



Despite its faults, *Poverty and Wealth* is worthy of a reading because: (1) it represents the opinion of a fairly large sector of the evangelical community; and (2) it is helpful in critiquing errors in present policies, even if it is misleading in providing a Christian platform for solutions.

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Ruegsegger, Ronald W., ed. *Reflections on Francis Schaeffer*. Academic Books. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986. xvi + 320 pp. Paperback, \$13.95.

Beginning with the publication of *Escape from Reason* in 1968, Francis Schaeffer attracted considerable attention from the conservative Christian community. Although at first he concentrated on intellectual issues that appealed to young people, by the late 1970s he turned to social issues and used film as well as print to communicate his message, thereby broadening his audience. Even before Schaeffer's death in 1984, evangelical scholars were assessing his thought. That process now continues as an attempt is made to put Schaeffer's life and ideas into perspective.

Reflections on Francis Schaeffer brings together ten essays by evangelical scholars who examine various aspects of his thought. The subjects include Schaeffer's intellectual roots (Forrest Beard) and apologetic method (Gordon R. Lewis); his understanding of philosophy (Ronald W. Ruegsegger), art and music (Harold M. Best), and modern theology (Clark H. Pinnock); and his views of history (Richard V. Pierard), ethics (Dennis P. Holinger), America (Ronald A. Wells), and evangelicalism (James B. Hurley). Except for Best's essay, which tends to wander from its topic, the chapters are well-focused and clear, although they often overlap one another.

For the most part, the authors agree in their assessment of Schaeffer. They frequently praise him for encouraging conservative Christians to take ideas seriously and to engage their culture. They portray him as an admirable person, particularly in his work with young people at his L'Abri retreat. And they view him as an evangelist rather than a scholar.

It is Schaeffer's scholarship that most interests these writers. Despite their sympathy with his objectives, they universally agree that Schaeffer's learning was not very deep. Although he had some sense of the general direction of modern thought, several of the authors state that he possessed little knowledge of specific thinkers and ideas. In explaining Schaeffer's scholarly weaknesses, Pinnock points out that his research was often largely limited to newspaper clippings. With regard to an even more fundamental issue, several writers criticize Schaeffer's tendency to reduce everything to world view. This idealistic reductionism, they say, overlooks the impact of

such influences as economics and technology in society and styles and forms in the arts.

The only point of major disagreement among the authors is whether Schaeffer was a presuppositionalist—following the tradition of Cornelius Van Til—in his apologetic method. On the one hand, Ruegsegger argues that he was not a presuppositionalist and Lewis states that his approach “was a nontechnical version of the verificational method” (p. 86). On the other hand, Pinnock finds him inconsistently moving back and forth between presuppositionalist and verificationalist methods. The issue is not merely academic, for it addresses the question of how one is to “speak”—to use Schaeffer’s word—Christianity in the unbelieving twentieth century.

This volume is a valuable corrective for those who have uncritically accepted Schaeffer’s arguments, and it increases our understanding of an important influence upon the recent history of conservative American Christianity. By pointing out the flaws and limitations of Schaeffer’s work, however, these essays also remind us that what he was attempting to do was a task that needed—and still needs—doing. Hopefully other Christians with greater learning and precision of thought and expression will carry on Schaeffer’s efforts to relate Christian truth to the intellectual and social needs of modern man.

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Steinmetz, David C. *Luther in Context*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986. xiii + 146 pp. \$25.00/\$7.95.

David C. Steinmetz, already well known for his scholarly contributions regarding Johann Staupitz and Luther, has put us in his debt by another significant publication contextualizing Luther. *Luther in Context* consists of a series of ten essays, as follows: “Luther Against Luther,” “Luther and Augustine on Romans 9,” “Luther and the Hidden God,” “Abraham and the Reformation,” “Luther Among the Anti-Thomists,” “Luther and Hubmaier on the Freedom of the Human Will,” “Scripture and the Lord’s Supper in Luther’s Theology,” “Luther and Calvin on Church Tradition,” “Luther and the Drunkenness of Noah,” and “Luther and the Two Kingdoms.” The substance of five of these essays has previously appeared in print.

According to the author, “These essays are exercises in intellectual history. They try to cast light on Luther’s thought by placing it in the context of his theological antecedents and contemporaries” (p. x). “A thing is frequently shown in sharper relief,” he goes on to say, “if it is compared with something else similar to it but from which it differs in certain important respects” (ibid.). In presenting his material on the various topics, Steinmetz generally follows the style of selecting and summariz-