to almost everything that had to do with the Reformation, this is the one. Of course, a book with this kind of prospect will serve only as an introduction to the subject. That is its strength and at the same time leads to its one important weakness. Its weakness concerns the viewpoint from which the book is written which will be discussed below. But even with that it deserves a wide circulation for the important information it presents so well.

As indicated, the strength of this introduction to the Reformation is that it covers at least in some fashion almost everything and everyone who had something to do with the beginnings of that great event. One measure of the range of this book is the fact that nineteen of its pages are taken up by a very good, though far from elaborate, index that mentions mostly proper names and major subjects. This book truly allows one to profit from much of the previous writing of the history of the Reformation because a great many of the important and not so important people and events have here been gathered into one readable volume. The reader will be introduced to men and women, places and happenings that he

never realized were important to the great upheaval and restructuring of the church in the 16th century.

There are, naturally, a number of courses one may take in writing the history of such a broad and long event. One can approach things by discussing the lives and works of important individuals involved, by looking consecutively at the various nations in which the events occurred, or perhaps by trying to give an overall chronology to put things into perspective across the whole scene. Our present author uses a very effective combination of several methods which gives a good feeling for the events he is unfolding before us. The course taken is that of explaining general historical circumstances and then looking at particular events and people as they become important in a generally chronological way. At the same time the scene is shifted as necessary from country to country so that one can understand the interrelationships which often characterize Reformation events and persons of importance. A brief listing of the first few chapter titles will serve to show concretely how Dr. Jones works this out. Chapter one is titled, "Roman Catholicism in Crisis;" two, "Pioneers of reform;" three, "Signs of renewal;" and four, about the early work of Luther, "The gate of paradise." A further brief chapter on Luther's ninety-five theses is called, "True forgiveness," while the following one on his confrontation with Eck at Worms is called, "The unforgettable stand." There follow then several chapters on Zwingli and the beginning of reformation in Zurich, including introduction to the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement and the relations its early leaders had with Zwingli.

This book serves those familiar with a number of the major events of the Reformation as an introduction to almost a myriad of surrounding persons and lesser-known facts. Since the book is written for a broadly evangelical audience, and indeed from somewhat the same viewpoint, the author is at pains to bring to the fore a great number of men and women who are usually passed over in histories of Protestantism. These are the founders and leaders of the more radical Reformation, particularly those of Anabaptist persuasion. While this is a very useful and important part of the book, it also leads to the one weakness of the work which those familiar with Reformation history will recognize and about which those who are not familiar with that history should be warned ahead of time.

The weakness which we find in this book is that of assuming the

rightness of the Anabaptist position while glossing over objections to it and attributing opposition to it by the mainline Reformers as being due to a supposedly less than complete submission to Scripture by them. Now, no one, and that certainly includes this present reviewer writes in a vacuum. There is, indeed, no true objectivity for man. At the same time, some conclusions about persons and events are defensible and some are not. As pointed out above, Jones is at pains to include participants in the Reformation story who did not hold to what became, broadly speaking, orthodox Protestantism. At the same time, his conclusions concerning certain events, and men who opposed the Anabaptists in particular, show a tendency to blame that opposition on ideas and attitudes that those implicated would hardly agree were true to the facts.

One example of this will suffice to get the point clearly. With reference to Zwingli's opposition to the Anabaptists, which he expressed immediately upon the appearance of their anti-paedobaptist and anti-magisterial ideas, Jones concludes that Zwingli retreated from his "earlier view that the true church must be a suffering community, guided by the Word of God and at odds with the world . . ." (pp. 66-67). This conclusion comes out of Jones' typically Anabaptist idea that cooperating with the governing authorities is in fact compromising with the "world." This does not square with the facts of the matter nor pay honest attention to Zwingli's own arguments that the Bible requires submission to the governing authorities which are not, as the Anabaptist always assumes, necessarily "secular." Thus, while we do not want to quibble about the author's right to express his own conclusions even when we might disagree with them, we do think it is incumbent upon him to listen to the reasons Zwingli himself gave for his opposition rather than imputing motives and sins to him which have no basis in his writings or in the historical events.

A weakness of this nature is of some importance in a book of introduction to any subject. Because an introduction must cover the subject in broad strokes and give some basis on which to judge the whole, it necessarily will include a good deal of the conclusion and opinion of the author. Therefore the authors of introductions ought to be very careful not to introduce conclusions and biases that are not well-attested. In general, Jones does quite well in this respect, but he loses his footing often when dealing with the relations of the Anabaptist reformers to the rest of the world because of his own independentist and Anabaptist conclusions.

Overall, *The Great Reformation* is a very good and readable ac-

count of the opening stages of Protestantism. Almost anyone will profit a good deal from reading it, and those with a special interest in Church History will find themselves referring to it often. The book does present us with a great deal of the valuable information gained over the years in Reformation studies. With the exception of the mentioned problem of some ax-grinding it is well balanced and it is well organized. The nineteen page index is excellent and a useful bibliography is included. We found one typographical error in line 3 on page 197.

Robert Grossmann

A Bulgakov Anthology, edited by James Pain and Nicolas Zernov. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976. Pp. 191.

Eastern Orthodoxy in its underlying unity and rich diversity is far too little known, except for a few professional theologians, in the evangelical Protestant world. We meet its adherents in some of our neighborhoods; we see the onion-shaped domes of its churches; we may even step inside to witness a service. But its world remains much too foreign to us, even while we know that they claim for themselves an unbroken connection with the church of the first centuries.

In the early years of the Reformation contacts with this branch of Christendom were attempted but without any fruitful results. Often Eastern Orthodoxy is dismissed much too cavalierly as antiquated and sterile. Nor have the ecumenical contacts in the World Council of Churches taken away the "spiritual" (for want of a better term) distance between them and us.

This has been aggravated by the fact that so many of these autocephalous churches live under Communistic regimes. We can hardly escape being suspicious of especially its Russian church leaders as tools of Soviet propaganda. And Russian Orthodoxy still constitutes almost one-half of the known adherents.

Yet unless we are ready to dismiss this branch of Christendom as non-Christian, perhaps even antichristian, ours is the calling to give them and their representatives an honest hearing. We may well

by happily surprised to discover that there is less sterility and superstition even among its more simple members that we were led to believe.

To what is taught, at least in part and by some in these churches, this anthology can provide an introduction. Although not a comprehensive summary of Eastern (esp. Russian) Orthodox beliefs and practices, it does aim at helping the Western churches both Roman Catholic and Protestant to understand.

The volume is an "anthology" of some of the most significant writings of Sergius Bulgakov (1871-1944), a Russian who for a season was an avowed Communist and then after his conversion became a priest and recognized theologian. He belongs in that class which together with Khomiakov, Soloviev and Berdyaev aimed at the repristination of Eastern Orthodoxy in its dialogue with both western churches and totalitarian Marxism which has threatened its very life.

It is profitably introduced by the two editors.

James Pain supplies us with a brief introduction to the life of Bulgakov which was one of great heroism under sufferings. Those facts are deepened by the sensitive and penetrating "Memoir" of Lev Sander, an Orthodox lay theologian who has long lived and worked in Paris. Without reading this reflectively many of the nuances in and the development of Bulgakov's writings (which reveal a profound religious pilgrimage) will escape us. He supplies the key in a few well-chosen sentences.

The leading idea of Father Sergius' thought was that of *revelation*: that everything is a revelation of God—of his wisdom, power and glory. Theology tells us that the Father reveals himself in the Son and in the Spirit—begetting the Son and in giving procession to the Holy Spirit while remaining in substantial unity with them. The Holy Trinity as the revelation of the Father is the basic theme of Christian theology. Philosophy tells us of how the Creator (God the Father) reveals himself in creation, manifesting his wisdom through the Son by whom the world is made, and his glory through the life-giving Spirit Thus philosophy re-echoes the theme of theology, forming a unity with it "without division or confusion." Their common unity is the idea that everything is a revelation of God and bears his stamp . . . (xxii, xxiii).

Here, indeed, are biblical motifs altogether too often lacking in

much that passes for up-to-date western theology today. Much, indeed, in Bulgakov's writings is quite speculative without demonstrating any adequate biblical support. But its God-centeredness which stems from an authentic Christian tradition provides wholesome relief from the superficialities and inanities which are often passed off in the name of Christ and the Bible in western society and some of its churches.

Nor is Bulgakov an uncritical defender of Eastern Orthodoxy. He in both his autobiographical and theological writings takes the church to task for what he (and we) regard as its weaknesses and failings. This comes through clearly in his "The Orthodox Church," (119-138).

We find a special difficulty for Orthodox ethics in a trait already indicated; the ideal foundation of Orthodoxy is not expressed in ethics, but is a matter of religious sensibility. It is the vision of "spiritual beauty"; . . . It cannot be denied that this spiritual aestheticism of Orthodoxy sometimes degenerates into indifference concerning practical necessities, and above all the methodological training of the will . . . Orthodoxy educates the heart; this is its characteristic trait, the source of its superiority, and also of its weakness, which expresses itself in a lack of education of the will . . . (122, 123).

But he scolds, and this we would expect of a faithful Orthodox priest, Roman Catholic "probabilism" and Protestant moralism much more severely.

On almost every page, even when deeply touched by the reality of his spiritual pilgrimage with its "conversion" to Orthodoxy which he knew from childhood but rejected for years, we find ourselves in confrontation with his views. This becomes very clear when in more than one place he expresses himself on the necessity of the Incarnation. Thus he asks and states,

However, do people sufficiently realize that this dogma in itself is not primary but derivative? In itself it demands the 'prior existence of absolutely necessary dogmatic formulations concerning a primordial God-manhood. These presuppositions are in fact unfolded in sophiology . . . (152).

Here as elsewhere his speculative mysticism hardly accords with his insistence on the Christian's calling in the everyday world to which, indeed, he wants to give more than lip-service.

But, and we ask this question in all candor, is this not a perennial problem also for us as evangelical Protestants? We stress the "new

life in Christ Jesus" which calls us to holy and godly service in all of life. Fine. But where is the "delight" of beholding God by faith in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ who is altogether lovely? Has not much of our evangelical and Reformed faith (whether because of or in spite of the preaching we hear) become far too down-to-earth and matter-of-fact?

Much can be learned not only about Bulgakov's views but also about the basic theology of Eastern Orthodoxy, to which he wants to be uncompromisingly faithful, from his five *Festival Sermons*. Here we notice at once the wide gulf which separates that branch of Christendom from evangelical Protestantism. The cross is highly exalted, but much more as a symbol of God's self-sacrificing love than as the ground and foundation of our salvation—the atoning sacrifice for sins. So, too, stress is laid on repentance as a necessary ingredient of true faith. But again the joy of forgiveness is not clearly connected with the death and resurrection of the Savior.

Much, indeed, will have to be discussed in depth between evangelicals and the Eastern Orthodox if we are to be of any help and comfort to each other as those who claim a common God and Savior. In our fractured world, steeped in idolatry and unbelief and rank materialism, this is part of our high calling in Christ Jesus, especially where so many of its members suffer greatly for their faith. Even if for a time we can do little more than pray for them, this volume will help us understand them and their needs better than most of us now do.

Peter Y. De Jong

Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility, edited by David Basinger and Randall Basinger. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986. Pp. 180.

Those who enjoyed "four views" books published earlier by InterVarsity Press will welcome this volume. However, like the earlier volumes on the millennium and on war, the strength or weakness of the representative positions should not necessarily be concluded from the advocates here writing and/or the arguments

here presented. There is always the danger that the uninitiated, not knowing the complexities, intricacies, and implications of the various views involved, will take such a volume as this one as the last word, or at least as the best word, since direct interaction is present among the participants. The issues are too difficult and the book too brief for it to merit such a status; but it is nonetheless a good introduction into this often convoluted, muddled and sometimes unfathomable subject of divine sovereignty and human freedom.

The format is predictable. Each of the contributors sets forth his own theoretical and practical perspective at some length, the latter of which is applied to two specific case studies, followed by brief critical responses from the other three contributors.

The four representative views are divided by the editors into two major categories: those advocating specific sovereignty, and those advocating general sovereignty. Specific sovereignty means that "human freedom poses no limitations on God's sovereignty." Stated differently, "human freedom in no sense limits God's ability to bring about the specific events he desires." Adherents to this view are sub-divided into two more categories: determinists and self-determinists. Determinists believe that human choices and activity, though determined by God, are compatible with freedom and responsibility. John Feinberg of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School champions this view. Self-determinists, on the other hand, believe that human choices and activities are not determined by God. Determinism is incompatible with human responsibility, according to this view. In order to explain how God can order "his creation in such a way that what humans freely do is always within his specific, preordained plan," an appeal is made to divine omniscience. Norman Geisler of Dallas Theological Seminary defends this position.

The second major view is that of general sovereignty, which means that "human freedom does place limitations on God's control over earthly affairs." That is to say, "to the degree to which God gives us freedom he does not control earthly affairs." God accomplishes his goals by judicious intervention. But human freedom does impose significant limitations upon God, limitations which are again categorized into two kinds: those who limit God's power and those who limit God's knowledge. The former believe that human freedom is incompatible with God's omnipotence, while the latter believe it is incompatible with God's omniscience. Bruce

Reichenbach of Augsburg College and Clark Pinnock of McMaster Divinity College are the advocates of these two positions respectively.

It is certainly beyond the scope of this review to detail the four positions. But I would like to point out a number of troublesome items and make a few critical comments of my own. The issue dividing the specific-sovereignty gentlemen from the general-sovereignty gentlemen is a big one, namely: the nature of Christian theism. Pinnock puts his analytical finger on this problem when he says, "In the last analysis the debate in this book is about the nature of Christian theism." One can hardly get more basic! Hence the question: Are we dealing here with a difference of *degree* or of *kind*? If it is one of *kind*, we are confronted with an even more serious question: What constitutes orthodoxy?

Feinberg and Geisler fall within the classical tradition on the doctrine of God, whereas Reichenbach and Pinnock would seem to embrace what is called a neoclassical view in the direction of Process Theologians, such as Schubert Ogden and others. Geisler in particular senses the wide gap which exists between himself and the general-sovereignty advocates. Responding to Reichenbach he states: ". . . even though it is currently in vogue to reject the classical orthodox view of God, most have not fully faced the disastrous consequences this will have on the whole of Christian theology." And even more resolutely Geisler responds to the more radical Pinnock:

The time is overdue to drop the ad hominem stereotypes, caricatures and straw-men attacks on the classical orthodox view of God and to reveal the radical departure of these neoclassical views from the I AM of Moses, Jesus, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther and Wesley. Individuals have every right to deviate substantially from the orthodox view, but they have no right to consider themselves orthodox when they do (p. 172).

May we applaud.

This is not to say, however, that Geisler's position is itself unassailable. Far from it! In fact, in this reviewer's judgment Geisler's essay is the most bewildering, confused, and annoying of the four. Supposedly Geisler is describing the Calvinists when he says,

. . . God determines to save whomever he wishes regardless of whether they chose to believe or not. Accordingly, the

fact that some (even all) do not choose to love, worship and serve God will make no difference whatsoever to God. He will simply doublewhammy them with his irresistible power and bring them screaming and kicking into his kingdom against their will.

And so Geisler chastises: "There can be no shotgun weddings in heaven. God is not a cosmic B.F. Skinner who behaviorally modifies humans against their will."

Geisler's position itself, that God sovereignly ordains all things while humans are entirely self-determinative, confuses God's *acts* with God's *attributes*. Thus, when addressing the matter of the *logical* relation between God's *acts* of foreknowing and foreordaining Geisler leaves the reader out on a weak and dubious theological limb. For Geisler there is no *logical* relationship between God's foreknowing and foreordaining, or (as he writes) God's knowing and determining; they are identical. So Geisler maintains: "Whatever God knows, he determines. And whatever he determines, he knows." And to Geisler's mind this is to say that God *knowingly determines* and *determinately knows* ". . . from all eternity everything that happens, including all free acts."

But what does it really mean to say that God *determinately knows*, or to say that whatever God knows, he determines? It seems to mean that what God *sees*, he knows. And what he *knows*, he instantiates. And these three *acts* of seeing, knowing, and instantiating are identical. And if they are not identical, then Geisler leaves unanswered their *logical* relationship to one another. Reichenbach demonstrates that though Geisler's words are catchy they are, in fact, meaningless (p. 92). Feinberg is left to query whether Geisler is "an Arminian/indeterminist or a Calvinist/determinist." And no wonder! How does one coordinate a Calvinist view of sovereignty with an Arminian notion of freedom?

Geisler's view is not the only one in this book which is vulnerable. Reichenbach and Pinnock both leave us with an impotent God. Says the former: "With respect to his omnipotence, he [God] voluntarily limited his power when he created free creatures." Similarly Pinnock states: "God gives a degree of reality and power to the creation and does not retain a monopoly of power to the creation and does not retain a monopoly of power for himself." Pinnock also abandons the traditional doctrine of God's omniscience. Not that Pinnock denies God's omniscience. But he does *redefine* it. For Pinnock,

free actions are not entities that can be known ahead of time. They literally do not yet exist to be known. God can surmise what you will do next Friday, but cannot know it for certain because you have not done it yet (p. 157).

Thus, God anticipates the future in a way analogous to human beings. God is omniscient in the sense of knowing the knowable; but free acts are by definition unknowable.

The real frustration of this book is that the idea of human freedom, free will, free choice—whatever terms one wishes to use—is never squarely faced and carefully articulated. Only Feinberg honestly faces the question of what free will could *mean*. The other three contributors dogmatically assume that their notion of freedom is the only legitimate one—namely, the notion of self-determination, or more accurately, contra-casual freedom, or the power to do otherwise. Feinberg alone carefully distinguishes his view of human freedom and responsibility from that of the other three contributors. And thus he alone escapes serious question-begging. This refusal by three of the four essayists to openly and perceptively address the freedom question constitutes the book's most glaring weakness.

For those interested in the perplexing subject at hand this will prove to be a welcome publication, nicely introducing you to key themes, problems and areas of major disagreement in the divine sovereignty and human freedom debate. It will also point you to a number of helpful source materials.

J. Mark Beach

Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview,
by Albert M. Wolters. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 98.

Albert M. Wolters is an Associate Professor of Religion and Theology/Classical Languages at Redeemer College, now located in Ancaster, Ontario. In this short, popularly-written book Wolters seeks to "spell out the content of a biblical worldview and

its significance for our lives as we seek to be obedient to the Scriptures" (p. 1). In the main Wolters has admirably succeeded.

Wolters admits that he stands in a long tradition of reformation Christian thinkers (e.g. Calvin, Kuyper, Bavinck, Dooyeweerd), and his book further refines and clarifies what a reformational "worldview" entails. Everyone has a worldview; that is, everyone has a basic belief about all reality, a belief that is comprehensive in scope. One lives out his life on the basis of his or her particular worldview.

Explicated in this book is the familiar reformational triad of creation/fall/redemption. When one speaks of creation, one can speak of the activity of creating or the result of creation (the cosmos and its order). In an excellent discussion of the law of God and Word of God in creation Wolters maintains a very good balance, as he describes the compelling (laws of nature) and the appealing (norms), plus the sweeping (general) and individual (particular) range in the validity of God's law and world. Says Wolters on page 25:

Creational law speaks so loudly, impresses itself so forcefully on human beings, even in the delusions of paganism, that its normative demands are driven home into their inmost being, are "written on their hearts" like the indelible inscription of a law code on a clay tablet.

In connection with his discussion of the fall into sin Wolters develops the relationship between structure and direction. Sin is an "alien invasion of creation" (p. 48). It is an intruding parasite which cannot undo God's creation but has altered the true spiritual direction that God intended for His world. Wolters prefers the term "conserving grace" to the usual term "common grace." To this reviewer the use of the word "conserving" in this regard is a distinct improvement, although the use of "grace" here is not. In Scripture grace is God's saving power made effective in the lives of God's elect in Jesus Christ. From Christ come all the good things which even unbelievers can experience (but not as "grace" in the Scriptural sense).

In explaining salvation, Wolters defines it as redemption, God's "buying back" of a world captured by sin. Redemption and salvation can be understood as re-creation (pp. 58-59). God has not let His world go. He gave up His own Son to restore mankind to office as manager in His creation. Sinful direction in the world is overcome.

In this matter Wolters could have strengthened his book by a more explicit discussion of the role that Scripture plays in redemption. He has a very fine explanation of Scripture in his chapter on creation. He says that "we can discern creational normativity best in the light of Scripture" (p. 32). True enough. But Wolters could have strengthened his whole book with a clearer delineation of Scripture's role in recreating mankind. The Scriptures were given so that we might believe that Jesus (Creator and Recreator) is the Christ and that in believing, we might have life in His name (see John 20:31; I John 5:13).

Wolters includes a discussion of both societal and personal renewal. Every societal institution, rooted in creation "after its kind," is to be renewed and redirected in obedience to God and His Word. Each institution has its own sphere of competence and duty. Wolters makes the helpful suggestion of speaking of "differentiated responsibility." This, it seems to this reviewer, is to be preferred over "sovereignty," since sovereignty belongs only to God. Furthermore, Wolters could have strengthened his book by more elaboration of how the Church as God's new humanity can serve as the vanguard of such societal and personal renewal in the world.

The book is virtually free from typing errors. On page 59 the word "the" should be capitalized in the last paragraph. Also, on page 71 it seems that the word "that" in the last paragraph should be "than."

The book is written in a non-technical manner. Yet Wolters is able to explain crucial distinctions which belong to a reformational worldview. Wolter's use of illustrations and examples serves to concretize the points he is making. The book would serve as an excellent introduction to a perspectives course on a college level.

Mark Vander Hart

The Idea of Office, by K. Sietsma. Trans. by Henry Vander Goot.
Jordan Station, ON: Paedeia Press. Pp. 101.

The importance of this book is far greater than its small size, about 100 pages, leads one to suspect. The author dealt with a subject which is very up-to-date: *The Idea of Office*. Those who hope

to find a broad treatment of the various offices in the church will be disappointed. Indeed he dealt with the offices in the church too, but his main concern is to discuss the idea of office in all the various realms of life.

In the author's opinion "office" is the only justification and the only proper limitation of any human exercise of power and authority. What would happen in our society if this principle were acknowledged to be true? The exercise of authority does not depend on the condition or power of an organization or institution nor on the gifts or stature of a given person.

Offices are ordained by God to regulate human life on the foundation of societal connections and relationships.

The author tells us that the term *office* is used only once in the New Testament. He is mistaken—it is used several times, but the number of times it is used is rather restricted. The Old Testament uses the term far more often in speaking of various functions which were to be accomplished by those who were chosen to do them. The officeholder has a certain authority as a servant of God. The whole Scriptural view of office is opposed to the Greek idea of slave.

In the idea of office man is charged with certain responsibilities. The essence of office depends on the divine mandate. Office is not rooted in the nature of things but in the divine command. The fall brought man into slavery, among other things: it was also a fall from office.

The office of Christ is explained most clearly in Lord's Day 12 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. He became man and Redeemer to re-establish office among men. All offices are redeemed by Christ! Unbelievers have not yet been deposed! Sietsma believed firmly in a sphere sovereignty. This means, of course, that the one office limits the other. At the time of the French Revolution the masses took authority upon themselves. This is contrary to the whole idea of office as taught by the Scriptures. There may be a time when the government is corrupt and must be overthrown, but the impetus for such a movement must come from the lower office-holders. Then only is justice done and the divine order is honored.

All authority belongs purely to office. One person is not better than the other, or stronger or wiser, but the one is in office and the other is not. Plato's idea of philosopher-kings is hereby denounced. One individual may be far superior in wisdom or strength or moral

quality to the ruler, but the ruler is in office and the other is not. The ruler is to be obeyed because of the office he holds. In none of the systems of society is there a realization of office (essence). Scripture alone makes office central.

In the family are found the offices of both father and mother, parents. Their authority is not based on strength, experience or wisdom but on the command of God. The son may become much stronger and receive much more education than the father, but God commands him to honor his father and mother to the end of life.

Next Sietsma deals in somewhat general terms with the offices in the church. No, the idea of women in office had not yet surfaced in the time in which he wrote this book and he therefore does not deal with this subject. He emphasizes that there is an equality among the offices in the church. A deacon, by virtue of his office, may be called upon to rebuke a minister or elder if these neglect their duty. Among us the service aspect of office is stressed greatly today (cf. Report 44, 1973 *Acts of Synod*). Sietsma claims that service does not pertain to office (special) but to all offices in Christian living. Ministers are not servants of the congregation or of the consistory; they are servants of God. He is called to minister the word of God. The emphasis should, therefore, not fall on service but on the administration of the word!

The author also deals with the office of all believers. He does so in the sense in which the Bible instructs us in this matter and as it was emphasized again by the reformers. It becomes clear from Sietsma's treatment of this subject that we may never play off the office of all believers against the special offices.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Prof. H. Vander Goot for translating this book from the original Dutch and thereby making it accessible to the English-speaking public. This reviewer hopes that the book will have a wide sale and that many will profit from its reading.

There is one note of caution which I would raise, which is neither a criticism of the author nor of the translator. It is this: We do not use the term "office" in the English language in the same broad sense in which the Dutch use the term "ambt." We speak much more of responsibilities and duties rather than of office. We do not speak of the "office" of father and mother. This may be faulty, but it is true. The discussion of the author will be more difficult to follow if this is not borne in mind.

Dr. K. Sietsma was a highly respected minister and theologian in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) for many years. The contents of this book first appeared in articles in *De Bazuin* about 1936. The book *Ambtsgedachte* appeared posthumously. The reader of the book should note that the covenant idea espoused by Dr. Sietsma is virtually the same as the one defended a few years later by Dr. K. Schilder. He makes it very clear in this little book that the covenant and election do not necessarily contain the same members. And then consider that Sietsma wrote these articles in 1936, the year when the Synod of the GKN appointed a committee to look into alleged doctrinal deviations of Schilder c.s. History is interesting.

Henry Vander Kam

Christian and Reformed Today, by John Bolt. Jordon Station, ON: Paideia Press. Pp. 101.

This book had its origin in several popular lectures which the author gave in churches and schools. Bolt is dealing with a subject which is important and vital for the church today. He puts forth a noble attempt to avoid in-house issues in order to focus on the broad issues which rise out of the Reformed tradition.

The terms *Christian* and *Reformed* are not synonymous today and the author feels it necessary to give a careful definition of the term *Reformed*. This definition is also made necessary because by the term *Reformed* we mean our God-given heritage. The term also covers quite a large group—much broader than we often think. Not only do the Dutch Calvinists lay claim to the name but so do the Presbyterians and various other groups. After careful reflection, Bolt concludes that the following definition is the clearest he is able to give: "A Reformed person is trinitarian in theology and catholic in vision." This definition strikes the reader as quite different perhaps than any he has ever heard. To say that the Reformed view is the most consistent trinitarian position does not distinguish it from the position broadly known as Christian. He believes that some others have made this mistake.

He emphasizes that the Apostles Creed is divided into the three parts, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Bolt believes that

the Fundamentalists over-stress the second part of this creed and therefore are strongly for missions and evangelism. The views to which they hold might be either conservative or liberal. The Pentecostals emphasize the third part of the creed, dealing with the Holy Spirit, and emphasize the necessity of special gifts, tongue speaking, etc. The liberal humanists emphasize the first article, the brotherhood of man and the full human creaturely potential.

In contrast to the above, the Reformed seek to emphasize each part of the Apostles Creed. Equal emphasis is to be placed on the Father and our creation; upon the Son and our redemption; and upon the Holy Spirit who applies the work of the Son and proceeds from both the Father and the Son.

It is true that Bolt admits he is not writing a complete dogmatics. Surely, although it is a rather novel approach which he introduces, it is not sufficient to give a definition of the theological aspects of what is really *Reformed*. The Apostles Creed is broad in scope and can serve as a good guide to the Reformed person. To me, Bolt's great weakness in this part of the book is his lack of Scriptural foundation. As a result, the book becomes more philosophical than theological.

But, this is only half of the definition he has given. He also believes that the truly Reformed person is "catholic in vision." In this he stresses what is commonly known as a world-and-life view. The sovereignty of God over all of life plays a major role here, and correctly so.

In the view of the author the Reformed vision is concerned with the renewal of the whole fallen creature and fallen creation. The most important question is not: "How can I be saved," but "How can I live to God's glory." The Reformed stress the work of the Father and the whole of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments. Luther downgraded the continuing significance of the Old Testament and the law. This gives an opening to the theory of evolution. Liberal theologians, of course, also devalue the Old Testament.

Calvin teaches that the New Testament, by itself, is incomplete. One needs the view of creation as the starting point and that of the cultural mandate. He might have said that we also need the clear history of the origin of sin and its history before we will realize the need of that which the New Testament teaches. The law, says Bolt, is read only in the truly Reformed churches. Others don't. There is a danger in both. The Lutherans, not reading the law, may em-

phasize a cheap grace; the Reformed, who read the law, may fall into the danger of legalism or moralism.

Although we may well bemoan the fact that Bolt does not pay enough attention to Scripture in his definition of what is *Reformed*, he certainly deals with Scripture in various places. It is his contention that the Scriptures speak to all of life and that they are not only infallible in matters of faith and morals (as many so confidently affirm), but that nothing of the content of Scripture, whether it deals with faith and morals or with something else, may be viewed as anything but the Word of God. He stresses the order of Scripture. The Bible does not begin with Exodus (redemption) but with Genesis (the origin of all things). It ends with the picture of a new creation! Redemption serves creation!

Calvinism has been charged with being the parent of capitalism. Max Weber has made this accusation. This accusation is partly correct. Calvin believed that such human effort was legitimate. Calvin taught that no interest might be charged the poor but saw no evil in charging interest for productive purposes. This is neither materialism nor exploitation. All of life, including economics, is under the word of God.

According to Bolt, the basis of Christian education is not first of all the gospel but the wisdom of God in creation. Calvin distinguishes between political and spiritual kingdoms. He warns that the doctrine of Common Grace may not obscure or obliterate the antithesis between believer and unbeliever.

We are to enjoy the material blessings of life. Indeed, the Son's work is redemptive but His first work was creation (John 1). He reconciles all things to Himself. These things and their dominion can, of course, be abused because of sin. In redemption Christ shapes our lives in all aspects. There is a tension between creation and redemption, between following Christ the creator and Christ the servant-Lord. Believers so easily sing: "I am a stranger here . . ." But this world is the place where their work is. The cultural and missionary mandates must be clearly distinguished. The one is not the repeat of the other. We must distinguish them but may not separate them. Our history and world history are determined by the preaching of the word. Christian schools are not missions but must recognize the need for evangelism and missions.

Concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, Pentecostals emphasize the charismatic and do not do full justice to His work. It is

noteworthy that Calvin devotes as much space to the Holy Spirit as to the work of the Father and Son combined. He has indeed been rightly called: "the theologian of the Holy Spirit." Faith is not merely an intellectual activity for Calvin. He lays great emphasis on true piety. The Spirit does more than regenerate the individual; He is the Spirit of holiness and also the Spirit who comes on Samson.

The author criticizes the 1928 Synod of the CRC for singling out such things as card playing, theater and dance as worldly amusements. He believes that this stand had to be changed of necessity later on. I'm not so sure. These three activities were simply used as examples in 1928 and people lost sight of the warning Synod gave. It is remarkable that Dr. Abraham Kuyper singled out the same three as evidences of real wordliness and urged separation from them. It is easy to call for separation but then stumble at the things from which we should separate ourselves. Is this fundamentalistic? Is it sectarian or legalistic, as the author claims? He does agree that the Synod of 1982 made a bad decision concerning the dance. People are redeemed—not actions!

The Reformed have always emphasized education. An educated clergy was considered to be very important. The youth were also to be catechized so that they would know the Scriptures and Confessions. Dort's Church Order demanded that there be good "schoolmasters" to teach the three Rs and Reformed doctrine. This was revised by the Synods of 1914 and 1965 to read that "the consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools."

Although the doctrine of the covenant has often been cited as the basis and reason for the Christian school, Bolt does not believe this is sufficient. The idea of creation and the creature made in His image should also have its due. The idea of the Kingdom of God (Kuyper) may not be slighted. In Christian education our God must be shown to be the sovereign over all of life. Bolt believes that the trinitarian framework must also be maintained for Christian education (Lord's Day 8). Cultural activities are not redeemed—such as the dance—but Christian schools must promote cultural obedience. There must be joy in learning.

In the last chapter the author speaks of a tension in Reformed Ethics. The Anabaptists are detested in our confession. They believe in a community of goods, a simple lifestyle and pacifism. The Anabaptists have a Christianity of the cross only and practice world-renunciation. Over against this view, the Reformed em-

phasize creation and law as well as to die with Christ. They desire to enjoy the world and renounce it at the same time.

At the close the author seeks to show some fundamental differences between the views of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck.

This book sets one to thinking—and that is much more than many books are able to do. It is a very well-written book. It is a book which ought not only be read but also studied thoroughly. The author lays his finger on some very important issues and does this in a novel way. Highly recommended.

Henry Vander Kam

Table and Tradition: Toward an Ecumenical Understanding of the Eucharist, by Alasdair I. C. Heron. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983. Pp. xiv + 192.

In the last thirty years there has come about a renewed interest in dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and a variety of Protestant groupings (Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, etc.). Among the issues which divide the Roman Catholics from all Protestants is the doctrine of the sacraments.

Alasdair Heron, who teaches Reformed theology at the University of Erlangen, has offered a very commendable study of the issue of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He combines three areas of investigation: exegetical, historical, and theological. Heron traces the development of the various dimensions of what the Lord's Supper was thought to be in the western Christian Church.

In the first section of his book Heron analyzes the various institution accounts of the Eucharist. Following the critical approach of J. Betz the institution narratives break down into two pairs: Paul and Luke's longer version, and Mark and Matthew (p. 15). Heron provides a very helpful discussion on the question of the relationship between the Passover and the Lord's Supper. In the following chapter Heron demonstrates how in John 6:35ff Jesus shows that

He is both the bread from heaven and the bread which must be eaten (pp. 46ff). The "text" is based on Psalm 78:24.

In his historical section Heron quotes from a number of church fathers. At least three different nuances on the Eucharist developed: a Eucharistic realism (e.g. Irenaeus), a "spiritual" emphasis (e.g. Clement of Alexandria, Origen), and the notion of Eucharist as offering to God.

Augustine (p. 69) in particular gave shape to the Western understanding of sacrament in the theological sense. *Sacramentum* is a Latin term for the New Testament term *mysterion*. The "mystery" is God's will for our salvation revealed in Jesus Christ. Thus Jesus Christ is the true sacrament. But in the history of the Church the focus shifted toward proper rites and reverence for the sacramental elements. The Fourth Lateran Council's promulgation of transubstantiation was simply the culmination of developments in the Western Church which went back many centuries, a development aided by Aristotelian categories of thought.

In the sections on the Reformation developments, Heron correctly notes that there came a very significant shift in sacramental understanding. The focus for the reformers was away from the Church's action to God's Word in the Bible. Such a shift is traced in the reformers Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. The Roman theology of the priesthood received a frontal attack, as well as did the Roman notion of transubstantiation. Sacraments were not a cause of grace, but they were signs of God's promise designed to lead to faith (p. 110).

Of course, there were differences within the Reformation. Luther continued to accept the words of institution literally ("This is my body"), while Zwingli maintained that the words could not be reduced to their literal sense (p. 119). Calvin stood somewhere between these two Protestant positions. He rejected the Lutheran notion of ubiquity as being a false answer to a wrong question. The Sacrament is a sign of divine promise meant to quicken faith. Heron says that for Calvin, "he who truly receives the body and blood receives only salvation, not condemnation" (p. 130). One wonders how close (or far) churches that would claim Calvin as a spiritual father would agree with his eucharistic theology.

The strength of Heron's work lies in its historical discussions. If there ever is to be a coming together of the Roman and Reformed positions on the Eucharist a thorough study of our histories is

necessary. One does not understand who he is until he understands from where he came. Heron is very frank about the modern-day obstacles to dialogue and rapprochement. Despite the fact that some in the Roman Catholic Church wish to reopen a discussion of transubstantiation, the 1965 Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* has basically reaffirmed the pronouncements of Trent. Furthermore, the Roman theology of the priesthood remains a crucial issue as well (p. 174).

So where does one go from here? Heron suggests that using current prayers and hymns of the people could be a better bridge to dialogue than discussing "abstract theology." But that does not seem a wholly satisfactory option either. Since churches are identified by *confessions*, would this not be a starting place for discussion?

Heron's book is very useful work for seminary courses or for anyone who needs a survey of the development of eucharistic theology. Several indices and an abbreviated bibliography conclude the book.

Mark Vander Hart

What the Bible Says About the Great Tribulation, by William R. Kimball. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983. Pp. 291. \$7.95.

With the rise of dispensational eschatology in the last 150 years the Christian church has been flooded with a great deal of speculation as to the events which will characterize "the last days" of planet Earth. The popularity of Hal Lindsey's book *The Late Great Planet Earth* attests to the interest in this subject which exists among many evangelical and Reformed Christians.

In his book on the great tribulation William Kimball, president of "Disciples Indeed" Bible School in South Lake Tahoe, CA, challenges the popular dispensational notion that the earth will see a final seven year period of tribulation. Kimball focuses on the Olivet Discourse in particular with occasional glances at related

passages. The Olivet Discourse is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21.

Kimball's thesis is simple and straightforward: the great tribulation of the Olivet Discourse has primary reference to the affliction of God meted out on the Jewish nation (A.D. 66-70) during the First Jewish War (pp. 83 ff.). Contrary to the "verbal litter of dispensationalism" (p. 13), Kimball contends that major sections in the Olivet Discourse are fulfilled, and that only in a secondary way can they apply to the end of the world.

The contextual framework of Jesus' eschatological discussion must be established, says Kimball. The disciples asked Jesus a question regarding the destruction of the Temple, but they framed their question in error. To them the destruction of the Temple would signal the end of the age (world). Jesus' remarks were intended to offset their mistaken ideas.

In a series of short chapters Kimball examines Jesus' warnings that would signal the end of Jerusalem (and her temple): false Christs, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, the "beginning of sorrows," persecution, and false prophets. Using the Scriptures, Eusebius, Josephus, Tacitus, Dio Cassius, Seneca, and Suetonius, Kimball shows how these references describe the 40 year period between A.D. 30 and 70. But they can have reference to the distresses which will be true to the end of this age (cf. Matt. 24:6,13,14). Christians should not be tricked into thinking that every great international crisis or catastrophe is a harbinger of the end.

At Mark 13:14 (cf. Matt. 24:15ff; Luke 21:20ff) Jesus makes an abrupt switch from discussing generalities to discussing the specifics of Jerusalem's ruin. This section is pivotal, Kimball maintains. The "abomination of desolation" was the invasion by foreign armies in the 1st century A.D. The "holy place" referred to in Matt. 24:15 is not the holy of holies, but it is probably Jerusalem itself. The abomination had to be seen by all, whereas only the high priest could enter the holy of holies. Furthermore, the abomination would cause desolation; an idol/image cannot do so. Kimball's arguments at this point are clear, cogent, and convincing.

Kimball discusses also the "time of the Gentiles" (pp. 122ff), mentioned only in Luke. Gentiles are now favored by God during a time of displeasure against the Jews. Yet a time of change for the Jews is in prospect. The rejection of the Jews is temporary (p. 128).

Kimball asserts that a time is coming when many Jews will respond to the gospel.

The writer does show that the Lord did not exclude consideration of the end of time. But Kimball strongly asserts (correctly, I believe) that all human speculation on which events will herald His advent are futile. No man knows the day or the hour!

Kimball contends that the Olivet Discourse cannot be used to prove a "great tribulation" at the end of human history. In regard to this point the reviewer believes that Kimball is on the right track. But one passage (among several others in Revelation) that is left out of the discussion is Revelation 20:3, ". . . After that [Satan] must be set free for a short time." What are the ramifications for some sort of end-time tribulation implied in this passage? Kimball does not say.

The book reads very easily but does become very repetitious at points as the writer seeks to nail down his case. Review questions are provided at the end of each brief chapter. The discussion of survivalism near the end of the book is somewhat distracting.

A number of typing errors appear in the book: "Magnus" (p. 20), "Halley's" (p. 33), "astrocities" (p. 59), "unparalled" (p. 85), "capitol" (p. 137) and "surivival" (p. 251). "Irregardless" on page 246 is substandard English.

The book includes a full bibliography with subject and Scripture indices.

Mark Vander Hart

Sermons You Can Preach on John, by Herschel Ford. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985. Pp. 430.

Originally published in 1958 these "sermons" now make their way into the marketplace under a slightly different title. They were preached in this form by a Southern Baptist minister who has won a wide hearing. Thirty-nine messages attempt to cover the entire fourth Gospel in simple, straightforward and occasionally arresting

fashion. Especially some of the titles at once catch the reader's eye and mind. Throughout the preacher remains biblical.

What is lacking, however, is dealing with the material in any depth dimension. Most of what the preacher says should be known beforehand to the average believer. The specific message of the many passages recording incidents, miracles and words of our Lord Jesus Christ is usually lacking. Far too much space is devoted to illustrations and stories of every kind, many of them interesting and, perhaps, even somewhat useful. Not a few of the sermons lack true unity. Often the theme or title is not adequately reflected throughout the message. To this reviewer what is presented here is more akin to a popular review with appropriate comments on relatively long passages than to a sharply focused sermon which opens up the riches of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. By far the best of these sermons are those based on much briefer texts of from two to some eight or ten verses.

At the same time we appreciate that these messages aim at explaining and applying God's Word. Basic doctrines, while not explained in any detail or depth, are proclaimed.

We trust, however, that no reader of this review will take the title seriously. No one has any right to preach someone else's sermons. "That," so our professor of homiletics insisted, "is parading under a false flag. It's piracy of the most unconscionable kind!"

Peter Y. De Jong

Preaching and Leading Worship, by William H. Willimon.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984. Pp. 116.

Cultivating Religious Growth Groups, by Charles M. Olsen.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984. Pp. 118.

Helping Laity Help Others, by Stanley J. Menking. Philadelphia:
Westminster Press, 1984. Pp. 114.

All three of these books are part of a series entitled *The Pastor's Handbooks*. Each gives what it promises, a kind of "how to do it"

for the busy pastor. Each addresses itself to an aspect of the minister's calling to serve his people. Each is also deserving of being read, if only because a pastor especially after he has served for some years in the ministry is inclined to take his work too easy and without too much serious reflection. All of us, let us confess this honestly, can and do get into a rut where our service to the congregation for Christ's sake has lost much of its compelling urgency.

In each case the titles spell out the area of pastoral service to be reviewed. These books may well alert the minister to aspects of his ministry which he has been neglecting. If this happens, the few hours spent in relatively easy reading will be well worthwhile.

Each of the three, of course, mentions the necessity of a "theological" rationale or foundation. But none of them will on this score prove satisfactory or stimulating (except perhaps in a negative way) to the pastor who is committed to Holy Scripture as "the all-sufficient rule for faith and life," including especially that of one called to lead a congregation into ever-closer fellowship with God and others. Far more attention than to theological foundations is given to the psychological and sociological dimensions of personal and group interaction. Hence every "practical" suggestion which is made will have to be carefully assessed.

As an example we refer especially to the book on *Helping Laity Help Others*. That we have far too many relatively "inactive" and even "self-centered" members in the churches hardly escapes any serious pastor's attention. And much more is needed than simply reminding people from the pulpit that as Christians they are called to be "prophets, priests and kings" on the basis of and in gratitude for Christ's work of salvation. They are called to "involvement," each according to the gifts of time and talent given by God. What is needed here, to be sure, is pastoral leadership. And this, far too often so it seems to this reviewer, has been lacking. At times we show too little interest in what some of them are attempting to do in serving others. But whether all the suggestions made in this book (as well as the others dealing with other subjects) can or even should be carried out is another matter. Nor can a pastor busy himself with everything that needs doing, lest he fail to keep his priorities straight. In self-conscious and committed Reformed congregations the pastor will lean for help first of all on elders and deacons; they are in "office" and not simply laity!

For the discerning reader, who is committed to much more than is biblical than these books give, all three can serve a useful purpose.

They are stimulating. And every pastor needs a shot in the arm, even when this hurts by its reminder of what he may have too much ignored.

Peter Y. De Jong

Convictions That Give You Confidence, by Wayne E. Oates.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984. Pp. 110.

Ambition: Friend or Enemy? by Frederick C. Van Tatenhove.
Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984. Pp. 120.

Here are two volumes in the series *Potentials* edited by Oates.

The first stresses the necessity not only of having "convictions" but of living by them. Far too often people's lives are torn to shreds by indecision when compelled to face the crises of many kinds which develop in every life. Such folk are doubleminded, halting between two (or more) opinions and unstable in all their ways. Rightly then the author insists, "You need a clear path of action in which you believe wholeheartedly and from which you can draw personal serenity" (15).

Oates recognizes that without some kind of faith, and here he mentions God and Jesus Christ, man cannot live a full and satisfying life. But the kind of "faith" which is advocated throughout is a far cry from that of historic orthodox Christianity, even while again and again distinctively Christian words are used. The need of redemption by God's grace in Christ Jesus and renewal by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is conspicuously absent. Precisely because the book deals with a basic problem in many lives and is fascinatingly written, it will deceive the unwary. We are here saved in the exigencies of our lives by simply believing, a lifting up of ourselves out of life's mud by our own bootstraps. That we do and must believe and act on our convictions (beliefs) is undeniable. But there is much more to a true saving and therefore helpful faith than this; we need to teach people *what* and therefore *who* is to be believed—the triune God who has revealed himself so graciously and fully in Holy Scripture. Thus while many of his warnings are well-taken, Oates fails to point out which convictions alone

guarantee the strength and serenity which God so lavishly gives to those who take him at his written Word.

The second book in the series deals with a vexing problem in our culture which far too long has been worshipping "the bitch goddess Success." Men strive for position, power and wealth with such fanaticism that their true humanity is consistently killed. Hence the appeal of Van Tatenhove to evaluate our own ambition(s).

While not free from "moralizing" with humanistic overtones, the author does come much closer to the biblical teaching on our need for salvation, if our ambition is to be truly inner- and other-directed rather than self-directed.

Ambition becomes a friend, then, when it produces growth in your self-knowledge and in your inner spiritual maturity. This growth helps you to know your strengths and your weaknesses, your potentials and your limitations (88).

But he does not stop with this.

The most creative act that can happen to you is the renewal of your life. The Christian meaning of salvation is "recreation." Belief in Jesus Christ and the recognition of his forgiving grace transforms you into a "new creature," a new person. Your personality is renewed by your sincere repentance and acceptance of God's gift—Jesus Christ.

Then alone can service to others become truly meaningful and fruitful, since it is done for God's sake. In our self-centered and selfish world what Van Tatenhove has penned needs to be taught repeatedly and with even stronger grounding in the biblical teachings on creation, sin and full salvation through redemption and reconciliation as well as renewal. Unless one lives by the conviction that he belongs body and soul to Jesus Christ, as a purchased-possession, personal ambitions will be not a friend but a foe.

Peter Y. De Jong

Ministry to the Divorced, by Sue P. Richards and Stanley Hagemeyer. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. Pp. 109 (including annotated bibliography).

The authors of this book, Sue Poorman Richards and Stanley Hagemeyer, look at the problem of handling the multitudinous and

vexing personal problems that arise from a divorce from the point of view of individuals who have been through the process themselves. Their main point is that churches could and ought to be far more willing and able to mobilize their considerable resources to help people who are in this situation. The book includes not only a very concrete discussion of the problems and ideas for solutions the writers recommend; it also contains a detailed set of instructions for carrying out various kinds of seminars to help divorced people cope.

A number of things about both the approach and the ideas discussed in this book will give valuable insight into the feelings and actions of those who have gone or are going through a divorce. On the other hand, there are also some very large and even fatal flaws in the underlying thinking concerning divorce on the part of these authors. No doubt in our society, the first point made in the book is true: more and more people are finding themselves divorced. Furthermore, as the authors also hold, those who have not suffered the agony of divorce, and particularly those within the church who have not suffered in this way, have been slow to respond to the needs of those who have. Christians ought to be concerned for the broken hearted, truly the gospel is good news for those who are in distress, who are spiritually poor.

While the publishers of this little book seem to think it is a good recommendation that both of its authors have been in the shoes of the ones who are the objects of its desire to help, this reviewer is not convinced that this is necessarily good. When any of us undergo experiences in which there is not only a great deal of pain, but also a great deal of typically human sinful reaction to the actions of others and to that pain, it is so easy for us to concentrate on alleviating the pain without facing the sinful realities which have produced the pain. This reviewer is convinced that this book suffers from a fatal flaw precisely at this point. Handling the pain of divorce without directly handling the guilt and sinful lifestyles involved in it leads to a weak and often ineffective dealing with the problem. The strength of biblical religion is that it is an effective and honest method of handling the reality and corruption of sin in each of our personal lives. Biblical religion does this by offering God's method of handling sin as the *only* alternative to man's method of hiding sins.

For example, this book handles the grief and pain of divorce as parallel to that of the grief and pain of facing the death of a loved one, without discussing the great moral differences involved. It

treats the divorced person as one who is just "there" with no more moral hangups or problems than the average survivor of a dead family member might have. It simply sweeps this whole moral issue under the rug of the past and acts as if it has no effect or need for treatment in the present. This is akin to the handling of sin practiced by our first parents Adam and Eve in the garden. When God came to question them about their sin, they hid in the bushes. It is the method which every human being uses often and in which we are all expert. It is our contention that in order to be of real use and help to the divorced, we may not follow this method of handling sin and guilt. Indeed, we would hold that the authors hide from their clients the most significant benefit of the biblical method of handling sin by confession and repentance, namely, that of actually handling it and putting it into the past.

We would, for example, point out how the Lord Jesus Christ handled the matter of the woman in John 4 who had had five husbands. Instead of allowing her sins to remain hidden and thus unhandled, he specifically calls her attention to them in order that she can see her need and receive the living water of the Holy Spirit who ministers repentance and faith. While not every divorced person has had five husbands, all have been involved in a sinful situation in which it is foolish and sinful to ignore the possibility of sinfulness on their part and act as though all the sins were those of their former spouse.

My point is that the Bible offers *real* help for sinners; in fact, the only real help that is possible. To ignore or down play that help (for this book does a time or two allude to the need for working out guilt feelings though it never really faces the issue of sin) is to treat the results of sin with the bandaids of secular psychology. Psychology is indeed a legitimate science, and even unbelieving psychologists may have an insight or two. But they are ineffective in the long run because they are wrong in principle. As this writer once told a couple who wished to and did see such a psychologist in the midst of deep marital problems, "Psychologists just are not equipped to handle sin." As Jesus said, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). Our authors here never counsel the divorced person to confess sins to God and seek forgiveness; much less do they attempt to help the divorced discover those sins which need attention in this way. By the way, the couple mentioned from this writer's pastoral experience is living a good marriage with problems resolved by treating sin as sin after giving up on secular psychology.

The usefulness of *Ministering to the Divorced*, like that of similar books, will be in its pointing out the kinds of reactions and needs that divorced people have. It is indeed helpful to compare the patterns of loss and grief which divorced people feel with those experienced at the loss of a loved one in death, but, as observed above, not without the moral implications of divorce! The further advice of calling Christians to involve themselves in ministering to the brokenhearted is also needed in our day. The church truly does need to reject the uninvolved lifestyle of our society and learn again to weep with the weeping and rejoice with the rejoicing, to bind up the brokenhearted and to preach the gospel to the poor. However, we are convinced that it cannot do this without really learning to deal with sin in biblical fashion, both ours and that of our neighbors.

Ministering to the Divorced will likely receive good notices from those who think of the church's task primarily in terms of ministering to the needs of people. To those of us who consider the primary work of the church to be bringing glory to God, this book and others like it will continue to miss a major part of the point. This advisor to would-be helpers of the divorced suffers, as do so many marriages in our society, from a horizontal view of life. God is not a major actor on the scene; He should be, even for the divorced.

Robert Grossmann

Lectures on Counseling, by Jay E. Adams. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977. Pp. 277.

The author, professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Escondido, Calif., should need no introduction to our readers. His work in this field has become far too well-known for this in recent years. And by many an evangelical and especially truly Reformed pastor it is greatly appreciated as a necessary and healthy antidote to much of what has long passed for helpful Christian counseling. Of course those who disagree with his basic convictions dismiss him and his works out of hand and that far too often with criticisms which border dangerously on being slanderous misrepresentation.

Pastoral Counseling and Care has far too long been in disarray.

In most seminaries which offer a spate of courses in this area of theological training students are frequently urged to steep themselves in the writings, if not of Freud, then of Skinner and even more of Mowrer and Carl Rogers. Meanwhile the Bible with its message gathers dust on the shelves except, perhaps, for some devotional reading! The underlying humanistic and Pelagian presuppositions are not discerned. Hence "eclecticism," which attempts to combine a bit of biblical wisdom with the latest psychological insights and psychiatric methods, still holds sway in the field. But these provide no strong anchor for mind and heart in times of trouble.

Here the challenge, in five lectures presented to different audiences on different occasions, is given to all committed Christians who have opportunity to give counsel in our harried times.

The truth of the matter is that the Christian counsellor who determines by the grace of God to know and use the Scriptures in his counseling is the only one who can ever have a solid basis for what he says and does. While there may be any number of times issues about which he has not yet come to a fully biblical understanding, nevertheless, because he has the Scriptures, on all of the fundamental questions of life he not only knows but is fully assured of the truth and of the will of God.

Let no one, therefore, tell you that the scriptural counsellor is inadequate and that he must take a back seat while learning from his pagan counterpart. The opposite is true, and it is about time that Christian counsellors begin to make the fact known (191).

The five lectures indicate the kind of audiences which Adams has addressed. Especially valuable, in the reviewer's opinion, is the one on "Counseling and the Sovereignty of God." Here is a balanced and spiritually invigorating message especially for pastors and those elders who would learn how to become more effective in their ministry to the congregation.

It seems necessary that those who take up this volume have at their disposal also Adam's basic work, *Competent to Counsel*, which is frequently referred to.

Whether the "home work" which Adams so heartily commends (and explains) is necessary will depend largely on the circumstances of the counselee(s). In deep-seated family crises, where all true communication has largely broken down, it may well be required

and made an integral aspect of the work. What Adams does insist on—and that rightly—is that Christians learn to counsel themselves! Here the pulpit offers the most fruitful opportunities for pastoral effectiveness, especially when this is accompanied by faithful pastoral contacts of the minister and/or elders in the homes. An ounce of prevention in “soul-care” is worth more than many pounds of cure.

Despite what often is alleged, many church members still read. But what they read usually consists of newspapers, magazines, and the latest novels. It is more than time that every pastor in consultation with session or consistory sees to it that a suitable church library is available to all the members. Without this, we are convinced, a church is ill-equipped to serve its membership, the young as well as the old, as fruitfully as it could and should. In such a collection some of Adams' works also deserve a place.

Peter Y. De Jong

When Someone You Love is Dying, by Ruth Kopp, with Stephen Sorenson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980. Pp. 238.

Here is a book which deserves a place in every church library and to be read by every pastor and elder.

Nothing seems more traumatic in Christian experience than suddenly facing the reality of a terminal illness. Deep within us is the desire to live and that hopefully for a long time and in full strength of body and mind. Few are capable of facing such a death without a large measure of fear and frustration. Still fewer seem to be able to face it when this exigency strikes a loved one, spouse or parent or child. Even with all the warnings about cancer, heart disease, kidney disfunction, etc. all of us soon hide our heads in the sand. “It can't be happening to my loved one or to me!”

For all such and for those who as pastors, elders and friends are called to minister in such situations this book has been penned. And it deserves high marks for several reasons.

It is written from a distinctly evangelical point of view. The writers are not ashamed to testify to their faith in the God who

brings salvation and makes our cares with their perplexities and pains his own.

It is well-organized, dealing as it does with all the basic aspects of such crisis situations.

The first section discusses "Denial in Terminal Illnesses" and needs to be read again and again, when anyone is confronted with this situation. As a medical practitioner the author has dealt repeatedly with this psychological reaction in patients and family members. Much of what she and her collaborator write demonstrates deep sensitivity which will alert the reader to difficulties and dangers in seeking a helpful response. Here as throughout the book many examples are provided from her experience. Again and again the appeal is to Scripture, emphasizing that the peace of acceptance comes only when the individual (and family with friends) learn to rest their lives in the sovereign will of God which always works good for those whose trust is in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But this is experienced usually through struggle; quoting a text or two (no matter how appropriate) does not supply a magic pill.

The second section gives many helpful suggestions on choosing and responding to the doctor. Far too often this is done casually, so that a sustaining relationship is difficult to achieve. Warnings are sounded against listening too much to other people who have heard of "miraculous" cures and suggest going from one doctor and clinic to another. In the third section we are introduced to the effects which families suffer when terminal illness invades their ranks. Marriages have been threatened and even destroyed when husband and wife no longer know how to respond helpfully to each other especially when one of their children faces slow but certain death. Wholesome suggestions are given for those who find themselves in such a distressful situation.

Throughout there is an honest appraisal of the fearful reality and finality of death. It is not regarded as something that comes "naturally" and so to be easily taken in stride.

We must remember that the Bible calls death an enemy, and the Christian who faces death with reluctance or fear is not necessarily weak in his faith. One does not run to the door and fling it open to allow an enemy to enter! . . .

It is, of course, necessary for the Christian to find courage and strength in facing death through faith because of the nature of the enemy he faces. Although the Christian stands

to gain much after death, there are still tremendous losses as well. If he denies his human needs to fall in line with a concept of "spirituality," he is robbed of his humanness and his Christian faith is deprived of its vigorous, robust human character. Only as he faces death realistically, in all its horror, can he see the true magnitude of Christ's triumph in the Resurrection, the true glory of God's promises, and the true grandeur of the God who has so amply supplied *all* his needs (165).

Also helpful is the description of the several ways in which individuals, from childhood to old age, instinctively seem to face the great and last enemy. For the family as well as for pastors, elders and friends this section provides rich insights for a truly sustaining Christian ministry.

Dr. Kopp has throughout her long experience as a doctor met and dealt with people of all kinds, by no means all of them believers. Some were even avowed unbelievers; others Christians whose lives were not in harmony with God's will for their lives. How she was able to help as a sympathetic but committed Christian physician opens the eyes of the reader to the importance of not shying away from speaking, at the right time and in the right way, about the urgency of being reconciled with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Such "caring" ministers to the whole person, a source of strength which patient and family sorely need in such crises. She does not evade questions which tug at many minds and hearts facing this situation. Thus she deals with "the sticky business" of faith healing in a balanced and biblical manner.

Almost without exception Christians, except the very old and mature, are ill-equipped to face terminal illness with the equanimity of a strong personal faith in our God and Savior. And for some of this perhaps we as preachers are also to blame. How often are sermons preached in a direct and personal way on being ready (as far as possible in our busy lives) to face the reality of death? Is it dealt with in our catechetical and Sunday School classes? Does it receive more than passing mention in our family discussions, even when Scripture is faithfully read every day? Living as we do in a culture which places high premium on health and youth and personal achievement, we find ourselves skirting this subject as gingerly as we can. We don't like to think about it; we don't really want it dealt with in any depth when children and young people are around. All this and much else leaves most of us without the armor

which God has so graciously provided. It might be well in this day to reflect on the attitudes of our grandparents and great-grandparents. They did not hesitate to discuss death and its inevitable coming. They read meditations on this subject by Abraham Kuyper and others. Not a few of them had in their possession Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*. And preachers two or three generations ago, when medical care was far less advanced, did not hesitate to speak about it frequently and frankly.

A morbid preoccupation with this reality is, indeed, sin. It robs one of the joy which God gives in the daily round. It fails to recognize and rejoice in the glories which surround everyone of us even in this sinful world. But our often frivolous attempts to ignore or cover up or even deny its reality may well be the far greater and more dangerous sin. Hence the reading and reflecting on what Dr. Kopp has to say ought not be postponed until the specter of terminal illness challenges us or our loved ones. Because of its balanced and thorough message it deserves to be read without any further delay.

Peter Y. De Jong