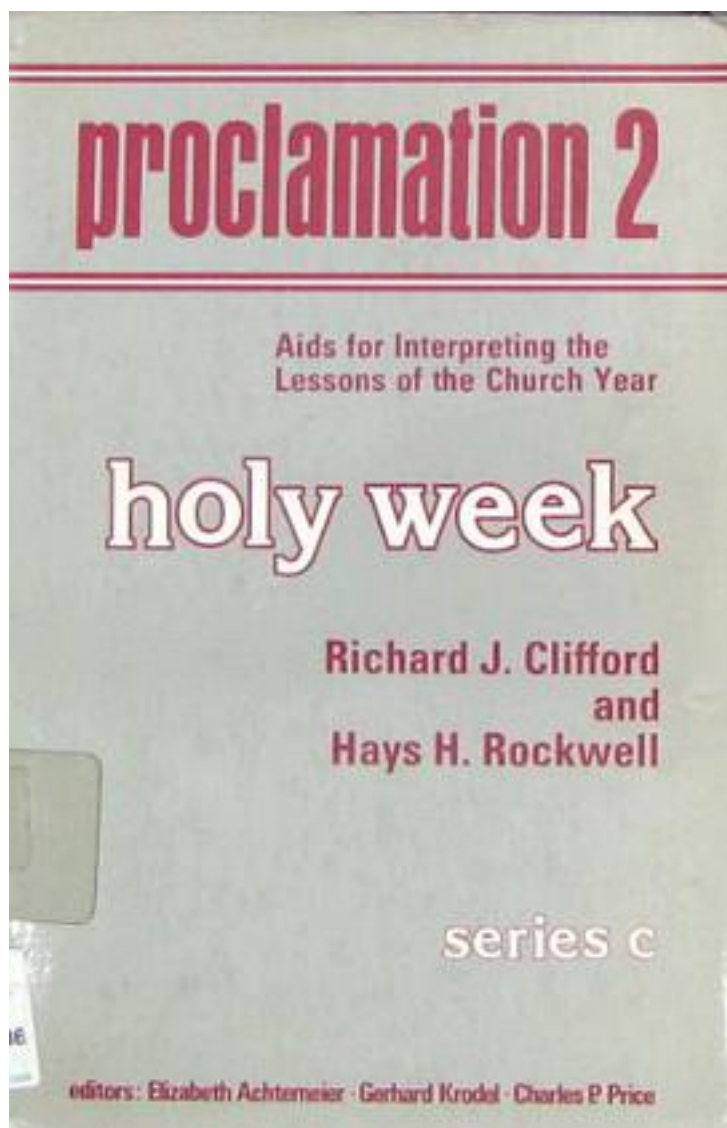


Proclamation 2



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出版者:

出版时间:1979-1

装帧:

isbn:9780800640798

Editor's Foreword
In the celebration of Holy Week—the biblical drama of the salvation of the world is now moving rapidly toward its climax. That which was hidden in two thousand years of history is now soon to be revealed: God's lordship over all the earth—to which every knee shall bow. At the center of the drama are the suffering and glorification of Jesus Christ. Thus the lessons of the Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday) tell the story of his suffering and promise his exaltation to glory. The lessons of each day of the week spell out the significance of these events. Two traditions merge on the Sunday before Easter: the fourth-century Jerusalem custom of commemorating the triumphal entry in a procession of palms—and the fifth-century Western commemoration of the day as the beginning of the Lord's final passion. It was the latter which passed into the Reformation—but in the present lectionary the two have been almost combined: the story of the passion is read—but the joyful mood of the triumphal entry is preserved by the OT and Epistle lessons. Maundy Thursday's name is taken from the Latin—mandatum—"commandment"—remembering Jesus words "A new commandment I give to you . . ." at the washing of the disciples' feet. The ceremony of foot washing was widely practiced in the Middle Ages and in Reformation England—but it is the eucharistic imitation of the Last Supper which predominates in practice. In the custom of the fourth-century Jerusalem church this was followed by a visit to Gethsemane after midnight. In the primitive church Good Friday and Holy Saturday were originally simply fast days in preparation for baptism and participation in the Easter Eucharist. It was again—the fourth-century Jerusalem church which introduced the three-hour Friday service of reading hymns and preaching so often found today. The Jerusalem service took place at the actual site of Golgotha—followed by a visit to the Holy Sepulcher in the evening.

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