CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
QUARTERLY

CTQ

Volume 58: Number 4

OCTOBER 1994

Book Reviews

BLACK CHRISTIANS: THE UNTOLD LUTHERAN STORY. By Jeff G. Johnson. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991.

This book is of special interest to the reviewer since he worked among African-American Lutherans in Alabama two years and at Immanuel Lutheran College and Seminary in North Carolina for the next four and a half years after having served three years in Nigeria. The reviewer was well acquainted with Rosa Young, Dr. Peter Hunt, Pastor Jenkins, Dean Lynn, and many others at that time. Much of what Dr. Johnson writes in this book is quite familiar to the reviewer. The reviewer left Immanuel College and Seminary in December of 1955 for a call to St. John's College in Winfield, Kansas, only because the seminary no longer had the support of its constituency.

Dr. Johnson has done an immense service for Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike by what he has written. His research has been painstaking and has extended over many years. The detail with which he writes is simply amazing. The reviewer, via this book, has learned of things which happened immediately around him while he worked in the South from 1949 to 1955 but of which he was not aware.

In Part I Dr. Johnson writes concerning Black Lutheran work in the American Colonial North during the years 1669-1776; in the Danish West Indies beginning in 1713; in the American Colonial South between 1717 and 1781; in Surinam beginning in 1791; and in Guyana beginning in 1818—all with reference to Lutheran influence on Blacks in these various parts of North and South America. In Part II he writes of Lutheran Black work in the Southern slave states (1774-1865); Jehu Jones and the first all-Black Lutheran church (1832-1849); and the Old Lutherans in the South (1865-1891). By the "Old Lutherans" Dr. Johnson means the antecedents of ELCA, namely, the General Synod of the North and the United Synod of the South.

Part III is devoted to the rebirth of Black Lutheranism (1877-1950). Here Dr. Johnson treats the work of the Joint Synod of Ohio, the Alpha Synod, and the Synodical Conference (the LCMS, the WELS, and the ELS). It is at this point that members of the Missouri Synod will begin to feel at home, especially if they happened to work in Louisiana, Alabama, or North Carolina among Black Lutherans. Though the story is a familiar one to many, it is told afresh here and is worth reading.

Part IV is devoted to the question of where we go from here under two heads: "The Great Debates of 1930-1964" and "Integration, Inclusiveness, or What? 1947-1990." This chapter covers the period of the movement of Black Lutherans (especially during World War I and World War II) from the South to urban centers in the North, where they helped establish

congregations in Oakland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Kansas City, Detroit, Washington D.C., Baltimore, New York City, and elsewhere. This account is a glowing testimonial to the thoroughness of the Lutheran work done in the Deep South. These Black Lutherans did not join other churches when they went North; they started their own Lutheran churches.

Part V is devoted to African-Americans inside mainline Christianity. The Appendices contain worthwhile material and statistics about Black Lutheranism in the western hemisphere. But where among the other lists of pastors are the names of current Black pastors of the LCMS? They are conspicuous by their absence.

On page 196 Dr. Johnson claims that "in order to be a 'good black Lutheran,' one had to become a 'good black German.'" This statement is made with reference to the work of the Synodical Conference in the late years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of this century. What is said about requirements of German is simply inaccurate. The reviewer worked side by side with Peter Hunt, Pastor Jenkins, Rosa Young, Dean Lynn, and others in Alabama and North Carolina. No one ever told him that the learning of German was required. Nor was any vestige of German culture required. We were German-American Lutherans working among African-American Lutherans. We were all Americans and our point of contact was confessional Lutheranism, which African-Americans very much appreciated. Rosa Young said so repeatedly. Everyone spoke English and only English was used in both study and song.

African-American Lutherans are clearly more than ready to assume responsibility for themselves. They have the wherewithal and the determination.

Anyone interested in American church history or the history of missions in America would do well to own a copy of *Black Christians*. It is well written and reads easily.

Harold H. Buls

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Charles B. Puskas. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Charles Puskas is Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies at Drury College and Associate Minister of Schweitzer United Methodist Church in Springfield, Missouri. His *Introduction to the New Testament* is not an isagogics, but a presentation of what he believes are three non-negotiable essentials of New Testament study: (1.) The Backgrounds of the New

Testament; (2.) Methods for Interpreting the New Testament; and (3.) The Formation of Early Christianity. Following this scheme, his book falls into three sections of about 80-90 pages each.

The four chapters of Part I ("Backgrounds") survey the Greco-Roman context, the Jewish background (Judaism's struggle for identity is compared appropriately with modern Poland), the development of Koine Greek, and the transmission and criticism of the New Testament text. Part II ("Methods") again falls into four chapters: "Historical Methods of Criticism," "The Genres of the Gospels and Acts," "The Ancient Letter Genre," and "The Genres of the Revelation of John." A preoccupation with stylistic features and literary forms and genres is evident. Part III is a mini-history of the New Testament and early church, covering the chronology of Jesus' life, the historical Jesus and His message, a chronology of Paul's life, major phases of early Christianity, and emerging Christian orthodoxy.

The Lutheran pastor will find Puskas' book uneven in value. Part I is a succinct and reliable summary of New Testament background. Part II is dominated by historical-critical presuppositions. It lacks appreciation of the role of the Holy Spirit and the apostles in shaping Sacred Scripture; all is community formation, at a time far removed from Jesus and the Twelve. (For example, John Reumann's dating of the gospels—with the exception of Mark, all to *circa* A.D. 90 and beyond—is the pattern followed [p. 85].) The New Testament is portrayed as a diverse and difficult body of literature, the province of the trained expert.

Part III contains some valuable historical information from the first century, the early church fathers, and their heretical opponents. Puskas' treatment is influenced by the critical approaches of scholars like Kaesemann, who see conflicting theologies in the New Testament later synthesizing in the creeds and structures of "early catholicism." The book concludes with helpful appendices on "The Formation of the New Testament Canon" and "English Translations of the New Testament."

Gregory J. Lockwood

CHURCH PLANTING FOR REPRODUCTION. By Samuel D. Faircloth. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991.

Samuel D. Faircloth planted churches in Europe, especially Portugal, during the past several decades. He now teaches in Tyndale Theological Seminary of Badhoevedorp in the Netherlands. His advisor during studies

at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Arthur P. Johnston, in a preface to *Church Planting for Reproduction* derives Faircloth's patience for structural detail from his training in engineering at the University of Illinois.

Sixty-two "figures" (i.e., graphic illustrations) help the reader envisage the steps in planting a church and bringing it to the point where it "reproduces" another new mission. The author needs forty-one pages to "introduce" his subject because of the average reader's need for (1.) an introductory history of the development of the concepts and methods of modern church planting and (2.) a clarification of PERT, "a control instrument for defining the *parts* of a job and putting them together in network form so that the person responsible for each part and the man charged with overall management knows *what* is supposed to happen and *when*" (p. 27). The acronym PERT stands for "Program Evaluation and Review Technique" (p. 27, as originally defined by B. J. Hansen).

Part II of the book has two chapters covering the "Preparatory and Pioneer Periods" (pp. 43-75). These chapters treat what we normally call "church planting," namely, motivation, choice of personnel, target area demographics and site location, finding a core of members, strategizing for evangelism, initial fellowship, discipleship and baptism of new converts, and the first-stage organization of the new mission congregation. The rest of the book tells us how to lead a congregation in the "Period of Growth and Organization" (Part III) and the "Period of Reproduction" (Part IV). Faircloth used eight "methods to make evangelistic contacts" in his work: "door-to-door surveys, telephone surveys, extended-family relationships, acquaintance surveys (social contacts), film projections in public places, social assistance contacts, distribution of literature with the church address, and neighborhood Bible-study groups" (p. 88). This book can assist both seminarians and pastors in using the PERT method of planning each step during the several stages of church planting. Its weakness could be in too much clutter in its footnotes and its quotations from the author's research, which may prove frustrating to laymen who want simple and straightforward instructions in starting a mission.

Harold Zietlow

THE INTERRELATIONS OF THE GOSPELS. A Symposium Led by M. E. Boismard, W. R. Farmer, F. Neirynck. Edited by David L. Dungan. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press; Louvain, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1990.

A symposium on the gospels was held in Jerusalem during the two weeks prior to Easter in 1984 for the express purpose of bringing together scholars with differing views on how the synoptic gospels were related. The mover behind the conference, Professor William Farmer of Southern Methodist University, is recognized as the leading contemporary proponent of the view that the order of the gospels is Matthew-Luke-Mark, now known as the Farmer-Griesbach hypothesis. For many, the various theories of origin of any of the books of the New Testament, including the gospels, may have no interest or use. Such matters become crucial only when cherished exegetical positions and theological opinions are threatened. The Jerusalem Conference on the Gospels of 1984 was Farmer's challenge to the critical orthodoxy that Matthew and Luke are dependent on Mark and "Q." The essays delivered there have now been collected into the present volume. Three views are offered here: the two-gospel hypothesis (Matthew-Luke-Mark), the two-source hypothesis (Mark and "Q"), and the multiple-stage hypothesis, which sees our present gospels evolving out of a more complex system of interdependency. Gathered for the conference was an impressive collection of international scholars: Benoit, Reicke, Orchard, Borgen, Riesner, Stuhlmacher, Gerhardsson, Tuckett, Daube, R. Fuller, Guelich, J. K. Elliott, and the names listed above. The format was that of a prolonged debate with each of the three positions being introduced on the first day and then one day devoted to each position with refutation being attempted by the other two positions. Each group made its case by comparing Mark 13:33-37 with the parallels in Luke 21:34-36 and Matthew 24:37-25:30. Interspersed among these direct encounters were fourteen essays of a related nature, such as Reicke's "History of the Synoptic Discussion," Dungan's "Synopses of the Future," and J. K. Elliott's "The Relevance of Textual Criticism to the Synoptic Problem." These essays were pulled together by David Dungan of the University of Tennessee for this publication of 1990. This monumental task of publication matched the equally enormous task which he had undertaken in arranging the conference itself. The religious seriousness of the task is evident not only in that Jerusalem and the two weeks prior to Easter were chosen for the symposium, but also in the way that each day began with morning and evening prayer and appropriate services were held on the special days of the period. Participants were aware that what was said about the gospels would have religious consequences. No conversions from one side to another were made, but the religious significance of the synoptic order is not thereby diminished.

Farmer's first purpose in this conference was to raise awareness in the

scholarly community that the documentary hypothesis is not beyond challenge. Even without mass conversions the results are evident. A group devoted to discussion of the two-gospel hypothesis is for the time on the annual schedule of the Society of Biblical Literature, and the two-gospel hypothesis is discussed in many of the most scholarly studies of the gospels, such as those of W. D. Davies (on Matthew) and D. Moody Smith (on John). Farmer's success may be reserved for the future, simply because the present generation of scholars has too much invested in Markan priority and the hypothetical "Q" document—considering the vast scholarly reservoir of books, symposia, and essays on "Q," its author(s), its development, its community, and its theology. Ridding the scholarly world of "Q" would mean mass scholarly self-annihilation. Markan priority is assumed without argument in nearly all studies on the gospels. Committing infanticide on intellectual children, in this case "Q" and Markan priority, is unnatural. Academic conversions are less likely than religious ones, since the latter are the products of the Holy Spirit and the former are not. Farmer is one who has himself gone through a conversion from the two-source hypothesis to the two-gospel hypothesis without an obvious religious motive. The critical orthodoxy of Markan priority is not completely satisfactory.

Farmer's tactic is first to cast doubt on the two-source hypothesis and thus ally himself with those who do not totally hold his views. For example, the late Bo Reicke saw the synoptics springing from a common tradition. Farmer sees the proponents of the multiple-stage hypothesis as allies. Farmer's view is not above challenge. His claim that Matthew comes after the fall of Jerusalem is questioned by C. S. Mann and Farmer's good friend, Bernard Orchard. Given the Jewish-Christian antagonism of the time, the fall of Jerusalem would have surely been mentioned in any document which was written after 70 to support the claims of Christianity. With nearly seven hundred pages of data, this recent collection of essays presents an opportunity to see all sides of the question discussed within two covers.

There are a variety of reasons for not walking into the swamp of synoptic relationships, as Farmer's group has. Pretending that the problem does not exist would be easier. Literary criticism follows just this course by examining one gospel without reference to the others. Canon criticism lumps the books together in a way not dissimilar to a more conservative stance which claims an exemption from any discussion on the basis of inspiration. Perhaps the easiest solution would be simply to accept the priority of Mark and the existence of "Q" and divorce the theological

enterprise from any opinion about the relationships among the gospels.

As long as the church sees the incarnation as the basis for her faith, however, she cannot ignore historical questions, including those involving the origin and relationship of the gospels. The incarnation involves God's participation in human history: *crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato*. Inspiration is an endorsement of the incarnation and not its denial. The creedal phrase "*apostolic* church" assumes Christ's historic institution of the apostolate and His inspiration of the Scriptures of the New Testament by means of the apostolate. Our confessions require allegiance to the "apostolic Scriptures." Apart from the raw exegetical data, whereby the issue must finally be resolved (*sola scriptura*), Lutherans, with their insistence that doctrine be biblical, have an ideological stake in placing Matthew first among the gospels. In critical circles Mark was placed first to support the view that Christian doctrine *evolved* from the simple teachings of Jesus to the complex doctrine of Paul. Placing Matthew first, and hence earlier than Mark, flies right in the face of any evolutionary development of doctrine (as advocated by von Harnack, Bultmann, and others). Clearly the question of the order of the gospels does have theological consequences. If it be argued that placing Matthew first is done only for ideological purposes and so is an exegetical conclusion made to fit a predetermined dogma, the same charge must be laid to those who hold on to "Q" and Markan priority. The exegetical method was tailored to fit the predetermined theological conclusion. Certainly not everyone who operates with one method or the other is aware of its ideological background, but its presence is foundational to understanding it.

Farmer's attempt at unraveling this prickly question is valuable, simply because he is not motivated by denominational loyalties or any apparent ideology. Making no claim to being a theologian, he may be only marginally aware of how influential he may be in the theological endeavor. Though the matter remains unsettled, he has made it possible to see all sides of the issue.

David P. Scaer

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ISAIAH: EXPOSITORY SERMONS ON EVERY CHAPTER OF ISAIAH. By Kenneth K. Miller. Ann Arbor: Cushing-Malloy, 1992.

Kenneth Miller has been a Lutheran pastor and preacher of the gospel for more than thirty years, but he is no ordinary preacher. He is a

preacher who has combined a knowledge of the biblical languages with a profound understanding of Old as well as New Testament theology and of the relationship between the two Testaments. The Old Testament proclaims the gospel of Christ as sweetly as the New. The Old Testament speaks about Christ, and Isaiah is the greatest gospel preacher of all the prophets. It is for this reason that Miller preaches on this book which is so unknown and unappreciated by both Jews and Christians today. The Book of Isaiah can be understood and appreciated only christologically by recognizing that, when Isaiah speaks about the glory of God or His holiness or forgiveness or the redemption of His people, he is speaking of the church of Christ. It is because Miller understands this profound truth that his book of sermons is so good and relevant. Miller understands Isaiah's basic aim. And so Miller, with his firm grasp of the New Testament and of Christ's fulfilment of everything which Isaiah said about Him, preaches Isaiah's gospel for people today.

Miller's sermons are expository; that is to say, he actually presents Isaiah's message and meaning, chapter by chapter, and applies it all to Christians today. Such exposition is a challenging task for one who preaches on New Testament texts, but more so for one who offers his hearers and readers the message of a prophet who preached and wrote seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, speaking of places and names and events which are remote and strange to us. But Miller is prepared for the task. His expository sermons, which many today consider the most difficult variety to preach to our impatient generation, are as relevant as they are textual and evangelical. In fact, the reason they are relevant is that they are textual and evangelical.

Miller's sermons are arranged chapter by chapter, rather than according to the church year, and yet Miller preaches on texts appropriate to every season of the church year and every festival (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Epiphany, Lent, etc.), for Isaiah prophesied concerning all those things. Although Miller's sermons were preached to members of his own congregations, they offer an excellent example and a wealth of help to pastors who wish to venture forth from the habit of preaching on chosen pericopes into preaching on one great book of the Bible for a sustained period of time. There is help here, too, for those preparing to teach a Bible class on the Book of Isaiah. Pastors may also wish to commend Miller's book of sermons to their church members for use in their private devotional life and family devotions.

Robert Preus

CONFESSING THE FAITH: REFORMERS DEFINE THE CHURCH, 1530-1580. By Robert Kolb. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991.

In part it is Kolb's thesis to show that within Christendom Lutherans and therefore Lutheran theology are unique in that they are confessional. Other communions within Christendom also wish to be known as witnessing to the gospel, but few among them, if any, retain their commitment to their confessional documents (if they have any) in the way the Lutheran church does. Lutherans declare publicly that these formulations are standards by which they want to attest to the articles of the Christian faith and that they believe these confessions to be correct expositions of God's word (Holy Scripture) by which they are willing to be judged and which they steadfastly intend to defend. These symbols are specifically the three ecumenical creeds and the various confessions which were adopted in the sixteenth century in the course of the Reformation (the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, the Smalcald Articles and Treatise, the Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord, both Epitome and Solid Declaration), all of which are contained in the Book of Concord.

Kolb raises the question of the need of additional confessional documents as the church faces the insinuation of new teachings that threaten biblical truths, but he expresses confidence that, if such a necessity arises in Christendom, "the Lord of His church will lead the church to determine when a new form is needed" (p. 135). That conclusion is, of course, a debatable point. How are we to know when the need has arisen and what the church is to do about it, if anything. More than ten years ago, in 1981, the late Dr. Wilhelm Oesch, longtime professor in Oberursel (Germany) published his *Plaedoyer* (entitled in the English translation of 1983 *An Unexpected Plea*) and argued for addenda to the Formula of Concord, specifically as regards the doctrine of the divine word, because of the damage done thereto during the past two hundred years by higher-critical theology, and the doctrine of the church, because of the confusion that reigns on this article as a result of misguided ecumenism and the activities of such organizations as the World Council of Churches. Dr. Oesch was uncertain in what way churches with a confessional commitment would go about this task in the twentieth century, although he felt quite deeply that such an undertaking could not emanate from some narrow precinct within Lutheranism. It had to be a world-wide concern that was urgently felt by confessional Lutherans in general, individuals (clergy and laity) and churches alike.

The primary focus of Kolb is on the Augsburg Confession, as indeed it might well be, and he has usefully delineated its background, history, and significance, then and now. This observation does not mean that the book is primarily a historical rehearsal. On the contrary, Kolb enters into the theological dimensions of the Augustana throughout his discussion, so that even those who are well acquainted with the confession can find grounds here to enhance their appreciation of it. In addition, Kolb has covered well the years between Luther's death in 1546 and the writing of the Formula of Concord in 1577, a time during which the Lutheran church was severely tested by various controversies. It was a period when one side hurried to formulate additional confessional writings, while the other side tended to water down the intent of the stalwarts who had stood before emperor and prelates at Augsburg in 1530.

There is a definite timeliness in this production in the series entitled Concordia Scholarship Today. The editors are concerned that the Lutheran church always remain a confessing church that is faithful to the gospel witness. They could hardly have been called upon a more qualified author to speak the desired word.

Eugene F. Klug

THE GRACE OF GOD, THE WILL OF MAN: A CASE FOR ARMINIANISM. Edited by Clark H. Pinnock. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989.

There is little reason to argue that Arminian thinking in theology has always been the favorite to win the support of the average man of this world. After all, every one born into it comes with a strong inherent propensity to synergism, and his exposure to the gospel does not wipe out this streak in him. Pinnock, along with fourteen other apologists for the Arminian thought-pattern in this volume, attempts to show "that God is a personal being who respects the integrity of the significantly free creatures he made" and that He is not "an all-determining Power who gets glory even from the damnation of sinners" (p. x). The book in a sense becomes pinnock's own personal account of the odyssey which had led him (and he believes many other evangelicals) far away from the rigid confines of Calvinian theology and such staunchly Calvinistic thinkers as John Murray, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Cornelius Van Til, Carl Henry, James Packer, and Paul Jewett (p. 17). The sticking point for Pinnock, as apparently for the rest of his "team," of course, was Calvin's "horrible decree" that destined the majority of the human race to eternal damnation.

As a Calvinist, Pinnock had found it increasingly disquieting and uncomfortable to hold that human actions could be both free and totally determined by the sovereign God. Hence he moved to Arminian thought-forms, by which God and His actions are changeable and conditioned upon human response in freedom. Now finally he is able to view eternal election as potentially encompassing everybody rather than arbitrarily excluding anybody, and man's election is subject to his free decision of faith. Pinnock's stable of writers chime in with enthusiasm for the Arminian solution, with individual chapters supporting universal grace and universal atonement. Others attempt resolutions of the problems connected with the sovereignty of God and His unlimited foreknowledge when seen in conjunction with the free—and so sovereign—creature (man). The fact that these writers come from Methodism, Pentecostalism, the Church of Christ, Seventh Day Adventism, and like communions explains why the Arminian solution is compatible with each. The book could well have included a Roman Catholic, since Roman theology (which denies the total depravity of man, asserts the capacity of man to make a decision of faith, advocates the free will of man in spiritual matters, and thinks of eternal election as resulting from God's foreknowing who would believe) is, after all, very close to much of Protestantism today, particularly the Arminian school. A serious misunderstanding and caricature of Luther occurs in the chapter by Jerry Walls on "Divine Commands, Predestination, and Moral Intuition" when the author equates Luther's view of predestination with Calvin's arbitrary election to reprobation, dismissing as unnecessary the "need to be detained by the distinctions between them" (p. 264). Walls' view is identical with that of Packer and Johnston in their introduction to Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, although their translation of this work, aside from the stricture stated, is much to be preferred over the version by Philip Watson which is included in the American Edition of *Luther's Works* (volume 33). Luther never dissociated man's accountability to God for rejecting His grace (offered through the word) from the *voluntas consequens*, the damning will of God upon unbelief. One has to concede that Pinnock and his collaborators have produced an exemplary specimen of Arminianism in modern dress, and for the study of contemporary Arminianism it becomes an invaluable tool.

Eugene F. Klug

JOHN CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. By John H. Leith. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster-John Knox Press, 1989.

From the time of the Reformation on, the Lutheran dogmatic tradition has been at pains to distinguish itself from both the Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions of theology. Accordingly, Lutherans have often defined their beliefs at least in part as being a repudiation of Calvinism, and Lutheran seminarians have been shown the great reformer of Geneva primarily, if not exclusively, through Lutheran lenses. Is that picture of Calvin's theology accurate, however, or does it represent a caricature of what Calvin actually taught and believed?

One way to answer the question is, of course, to read Calvin himself. Short of that undertaking, one can learn a great deal by reading treatments of Calvin prepared by those who still stand within the Reformed tradition and are admirers of one of its principal theologians. John Leith's new book provides an excellent opportunity for the latter approach.

Leith, a Presbyterian minister who has recently retired from the faculty of Union Theological Seminary (Virginia), has written a very lucid account of Calvin's theology from the perspective of the Christian life, that is, what Christianity means for the individual believer. Although this work discusses ethical themes, it is not really a treatment of Calvin's ethics *per se*, but rather a summary of Calvin's entire system from the perspective of how that system affects the individual in his faith and life. This approach Leith justified on the grounds that this connection was Calvin's real concern in doing theology in the first place; the purpose of Calvin's theology was "to glorify God, to save human souls, to transform human life and society" (p. 19) and not merely to speculate on abstract truth.

After an initial chapter in which he defines the Christian life as Calvin understood it—basically, man's "response to God's gracious activity in human life and in the world" (p. 86)—Leith proceeds to review four major themes in Calvin's theology from the standpoint of what they mean for the believer's life: justification by faith, providence and predestination, history and eschatology, and church and society. Each section is very well organized and very clearly written. Although Leith's treatment confirms the standard Lutheran criticism of Calvin in such areas as double predestination and the extension of the kingdom of God to human society, it also serves to show Calvin's great indebtedness to Luther as a champion of *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. Indeed, even with respect to predestination, some readers of this journal may be surprised to realize how emphatically

Calvin rooted his teaching in soteriological concerns rather than speculative ones, emphasizing election as the guarantee of salvation in Christ rather than as simply a manifestation of God's sovereignty.

Although Leith's book is well worth reading, there are two ways in which it is unsatisfactory. The first is its age. Although published in 1989, Leith wrote it in 1949 as his doctoral dissertation. As a result, he engages the scholarship of two or three or even more generations ago. There is nothing wrong with interaction with scholars of the past, but the absence of references to such scholars as William Bouwsma, Alexandre Gonaczy, Francois Wendel, and T. H. L. Parker is more than a little disconcerting.

Secondly, Leith insists on taking a critical stance over against Calvin in order to resolve the paradoxes that he finds in his thought. Again, there is nothing inherently wrong with such an approach, but Leith fails to offer an adequate justification of his criticisms. For example, Leith charges Calvin with failing to "give love a place of priority in the Christian community" (p. 217) on the ground that Calvin urged the magistrates of Geneva to defend and maintain the Christian faith in their city. Surely Calvin believed such actions to be quite consistent with true Christian love. Leith apparently believes Calvin's posture to be inconsistent with Christian love, but he fails to explain why. Leith, of course, is more in tune with modern sensibilities regarding the private and personal nature of religious belief than was Calvin, but do such sensibilities provide adequate grounds for criticizing Calvin? I doubt it. In spite of such criticisms of Calvin, Leith is an admirer of his thought; and in spite of my criticisms of Leith, I am an admirer of his book for offering a useful perspective on one of history's great theologians.

Cameron A. MacKenzie

MARTIN LUTHER: THE PRESERVATION OF THE CHURCH, 1532-1546. By Martin Brecht. Translated by James L. Schaff. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

With this translation of the third and final volume in this magisterial biography of Luther the reader of English has at hand a formidable tool with which to trace the reformer's life and thought. The work consists of chapters and sections organized around particular themes in a generally chronological progression. A fifty-page subject-index to all three of Brecht's volumes in English forms an important feature of the book.

This massively researched account of Luther, for all its sober scholarship, unfolds as a mainly appreciative one. Only rarely does Brecht editorialize, but his sympathies do show themselves. For instance, he maintains (with Luther himself) that the Wittenberg Concord was no compromise on Luther's part (pp. 51, 58, 326). In his account of Philip of Hesse, Brecht points out that, for Luther, bigamy was *not* the ethically neutral thing some popular accounts suggest (pp. 213-214). He reports in detail on Luther's political opinions and involvements, but insists that, on balance, "political concerns scarcely played a role for him." "Instead," says Brecht, "his concern was to emphasize his theological standpoint" (p. 64). Likewise, "Luther's theological controversies were always a struggle over the interpretation of the Bible" (p. 336). While critical of Melanchthon in the Cordatus controversy of 1536-37, Brecht offers a realistic and not uncharitable appraisal of Philip: "Melanchthon thought that he understood Luther better than Luther understood himself. Thus Melanchthon could let him speak without having to correct him" (p. 151).

In this work of biography Brecht does not fail to grasp Luther's theology, as evidenced by perceptive points made at key junctures. For example, "One of the most impressive claims of the antinomians was their deriving repentance from a recognition that the sin of unbelief really did injury to Christ and not to the law. As touching as that sounded, for Luther defaming Christ was only a special case of violating the First Commandment" (p. 161). Brecht, moreover, seems to be alert to paradox in Luther's theology of church and ministry. While he notes that Luther issued cautions regarding a suggestion that the Lord's Supper could be administered by laymen (p. 37), he summarizes his description of the communion service in *The Private Mass and the Consecration of Priests* (1533) in this way: "The pastor appears solely as the representative of the congregation, which is fed by Christ" (p. 77).

Only in chapter 13, "The Enemies of Christ and of His Church: Jews, Turks, and the Pope," does Brecht's previously sympathetic treatment of Luther turn more negative. He acknowledges that Jewish blasphemy in statements about Christ and the Virgin Mary moved Luther to publish *On the Jews and Their Lies* with its harsh proposals on treatment of Jews, adding that to treat blasphemy as a criminal offense was "inappropriate in the context of his theology" (p. 344; see pp. 346, 351). Interestingly, in describing earlier events in which Luther appealed to similar anti-blasphemy laws against the Anabaptists, Brecht had ventured no such criticism of Luther, although he did indicate the similarity with the reformer's later position on the Jews (p. 37). Why does he score Luther

in one case but not the other? Does this selectivity occur to avoid offending modern sensibilities?

Also in chapter 13 Brecht is equally critical of Luther's rectilinear exegesis of several messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. One example will suffice: "[Luther] tried to prove that the virgin birth had been prophecied in Isaiah 7:14, although it spoke only of a young woman, not of a virgin, and thus his proof cannot be conclusive" (p. 347). Here Brecht's contention (basically that Luther was wrong because he was wrong) stands out not only as selective, but also as decidedly modern. Here no attempt is made to set forth Luther's case on the meaning of the word *almah* (on which he offered to put his money where his mouth was), nor even to understand the man on his own terms. Instead, Brecht alleges that "Luther deliberately violated exegetical methods for the sake of what were for him higher theological principles" (p. 348). This sort of embarrassed dismissal of Luther also somewhat colors Brecht's section on Luther and the papacy in chapter 13 (see pp. 361-367, *passim*).

Errors of fact as well as judgment are bound to creep into any large work like this one. When one spot-checks the notes, in a few places the question can arise whether the sources have been fully reflected. For instance, while Brecht writes that "Luther would have preferred to keep the traditional practice" of elevating the elements in the Lord's Supper (p. 283), he cites a page reference to—but does not report on—this statement of Luther: "from the beginning I had been inclined to drop the elevation and certainly would have done so . . . if [not for] Karlstadt" (*AE* 38, 317; *WA* 54, 165). In the same paragraph Brecht says that Luther "had no objection" to communing the sick with elements remaining from the service. Luther's words in the source cited were these: "We do not think it should be done. To be sure, one must allow it for a while" (*AE* 54, 407; *WA* Tr 5, 55).

All such issues aside, the three-volume *magnum opus* by Martin Brecht (with honorable mention due to his translator, James Schaff) will provide scholars and pastors interested in Luther a mountain of valuable material for years to come. It is not too much to say that this work is destined for the status of "classic." It will remain the standard for years, possibly until the end of the next century.

Ken Schurb
Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE EARLY HISTORY OF GOD: YAHWEH AND THE OTHER DEITIES IN ANCIENT ISRAEL. By Mark S. Smith. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990.

Mark Smith's book is in some respects an updating of William Albright's *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, which came out in 1968. Since that time there have been ongoing major publications of epigraphic and archaeological information from old finds continuing to yield data and from new sites. Examples include the ongoing publication of the Mari letters, the discoveries of inscriptions at Deir 'Alla, Kuntillet 'Ajrûd, and Khirbet el-Qôm, excavations at Carthage, and the recent publication of nonbiblical writings of the Dead Sea Scroll community. This wealth of material coming to light within the past twenty-five years, according to Smith, has helped to produce four major changes in scholarly perspective which inform his book. The most significant change involves Israel's cultural identity: a large group of scholars currently believes that Israelite culture largely overlapped with, and derived from, Canaanite culture. The second major change in perspective, writes Smith, involves the nature of the "Yahwistic cult": old Israelite religion is understood by many scholars to have been essentially Canaanite in nature (actually, this is not such a "new" development). The third shift in perspective, Smith points out, involves the role of the Israelite monarchy. In the first half of its existence, Smith and others assert, the monarchy fostered the inclusion of various deities, or their features, into the cult of Yahweh. However, during the second half of the monarchy, religious programs patronized by the Judean kings Hezekiah and Josiah contributed to the differentiation of Israelite religion from its Canaanite past. The fourth change in outlook, according to Smith, involves the tremendous interest now expressed in the possibility of goddesses in Israelite worship life. The purpose of Smith's book, then, is to utilize the recent additions of data and these "major changes" in perspective "in order to illuminate broad trends underlying the development of various features of Israelite religion" (p. xxvii).

The author holds to the historical-critical method, with its theory that Israelite religion developed in a gradual evolutionary process. Specifically, Smith proposes that Israelite faith evolved from a limited polytheism, to monolatry, to monotheism (not a strikingly new proposal). Change came about, Smith affirms, due in large measure to two key developments: convergence (the coalescence of various deities or some of their features into the figure of Yahweh) and differentiation (of Israelite cult from its Canaanite heritage).

Starting with the period of the judges, Smith states that the deities of Israel were El, Yahweh, perhaps Baal, and possibly Asherah (a Canaanite goddess). However, Yahweh and El, in Smith's scenario, were regarded as the same deity (or equated) by the tenth century, and devotion to Asherah did not continue as an identifiably separate cult (her symbol, the asherah, was assimilated into Yahweh worship). Yahweh "held hegemony" over a complex religion that preserved some old Canaanite components and coexisted with Baal worship. Yahweh became the national deity during the monarchy, which was, Smith writes, equally a political and religious institution. In order to describe the powerful god (Yahweh) that brought them to prominence, the Davidic dynasts drew on older, "traditional" language used for the divine warrior Baal. Thus, the early monarchy embraced Baal's titles and imagery to describe its patron god. The second half of the monarchy, on the other hand, involved differentiation of Israelite cult from its Canaanite heritage. Numerous features of Israelite religion came to be rejected as Canaanite and non-Yahwistic. This development apparently began first, explains Smith, with the rejection of Baal worship in the ninth century and continued in the eighth to the sixth centuries with legal and prophetic condemnations of Baal worship, the asherah, solar worship, the high places, practices pertaining to the dead, and other religious features. As a result, a form of monalatry emerged during the monarchy. Smith concludes that the two major developments of convergence and differentiation eventually brought about monotheism, which Israel practiced and defined in the exile.

This book is not easy reading, both because of the subject matter and because of Smith's writing style, which at times lacks smooth connections and lucidity. Smith, however, has done thorough research, as exhibited in his ample footnotes. *The Early History of God* is a helpful summary of much modern scholarship concerning the religion of Israel.

Walter A. Maier III