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Author(s): Wesley J. Wildman
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Something as familiar as symbol usage may not seem promising as a topic for close analysis. But philosophically minded people thrive on first noticing the familiar, no mean feat, and then plumbing its depths. In this volume, Robert S. Corrington plumbs the symbolic world as deeply as any philosophical theologian ever has. He interprets human symbol wielding in a thoroughly naturalistic framework. In fact, the book can be thought of as an essay in the philosophy of nature, wherein symbols and symbol wielding are disclosed as the most basic stuff of nature—an argument begun in his Nature's Self (Lanham, Md., 1996). In such a picture of reality, nature is an infinite semiotic flow, each sign of which expresses an interpretation that takes some other signs to mean something. There is no bedrock of basic signs here: semiosis goes all the way down.

In this ontology of signs, conscious interpretation is not a precondition of meaning; rather, consciousness arises from the infinitely tangled web of signs and interpretations. In fact, the semiotic flow gives birth to every complex emergent structure, from the invariable relationships that we call laws of nature to the variable conventions of social life, from the simplest arrangements of matter that have significance for something else to the wondrous chaos and order in balance that is human life.

The psychologically attuned reader will immediately ask how the emergence of consciousness from a semiotic flow relates to the dynamics of the unconscious that Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and others tried to trace. Corrington spends most of the first part of the book describing how the ontology of signs transforms our conception of psychoanalytic categories. His term "psychosemiosis" names this transformed view: the human unconscious is blunt evidence of the way human beings process signs and interpretations at a level more basic than conscious-
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In Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics, William Lazareth engages in a close analysis of the biblical sources and norms of Martin Luther’s theological and social ethics. He seeks to demonstrate that Luther’s ethics as well as his theology is indeed “wholly determined by Scripture” (p. 31). He describes Luther’s approach to reading Scripture as christocentric and intra-Trinitarian. This approach “enables biblically guided Christians to interpret the totality of human life, and especially their new life in Christ, in organic relation to the adoration of

LAZARETH, WILLIAM. Christians in Society: Luther, the Bible, and Social Ethics. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001. xii+274 pp. $22.00 (paper).