

will treat the history of the Bible from the beginnings to Jerome is still awaited. The first three chapters of the present volume, however, give a survey of what will be treated in that forthcoming volume. Chapter 4 herein deals with Jerome himself. The remainder of the book is divided into chapters carrying the following titles: "The Medieval History of the Latin Vulgate," "The Exposition and Exegesis of Scripture," "The 'People's Bible': Artists and Commentators," "Bible Illustration in Medieval Manuscripts," "The Vernacular Scriptures," and "Erasmus in Relation to the Medieval Biblical Tradition." These chapter headings give an impression of the wide range of coverage in this book.

This publication is literally packed with information, but care has nevertheless been taken to give sufficient space for explanation of terms which might not be clear and for illustrating various points which are treated. For example, sometimes concrete examples are given of the method of lecture which medieval scholars used.

In discussing the vernacular Scriptures, the author gives the greatest amount of attention to the English Bible (understandably so), but the vernacular Bible in Spain is also given a fair amount of space (probably because relatively little has been done in this area). The treatment of the German vernacular Scriptures, however, is somewhat disappointing. Except for mention of the Mentel High-German Bible and three Low-German Bibles, none of the other 15th-century German printed Bibles is named. It would seem to this reviewer that at least the Koberger Bible of 1483 ought to have been mentioned because of its particularly great importance in the sequence of pre-Lutheran German Bibles. Furthermore, no mention is made of either Wilhelm Walther or Wilhelm Kurrelmeyer (neither in the text nor in the bibliography), whose outstanding contributions to the study of the early vernacular Bibles should not have been overlooked (especially when other scholars such as J. Berger have been duly noted).

Other deficiencies may be noted too, caused largely, perhaps, by the fact that so much material is packed into this volume. For example, on page 494 the treatment of the *Devotio Moderna* is hardly clear, and the place at which this movement was supposed to have "inspired" Erasmus is perhaps given erroneously. Did not Erasmus secure more influence from the *Devotio* at Deventer than at Steyn ?

Aside from rather minor criticisms, however, this book is an excellent piece of work. It will be an indispensable reference tool for anyone interested in the history of the Bible.

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Lowell, C. Stanley, *The Ecumenical Mirage*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1967. 205 pp. \$ 4.95.

There are two facets of ecumenism. The first facet refers to the cooperation among Christian bodies in their work. This has always existed to some extent. The second facet refers to the present assumption that ecumenism is a drive to bring all Christian bodies, including the Roman Catholic, into one organic structure. This latter concept of ecumenism is a fact; and to substantiate this fact, Lowell begins his book with a lengthy documentary composed of statements from religious leaders representing many denominations, showing that structural unity is the accepted goal of ecumenism.

Lowell points out that the "ecumenical assumption" is that the organic, structural unity of all denominations is the best thing that could happen to Christendom, although ecumenists do not readily admit this. The ecumenical movement is led by clerics who have a kind of obsession for organizing everything under one big ecclesiastical tent. He calls this passion for ecumenism an "occupational disease." These ecumenists solemnly think of separation as a grave sin and ecumenism as the remedy. Lowell firmly believes that if the differences among churches are of no significance, then there is no reason for the churches to exist at all. Again, abundant documentation is given to establish the point.

There are other ecumenists who think of ecumenism as the will of God. They base this assumption upon the prayer of Jesus in Jn 17. Lowell at this point differs with this view, stating that Jesus is not referring to structural unity but spiritual unity. Therefore, he feels that the ecumenical movement has no basis in Scripture. He challenges the idea that Christian unity in the form of one great church represents the will of God, and calls it a "naive assumption." He firmly believes that within the true church there should be many and varied churches, and he devotes two chapters to showing why he believes this way.

Ecumenism, he says, produces sterility, while proliferation and separation produce health and vitality in the church. This sterility, as he speaks of it, is caused partially by the absorption of getting the machinery running satisfactorily after mergers have taken place. A second and perhaps more important reason for sterility comes in the surrendering of distinctives which are involved in union. As he puts it, "One gives up something for everything and ends up with nothing."

To substantiate these two points, Lowell furnishes statistics showing the growth or lack of growth among churches, comparing those which have been active in the ecumenical movement and those which have not. The evidence presented does reveal a stifling of growth among those churches involved in ecumenical endeavors while non-ecumenical communions have continued to grow. The assumption involved here is that if one church is as good as another, why evangelize? Therefore, the rise in ecumenism has produced a decline in evangelism.

Lowell goes on to point out that "proliferation" is necessary for the health of the Christian church. He cites some of the controversies that have arisen since the first century, showing that as these controversies split the church they actually kept the church from dying a slow death in its own complacency.

One of the weak points in the author's presentation is that he tends to give the impression that unity is intrinsically evil. He almost goes so far as to imply that disunity is the will of God, taking the exact opposite position from that of the ecumenists.

The approach of Roman Catholicism to Protestantism has changed drastically over the centuries and especially within the last few decades. The traditional strategy of Rome against division was to stamp out heretics and schismatics. When religious execution became awkward, says Lowell, "an alternative strategy has been to stunt Protestant growth by political and economic disabilities" whenever possible. Even this approach has given way in many cases to the new appeal to return to the "Mother Church." There is also an approach through reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. This final approach, however, in actuality is the same as the appeal to the Mother Church but shows more of a willingness on the part of Roman Catholics to work with Protestants to bring it about. At any rate, the aim of ecumenism in the eyes of Roman Catholicism is the absorption of whole communions. Rome has so bound herself by her own dogma that little conciliation on her part is possible, and Lowell gives many examples of this.

When one compares the major differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants, it appears that reunion is virtually impossible, though ecumenical leaders are forging ahead none the less. Lowell devotes an entire chapter to these major differences—Papal Infallibility, the Concept of Authority, and Mariology—and what is being done to resolve them. It is apparent, however, that while Rome appears to be conceding in some areas, the concession actually comes from the Protestant side. No basic Roman Catholic doctrines have been or can be changed. The rules governing ecumenical dialogue in the past seem to have been formulated to the liking of Roman Catholics. These rules put them in an advantageous position, making concession on the part of Protestants necessary if anything were to be accomplished. It is assumed that ecumenical dialogue should exist for the sole purpose of "getting together." Lowell, however, states that the purpose of dialogue should not be compromise or accommodation but simply an understanding of each other's position.

This is primarily a book for laymen and pastors on the "grass-roots" level of the church who do not fully understand what the ecumenical movement is about or the dangers inherent in it. They will find it both informative and stimulating. Because of Lowell's rich experience as editor of *Church and State* magazine, Associate Director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and an accredited correspondent to Vatican II, he can well speak with authority. By virtue of his work in these areas he has come in direct contact with many of the issues presented in this volume. In many cases his book is documented with his own encounters with leading personalities of the ecumenical movement.