

Science,” considers the contemporary relationship between religion and science; and the thirteenth article called “The Bible and Music” considers the relationship between the Bible and music, contemplating the function, sounds and form of music, and addressing music in the Old and New Testaments as well as the development of music in church worship throughout history.

Articles in this book are divided in the following way: some articles offer an *introduction* to a certain theme, some point out the *theological background* of a certain theme, while some articles deal with a theme connected to *historical* or *contemporary* contexts. Articles are written in a manner that has quality and is informative, and most offer the reader additional reading for further study.

The Book *Transforming Word* is a modest book as far as the number of pages, but its greatness is in its content because it encompasses and introduces one into a broad range of theological themes which are normally hard to find in one place. With its content, this volume offers a useful foundation for an introduction into studying the Old and New Testaments, and it certainly represents an ideal help for the academic community as well as for lay believers and for any serious students of the Bible. For, as the editors themselves point out, “We wrote bearing in mind the reader, in order to help him in engaging in the biblical text with greater understanding and commitment”.

Considering the fact that Protestant theological publishing in the Republic of Croatia is still starting out and is distinctly lacking, this volume (as well as any other theological book coming from the Protestant academic community) represents a great contribution to the theological thought in this area. There is no doubt that this book will be helpful to many people and a blessing in studying the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, the second and third volumes of this commentary which will offer an introduction and commentaries for every biblical book, are eagerly awaited.

Ervin Budiselić

Translated by Daniel Jambrek

Matthias Flacius Illyricus

**How to Understand the Sacred Scriptures from Clavis Scripturae
sacrae** (translated by Wade R. Johnston)

Saginaw, Michigan, Magdeburg Press, 2011, 118 pages

One of the most important works of the great man of the German (and Croatian) Reformation, Matthias Flacius Illyricus, is definitely *Clavis Scripturae sacrae*, one of the fundamental works of biblical hermeneutics. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and far into the eighteenth century, it was one of the theo-

logical works that was read the most. It was published for the first time in Basel in 1567, and, according to the opinion of many people, this most original work of Flacius, because of its quality and popularity, was printed in numerous editions during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries thus significantly influencing the development of theological thought and education. However, considering the fact that all the complete editions of *Clavis* were only in Latin, this valuable work has, in more recent times, been almost completely forgotten, available only to a small circle of specialized experts which is, unfortunately, still the case for the majority of Flacius' other works.

This year an important translation of an excerpt from this capital work by Flacius was published. The work being reviewed here is the English translation of the first four chapters of the first discussion (*De ratione cognoscendi Sacras litteras*) of the second part of Flacius' extensive *Clavis*. Just how important this enterprise is can be seen in the fact that it is (as far as this author knows) the first translation of one of Flacius' works to this world language. In fact, until now, readers of English could not read one whole work by Flacius, nor any significant excerpt from one of his bigger works. This, however, is not the first edition of a translation of this part of *Clavis* to a contemporary language. In 1969, Lutz Geldsetzer published a German translation of this particular part of *Clavis* according to the Frankfurt edition from 1719. After that, in 1993, that part of the *Clavis* (according to the first edition in 1567) was translated into Flacius' mother tongue, Croatian. It was translated by Željko Puratić, commented on by Jure Zovko, and published by the Croatian university publisher in Zagreb. In 2009, that part of *Clavis* (according to the 1567 edition) was translated into French and published by Presses Universitaires du Septentrion. Philippe Buttgen and Deni Thouard worked on that translation and its commentary.

This English translation was given to the public by the recently founded publishing house Magdeburg Press from Saginaw in Michigan in which several Lutheran pastors are involved. I'm not sure what he is trying to say with this part of the sentence Despite extremely humble financial resources (as they themselves say on their web page), they invested great effort in their enthusiasm to publish less famous (though, they think not less important) works of the "fathers of Lutheranism" (among which the Croat Flacius holds a high place) to today's readership, (primarily, the inheritors of Luther's Reformation) and in that way positively influence the life and health of the church. In this project, two men have been especially prominent: Wade R. Johnston, who translated the book from the Latin original, and Jack Kilcrease, who wrote a short study with the title *The Life and Theological Contribution of Matthias Flacius Illyricus*.

At the beginning of the book, in his short Foreword, the translator humbly admitted that his job was not easy, and at the same time he expressed his hope that

his work would encourage someone more talented to enhance his work, translate more works of Flacius, and maybe one day even translate the whole *Clavis*. Even though he is aware that Flacius was not immune to some deviances, still he emphasizes Flacius' role in paving the way for the creation and content of the *Formula of Concord* (1577), and the fact that "many areas of scientific research can recognize Flacius as a key figure in their development" (p. 6). He especially emphasizes Flacius' axiom which pervades the translated text in its entirety, that the Bible mostly interprets itself, and he believes that this, along with other principles that Flacius mentions in his text, will help devout observers to get to know the richness of God's word and apply it in their lives.

In his study of Flacius' life and theological contributions, Jack Kilcrease introduces the reader to Flacius' basic biographical information and the historical-theological context in which Flacius lived and worked, succinctly and clearly demonstrating all the most important characteristics of his theological thought, as well as all the discussions he was involved in. It could be said that he used all the relevant literature for the task, often even being excessive in depth and scope, both in the list of literature used as well as in the content which he envelops in the overview. Thus, in a large part of the text, (almost) every sentence is accompanied by a footnote, which is truly unnecessary, and it often needlessly tires the reader. If one ignores these methodological faults, one has to admit that Kilcrease made a very good overview of Flacius' life and work in such a condensed form (just 35 pages). It is also very useful that he explained some of the lesser known places in the translation with appropriate notes. It is worth mentioning that throughout the Foreword written by the translator, as well as throughout Kilcrease's study, a passion (which should not be mistaken for bias) for the subject being studied - Flacius and the Bible - can be seen which is not often seen in scientific works, and which will surely make this work accessible and interesting to a wider circle of readers.

With all this said, it can be concluded that the authors and associates of this work succeeded in achieving their intent: to bring the (character and) work of a great man of the Lutheran Reformation closer to a wider circle of contemporary readers (notably among the members of the Lutheran or evangelical churches), and in this way positively influence the life and health of the church which always has need to draw again from its sources, both historical and biblical. Therefore, this work can serve as an intellectual and spiritual development. Because of that, congratulations are in order for the publisher and associates that worked on this project, and well-wishes for success in their future work (they announced more such projects); and to the readers, a hearty recommendation of this work.

Tomislav Vidaković
Translated by Daniel Jambrek