Images Of Black Religion: A Historical Kaleidoscope
Milton C. Sernett

An Address To Lutherans
Sidney E. Mead

Messianic Prophecy And Messianism
Raymond F. Surburg

The Analysis Of Exodus 24, According To Modern Literary, Form, And Redaction Critical Methodology
Walter A. Maier

Theses On The Law And Gospel
David P. Scaer

Book Reviews
BOOK REVIEWS


Without a doubt, this book is for those who knew or studied under Morgan at the Moody Bible Institute. It was originally a series of addresses but later used as sermons to his congregation. Subsequently, it was published under the title “Wherein?” and reprinted now by Baker. Its significance centers in a holistic interpretation of Malachi’s message applied to modern man. As reviewer, we were not impressed.

William F. Meyer


A simple and useful little volume to assist the individual in enjoyable participation in formal Bible classes. The book is profitable reading for both Bible Class members or leaders.

John D. Fritz


This commentary on the Gospel of Luke is the sixth book from the pen of the chairman of the Department of Religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. It is written for both the scholar and the layman.

It is plainly evident that Mr. Summers is knowledgeable in the area of the Synoptic Gospels. A great deal of study has gone into the composition of this commentary. And he must be commended for a pleasing style of writing which never goes over the head of the reader. But it is also plainly evident that he does not allow the Word of God to speak in all its clarity.

One wonders whether Mr. Summers truly believes that Jesus is very God of very God. With reference to the healing of a paralytic (5:17-26) he writes: "He (Jesus) must be God—or at least God’s power must be working through Him." (p. 65) With reference to the calling of Levi Matthew (p. 67): "Jesus understood himself as representing a God who was concerned about sinners." With reference to the rich ruler (p. 213) this: "In his (Jesus’) incarnation he did not welcome the attribute ‘good’ as he understood that it belonged only to God. His question was a word of caution: ‘Be careful how you use the word good; it fits God only.’" Mr. Summers evidently assumed only a limited deity in Jesus. On page 310 this: "He gave up that form (of God) and took the form of a man. In that self-assumed limitation of his deity, he suffered as men suffer." And on the same page: "There is no basis for the idea that Jesus, having held off death, willed deliberately to die at this point and relinquished his spirit. Death came as the natural result of the scourging and the crucifixion with the loss of blood and the resulting dehydration of the body and mounting fever."

Secondly, the commentary is thoroughly synergistic. Such words as "decision" and "commitment" occur constantly. "The coming of the Christ faced men with decision; their decision determined whether their relation-
ship to bring him was one of salvation or judgment” (p. 48). With reference to the Parable of the Sower (p. 93), everything depends on the nature of the soil. On page 112: “The choice was and is every person’s, and only the person can make it.” On page 134: “The Son chooses to reveal God only to those who want to know him and will open themselves to him.” Page 117: “He (Jesus) meant that they should offer up to God as a gift their very inner selves. That would make them really clean—clean on the inside.” Page 174: “It was Jerusalem’s choice to accept or reject his offer of God’s mercy.” With reference to the Prodigal Son (p. 186): “He did not really know the father’s compassion until he surrendered himself to his father’s decision about him.”

Thirdly, it is immediately evident that this commentary attempts to make a compromise between the traditional view of Luke and that of the contemporary literary, form, and redaction critical view of this Gospel. Mr. Summers accepts a late date for the composition of Luke. This is necessary for the idea that Luke is a reinterpretation of Mark and earlier tradition for a theological purpose. “The eschatological outlook embedded in Luke is not anticipation of an early return of Christ such as marked the very early church and the writings of Paul in the fifties and sixties. The anticipation has not given way to despair. It is still present, but in place of impatience it has given way to the necessity of constant witness to a pagan world in order to bring them to a knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord” (p. 12). With reference to Jesus’ first passion prediction (p. 110) we find this: “One may accept the sayings as genuine sayings of Jesus and still grant some evidences of coloration of clarification added at a later time.” With reference to the question in 18:8: “If the question is Luke’s conclusion rather than Jesus’, it reflects an appraisal of the attitudes and reactions in his own day—probably around A.D. 80—as some Christians under pressure of the world and disappointed in the delay of the Lord’s return were losing heart rather than praying.” Mr. Summer’s exegesis of Luke 21 is Conzelmannian: “God’s redemptive history is viewed in three stages: the time of Israel, the law pointing sin and the prophets pointing to the sinbearer, the promised Redeemer; the time of Jesus with his fulfilment of God’s promise to send the Redeemer; the time of waiting, with the church witnessing of the Redeemer until his coming in consummation of God’s redemptive purpose at the end of the age. Luke wrote at a time when Jerusalem had been destroyed and even that took place forty years after Jesus went away” (p. 254). With reference to Judas (p. 287): “One can imagine the scornful tone in which this story was told and retold in those years of oral reporting before it was reduced to writing.”

It should be obvious from what has been said that the commentary is not recommended. Unless a commentator presents the Gospel of Luke as the very Word of God, unless he portrays the nature of man as the Word presents it, and unless he presents Jesus as the Word truly presents Him, true God and true man in one indivisible person, how can that commentator truly edify the reader?

Harold H. Buls

Scholar and layman alike can make good use of this commentary. The author has done his homework very thoroughly. The book contains an up-to-date bibliography and is well documented. One senses that Mr. Kent has thoroughly digested the material and his conclusions, generally, are thought through clearly. He considers the Old and New Testaments as a unit. And he writes in a readable and pleasant style.

Examples of his exegesis are herewith offered: "Basic to the entire discussion is God's rest, begun at the conclusion of creation. It is this present blissful condition of God which he longs to share with men. From this beginning the author develops the theme from one step to another. The physical rest in Canaan was merely one limited aspect, and is used as a type or picture of a deeper spiritual concept. That spiritual reality is the spiritual rest which the true believer may have even in this life, but it does not bring the fullest satisfaction until the future day when believers actually enter God's presence in heaven and 'rest from their labors.' God's salvation for man thus is covered in broad strokes, and is shown to involve physical as well as spiritual blessings, both in time and in eternity" (p. 85). "Old Testament atonement by animal blood depended for its value upon the death of Christ to come" (p. 174). With reference to 12:1: "The reference is probably not to some specific sin, but to the peculiar characteristic of all sin as continually surrounding me and so easily getting hold of them. The article with sin should then be understood as the generic use" (p. 258).

The author is a Calvinist and frankly admits his theological bias. His Calvinism comes out very clearly in a number of places. With reference to the apostasy passages in chapters 6 and 10, he comes to the conclusion that both passages are hypothetical because he believes that a true believer cannot fall away from faith. And on page 314 this: "Scripture is clear that a true Christian will not finally apostatize." This thought occurs again and again in this volume. Furthermore, "limited salvation" comes out in a statement on page 161: "It (salvation) is eternal, but it is not universal!" Perhaps he means, in this context, that it is limited to believers, but, in that case the choice of "not universal" is an unhappy one. One passage in the commentary definitely shows a millennialistic tendency on the part of the author. In a discussion concerning the covenant (pp. 159-160) the author speaks about the final conversion of the Jews as the final fulfillment of the covenant.

One would expect a Calvinist to limit Christ's presence to heaven. And that, evidently, is the intent of his exegesis of 9:23-25 on pp. 178-180. Some mystifying statements concerning the Old Testament Covenant are made. Page 154: "Because many under the old covenant had no personal experience of God as far as spiritual knowledge was concerned and the revelation itself was not complete, there was constant need for the priests and prophets to make known the latest word from God." And on page 185 these statements: "The fact that they (annual sacrifices) continued to be offered showed that the worshippers had no assurance of permanent forgiveness. Day of Atonement offerings brought forgiveness 'up to date,' but subsequent sins required further sacrifices, and the passing of another
year necessitated the cycle to begin again." This is obviously in error. The author pictures sin as an accumulation rather than guilt. The annual sacrifices pointed to the temporary nature of the Old Covenant not a different concept of sin or forgiveness from that which is presented in the New Testament.

And, finally, it must be pointed out that the author does not accept Ps. 8 as Messianic but rather as a description of what God intended man to be. Page 54: "In contrast to sinful man's failure, we may contemplate the man Jesus who fulfilled the description of Psalm 8."

If one is aware of these Calvinistic deficiencies, the commentary can be used with profit.

Harold H. Bula

II. THEOLOGICAL—HISTORICAL STUDIES

FAITHFUL TO OUR CALLING, FAITHFUL TO OUR LORD. An AFFIRMATION PART I. By the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1972. Paperback. 43 pages. 75¢. (AFFIRMATION II, containing individual statements, is available for $1.25.)

There is a certain definite risk in reviewing a publication like this. Who after all wants to handle the proverbial hot potato? FAITHFUL TO OUR CALLING (hereafter designated AFFIRMATION I) was pressed forth from its authors because they knew that everybody knew that they (the faculty majority) were at the vortex of the cauldron that caused synod's pot to boil over and was threatening now to blow things sky high. The faculty had a felt need to speak or write a word in its own defense and, if possible, justify its position.

When this is done on the basis of a universally received Confession like the Nicene Creed, it seems self-evident that the last thing any sane protagonist would want to do is to question anybody's theology. (As a matter of fact it is hard for this reviewer to believe that a consensus exists among the subscribers to AFFIRMATION I.) With broad, beautiful sweep come the specific affirmations:

We praise and magnify our God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Affirmations which follow express the faith within us that leads us to glorify our God.

We appeal to all who hear these words to unite with us in a common chorus of adoration.

All that is missing is a loud Amen. That is to be supplied, the faculty hopes, by voices throughout synod who will sound it forth to the doxology which they (the faculty) intoned.

Forever and a day there will be need for the church, and every believer in it, to sound forth its doxology. But doxology without theology is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. There is a time for doxology; there is a time for theology. It was the latter which the faculty had need to account for in a responsible way at this serious juncture in synod's history, and that they have failed to do. When meanwhile genuinely Biblical, Confessional, and Lutheran substance is being jettisoned, then the refrains become mere doxologizing with superficial and subtly inadequate theolo-
Reactionary drivel out of central Illinois' corn and soybean fields? We cannot help feeling personally the inevitable counterblast that will come, in just so many words. And, quite frankly, over the years it seems that an undue amount of one's time and energy has been diverted in what—even to oneself—seems like an unpleasant, reactionary business, the on-going protest against the undercutting of synod's theology. Much of the old familiar language is still there, but with new, unfamiliar, and unwelcome theology. When things have advanced so far that the threat is already within the walls, then silence is not only questionable but culpable. As the sainted and widely esteemed Dr. Martin Naumann used to say over against the insidious forces at work for the erosion of our Lutheran church's theology and doctrine, “Are we going to lie there like dumb dogs? Dogs who don't sound the alarm when the intruder is at the door?”

The concern is no longer a narrow one, affecting a few theologians. The whole synod obviously is roused up, whether the issues are fully understood or not. Many people, it is true—probably a good many pastors—are willing to let the dust settle as it may, indifferent to what's going on and how it will come out. That attitude is inexcusable when the Truth of God's Word itself is at stake. At Milwaukee, 1971, the synod instructed the synodical president to deal directly with the cause of the conflagration by appointing a fact-finding committee. One step followed upon another, more and more evidence coming out into the open (also beyond the confines of synod) that the issue was serious, involving a theological viewpoint sharply opposed to our synod and Confessional Lutheran theology.

What issue? According to AFFIRMATION I (Preamble, 3), “at the heart of the discussions in our Synod is the question of whether the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the sole source of our personal faith and the center of our public teaching.” With this came the strong disavowal of any other authority “to supplement the Gospel so that it is no longer the sole ground of our faith or the governing principle for our theology.” (Ibid.)

The first is not, and has not been, the issue! It is a clever dodge designed to throw off the scent and discourage any would-be pursuers from going any further. The second touches the nebulose point exactly. A person would have to be totally blind and theologically uniformed or misinformed, not to see that AFFIRMATION I, with its vaunted “freedom in the Gospel” is scuttling and throwing overboard the only principle which Lutheran theology has ever recognized as authoritative and final in establishing all articles of faith, the Scriptural Word of God.

Without question the first and chief article of the Christian faith is, our Confessions repeat over and over again, justification sola gratia/fide, and no Lutheran Christian will dispute this. That is the dogmatic foundation of Christian faith, the material principle, on which everything hangs as far as the sinner's salvation is concerned.

But the “governing principle for our theology,” ever since Luther pointed the church of his day back to the “external Word,” as he called it, has been the “pure fountain,” the “only standard, according to which, as the only test-stone, all dogmas shall and must be discerned and judged, as to whether they are good or evil, right or wrong,” (P.C., Bp., Intr.) the Scriptural Word of God. “The rule is,” wrote Luther of Scripture, “that the Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel.” (S&I, II, 15) This includes also the article on the Gospel as
distinguished from other "gospels" peddled by men. Nothing preempts this from Holy Scriptures. It is the God-given formal principle in theology. Nothing preempts it, that is, except a theology which subtly undermines it by substituting "the freedom of the Gospel," or simply, the "Gospel," as the "governing principle." Luther asked: "What Gospel?" I know no other Gospel, he said, than that of Scriptures!

AFFIRMATION I asks that this switch in authority be accepted, on the stated grounds that it is more nearly Lutheran, but actually—and this is the hidden agenda—because it comports better with the higher critical methodology on Scriptures. Bellwether Richard E. Koenig has his finger precisely on this point in his review of AFFIRMATION I (Forum, March 1973, 9), when he asks and then gives the answer: "Is the faculty position different from what Missouri taught previously? Of course it is." Soft sell has now become brazen boast with the more outspoken supporters of AFFIRMATION I.

Outsiders divide over Missouri's plight; for some it's glee, for others grief to see "solid Missourianism" (Jordahl's term in Dialog, Autumn 1972, 319f.) with its head on the block. Our brethren of the past are deeply concerned. Their voices are a haunting call back to "solid Missouri" stance. From Germany (out of the wider association of Confessional Lutheran churches, Kirchliche Stellung von Bibel und Rekennnis) comes the incisive analysis that the problem is, of course, not one of personality clash (Pres. Preus v. Tietjen), but simply this: "The issue turns on this question, whether the Missouri Synod will remain what she was till now, a Confessional evangelical Lutheran church." From down under in Australia rises the charge that "the Seminary document has jettisoned the organic foundation (i.e., the Scriptural Word and formal principle) and, as a result, the Gospel itself is in principle de-natured." From the French brethren, who likewise once depended on Missouri for spiritual nurture and support as the bulwark of Confessional Lutheran theology in the 20th century, the plaintive wail goes up: "Un Seminaire en peril!" and then spoiled out are the ingredients of this peril.

There is something terribly sad that runs through the whole effort, AFFIRMATION I. In striving to state and ground its theology upon the principle of relevancy, upon that which is presumably in tune with the day (like higher criticism), there is the fateful forgetting of what all of church history makes painfully plain, viz., that such "relevant" new theologizing is destined, before the century is out, to be irrelevant and die an early death. We shall try to point out some of these weaknesses, brief though critique will have to be.

The format of the nine discussions or chapters follows the pattern of the three articles of the Nicene Creed, as the Preamble of AFFIRMATION I already states. The announced purpose is to treat all issues according to principles that "are Gospel-oriented and therefore Lutheran." (2) As already indicated, the disavowal of Lutheran theology's formal principle cancels out any possibility of this happening, except, as Pieper says, by happy inconsistency.

Discussion One. God's Creation and the Beginnings.

Here at the outset AFFIRMATION I makes it very plain that it is going a new way, no longer bound by the Bible text as such, but "straining" with the "freedom of the Gospel" to give the meaning and import of
God's creation without being bound by Scripture’s teaching of literal creation according to Genesis 1 and 2. With right we ask, is it the evolutionary theories which dictate the conclusion that “these passages reflect the language of belief, not of scientific discourse,” or “biblical pictures,” and not fact? No call for a doctrine “of praise and wonder” can hide the spirit of agnosticism which hides behind the veiled language.

Discussion Two. God’s Creation and Human Beings.

While some (apparently unreconstructed old fogies), we are told, think of Adam and Eve as “two specific individuals,” there are others (ostensibly the more sophisticated elite) who refuse “to press the details of this narrative” beyond their purported intent of “proclaiming the truth about Everyman (ha’adam, “the man”) and every woman (Eve, “mother of all that live”).” Scripture, Old and New Testament, leaves absolutely no doubt in any reader’s mind that Adam and Eve were real, historical persons, with whom the human race began, that they fell into sin, and that through them original sin has been imputed upon all men as result. Is it really true, therefore, that “the message remains the same whether we consider the text of Genesis 2-3 a literal historical account,” (17) or not, as AFFIRMATION I maintains? Neither Scripture (Genesis 1-3; Rom. 5, 1ff.), nor the Confessions (SA III, I and VIII, 5.9; FC; SD, I, 38) provide this luxury or option! Higher critical methodology, on the other hand, operates with a different set of historical canons, in line with the faculty stance, one that allows for the mythological treatment of large parts of so-called Old Testament “history.”

Discussion Three. God’s Creation and His Wonders.

Precisely what is intended when the faculty opinion raises doubts about the “absolute acceptance of each detail of the miracle” and offers the advice instead that “to edify the Church, we ought to focus on this central meaning of the miracle accounts for us instead of dwelling on the authenticity of isolated miraculous details?” (19) The across-the-board attack on the supernatural has usually begun with this kind of whittling away at “isolated miraculous details.” Moreover, what finally is detail and what central in any of the miracles which Scripture reports? Can there be ultimate safeguarding of a key miracle like Christ’s resurrection, if this pecking away at the supernatural is countenanced at any point?

Discussion Four. The Promise and the Scriptures.

( Discusstions four to six are intended as expositions of the 2nd article.)

Immediately one comes face to face, once again, with the arbitrary polarizing of the Gospel ever against Holy Scriptures. There can be no quibble that “all of their (Scriptures’) parts must be understood in relationship to that (Gospel) center of Jesus Christ.” (21) But completely without foundation either in Scripture or the Confessions is the assertion that “the Gospel gives the Scriptures their normative character.” (Ibid.) One can only wonder, therefore, what motivates a blast like the following, that “any tendency to make the doctrine of the inspiration or the inerrancy of the Scriptures a prior truth which guarantees the truth of the Gospel” is “sectarian”? I must confess (and I believe every Lutheran must concur) that I have never met that Lutheran, nor read any Lutheran text on dogmatics, seen any Lutheran hymn, etc., which because of their adherence to the doctrine of Holy Scriptures’ inspiration ever set the Gospel in any but its rightful position as the first and chief article of the Christian faith.
But I have met and read any number of theologians who along with their denial of Scripture’s inspiration (and inerrancy), also denied not only some of Scripture’s miracles as reported, etc., but also the first and chief article of the Christian faith as well! That’s the way the things works, as everyone really knows!

The point is: whose side is AFFIRMATION really on? To which side of the grandstand is it playing? The language by and large is still Scripturally Lutheran, but the dialectics are clearly in the direction of higher criticism which has established itself as the chief creditor of both Scripture and the Gospel.

A specific case in point is worth mentioning. Only a Bultmannian existentialist exegesis would be content to say that “the fact that a given biblical episode is historical is not important in and of itself.” (23) Precisely this is what those who espouse the “Easter faith” like to say as they then go on to deny the Easter fact of the resurrection with all the terrible implications of this anti-Biblical theology.

Discussion Five. The Promise and Jesus Christ.
The same sort of bifurcation of event from meaning carries over into this section as AFFIRMATION I fiddles with the historicness of events and details in the life of Jesus as recorded by the evangelists, and then questions whether “doubt is cast on the historicity of Jesus’ resurrection” when doubt is cast on other events reported by the evangelists. (25) But why doubt, we ask? Is doubt somehow sanctified in the name of the so-called scientific results of the historical-critical method of dealing with Scripture’s text? Is Scripture to be relegated to the same category as other ancient literature? Do John 10, 35, 2 Tim. 2, 16. John 20, 31, etc., mean nothing at all? Is a statement like, “proof of the resurrection will not lead us to believe the Gospel or trust God.” really what a Christian would want to say? Especially when Scripture attests so plainly that there was no fact which turned the disciples around from doubt to faith as did the fact (and proof!) of the resurrection in the person of the physically risen Lord!

What “gospel” does AFFIRMATION I have in mind when it states that, because of Christ’s life, death and resurrection, God “now promises to free us from any force that enslaves us” and helps us “look to the future with confidence”? (26f) Heaven, too, in that future? Or is this merely the empty theology of hope, like Moltmann’s, which proclaims infinite progress into the future for mankind? It has all those earmarks, particularly because of what is not said and yet ought to be said in line with Scripture’s straightforward promises.

Discussion Six. The Promise and the Old Testament.
In this day and age when predictive prophecy is largely discredited for the Old Testament, we find objectionable the caution “not to leap prematurely into the New Testament to find the meaning of Old Testament passages” and the reminder that the “Old Testament deserves to be thoroughly studied on its own terms.” (28) Biblically controlled exegesis, where human reason has always been kept in its ministerial place, has always had this latter concern; but at the same time it has also recognized that the New Testament, on its own merits and authority, is the best interpreter of the Old Testament. Therefore, it objects strenuously to higher criticism’s refusal to give first place to what the New Testament writers have to say concerning prophetic promises in the Old Testament.
We puzzle, too, over the strange omission, or reticence to speak, of the definitely *Messianic* content in the promises to Adam, the patriarchs, David, etc. The best AFFIRMATION I is able to muster for these old worthies of faith are nebulous formulations like "new lease of life" (to Adam), "promise of God's concern for all men" (to Noah), "land of his own, national greatness, numerous seed, and the privilege of mediating God's blessing to other nations" (to Abraham), "Redeemer of oppressed people" (to Israel), etc., but nary a word directly about the Messiah. What ought to be a clear, grand attestation on the basis of Old and New Testament shows rather throughout the heavy pedal of higher criticism's avoiding predictive *Messianic* promises.

Discussion Seven. The Holy Spirit and the Mission of Christ.

(Discussions seven to nine are supposed to highlight the 3rd Article.)

Is the Gospel ever properly and fully stated, at least for Lutheran theology, when it is described in conditional terms of the "possibility of forgiveness" rather than in categorical proclamation of the accomplished fact of God's grace through Christ? (32 & 22) Hermann Sasse says quite correctly of Luther: "For him the Gospel was not a teaching concerning the *possibility* of the forgiveness of sins, but God's proclamation to the sinner, His bestowal of forgiveness of sins." *(In Status Confessionis, 47)*

This is an important point, if the Gospel's *efficacy* is not to be made contingent upon, or constituted by, the recipient's faith. AFFIRMATION I seems to miss this entirely, and thus comes off sounding more Reformed than Lutheran at this point.

Then, too, the reader may rightly wonder about the "Gospel" being presented according to the "thought patterns of every culture." It was one thing for St. Paul to become all things to all men that he might by all means save some, but this section of AFFIRMATION I teems with questionable theologizing which clouds the absolutely unique character and content of the Gospel, a Gospel which in no way comports with or learns from the so-called "living faiths" of mankind. This concern is heightened by the further diluting of the Gospel into a lateral program for the improvement of socio-economic-political conditions in the ailing body of mankind. True, the avenues of mercy lead in these directions, but what kind of "gospel" is it that brings about "the liberation of human beings from all evils" in this present wicked world? (33)

Discussion Eight. The Holy Spirit and the Community of God.

While Scripture highlights the uniqueness of the miracle of inspiration (2 Tim. 3, 16 & 2 Pet. 1, 21, e.g.), AFFIRMATION I flattens it out by dealing "the same dynamic power of God" broadly to "His spokesmen (who) fulfill His redemptive purposes for His community." (35) No wonder, then, that when attention finally rivets on 2 Tim. 3, 16, the reader is carefully prepared, step for step, to be in doubt about its evident meaning that "all Scripture is given by *inspiration* of God." His confidence in this text is methodically broken down by AFFIRMATION I telling him that . . .

1) It "has become," not is, a classic text for the doctrine of inspiration; (36)

2) It "is the only biblical reference which actually applies the term "inspired" to the Sacred Scriptures as such." *(Ibid.)*

So what?! Lutheran theology has always held it to be an inviolable
principle that articles of faith are established by clear verses (or verse!) of Holy Scripture.

3) "the writings referred to are clearly the writings of the Old Testament, probably in the Greek translation (Septuagint)." (Ibid.) The latter is an entirely irrelevant matter. And as to the former, that Paul's point of reference is the Old Testament, it might be well to point out what Chemnitz does, that this is the apostle's last letter and that, therefore, it ought not be said so quickly that he has only the Old Testament in mind but "the whole divinely inspired Scripture." (Examination of Trent I, 136)

4) the term "Theopneustos occurs only here." (Ibid.) This is neither here nor there, for the meaning is beyond cavil or doubt from Greek usage in Scriptural and secular realm. Beyond doubt, that is, except for AFFIRMATION I, for, horror of horrors, it opts for the grammatically unacceptable meaning that "the breath of God working in and through the Scriptures expresses the same idea," in other words, that "inspired means the same as "inspiringness." This is a totally un-Lutheran bowing in the direction of higher criticism's denial of Scripture's inspiration.

Little wonder after all this that the historicity and accuracy of the Scriptural writings are cast into the now customary mold or way of looking on things, that they are held to get the 'truth of God, "the Gospel," across unfailingly in spite of the errors, historical and otherwise, which they contain.

Discussion Nine. The Holy Spirit and the Teaching Activity of the Church.

We wonder where the theology of AFFIRMATION I can possibly lead when it posits the principle that "the Sacred Scriptures lay down no rules for interpretation and prescribe no method for communicating the message of the Scriptures to successive generations." (39) Holy Scripture, as Luther reminds us, with its inherent clarity invites careful reading and investigation, and needs to lay down no rules for interpretation. In fact, do you know any other book, ancient or modern, that does? But AFFIRMATION I wants the reader to believe, however, that methods of interpretation differ from age to age and that "the church stagnates and loses its effectiveness" if it fails to move with new methods. (40) So, in spite of the fact that the history of language has pretty well established that the art of communication, as employed also by God through chosen spokesmen or persons, embraces within it certain self-evident and basic rules of hermeneutics, AFFIRMATION I assures us that there may be a variety of ways for interpreting, particularly Scripture. Luther's answer against Erasmus, who tried the same trick or ploy 450 years ago, was: "This is the very devil!" And he was right in labeling it as he did; for notice how in the next breath comes AFFIRMATION I's assurance that the so-called "historical-critical methodology is neutral." Nothing was ever farther from the truth, and the sorry, broken trail left by this methodology in the hands of its dedicated practitioners is a matter of record. The tombstones of liberalism are everywhere, bearing record to the stifling of the Gospel in church after church, seminary after seminary, pulpit after pulpit, in all centuries past, but especially the last two. The assertion that "basically all the techniques associated with 'historical-critical' methodology, such
as source analysis, form history, and redaction history, are legitimated by the fact that God chose to use as His written Word human documents written by human beings in human language," (41) is unmitigated, unsubstantiated nonsense. If Missouri buys AFFIRMATION I's "legitimated" on the word of the faculty majority's assurance, it deserves what it has bargained for—to be swindled of the Word of God itself. Pious palaver can never cover the scarred and eroded condition of Christian theology as a result of such "legitimated" and deceptive destruction of the Sacred Word of God.

AFFIRMATION I falls far short of addressing itself to and, above all, of resolving the issues confronting Missouri. What each of its authors and subscribers, as well as every reader, must finally face up to is this: "The issue turns on this question, whether the Missouri Synod will remain what she was till now, a Confessional evangelical Lutheran Church!"

Here, then, we rest the case . . . If we destroy the historical life of our Church, and abandon her Confession, whither shall we go? What system can we accept which will meet so fully our wants? If we destroy or rend the Lutheran Church, or allow as normal and final just as much deviation as the individual may wish from all to which she has been pledged in her history, from all that is involved in her very name, from all that gave her distinctive being, what may we hope to establish in her place to justify so fearful an experiment, and to indemnify the world for so great a loss? (Chas. Porterfield Krauth, Conservative Reformation and Its Theology, 574.)

E. P. Klag


This book by a professor of systematic theology at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland is widely hailed as a major contribution to the understanding of ethics in general and of Christian ethics in particular.

The author discusses natural morality, and the ethical teachings of ancient and more modern philosophers. He shows real understanding and respect for these teachings, but insists that these dare not rule Christian ethics. In discussing theological ethics the author enters into a lengthy discussion of a question which is very much in the foreground in ethical treatises in our time, the question of autonomy or heteronomy, i.e., whether the basis for ethical decision lies within or outside of man. As a Christian the author cannot agree to an autonomous, humanistic ethic, but must opt for ethical standards outside of man. He does not, however, fall into the trap which views ethical standards as something imposed on man from the outside, which could easily lead to crass legalism. Rather, he insists that Christian ethics is an ethics of revelation and redemption. Being an ethics of revelation it indeed seeks the basis for Christian ethics outside of man, namely in God. To this extent it is heteronomous. Christian ethics is, however, also an ethics of redemption. The Christian is a child of God, and therefore not under the law in the sense that the law drives
him. He has found peace with God, and therefore also he loves God and gladly seeks to do the will of God.

In carrying out these thoughts the author examines the ethical teachings of many older and also more modern theologians. He finds himself in agreement with Karl Barth to this extent that he considers the theological discipline of ethics not only related to dogmatics, but essentially a part of dogmatics, and to be taught as such.

As a book to guide the student to clarity of thinking on the matter of Christian ethics this book is outstanding. It is herewith highly recommended.

Fred Kramer

III. PASTORAL—PRACTICAL STUDIES


This book might be summarized as an insightful application of Christian principles to present 20th century problems and realities.

While the volume is meant to be devotional, it is doubtful if it will achieve that purpose with the average Christian who expects solace and comfort as well as challenge in devotional material. This book provides challenge, little solace or comfort. It is written to disturb and to generate Christian reaction to modern problems. It would stand a better chance for reaction in this regard if Gospel motivation were as evident as the castigation and denouncing.

John D. Fritz


About 10 percent of all elementary and secondary students attend non-public schools. Despite a considerable growth in Protestant and secular private schools, still four out of five school students are enrolled in Roman Catholic schools. One of the hotly debated issues of the last years has been whether or not public funds should be used to support the programs of parochial schools by tax credits, grants or other forms. Roman Catholic proponents for state tax money for parochial schools have argued that non-public schools save the taxpayers money, because if the parochial schools were to close, the public school systems would be swamped with new pupils that they would be unable to handle as well as to result in the escalation of taxes.

Martin Larson reports on a research that he conducted in sixteen cities, whose substantial Catholic enrollments have either been drastically reduced or eliminated. Among cities investigated were Bakersfield, California, Boise, Idaho, Dubuque, Iowa, St. Paul, Milwaukee and Detroit.

The purpose of the study was to show what did happen, and not what might happen. Due to the declining birthrate the public schools in the cities investigated were able to absorb the former parochial school pupils.

While there may be valid arguments for private schools to receive tax funds, one argument according to Larson that cannot be advanced is,
that public schools will be so swamped that they will not be able to handle the new student influx. Many people still believe that to accept public funds for a parochial religious school is to invite state or federal control, which may work toward the erosion of the religious character of a school.

Raymond F. Surburg


A novel “flower” approach to woman’s devotional reading which will appeal to some Christian women. This book is inclined toward too much stress on what we can accomplish if we follow God’s advice. It presents what might be called the “look-for-the-silver-lining” approach.

John D. Fritz


This book contains paragraph devotions for every day in the year, which are short in length, sometimes poetic, but thought provoking and pertinent. They can be used as illustrative material for sermons, speeches, fill-ins, etc. Birbeck has prefaced the volume with a biography of Drummond. The book is recommended as usable, practical and indeed devotional. It would make a fine gift.

John D. Fritz


Despite this shocking title, Gloria Lentz has penned a soberly written book, one that supplies the reader with a wealth of background information, on the growing matter of school sex-education programs, which are often bureaucratically foisted upon children in our public schools. The author shows how these programs are commercially exploited with little concern for the welfare of children and young people and the rights of parents, who are concerned about the moral and spiritual development of their offspring.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM. By Edmund Schlink, Translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman. Concordia, St. Louis, 1972. 228 pages. $7.50.

A substantial book on baptism by a Lutheran has been a necessity for a long time. Schlink very ably fills that lacuna, albeit with a style of writing that may prove a little tedious and repetitious to some readers. The serious student of theology, however, will be amply rewarded for staying with Schlink to the end. Beginning by tracing the “historical problem of the origin of Christian baptism” (p. 24) Schlink moves on to show the New Testament testimonies for baptism to be “far more numerous than those about the Lord’s Supper” (p. 31). Two things stand out on
what God is doing through baptism: bestowing the forgiveness of sins and imparting the Spirit, with the new life of holiness. God is the Baptizer, through His church, baptizing us into Christ, His death and resurrection; for, intimately woven into the doctrine of baptism is the message concerning Christ and His vicarious sacrifice for sin and sinners. Also the Lord’s Supper, and the doctrine of the church, says Schlink. Baptism is a one-time act, to be administered only once, and its significance and benefit are always there for the one baptized, who by his baptism is a different man from what he was before. Schlink admits that “we are going beyond the wording of Paul’s statements,” if we put the stress on a kind of mystical, existentialistic notion whereby “the baptized person becomes contemporary with Jesus’ death,” rather than stressing simply the benefit, effect, and fruit of baptism in accord with apostolic teaching (p. 51). In his treating of historical antecedents, such as John’s baptism, Schlink gets on debatable ground when he stresses the difference here from Christian baptism (pp. 18, 27, 100). Most Lutheran theologians would probably not agree with him. By the same token, he seems to be overly concerned for the mystical, allegorical interpretation of blood and water flowing from the Savior’s side as “the origin of Baptism and the Holy Supper in His death” (p. 25).

One of the finest sections, also most helpful in a contemporary sort of way, is where Schlink shows that “at no place is a distinction made between ‘water Baptism’ and ‘Spirit Baptism,’ or also between forgiveness of sin and the Spirit’s activity, as two different acts” (p. 59) and that “what happened at Pentecost . . . without Baptism happens subsequently to all others who come to faith and submit to Baptism” (p. 68). Thus the emphasis is on the impartation of the Spirit with the baptismal act, at the same time that the Spirit’s special outpouring occurred for the early church in order to aid “the advance of the message and for the growth of the church in new areas” (p. 67). Schlink stresses the need, therefore, for emphasizing the ongoing significance of Baptism in the believer’s life, for “if the activity of the Spirit is limited to the baptismal event . . . then the inevitable reaction will be a spiritualism which disregards Baptism and rests its certainty on ‘Baptism in the Spirit’ and other experiences apart from Baptism” (p. 72). Properly Schlink also underscores the fact that the believer comes into the Body of Christ, the church, through baptism, and he warns that this is no mere external church membership. Baptism’s promise and blessing are to be received by faith, which is God’s gift here, even as also in response to the Gospel. Even the unbeliever, who rejects the grace offered, if he is baptized, “does not remain untouched by Baptism and is not the same after Baptism as he was before;” but hears the Lord’s mark; and, if later he accepts the Lord whose grace he now despises and wrongfully uses, he would not require another baptism, for the treasure is there even though not at first grasped (p. 128). Careful attention is given to the baptismal formula and its probable historical usage. Schlink is critical of the Reformed teaching on baptism as “sign” and “representation”—especially Baptist teaching which places the emphasis on baptism as a sign or act of obedience to God—but he levels virtually no critique against Rome’s devaluation of Baptism as a result of its stress on the Sacrament of Penance. This is a strange omission. Infant baptism comes in for rightfully detailed treatment, but Schlink ambivalently concludes that “on the basis of the New Testament infant
Baptism can neither be excluded nor proved." In the end he rectifies matters somewhat by compiling a list of 12 compelling reasons for infant baptism (pp. 157f). Quite correctly he observes that "in the battle over infant baptism differences in anthropology manifest themselves" (p. 141). That's so true: much depends, in other words, on whether the doctrine of original sin is accepted or not! Where a man stands on that Scriptural teaching determines pretty well where he comes out on infant baptism.

Schlink devotes a proportionately smaller section to the practical matters pertaining to form and usage in baptism, with the proper caution that care be taken that all actions and ceremonies that precede or follow baptism itself not obscure "God's new-creating act in Baptism" (p. 192). His concluding chapter comes as a kind of ecumenical pitch. Noting again, as he has done at numerous other places, that the churches in Christendom generally recognize the validity of each other's baptism, Schlink asks "whether this fellowship of the one baptism does not lead to conclusions for eucharistic fellowship?" His contention is that "the differences in the doctrine of Baptism are hardly any smaller than those in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper" and that, therefore, it ought to be "possible also in the question of the Lord's Supper to advance through the dogmatic difference to the elementary act of a believing reception," since "each of the two sacraments grants participation in the body of Jesus Christ." Apparently quite indifferent to the basic differences on the Lord's Supper, he lamely asks for fellowship around the Lord's Table, too, as the concluding statement of his book. This muddled stance encapsulates the theme with which he began, that the "bond of fellowship" which Christian baptism establishes across denominational lines "has released strong ecumenical impulses," e.g., in the World Council of Churches and Vatican II (p. 7). Indeed, every Christian heart earnestly yearns for such fellowship, but not through compromise of God's gifts. Unanswered by Schlink is the historical question prompted by the Reformation of whether this bond of fellowship should be based on pious sentiment only or on solid consensus in teaching on such central articles as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, God-given means of grace and with the Word:

E. F. Kleng


In the three previously published symposia on creation, boldly and confidently, although belatedly, men of science who are also Christians, are daring to place God, the Creator once more at the center of His creation.

In volume II of this series on creation the editor claimed that it was necessary to keep a balance between criticism of uniformitarian evolution (identifying mistaken assumptions and conclusions) and positive conclusions (better ideas and proposals).

Of the eight contributors to volume IV seven have Ph.D's in various scientific disciplines from reputable and accredited universities in the United States and Canada. These essays cannot be criticized on the grounds that people unfamiliar with sciences somehow are discussing matters for-
sign to them. W. Dennis Burrowes has contributed the foreword. Of the men who wrote the chapters of this volume Burrowes writes:

They read the book of nature for themselves, with reverential inquiry instead of through the interpretation of evolutionary uniformitarianism. These men are prepared to demonstrate that the "purposeless" philosophy of natural history of the past century has led this century into diversion and distortion in the sciences of biology and geology, as well as into moral degradation in society at large (p. 5).

The essays presented in this volume endeavor to strike a balance between criticism of current scientific and theological notions about evolution and the attempt to present better ideas and proposals in certain scientific areas regarding the problems faced in botany and zoology.

Among essays that are defensive and critical of current evolutionism are the one on "Instinct" by Evan Shute of the Shute Institute, that of Turner on "The Blood," and that by Carron on "Pattern and Purpose in Creation." "Flood Traditions" by Custance is partly defensive and partly constructive. Custance has made a study of the many flood traditions found all over the world and believes that they support evidence for the Mosaic account of the Deluge, although he believes the Biblical evidence does not support an absolutely universal flood (cf. pp. 40-41). McCone in his contribution "Origins of Civilization," shows the solidarity of the Biblical world view of the genesis and development of man.

Howe, in his essay "Creationist Botany" discourses on the wonders of creation and points out the dilemma of evolutionary uniformitarianism when it deals with the details of botany.

Loren Steinhauer in his essay "Out of the Womb Came the Ice?" redelinees Roche's Limit in relationship to planetary catastrophes, in which he attempts to advance scientific knowledge. His presentation endeavors to assist in the understanding of the magnitude and suddenness of the Deluge catastrophe described in Genesis 6-8. Clark, in his essay "Creator or Cosmic Magician," presents the philosophy of creationism, with special stress on the work of God in creation. He emphasizes the purpose, design, and effort evident in "the work of his fingers."

The eight essays in this volume emphasize both the practical and the theoretical, some emphasizing catastrophism and others creationism, some concentrating on biology and zoology and others on earth history. Some stress the negative, the impossibility of the anti-Biblical evolutionary system, others emphasize the manifold evidences for the Biblical world view.

Christians who are interested especially in the relationship of the Bible to science and in the creation-evolution controversy will find this book informative and possibly helpful.

Raymond F. Surtberg
BOOKS RECEIVED

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