My response to Emerson Powery begins with a cordial ‘Thank you!’ Reading his article, I was gratified to find myself correctly, even perfectly, understood and interpreted. And I felt honoured that he paid so much attention to such a small book as Matthew in History. It is in fact a small ‘side product’ of my work on Matthew. I am convinced that the biblical texts which we interpret have a lot to contribute to our hermeneutics and that a hermeneutic of biblical texts should be developed through listening to the biblical texts and through communicating with them. This was the reason why I decided to write first my commentary on Matthew and then a hermeneutic (if possible!) only afterwards, taking advantage of my experiences with the interpretation of the texts. But then the main work, the commentary, of which Wirkungsgeschichte is a major and central part, took me much more time than I

* Ulrich Luz (Dr. theol. habil., University of Zürich; Drs. theol. h.c., Leipzig, Budapest, Sibiu) is Professor of New Testament Studies at the University of Bern, Switzerland, and recently served as President of Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas. He is best known to students of the New Testament for his multi-volume commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew (to appear in English in the Hermeneia series; Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress) and his recent monograph entitled The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). His work in hermeneutics has included an emphasis upon the history of the effects which the biblical text has had upon its readers.

1. Matthew in History: Interpretation, Influence, and Effects (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994). References to this book will be given in parentheses in the main text.

2. There is no satisfying translation of this German word, therefore Powery left
expected. This was the reason why I felt that I should not hold back all of my hermeneutical side-reflections till the end, but publish some of them in a preliminary form after the completion of volume 2 of the commentary. This became Matthew in History. Unfortunately, the book is now out of print and has been so for more than two years. This is, in a few words, the history of the booklet. In my response I follow the three parts of the review article.

1. Description

Here I have only one concern. Towards the end I was speaking about the two possible 'criteria of truth' of a new interpretation of a New Testament text, namely its correspondence with the history of Jesus on the level of the dialogue with the past, and the coming about of love as its effect on a functional level in the present time. I ended with the proposal that these two criteria should be considered as two aspects of one sole christological 'criterion' (Matthew in History, pp. 96-97) and interpreted as a contemporary analogy to what the Church Fathers called the 'two natures of Christ' or to the 'Christ of history' and the 'Christus praesens'. This was for me a very important point, because I think that already in New Testament texts it is the power of the living

it untranslated in his article. What could a translation be? 'Effective history'? This was the term used by the translator of Gadamer's Truth and Method; it expresses well the fact that the texts have power. 'History of effects'? This may be a more literal translation which expresses the fact that texts and their interpretations have consequences and effects in the subsequent history. 'History of reception'? This is a neutral term common in the science of literature; for this reason it tends to be limited to textual receptions. 'History of influence'? In this way the term was translated by W. Linss in the English edition of volume 1 of my commentary (see n. 3 below). This term is very appropriate, but at the same time very neutral and faint. I follow Powery's example and use the German term, and even expand this usage a little bit by also using the corresponding German adjective wirkungsgeschichtlich.

3. In German it is almost complete. Three volumes have appeared: Das Evangelium nach Matthäus. I. 1-3; II. 8-17; III. 18-25 (EKKN, I, 1-3, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1985-97). I hope to finish the manuscript of volume 4 by the end of this year. Volume 1 has appeared in English only (Matthew 1-7: A Continental Commentary [trans. W. Linss; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989]), then it was decided to take the whole project into the Hermeneia series. I hope that volume 2 will appear soon.

4. There are presently no plans of a reprint. I still have about 10-20 copies for urgent needs.