

gence and the obsessive moral tension about human responsibility that never became despair only because he regarded despair as an evasion. Many of these poems are about his third marriage and his life in England. Others are addressed to friends and fellow writers aging or dead. "This Golden Summer," to his wife, is a love poem in which the age of the lovers does not daunt but reinforces their autumnal passion: *We have plucked the illicit corn, / seen the Scriptural / fragility of flowers.* In "Our Afterlife (I)," he describes the energy and melancholy of this dying life: *We are things thrown in the air / alive in flight . . . / our rust the color of the chameleon.* Few poets end as strong as they began. Without the sentimentality he taught us to loathe, we can say that Lowell did.

— Frank D. McConnell

**REAPING THE WHIRL-
WIND: A Christian
Interpretation of History**

by Langdon Gilkey
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Difficult because it deals with highly abstract matters and sets up a dialogue with a great variety of theological schools, Langdon Gilkey's book is unquestionably important. It picks up and advances one of Christianity's central but most neglected themes: Providence. Theology's classical doctrines do not, in Gilkey's view, allow enough scope for human freedom and responsibility. Neither does "process theology," stemming from Alfred North Whitehead (*Process and Reality*, 1929), do justice to the Biblical faith. Gilkey holds that in creating free beings God imposes bounds on himself but within these bounds establishes, grounds, limits, judges, and rescues the present. The novel possibilities thus evoked in man help to shape the future. To nontheologians who lack the leisure to follow all the ins and outs of Gilkey's laborious argument, one can enthusiastically recommend the final chapter. It summarizes many of the findings of the book and could almost be read as an introduction to the whole. The opening chapters, on the promise and menace of our future, show how the religious dimension cannot be neglected in any serious effort to appraise the hopes and fears of our present technological civilization.

— Avery Dulles, S.J. ('77)