

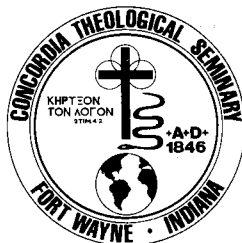
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Discord, Dialogue, and Concord The Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord

Lewis W. Spitz

The Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, observing the religious strife of the day, commented sardonically, "How absurd to try to make two men think alike on matters of religion, when I cannot make two timepieces agree!" Since his day the chorus of religious belief and opinion has become increasingly cacophonous, so that the celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the Formula of Concord, a confession which restored a good measure of harmony to a strife-ridden segment of the church, is an event of deep significance. Commemorations of Protestant confessions have at times in the past been not merely devout, but also partisan, sentimental, monumental, and even self-congratulatory or triumphalist, but ours must be done in a more reflective and analytical mood. The church of the Reformation, too, may benefit from reform and renewal. In the *Frankfurter gelehrten Anzeiger* (1772) Goethe mocked the iconoclastic zeal of the "enlightened reformers" of his day, who were even urging the reform of Lutheranism. But, as Luther himself realized, such great things are not in the hands of man, but of God. "Quando enim Deus verbum emittit," he wrote, "szo geets mit Gewalt!"¹

From Leonhard Hutterus' *Libri christianae Concordiae: Symboli ecclesiarum Gnesios Lutheranarum* (Wittenberg, 1609) to the contemporary work of Edmund Schlink, Holsten Fagerberg, Willard Dow Allbeck, and a host of others, the bibliography on the history and theology of the Lutheran Confessions has reached staggering proportions, so that it is not without trepidation that the non-specialist dares venture into the field.² The modest aim of this paper will be to open up some critical matters for discussion, not to offer definitive statements or formulae. It will begin with a bit of historical revisionism and rehearse briefly a bit of the Formula's *Entstehungsgeschichte*, underlining the drive toward unity against a background of dissension and accenting some remarkable aspects of the story. It will then address some major problems involved in confessionalism, the problem of authority in Protestantism, the relation of church structure to dogmatic emphasis, the function of confessions, some matters of interpretation of the Formula then and now, and the role of confessions

today. That is a tall order for a short paper, which will have to rely on suggestion and summary statement rather than upon fully developed argument.

1. A very widespread misreading of the history of the second half of the sixteenth century which has affected the common understanding of the Formula of Concord is the myth of Lutheran stagnation especially in contrast to the aggrandizement of a more militant Calvinism. Just as the old view that the evangelical movement faltered as a spontaneous popular movement following the debacle of the Peasants' Revolt in 1525 has been discarded in the light of new historical evidence of the urban expansion of the Reformation and the evangelization of the countryside after 1530, so the picture of a passive and static Lutheranism in the second half of the century is being thoroughly revised. Lutheranism continued to be vigorous and expansive during the second half of the century. Although most Lutheran territories were Lutheran in name prior to the Peace of Augsburg (1555), several of the largest states such as Prussia and Sweden were satisfactorily reorganized only in the latter half of the century. The consolidation of those territories continued up until the outbreak of the Thirty Years War. As late as the year 1598 Strassburg turned Lutheran and subscribed to the Formula of Concord. Even the Palatinate, the center of the Reformed churches in the Empire which had Calvinist presbyteries from 1570 on, became Lutheran in 1576 and remained so for seven years.

Moreover, the evidence is mounting that Renaissance humanism continued far into the Reformation era as a major cultural force and was expanded and popularized through the Protestant educational program.³ The Lutheran area of Silesia was of great significance for the cultural history of confessionalism, for during the decades between the Reformation and the Enlightenment it led Germany in literature and philosophy with Martin Opitz formulating the laws for modern high German literature and Christian Wolff most prominent as the leading philosopher. In 1558 Melancthon had declared quite sincerely that Silesia could boast of having more men learned in the humanities than any other area of Germany.⁴ Even during the three decades of the doctrinal controversies following the death of Luther, the opening of the Council of Trent, the trauma of the Interims, and the Peace of Augsburg, the very tumult and the shouting, vehemence and acrimony, the abuse and heated emotions bore negative witness to the fact that people cared and were very much alive, concerned, and energetic.

2. The Formula of Concord owed its origin to the fear of disin-

tegration, weariness with dissension, and a positive desire for unity within Lutheranism. Protestantism, because of its lack of a supreme centralized authority and its emphasis upon the individual's explicit faith has always carried within it a potential for complete organizational disintegration. With deviations from the central church pattern toward individualism on one hand and toward sectarianism on the other, according to Ernst Troeltsch's well-known diagram, it has come to resemble nothing so much as a banyan tree. Yet, the fact that ninety percent of its adherents are nominally members of a few major persuasions is all the more astonishing. Such cohesion despite all the centrifugal forces brought to bear upon the church may perhaps be explained historically by three factors. The one is a generally observable phenomenon that while ideas make for change in history, institutions provide stability, which gives a long term advantage to organization over individualism. The second is the fact that in early modern times political powers which insisted upon religious uniformity for the good of the state dominated the church. The third was the development of a general adherence and loyalty to the major confessions, whether that be the *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, the Westminster Confession, or the Formula of Concord.⁵

The desire of rulers for uniformity within the state increased with princely particularism, and the growth in power of natural monarchs added to the traditional proprietary church arrangements. In 1536 the Swedish statesman Axel Oxenstierna told his colleagues on the council that religion "is the great *vinculum communis affectus et societatis humanae* and there is no greater or stronger *nexus concordiae ac communitatis* than *unitas religionis*."⁶ Sweden was out of line with German Lutheranism, for it did not include the *Liber Concordiae* among its *symbola* until late in the next century. At Uppsala in 1593 the opportunity to include it was missed and the ordinance on religion in 1663 and the draft of the Church Ordinance of 1682 really merely recommended it as an explanation of the Augsburg Confession. It was only by his Church Law of 1686 that Charles XI at last gave the Formula of Concord a quasi-symbolic character.⁷ In the case of Sweden, however, the church assembly and, in line with it, the kings and parliaments reinforced religious unity, and the one case of possible royal deviation toward Catholicism proved not to be a serious threat. Ecclesiastical and secular government did in the case of Sweden, by way of example, present further fragmentation of the church.

There can be no doubt that the confessions played an important

role in preventing the doctrinal and organizational disintegration of Protestantism, and among these the Formula of Concord merits an honored place. It grew out of a desire for peace and unity. The formulators strove to be faithful to the ecumenical creeds, to Luther's evangel, to the normative Augsburg Confession; and they undertook to define doctrine on the basis of the Scriptures as the only rule and norm in order to correct error and end controversy. Their motto might well have been taken from St. Augustine's *Confessions*: "In this diversity of true opinion let truth itself beget concord!" Doctrinal controversies had raged so long between the integrists or Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philip-pists, accused of being Crypto-Calvinists, that the public had reached the point of saturation. In the words of La Fontaine, "Religious contention is the devil's harvest." Just as it is difficult to understand the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* without a knowledge of the Catholic *Confutatio Augustanae Confessionis*, so it is impossible to comprehend the asymmetrical thrusts of the Formula of Concord without a knowledge of the ten major controversies that developed between 1537 and 1577. How wide the chasm between the two major contending parties had become was revealed clearly at the Colloquy of Worms in 1557. That secular princes were unable to resolve such lofty matters became obvious at the meetings of the princes at Frankfurt in 1558 and at Naumburg in 1561. It was time now for conservative pacific theologians of the centrist position, supported morally and financially by the princes, Luther's "Christian brothers in authority," to become the blessed peacemakers. "The itch of disputing," Sir Henry Wotton wrote in *A Panegyric to King Charles*, "is the scab of the churches." It was time to apply balm in Gilead.⁸

There is no need to rehearse the details of the Formula's *Entstehungsgeschichte*. We should note especially, however, that the original triumvirate and all six initial signators did not reach agreement because they were such compatible personalities, but that they did so despite the fact that they were not! It was the cause of peace and unity in the church that was their overriding concern. All six signators were members of the Center Party, but they were individually quite different. Jacob Andreae had developed under the formative influence of Johannes Brenz and Württemberg Lutheranism. Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and Nicholas Selnecker had studied with Melancthon, but had moved quite far from their preceptor. Andreas Musculus, who had conducted polemics against the Interim, Osiander, Starcarus, Melancthon, and Calvin, was the stalwart general superintendent of Brandenburg.⁹ Christoph Körner or Cornerus, who

was called the *oculus universitatis*, had a keen humanist interest and did commentaries on Cicero and Aristotle. Despite the interplay of intellectual and dogmatic cross-currents, in spite of the ambivalence in the relation of Melanchthon's students to Philippism, despite their differing personalities and even the deep personal dislike that Selnecker, for example, felt for the mercurial Andreae, they worked effectively together for the common cause and set a noble example for emulation.¹⁰ Jacob Andreae made the cause of Lutheran unity his life's work and did much preliminary study prior to the formulation of the Bergen Book or Formula. In 1568 he proposed a "Confession and Brief Explanation of Certain Disputed Articles," and in 1573 he elaborated on these five articles in his "Six Christian Sermons, on the Divisions . . . among the Theologians of the Augsburg Confession . . . How a Simple Pastor and a Common Christian Layman Should Deal with Them on the Basis of His Catechism."¹¹ In his entire effort he never sought to innovate, but rather to clarify and propound those basic truths long held *semper et ubique*, even if not *ab omnibus* (Vincent of Lerins). As the Preface to the Formula eventually expressed it: "We . . . have wished, in this word of concord, in no way to devise anything new."

3. The problem of authority has quite rightly been called the Achilles heel of Protestantism. *Quot homines, tot opiniones!* Luther's personal appeal to conscience and to *ratio evidens* at Worms, before the Diet and later before the Archbishop of Trier, posed the problem of subjectivity. This question plagued him through the years: *Nam tu solus sapiis?* He found comfort in the thought that he was not alone, but in the company of the prophets, evangelists, apostles, fathers and brothers from Augustine and Bernard to Johannes Tauler and Philipp Melanchthon. In his funeral oration for Luther Melanchthon in turn placed Luther in that same noble succession. His conscience was "captive to the Word of God"; and his teaching corresponded, he held against the radicals, to a sound tradition within the church. Luther's own temperament did not equip him well to be a systematician, as his uninspired commentary on *The Three Symbols or Creeds of the Christian Faith* (1538) suggests.¹² He deferred gladly to the author of the *Loci*. Nevertheless, his own contributions to the confessional canon embodied in the Book of Concord, the Large and Small Catechisms and the Schmalkald Articles, were simple, forceful, and unambiguous statements of evangelical essentials. But even during his own lifetime, as early as the Wartburg days, "false brethren" undercut him,¹³ and he lived to see the beginning of doctrinal controversies which had to be taken into account in

the Formula of Concord.

The well-known Roman Catholic Reformation scholar Pere Daniel Olivier, a student of Yves Congar and a member of the Lortz school, contends that Luther's formula of justification by faith was basically unstable and could be held together only by a man of his forceful personality, keen intelligence, deep religious experience, and rich theological background. During his own lifetime his theology was distorted in three directions, legalism, synergism, and antinomianism. After his death heresies sprang up as though from dragon's teeth, some preached in his name.¹⁴ Of course, Luther's distinguished predecessors, St. Paul and St. Augustine, had also lived to see their doctrinal formulations twisted and turned, so that even in that respect Luther was in good company.

Why the early and persistent deviation? There is, of course, a skeptical answer, that of the urbane French historian Michelet, who defined theology as the art of befuddling oneself systematically. There was the usual problem of the *epigoni* who lack the master's brilliance. When one observes the exaggerations of an Amsdorf declaring good works to be harmful to salvation, Osiander's pomposity while rejecting forensic justification, or Flacius declaring man's very substance to be sin (although he distinguished *substantia materialis* and *substantia formalis*, and though he really meant the latter as being sin, he refused to clarify his statement), one is inclined to offer easy explanations such as assuming all this to be a case of *Die deutsche Neigung zur Ubertreibung!* But then one recalls that nearly every willful folly can be duplicated among the French and Dutch Reformed and can only feel bemused at general human limitations. Humanism seems to have added flexibility to some mentalities, but one can formulate no general rule. "Hoeschel," Julius Caesar Scaliger remarked, "though a Lutheran, is a learned man!"

When a doctrinal position becomes merely a matter of private opinion, disintegration doctrinally and eventually organizationally is sure to follow. "Taking heed to the doctrine" '1 Tim. 4:16) calls for more than that. It calls for churchmanship, not individual subjectivity: In his *Memoirs* Joseph Priestly recorded this incident: "Orthodoxy, my lord," said Bishop Warburton, in a whisper, "orthodoxy is my doxy — heterodoxy is another man's doxy." The formulators of concord had to arrive at a principle of authority which would transcend self-willed definitions and appeal to sound principle. There were several readily available solutions that they did not adopt. The first of these was an appeal to the authority of Luther. In the interest of pacification they had

decided against naming any person associated with an erroneous or controverted opinion, but would refer only to Luther by name. Andreae's mentor, Johannes Brenz, had called Luther *praeceptor noster observandissimus*. They wrote of Luther that "in the spirit this highly enlightened man foresaw that after his death his traducers would distort his teachings." Musculus published a volume of excerpts from Luther's writings. And yet, for all their high regard for Luther, they did not appeal to his writings as a final authority. In fact, it is astonishing to find how infrequently they cite his non-symbolical works and how rarely they appeal to his magisterial authority. This is no equation of Luther's teaching as such and revelation. Luther is viewed as a great doctor of the church to whom one should respectfully pay attention, but he appears as a gift to that part of the church which adhered to the Augsburg Confession, a true witness to the Gospel.¹⁵

Nor did the authors of the Formula of Concord look definitively to the authority of the ecumenical creeds or to the earlier evangelical confessions. Their attitude was very similar to that of Luther's toward the creeds and, indeed, toward the writings of the church fathers. They were evidence as to how the early Christians in a better age had understood the gospel, just as the evangelicals in those latter days had been given the gift of a purified understanding.¹⁶ The formulators knew full well that nearly all the confessions of the Lutheran Church arose out of specific political and ecclesiastical circumstances. This explains why the signators of the confessions were not synods or theological conventions. Nevertheless, the confessions spoke for the churches, as can be seen from the opening line of the first Chief Article of Faith of the Augsburg Confession, which begins: "Our churches teach with great unanimity . . ." The intention of the reformers was not to found a new church based upon a new confession like a new republic based upon a constitution, but rather to purify the old church of abuses in teaching, worship, and life. The Augsburg Confession did not for them constitute a new church teaching according to the Scriptures, but the confession testifies to its prior existence. Nor did the reformers after 1530 seek to found the church on the Augsburg Confession. That is evident from the freedom with which Melancthon changed the text from edition to edition like that of any ordinary text, without receiving any criticism from Luther or the other colleagues. Only at the time of the religious colloquies of 1540 was the specific individual wording of the Augustana emphasized more strongly and that from the political side by the Elector of Saxony. Luther realized that the formal adherence to the ecumenical creeds had not kept the old

church from losing its hold on evangelical truth. The essential signs or *notae* of the church were the true preaching of the Word of God and the administration of the Sacraments according to that Word. In the writing in which he gave the fullest account of the *notae ecclesiae*, in the *Von den Konziliis und Kirchen* (*Concerning the Councils and the Church*), he completely omits the confessions. They are also absent from the *Kirchenordnungen* and from the university statutes either for ordination or for the academic oath. The first case in which the Augsburg Confession took on a normative and binding character was in the *Homberg Kirchenordnung* of 1532, and then the statement is very guarded, denying force, but stating that the Augsburg Confession and the Apology do not state anything mistaken about the Sacrament. The one attempt to make the Augsburg Confession a norm for determining false doctrine came in 1535 in Ulm when the city proceeded against the spiritualist Sebastian Franck. He was to bind himself to a confession of ten articles composed by Martin Bucer and to the *Kirchenordnung* of Ulm of 1531. When he declined to do so, the city council dropped its demand. The Augsburg Confession was adduced as a witness of the right doctrine, but it was not given a legal character. Using the confessional writings as a legal test seems to have developed gradually in connection with the oath or subscription in churches, schools, and universities in the Lutheran territorial churches and seems to have increased during the period of transition from Orthodoxy to Enlightenment.¹⁷

The *norma normans* for the Formula of Concord was not Luther, nor the ecumenical creeds, nor even the Augsburg Confession, but the Holy Scriptures. The opening words of the *Epitome* make this quite clear: "Formula of Concord. A Thorough, Pure, Correct, and Final Restatement and Explanation of a Number of Articles of the Augsburg Confession on Which for Some Time There Has Been Disagreement among Some of the Theologians Adhering to this Confession, Resolved and Reconciled under the Guidance of the Word of God and the Comprehensive Summary of our Christian Teaching." Things are to be settled "in conformity with God's Word." The seventh paragraph of the *Epitome* reads: "In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and all other writings is maintained, and Holy Scripture remains the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone all doctrines should and must be understood and judged as good or evil, right or wrong."

4. The function of the Confessions, including also the Formula

of Concord, remains one of critical importance. Confessing the Confession does not mean a mere subscription to a church statement as an application of a *fides implicita*, but it means a commitment to the truth of the Word of God and to the person of the God who speaks that Word. The secular princes who signed the Formula of Concord professed to do so *cum ore et corde*. Christianity has lived by the confession of faith, for "many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds" (Acts 19:18). From Luther's brave stand at Worms, which the English historian Froude has described as perhaps the finest scene in human history, the evangelical movement intensified the confessional aspect of the Christian life, linking profession of allegiance to the person of Christ with a Biblical understanding of that relationship. Profession of faith and confession of the creed were joined historically in the Lutheran movement. In a university disputation of 1542 Luther established the syllogism: "The circle of the believers is not visible; the church is the circle of believers; therefore the church is invisible." But he opposed to that syllogism another: "For the sake of confession the circle of the church is visible . . . By confession the church is recognized, according to the word of Paul: 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation'" (Rom. 10:10).¹⁸ The Confession is part of the individual's confession as well as an expression of the collective doctrinal position. The Formula is very concerned about pure doctrine, *reine Lehre*. It couples the teachings of truth with defense against error (*Lehre und Wehre*), offering thetical statements introduced, with but one exception, with a ritualistic "we believe, teach and confess" and antithetical statements introduced by a formalistic "we reject and condemn."¹⁹ Even condemnations are intended as a loving corrective statement. Every article in the Formula of Concord is concerned with the issues of a major controversy within Lutheranism. But despite the apologetic purposes, the Formula remained evangelical and confessional in the positive sense. It breathes a pacific spirit.

It should be emphasized that none of the confessions of the Christian Church, including the Formula, have ever sought to exhaust divine truth and infinite wisdom through the agency of human language. Rather, they have sought to state as clearly as is humanly possible propositions which would by affirmation or rejection rule out certain human doctrinal aberrations which were not compatible with what from the Scriptures, also given in human language, can be known of divine truth. In the twelfth century Robert of Melun wrote of the church fathers: "Sacri patres,

quod non oppugnabantur, non defendebant." The Lutheran church fathers, too, did not in the confessions seek to state fully all that the Scriptures comprehended or that they believed. The great church historian Philip Schaff paid the Formula of Concord this tribute: "It sums up the results of the theological controversies of a whole generation with great learning, ability, discrimination, acumen, and, we may add, with comparative moderation."²⁰

5. One needs to reflect upon the question as to whether such confessions as the Formula of Concord are destructively divisive. Since confessions naturally stress what is characteristic of the confessing group they tend to ignore or play down the areas which that group has in common with other Christian segments of the universal church. The Formula of Concord united at least two thirds of all German Lutherans at the time, but it is instructive to study the response and reaction of other groups at the time. The Fortress Press book entitled *Discord, Dialog and Concord: Studies in the Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord, 1577* contains essays on the reaction of the Dutch Reformed, the French Calvinists, the Anglicans, and the Catholics. We have received the gift that Robert Burns asked for when he penned (*To a Louse*, 1786):

Oh wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion.

If the same spirit of Christian love and charity which is evident in the Formula, which counters error but nowhere attacks people or names them, it may well serve as a starting point for discussions with churches outside the Lutheran fold.

6. We must in conclusion consider the significance of confessionalism and of the Formula of Concord for the church today. The Formula was a confession of great historical importance. It ended the major doctrinal controversies within Lutheranism. It was widely accepted as an expression of inner convictions and personal faith as well as a public doctrinal statement and guide. It showed how the second generation of Lutheran theologians understood Reformation truths. It restored harmony within Lutheranism in the Empire, thereby assuring the Lutherans that the privileges gained politically in the Peace of Augsburg could not with right be challenged.²¹ But we need to reflect on its contemporary significance:

In this present day the idea of cultural uniformity enforced by the state has given way in the free world to an appreciation of cultural pluralism. Institutions as such seem to be coming unstuck at

an alarming rate. With the state and institutional cohesion, two traditional props for church organizational unity removed or weakened, only the third force, that of confessional loyalty remains. There are some voices raised in behalf of doctrinal pluralism on even central conceptions of theology such as sin and grace. Such counsel invites the disaster of confusion within the church and a speeded-up process of dissolution, a foreshortened eschatology.

There is a strange phenomenon operative in church history with respect to the relation of credal statements or dogmatic earnestness and the reality of ecclesiastical control. Where hierarchical governance or domination is relatively secure and effective, wide latitude of religious experience and theological speculation is allowed. Where ecclesiastical governance is weak, authority decentralized or congregationalized, and cohesion depends upon voluntary association, church bodies have tended toward strong credal statements and doctrinal conformity. Witness the Roman Catholic Church, the latitude of opinion allowed in the secure medieval period and the narrowness of Trent once papal power was shaken. Contrast the clerical strength of the Episcopal or Methodist churches with concomitant doctrinal permissiveness and the loose association of Southern Baptists with their strong emphasis on credal fundamentals. Or compare the power of the ministerium in Eastern nineteenth century Lutheranism which tolerated Dr. S. S. Schmucker's *Definite Platform*, the president of the General Synod's Seminary calling for a revision of central articles of the Augsburg Confession, and the dispersed authority of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, guaranteeing congregational supremacy in its famous Article Seven, but with a powerful emphasis under the leadership of Dr. C. F. W. Walther upon loyalty to the Lutheran confessions *quia* rather than merely *quatenus*. One can doubtless cite exceptions to this general rule, especially in American church history, which, for example, has seen Congregationalism suffer nearly complete doctrinal disintegration. But that, one might argue, was the price paid for a more intimate involvement in the processes of Americanization than most foreign or ethnic church bodies experienced until recent times. In the sixteenth century the confessions provided a focal point for allegiance and supplied a cohesive force which spared Protestantism from complete ideological disintegration. Confessions must do so again, unless churchmen are willing to preside over the final dissolution of organized Christianity into its atomic particles.

The Formula might well serve as a renewed stimulus to a genuine ecumenical endeavor. Indifference to genuine differences proved to be damaging in the union efforts of the nineteenth century and in all too many ecumenical efforts of the twentieth. A clear statement of one's beliefs and commitments, individually as well as collectively, is an important first step in any ecumenical effort. Churchmen today can learn from the authors of the Formula the meaning of concern for religious truth, the importance of honesty and integrity, and the value of the theological enterprise. They can cherish the concern for the *una sancta* so evident in the Book of Concord which placed the Formula of Concord after the ecumenical creeds and the conciliatory Augsburg Confession, declaring the ecumenical creeds to have the "very highest kind of authority" (*summae auctoritatis*) after the Scriptures themselves (well after, of course).

The Formula was addressed to grievous contemporary problems of that day. Certainly its engagement should authenticate the value of credal statements today addressed to contemporary problems within or outside the church. The Barmen Declaration in the thirties, the Missouri Synod's doctrinal statements, and similar efforts to articulate the concerns and convictions of church bodies are certainly in line with the intent of the Formula. However, doctrinal concerns and credal statements should be directed toward the real problems of our times, corrosive relativism, skepticism, secularism, totalitarianism, cynicism, nihilism. Creeds, it must be remembered, state what is not compatible with central faith-truths while not trying to exhaust the sum of all truths contained in the Faith.

Finally, from the Concordians and harmonizers of that day, we can learn how to combine a spirit of charity with the concern for truth. Rejoicing over the Torgau agreement Andreae wrote: "Truly, this is the change of the right hand of the Most High, which ought also to remind us that since the truth no longer suffers, we should do everything that may contribute to the restoration of good feeling."²² We can learn, as they obviously had, something from Luther regarding the study of theology. For when it comes to theology, Luther said, "es gehört eine gewisse Bescheidenheit dazu." When it comes to theology a certain modesty is called for!

FOOTNOTES

1. *Weimar Ausgabe* 56, p. 422, 7
2. Among the most comprehensive studies are Edmund Schlink, *Theology of*

- the Lutheran Confessions* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), which provides an introduction to the literature, pp. 318-344; Holsten Fagerberg, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions, (1529-1537)* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), limited to the confessional statements of Melancthon and Luther; Willard Dow Allbeck, *Studies in the Lutheran Confessions* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1952); Vilmos Vajta and Hans Weissgerber, eds., *The Church and the Confessions. The Role of the Confessions in the Life and Doctrine of the Lutheran Churches* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963); and the still useful *Historical Introductions to the Books of Concord*, by F. Bente (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), first published in the *Concordia Triglotta* of 1921.
3. See, for example, the articles "Humanism in the Reformation," in Anthony Molho and John A. Tedeschi, eds., *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron* (Dekalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1971), pp. 641-662; "The Course of German Humanism," Heiko A. Oberman and Thomas A. Brady, eds., *Itinerarium Italicum. The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of its European Transformations* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), pp. 371-436; "Humanism and the Reformation," in Robert M. Kingdon, ed., *Transition and Revolution. Problems and Issues of European Renaissance and Reformation History* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Burgess Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 153-188. On the Palatinate and Heidelberg as a political and cultural center for European Calvinism, see Claus-Peter Clasen, *The Palatinate in European History 1555-1618* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966).
 4. Manfred P. Fleischer, "The Reception in Silesia," chapter 7 in Lewis W. Spitz and Wenzel Lohff, eds., *Discord, Dialog and Politics, The Formula of Concord, 1577* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); Herbert Schoffler, *Deutsches Geistesleben Zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung: Von Martin Opitz zu Christian Wolff*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, 1974).
 5. The Reformed churches have been as concerned as the Lutheran about the role of confessions in their tradition, as is evident from the *Festschrift* edited by Joachim Staedtke, *Glauben und Bekennen. Vierhundert Jahre Confessio Helveticae posterior. Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte und Theologie* (Zurich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966).
 6. Michael Roberts, ed., *Sweden's Age of Greatness, 1632-1718* (London: Macmillan, 1973), p. 132.
 7. *Ibid.*, pp. 142f. Trygve R. Skarsten, "The Reaction in Scandinavia," in Spitz and Lohff, *op. cit.*, chapter 8, argues that the churches of Sweden and Finland maintained their right to legislate confessional loyalty and subscription as they met in church assembly and determined the confessional subscription of the king in contrast to Denmark-Norway-Iceland, where the king determined the religious affiliation and confessional subscription of the people.
 8. Jer. 8:22. For the *Entstehungsgeschichte* of the Formula see the excellent new popular introduction by Eugene F. Klug and Otto F. Stahlke, *Getting into the Formula of Concord. A History and Digest of the Formula* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), including a translation of the *Epitome*; also, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgerischen Konfession 1930*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1963), *Einleitung*, xxxii-xliv.
 9. There is a need for a new biography of Musculus offering a more positive evaluation than that of Christian Wilhelm Spreker, *Lebensgeschichte des Andreas Musculus* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Trowitsch and Sohn, 1858).
 10. See the new book by Theodore R. Jungkuntz, *Formulators of the Formula*

- of *Concord. Four Architects of Lutheran Unity* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), which presents skillfully drawn portraits of the four key authors of the Formula. On Chemnitz, see also E. F. Klug, *From Luther to Chemnitz on Scripture and the Word* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 115-142, on his life and work. John Warwick Montgomery offers a brief introduction to the life of David Chytraeus and his role in developing the Formula of Concord in his edition of *Chytraeus on Sacrifice* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 1-31. The forthcoming work edited by Jill Raitt, *The Shapers of Tradition*, will include chapters on Flacius, who had "to pull his teacher out of the water by the beard," Wigand, Chemnitz, and Andreae.
11. Robert Kolb has prepared a translation (with an excellent introduction and notes) of the sermons, *Andreae and the Formula of Concord. Six Sermons on the Way to Lutheran Unity* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977).
 12. *Luther's Works*, 34 (Philadelphia, Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 197-229.
 13. See Mark U. Edwards, *Luther and the False Brethren* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1975).
 14. Eugene Klug and Otto F. Stahlke, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15, lists the controversies to which the Formula of Concord responded, indicating the relevant articles. Johann Georg Walch, *Historische und theologische Einleitung in die Religions-Streitigkeiten welche sonderlich ausser der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche entstanden*, 5 vols. (Jena: bey Johann Meyers seeligen Erben, 1734), remains the classical account of the "time of troubles". Wenzel Lohff addresses the problem of polemical responses in his chapter on "Unnützes Gezänk und nötiger Streit" in *Diskordie, Dialog und Konkordanz* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1977).
 15. Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Lutheran Symbolical Books and Luther," in Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Luther for an Ecumenical Age* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), pp. 242-270; summary, pp. 150-159.
 16. See Hans Weissgerber, "The Valid Confessional Symbols", in Vajta and Weissgerber, eds., *op. cit.*, pp. 1-22, on the place of the Augsburg Confession, the Formula of Concord, and the rest, in the doctrinal subscription of the Lutheran churches of the world. On Luther's attitude toward the patristic corpus as evidence of later papal deviation and for the early understanding of the Scriptures, see Ferdinand Kattenbusch, *Luthers Stellung zu dem ökumenischen Symbolen* (1883).
 17. Heinrich Bornkamm, "Die Bedeutung der Bekenntnisschriften im Luthertum," *Das Jahrhundert der Reformation. Gestalten and Kräfte*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966).
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 222. "Propter confessionem coetus ecclesiae est visibilis . . . Ex confessione cognoscitur ecclesia, iuxta illud Pauli citatum dictum: Corde creditur ad iustitiam, sed ore fit confessio ad salutem." WA 39II, 161.
 19. Cf. the masterful study of the nature of condemnations, Hans-Werner Gensichen, *We Condemn. How Luther and 16th Century Lutheranism Condemned False Doctrine* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967).
 20. Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, I (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), p. 338; Willard Dow Allbeck, *op. cit.*, pp. 291, 242-244.
 21. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-253.
 22. F. Bente, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

Higher Criticism and the Incarnation in The Thought of I. A. Dorner

John M. Drickamer

In his significant book on nineteenth-century theology Claude Welch writes that "the whole of the nineteenth century may be seen as a struggle to affirm the humanity of Jesus."¹ This is especially true of German Protestant thought in the middle of that century. There was a great deal of tension and conflict about the doctrine of Christ. I. A. Dorner sought a solution which would retain something of traditional statements about Christ but would also embody the newer ideas coming from Hegelianism and its offspring, higher criticism, also known as historical criticism.

At the beginning of the middle third of the nineteenth century, historical-critical scholarship presented a radical challenge to orthodox Christology. F. C. Baur of Tuebingen had been using the higher critical method for some time, but it was his student, D. F. Strauss, who precipitated a storm of controversy in 1835 by the publication of his *Leben Jesu*.² This book treated Jesus as "a thoroughly historical and human figure about whom we have very little reliable information,"³ and about whom one could make no dogmatic statements about anything supernatural. Strauss' work met with a great deal of opposition. There were voices around Germany insisting on the retention of orthodox Christology in the face of the negative conclusions of the new method. Donald G. Dawe has written that:

. . . the challenge to church dogma had grown to the point of a strident denial of the validity of the orthodox picture of Christ. The battle was joined between the proponents of historical criticism and the defenders of orthodoxy.⁴

Standing between these opponents was the Mediating School, which attempted to preserve something of traditional Christology without rejecting the historical-critical method. It stood between those who desired to retain the orthodox doctrine and those who seemed to be making Christianity into a new and different religion. It sought to express something which it found in neither option.⁵ According to Welch, the principle of this mediating theology (*Vermittlungstheologie*) was "that of reconciling the two great claims, that is, of holding them together in synthesis or fruitful tension, in the tradition of the attempts by Schleiermacher and

Hegel to unite science and theology.”⁶

The Mediating School included C. I. Nitzsch, R. Rothe, Jul. Mueller, Jul. Koestlin, and others, but it was a nebulous category because its unity centered in its program and not in any specific conclusions. There was by no means unanimity of theological opinion among its members.⁷ Dawe has well summarized their program for Christology:

Among their many differences these theologians were united in seeing the Christological question as the key one in relating the historical Christian confessions to the modern religious consciousness. Specifically, they saw the problems of relating belief in Christ's divinity to their equally firm belief that Jesus had a fully human mental, moral, and spiritual life. The mediating theologians had accepted from historical scholarship a picture of Jesus that emphasized the reality of his humanity in a manner more radical than had ever been done before. But they rejected the conclusions that Baur and Strauss had drawn from this picture, namely that the traditional Christological formulas are no longer useful in interpreting Jesus' significance. Rather they set about the difficult task of incorporating the new historical picture of Jesus into the earlier doctrines of the two natures of Christ and the Trinity.⁸

Orthodoxy had maintained that Jesus was fully human as well as fully divine. He was true God and true Man. The nineteenth-century historical critics taught that Jesus was merely human and not divine at all. The mediating theologians were trying to retain some sense of Jesus' divinity without denying the historical-critical insistence that Jesus had lived on earth as a mere man.

It was in this atmosphere that Isaak August Dorner (1809-1884) carried on his life of serious scholarly work and active ecclesiastical service. Born in Wuerttemberg,⁹ he was a student of Baur and a contemporary of Strauss at the University of Tuebingen.¹⁰ He taught at Tuebingen (1838-39), Kiel (1839-44), Koenigsberg (1844-47), Bonn (1847-53), Goettingen (1853-62), and Berlin (1862-84). At Berlin he also served as Prussian Chief Church Councillor.¹¹ He was one of the strongest supporters of the Prussian Union.¹² Welch can speak of Dorner's "known paralleling of scholarship with intense involvement in 'practical' church affairs."¹³

Dorner was one of the most respected scholars of his day¹⁴ and may have been "the most important figure among the mediators proper."¹⁵ He authored significant scholarly works, and in 1856 he was one of the founders of the *Jahrbuecher fuer Deutsche*

Theologie.¹⁶ In spite of his significant contributions to the theological discussions during the second third of the nineteenth century, by the time he published his own complete work on systematic theology, mediating theology was no longer a live option in most theological circles.¹⁷ Because of Albrecht Ritschl's growing influence, Dorner's work seemed out of date.¹⁸

Dorner's theology was representative of mid-nineteenth-century Germany in this that it was influenced by both Hegel and Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher's influence is seen in a number of ways but most notably in Dorner's concern for religious emotions, which Welch calls "his testing of theological conclusions against the immediacies of religious life."¹⁹ Hegel's influence is seen "in the concern for objectivity and cognition, but more especially in the dialectical pattern for both historical and systematic interpretation."²⁰ In the last respect, Hegel's influence on Dorner was very pronounced.

With this dialectical pattern of historical thought, Dorner could be very optimistic about his own time, expecting from it a new and higher synthesis beyond the problems of the past.²¹ He entitled a section of one of his books "The Nineteenth Century or the Regeneration of Evangelical Theology."²² Without implying that history always can or always should be interpreted dialectically, it can still be asserted that Dorner's theology stood in a dialectical relationship to his own generation as well as to the preceding one. His solution to the Christological problems posed by the conflict between higher criticism and orthodoxy was formulated in response to the solution proposed by his contemporaries, the kenoticists.

The kenoticists did not belong to the Mediating School but dealt with the same Christological questions. Accepting the historical-critical emphasis on the development of Jesus, they tried to explain the relationship between the divine and the human in Christ in terms of a self-emptying of the Divine Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity. Their name derived from the Greek word *kenosis*, which they used for their doctrine and which they understood to mean "emptying." The related verb was found in Philippians 2:7, which was the most important text by which they sought to support their opinion. According to Franz Pieper, they taught that "the Logos emptied itself. The kenoticists fear that an unreduced deity would exert so strong a pressure on the humanity as to make 'a genuinely human development of Christ' impossible."²³ Gottfried Thomasius, the father of kenoticism, betrayed the rationalistic roots of this doctrine by his own explicit refusal to accept a doctrine which he could not understand:

I cannot maintain on the one hand, the full reality of the divine and human natures of Christ, particularly the full truth of the natural development of his human life, and on the other hand, the full unity of his theanthropic person, unless I assume a self-limitation of the divine Logos, which took place in the Incarnation, for without this assumption I cannot conceive of the unity affirmed on the subject.²⁴

The simplest form of kenotic doctrine was "the theory of the Logos changing himself into a human being."²⁵ According to this theory, as Dorner explained it, "the Logos is capable of development and subject to change [*werdefaehig und verwandelbar*] according to his essence, and is thereby distinguished from the Father, who alone has aseity."²⁶ The full theory was expressed in the words of one of its proponents:

The Son of God became man, that is, he renounced his self-conscious divine personal being and took the form of a spiritual potency, which, self-forgotten, as unconscious formative power worked in the womb of Mary, and formed a body which was fitted so to serve the development of this spiritual potency that it could use it as its own property and become conscious, could develop itself therein, and by means thereof put forth its energy.²⁷

This doctrine was taught by several theologians, including Thomasius early in his theological career. Pieper called the proponents of this doctrine "pankenoticists."²⁸ Because of criticism, Thomasius later taught that the Logos had laid aside not his deity nor all its attributes but only certain attributes which were not essential to deity. The Logos had emptied himself of omniscience, omnipotence, and omniscience, which, according to Thomasius, pertained not to God in himself but only to his relationship to the world.²⁹ The Logos retained the essential divine attributes such as love. Those who taught this doctrine were called by Pieper the "semi-kenoticists."³⁰

Dorner rejected both forms of kenoticism. He shared some of the same concerns and had at first been attracted to the *kenosis* doctrine. But he came to oppose it because he thought it created insoluble difficulties for the doctrine of the Trinity without solving the Christological problem.³¹ Dorner strongly denied any change in God. He saw change in the relationship between God and the world so that there could be a history of salvation, a growth of revelation, and a reconciliation of God to the world and vice versa.³² But he insisted on the immutability of God, which he thought was irreconcilable with kenoticism. Perhaps under the influence of Hegel, for whom unity was the key idea,³³ Dorner also

stressed the oneness of God's essence over the Trinity of Persons to the point that he could even speak of "the absolute divine Personhood."³⁴ For Dorner, the doctrine of *kenosis* violated monotheism, which Trinitarian formulas left intact:

If a Member of the Trinity demotes himself to a mere potency for the time of Christ's development and therefore also interrupts his sustaining and governing activity, then the Logos becomes not only changeable but also superfluous for the Trinity and holds only a contingent place in it, all of which leads to subordinationism.³⁵

Dorner maintained, in other words, that the problem of the relationship between the two natures in Christ could not be solved by imputing change to God.

Dorner believed that kenoticism offered no real answer to the Christological question of the day. It left Christ less than fully divine by "demoting" the Logos. Even in view of Jesus' completely human development, kenoticism saw the Logos as completely communicated to him, even from the time of the embryo's total lack of self-consciousness. This seemed to Dorner to leave no room for the Logos to possess even the divine attribute of love, for which self-consciousness was a prerequisite. Kenoticism's radical reduction of Jesus' deity still gave no explanation of how the two natures in Christ were related to each other. The only explanation which Dorner thought could be derived from kenoticism was that Christ was not really a human being but only the divine nature "in the form of a servant." Dorner believed that kenoticism could explain Christ only by making the *kenosis* itself the Incarnation. Christ would then be only a theophany, God appearing in a visible form. The logical conclusion would be theopaschism, the idea that Christ's suffering pertained properly to his divine nature. In this way, also, change would be imputed to God.³⁶

Dorner believed that the true synthesis, the best answer to the Christological antitheses of the nineteenth century, was a doctrine of a growing or becoming (*werdende*) unity of the Logos and the human person Jesus. The development of Christological doctrine was seen by Dorner as a dialectic between the duality of the natures and the unity of the person. This was finally to be transcended in a nineteenth-century synthesis which would do justice to the divine, the human, and their union.³⁷ For Dorner, with his Hegelian attitudes, the confusion of philosophical systems influencing Christology in the nineteenth century indicated only a transitional stage (*Uebergangsstufe*) in the production of a new common conviction (*Gemeinueberzeugung*).³⁸

Implicit in the emphasis on Jesus' human development and necessary for Dorner's new conception of the Incarnation was the belief that Jesus was a separate human person in himself. Orthodox Christology had taught there had been no separate human person with which the Person of the Logos entered into union but that there was always only the one Person of the Logos and that the complete human nature had been assumed into unity with that Person without having existed apart from that union. This doctrine, the *anhypostasia* of Jesus' human nature, had been given up by most theologians. Dorner said, "hardly a single theologian worth naming still dares to deny to it [Christ's humanity] its own personhood."³⁹ This conclusion was considered inescapable as a result of the new scientific historiography, which insisted that Jesus had lived on earth as a mere human being. Only two conceptions could answer the question of how the divine and the human were related in Christ. Only two doctrines were still considered possible. Either the Logos limited himself, the kenotic doctrine which Dorner had rejected, or the Logos limited the communication (*Mittheilung, Hingabe*) of himself to the growing developing Jesus. Dorner proposed the latter solution.⁴⁰

Dorner conceived of a gradual assumption of the human person Jesus into the Logos so that "the theanthropic unity, and not only the humanity, is a growing thing, . . . We have a true and vital conception of that unity only when we understand it as in constant process."⁴¹ Dorner wrote that "the Incarnation is not to be thought of as complete [*fertig*] at once but as a progressive [*fortgehend*], indeed, growing [*wachsend*]."⁴² The specific line of argument is seen in the following passage from Dorner:

Since, of course, as all admit, a human being who is still becoming [*werdend*] cannot constitute a personal unity with the absolutely self-conscious and actual Logos, especially as long as the human being has not yet even become self-conscious, and since the truth of this becoming [*Werden*] does not permit this unity to be established in the old way through an absolute exaltation [*Erhoehung*] of the human nature from the very beginning, then there is nothing left but to postulate that the Logos has somehow limited himself in his being and working *in this human being*, as long as the same is becoming.⁴³

Dorner's words and emphasis mean that the Logos limited not his essence but only his relationship to Jesus. The qualification "somehow" indicates that even this formulation was not a full explanation of the facts.

Dorner taught that Jesus had been gradually drawn up into

unity the Logos, and he tried to express it in terms of the historical events of Jesus' life. He was not so taken with historical criticism that he adopted a stance of radical skepticism towards the gospels. Instead he seems to have been assured that they were historically reliable, at least in outline. The major points in that outline were for him stages in the development of the theanthropic unity.

God's creative and sustaining powers combined, according to Dorner, in the production of the God-Man,⁴⁴ so that he came into being both from nature and from beyond nature. Dorner emphasized the supernatural in the origin of the God-Man, and he considered this the important dogmatic point behind the idea of the virgin birth, which he did not necessarily hold to be literally true. He wrote that "no dogmatic interest seems to demand the exclusion of male participation" in Christ's origin.⁴⁵ Dorner discussed the first stage of unity, the extent to which "divine essence can live and rule already in the beginnings of this human child."⁴⁶ He wrote:

In the center of his being this human being is admittedly from the beginning a theanthropic being, but at first this person still lacks much, and other things are only loosely united to him, e.g., the body still mortal; other things are still changing and alterable [*wechselnd und veraenderlich*] in this person without damaging his identity.⁴⁷

Dorner taught that, because of this "natural theanthropicity," Jesus grew and developed "to perfect theanthropic character through a real and fruitful, both purely and genuinely human moral process" in which there were always "opposed possibilities."⁴⁸ Jesus could have sinned, but, because of the work of God in him, he always made the perfectly correct moral choice. As a result of this maturing, Christ at his baptism came to the stage of "official theanthropicity" (*aemtliche Gottmenschheit*), which also involved a new self-consciousness of "God's absolute revelation to the world."⁴⁹ This work of revelation ended in Christ's death, which was also, according to Dorner, a new stage in Christ's personal development:

With Christ's death not only in his earthly work completed but also the inner, at first spiritual, perfection of his person is accomplished. Therefore the deepest level of his external humiliation is in itself the beginning of his exaltation.⁵⁰

Death brought Jesus to a new level of perfection in his inner personal life. The low point for his body was a new high point for his soul. Christ's descent into hell belonged to the exaltation and meant "for Christ's person a higher life status of a spiritual

character, in which he can prove his spiritual power free of space and time."⁵¹

In contrast to many of his contemporaries, Dorner believed that Jesus had risen from the dead and that this real, physical resurrection had theological significance. He did not accept the resurrection on the strength of the testimony of Scripture although he took note of such testimony. He accepted it because he considered it logically necessary for the full exaltation of the God-Man. His spirit had been glorified or transfigured (*verklaert*), and death could not be allowed to rob him of part of his being, his body.⁵² The necessity of the resurrection was "in this that the inner, spiritual perfection which he had achieved in death could allow this [death] no kind of further power over his holy person."⁵³

This resurrection was not, for Dorner, a simple revivication that left the body still mortal. In fact, the body does not seem to have remained physical. According to Dorner, Jesus rose "to an already higher existence."⁵⁴ The resurrection and the ascension were really one movement:

In the ascension of Christ, or his absolute exaltation, his resurrection finds its completion, as the full animation or transfiguration of his earthly personhood into a spiritual one presents itself in perfection. The exalted God-Man has left behind temporal and spatial limits and the humanity of Jesus has become the free, adequate instrument of the Logos.⁵⁵

It certainly seems that this last stage points to an end for any existence of Jesus in spatial, temporal, or physical terms at all. The person Jesus, according to Dorner, seems to have been finally diffused or dissolved into the Logos.

Dorner's Christology was a serious attempt to solve the major theological problem of his day as he understood it. He came up with an original and not altogether clear Christology. His doctrine was false when judged by Scripture, and it was certainly not true to the creedal statements of the early church, which were based on Scripture. Dorner's view of the earthly life of Christ was Nestorian, separating Christ into two persons, one human and one divine. But his view of Christ after the ascension was somewhat Eutychian, implying only one nature. But Nestorianism and Eutychianism had been mutually contradictory heresies in the early church, departing in opposite directions from the Biblical truth. Neither was Dorner's synthesis faithful to the clear and factual presentation of the canonical Gospels, according to which Jesus Christ is one Person who is both true God and true Man.

Dorner was torn in different directions. He wanted to hold to something of the orthodox doctrine of Christ and to be true at the same time to what he considered the reliable results of modern science and historiography. Whether Dorner and the mediating theologians or, for that matter, Thomasius and the kenoticists are taken as examples of such efforts, historical criticism was not capable of being harmonized with orthodox Christology. It must also be remembered that the Calvinist insistence that the finite was not capable of the infinite was behind this whole Christological problem, in spite of the fact that many of the theologians involved claimed to be Lutheran. The only real solution to the theological problems of that day was to be found with those few theologians who still held to a completely true Bible and whose teaching was subject to the written Word of God.

FOOTNOTES

1. Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 1:6.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
4. Donald G. Dawe, *The Form of a Servant: An Historical Analysis of the Kenotic Motif*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 89-90.
5. P. Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. by ed. W. Hastie (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1889), pp. 467-68.
6. Welch, *Protestant Thought*, p. 142.
7. Joerg Rothermundt, *Personale Synthese: Isaak August Dorners dogmatische Methode* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1968), pp. 12-13.
8. Dawe, *Form of a Servant*, pp. 91-92; see also Isaak August Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi von den aeltesten Zeiten bis auf die neuste dargestellt* (Stuttgart: Verlag von Samuel Gottlieb Liesching, 1845), 2:1199-1200.
9. Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology*, p. 477.
10. Welch, *Protestant Thought*, p. 273.
11. Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. anonymous (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1973), p. 578.
12. Welch, *Protestant Thought*, pp. 273-74.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
14. Rothermundt, *Personale Synthese*, pp. 42-43; see also Barth, *Protestant Theology*, p. 578.
15. Welch, *Protestant Thought*, p. 273.
16. Rothermundt, *Personale Synthese*, p. 13.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48; Isaak August Dorner, *System der christlichen Glaubenslehre* (Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Hertz, 1886), 2 vols.
18. Barth, *Protestant Theology*, p. 578.
19. Welch, *Protestant Thought*, p. 275.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
21. Dorner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 2:1276; see also *Glaubenslehre*, 2:300-301.
22. Isaak August Dorner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie besonders in Deutschland nach ihrer principiellen und intellectuellen Leben*

- betrachtet* (Muenchen: G. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1867), p. 769.
23. Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, trans. Theodore Engelder (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 1:292.
 24. Gottfried Thomasius, *Christi Person und Werk*, 2nd ed., 2:543, quoted in Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:105-6; see also Thomasius, "Against Dörner" *God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology: G. Thomasius, I. A. Dörner, A. E. Biedermann*, trans. and ed. Claude Welch (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 89.
 25. Dörner, *Glaubenslehre*, 2:368. Since in German, pronouns referring to God are not singled out for capitalization, no conclusions about a German theologian's attitude toward Christ can be drawn on the basis of his use of capitals. To avoid injecting any implications, this writer has limited the use of capitals in translating the words and explaining the views of these German theologians.
 26. *Ibid.*
 27. Schneider, quoted without further identification or reference in Richard Joseph Cooke, *The Incarnation and Recent Criticism* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1907), p. 204.
 28. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:292; see Dawe, *Form of a Servant*, pp. 93-94.
 29. Dawe, *Form of a Servant*, pp. 96-97.
 30. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:292.
 31. Rothermundt, *Personale Synthese*, pp. 192-94; see Welch, *Protestant Thought*, p. 278, and Dawe, *Form of a Servant*, p. 95.
 32. Rothermundt, *Personale Synthese*, pp. 178-79; see pp. 195-96.
 33. Welch, *Protestant Thought*, p. 88.
 34. Dörner, *Glaubenslehre*, 1:395-96; see pp. 430-31.
 35. *Ibid.*, 2:370.
 36. Dörner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 2:1268-70.
 37. Dörner, *Glaubenslehre*, 2:300-301.
 38. Dörner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 2:1198.
 39. *Ibid.*, 2:1224-25; see p. 1260 and Dörner, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie*, p. 875; Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:80-81.
 40. Dörner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 2:1263-66.
 41. *Ibid.*, 2:1272.
 42. Dörner, *Glaubenslehre*, 2:431.
 43. Dörner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 2:1261-62. The emphasis was Dörner's.
 44. Dörner, *Glaubenslehre*, 2:403.
 45. *Ibid.*, 2:403.
 46. *Ibid.*, 2:438.
 47. Dörner, *Entwicklungsgeschichte*, 2:1273.
 48. Dörner, *Glaubenslehre*, 2:460.
 49. *Ibid.*, 2:475.
 50. *Ibid.*, 2:659.
 51. *Ibid.*, 2:662.
 52. Rothermundt, *Personale Synthese*, pp. 194-95; see pp. 198-99.
 53. Dörner, *Glaubenslehre*, 2:666.
 54. *Ibid.*, 2:666-67.
 55. *Ibid.*, 2:672-73.

THE QURANIC CHRIST

C. George Fry

Seventy years ago Samuel M. Zwemer, the Apostle of Arabia, wrote this description of the Muslim Jesus:

A Christian studying the faith of Islam soon learns not only that Christ has no place in the Moslem idea of God, as they deny the Trinity, but that the protrait of our Savior, as given in the Koran and in tradition, is a sad caricature. According to Moslem teaching, Jesus was miraculously born of the virgin Mary; He spoke while still a babe in the cradle; performed many puerile miracles in His youth; healed the sick and raised the dead when He reached manhood. He was specially commissioned to confirm the Law and reveal the Gospel. He was strengthened by the Holy Spirit (Gabriel). He foretold another prophet, whose name should be Ahmed (Mohammed). They believe that Jesus was, by deception and substitution, saved from crucifixion and taken to heaven, and that He is now in one of the inferior stages of celestial bliss; that He will come again at the last day, slay anti-Christ, kill all the swine, break the cross, and remove the poll-tax from infidels. He will reign as a just King for forty-five years, marry, and leave children, then die and be buried near Mohammed at Medina. The place of his future grave is already marked out between the graves of Omar and Fatimah.¹

Zwemer's account is as accurate at the closing of the twentieth century as it was at its opening. For the majority of the world's 700,000,000 Muslims, that is a summary of the true story of Jesus. Our task in this essay is to deal with two questions:

1. How much of the popular Muslim portrait of Jesus is really based on the Quran? and how much is due to the accretion of tradition?
2. What are the real sources of the Quranic Christ? Where did Muhammad obtain the material from which he composed his stories?

The Shape of the Quranic Christ

When we study the Quran, we soon find that Jesus is one of its most prominent figures. Three chapters or suras are named after references to Jesus (suras 3, 5, and 19). Jesus is mentioned in fifteen suras and in at least ninety-three verses. In all instances Jesus is praised as the sinless prophet sent from God. As Geoffrey Parrinder observed, "Jesus is always spoken of in the Quran with

reverence; there is no breath of criticism."²

From an evangelical perspective, however, simply to respect Jesus is not sufficient. In our Christian Scriptures we read of a similar case, when "a woman in the crowd," who marvelled at Christ's power to heal, "raised her voice and said to him, 'Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!' But he said, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!'" (Luke 11:27, 28 RSV).

Repeatedly Jesus is reported to have asked, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46 RSV) Christ is properly honored not merely by praise of the lips, but by transformed lives and the labors of obedient love. It is my contention that the Christ of the Quran cannot produce such a conversion, for true discipleship requires both sincerity and truth.

For the sake of illustration, let us compare the Quranic and Biblical Christs in four respects: name, birth, work, and death. In each instance, in spite of the Quranic praise of Jesus there is missing sufficient truth and power to make even a sincere person acceptable in the sight of God.

1. The Name of Jesus

In the Middle East, names are much more important than they are in the West. A name indicates a person's nature, function, and destiny. Name and fame are the same. For that reason, both the Quran and the Holy Gospels are concerned to give the correct name of Jesus. Professor Geoffrey Parrinder has made this point:

The Quran gives a greater number of honourable titles to Jesus than to any other figure of the past. He is a 'sign,' a 'mercy,' a 'witness' and an 'example.' He is called by his proper name Jesus, by the titles Messiah (Christ) and Son of Mary, and by the names Messenger, Prophet, Servant, Word and Spirit of God.³

The name *ISA* (or Jesus) occurs thirty-five times in the Quran, where Christ is called *Isa Ibn Maryam*, or, "Jesus, Son of Mary." This expression, used only once in the New Testament, is employed twenty-three times in the Quran.

In the Four Gospels much attention is given to the name Jesus. Mark, said to have been the scribe of St. Peter, started his biography in this fashion, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1 RSV). Even before the Lord's conception, it was made known that his name would be Jesus. During the Annunciation, the Angel Gabriel said to Mary: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you

shall call his name Jesus" (Luke 1:30 RSV).

Matthew reports that later, in a dream, an angel of God came to Christ's step-father, Joseph, and said: "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21 RSV).

On the birthday of Jesus the angels told the shepherds the good news, saying, "for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11 RSV). After eight days the boy was circumcised, an event still observed among many Christians on January 1, or the Feast of the Holy Name. That day the words of Luke are read which tell us "he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21 RSV). The entire Gospel of John is an extended commentary on the meaning of the name Jesus. Much of this exegesis is offered in the Lord's own words. Jesus is God Himself, "The Great I Am" (John 8:58), and for that reason he can say, "I am the Light of the World" (John 8:12), "I am the Bread of Life" (John 6:48), "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6), "I am the True Vine" (John 15:1), "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11), "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25), and, lest we misunderstand, Jesus, speaking again through his servant John, says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:13 RSV). Both Jesus and John know that the words "Alpha and Omega" can be used only of the Deity, for earlier in the text it was written, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God. . . ." (Rev. 1:8 RSV). By the use of the name Jesus, the Gospel authors want to tell us that Jesus is God.

The message of biography and prophecy is made clear in the New Testament Letters. Paul reports that the name Jesus is "above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (Ephesus 1:21 RSV). In another place Paul tells us that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil, 2:10, 11 RSV). The author of Hebrews says of Jesus, "Let all God's angels worship him" (Hebrews 1:6 RSV). Men and angels adore the Lord because the name Jesus means "Savior," for the God-Man is the way of salvation, and, as Peter preached, "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 RSV).

A comparison of the name of Jesus in the Quran and the Bible proves the point made by H. Spencer when he wrote:

The Jesus of Islam is neither the Son of Man of the Scriptures nor the Son of God, and despite the unusual titles which are Given to Him in the Quran, He remains a mere mortal, only a prophet of Allah.⁴

2. The Birth of Jesus

The Quran teaches the Virgin Birth of Jesus. While there is no mention of Joseph, the step-father of the Lord, there is considerable attention given to Mary. Mary is a prophetess. As a matter of fact, Mary is the only female prophet mentioned in the Quran, and, because she is the mother of Jesus, she is the only Muslim prophet to physically mother another prophet. Of Mary it is said that she was "one of the devout" (sura 66:12), "a faithful woman" (sura 5:79, 75), who "guarded her chastity" (sura 21:91), and for this reason God chose her "above the women of the world" (sura 3:37, 42). By a direct action of Allah, Jesus was "cast into Mary" (sura 4:168) so that Christ was a direct creation of Allah like Adam (sura 43:59).

The New Testament writers consistently affirm the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ. Matthew, the Jewish tax collector, and Luke, the Gentile physician, both feature the story of the Virgin Birth at the beginning of their biographies of Jesus (Matthew 1: Luke 1). Mark starts his account with the Baptism of Christ. In that context, by illustrating the Trinity in action, he indicates the real origin of Jesus, for when Jesus "came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased'" (Mark 1:10, 11 RSV). John, in the first chapter of his Gospel, implies a comparison between the rebirth of the believer and the birth of Jesus, for in each instance the Holy Spirit makes sure we "were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13 RSV). For in the Christian Scriptures the story of the Virgin Birth is crucial because it tells us who Jesus is.

If in the Semitic Orient a name reveals a man's fame, so also a person's heredity indicates his identity. To the authors of the New Testament Jesus is not merely a remarkable man, the product of a fortuitous combination of famous ancestry and fine education. Though both Joseph and Mary had illustrious pedigrees (Matthew 1; Luke 1), Christ cannot be understood in natural terms. Jesus cannot be explained by heredity or environment.

Neither biology, nor history, nor pedagogy can identify Jesus. Christ is not a creation of God, for he is God Himself come to earth "for us men and for our salvation."

In Christian teaching the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is intimately associated with the affirmation of the Holy Trinity. For the account of the Virgin Birth identifies Jesus as the Second Member of the Trinity, for Jesus "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil, 2:7, 8 RSV).

Only God Himself could pay the price demanded on the cross, and God humbled Himself to be born of the Virgin, lead a life of perfect obedience, and give Himself as the ransom on the tree of Calvary. This work of redemption involved the entire Trinity, for Jesus, the Son, was sent by His Father, supported by the Spirit, and we believers, in the words of Jude, are to "build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the memory of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20, 21 RSV).

Every good story has two parts — narration and significance. In the New Testament we have a narration of the Virgin Birth of Jesus. The signification of the event is made clear: Christ is God incarnate, come for the redemption of the human race. Jesus is identified as the Eternal Son of God the Father.

In the Quran we have a narration of a Virgin Birth of Jesus. But in the Quran we are nowhere told the signification of this event. Instead, the import of the Virgin Birth is denied. In the Quran we read such statements as "How can Allah have a son when He has not a wife (sura 6:100; sura 72:3), or "The Jews say Ezra is the son of Allah and the Christians say the Messiah is the son of Allah . . . Allah fight them! How they lie" (sura 9:30). Whether these verses are initially aimed at Arabs who said that Allah had sons and daughters, or whether they were originally intended for the Christians, is now beside the point. Today Muslims use such texts to deny the Incarnation, refuse the Trinity, and rob Jesus of his rightful identity. The result is that the Quran is left with only a parody of the real story of the Virgin Birth, that there is a real absence rather than a real presence of the Savior God in their midst, for they receive Jesus not as the Redeemer but as a Stranger, and that Jesus becomes only "a semi-angelic created being." At that point the Quranic account leads Muslims dangerously close to idolatry.⁵

3. The Work of Jesus

The Quran also discusses the work of Jesus. He is God's messenger. Since speech is one of the seven attributes of Allah (along with Power, Life, Knowledge, Will, Hearing, and Seeing), God can give revelation. Sometimes Allah calls an apostle (*rasul*), who receives a revelation and is commanded to communicate it to mankind. Muhammad was such an individual. Sometimes Allah calls a prophet (*nabi*), who also receives a revelation. He may not be commanded to share it (as in the case of more than hundreds of forgotten prophets). He may be commanded to preach it (as John the Baptist, or Noah), but not author a book. He may be commanded to both preach it and write it. Through the course of history one hundred and four writings were given to prophets. Of these four are books (*kutub*), and one hundred are leaves (*suhuf*). Since Allah created the pen, all the books and decrees are with him on the Preserved Tablet (Sura 85:21) in heaven. One of these four books came through Jesus.

Because Jesus is the creature and slave of Allah (sura 43:59), he must do the will of his Maker. Jesus worked wonders, healed the sick, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, and amazed the multitudes. But his primary task was to deliver a message from Allah. Twelve times in the Quran we are told the name of the book Jesus brought. It was the *Injil* or "Gospel." This was not the first book given to the Jews. Moses had come earlier with the *Tawrat* (Torah, or Law) (see sura 3:44). David had provided the *Zabur* (Psalms, see sura 4:161). Because these Hebrew Scriptures had been distorted and disobeyed, Jesus came with precisely the same message; only it was once more in its original or pristine perfection. The Gospel was only a summation of the Law, or a message of salvation of works. Because the Christians confused the religion of Paul (which was about Jesus) with the religion of Jesus, it was necessary for Muhammed to come with a transcript of the Archetypal Book (sura 43:3), the Quran, which is, in fact, the true teaching of all previous prophets: "We have revealed Our will to you as We revealed it to Noah and to the prophets who came after him; as We revealed it to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and David, to whom We gave the Psalms" (sura 4:164). While Jews and Christians, in spite of their corrupted Scriptures, remain "Peoples of the Book," the pure Word of God is found in the Quran.

This Muslim teaching reduces Christ to only a penultimate prophet. Though Jesus surpasses all other Quranic prophets in perfection (he is the only sinless prophet in the Quran) and often in the popular affection he inspires among the masses, he is still in-

ferior to Muhammad. What John the Baptist was to Jesus, Jesus is to Muhammad. Jesus is the Pathfinder for the Prophet of Mecca. Christ prepared the way for Muhammad. Professor H. Spencer wrote:

... on the basis of Surah 61 v. 6, the promised Paraclete of John 16:7 is identified with the prophet Muhammad, and Jesus is supposed to have foretold the coming of the Praised one (*Ahmad*). The Christians are accused of having changed the supposed original Greek work *Periklutos* ("Praised one") to *Parakletos* ("Comforter"). Such charges may, of course, easily be refuted by reference to Greek Mss. of the New Testament which were written over a hundred years before the birth of Muhammad (e.g. the Codex Alexandrinus in the British Museum).

The New Testament also pictures Jesus as a prophet, as the spokesman of the Almighty, coming with the Gospel, to proclaim the Kingdom of God, Kenneth Scott Latourette the distinguished Baptist historian, explained it this way:

... Jesus began preaching and teaching. He believed that the kingdom of God was about to be inaugurated, and it was this which constituted the recurrent theme in his message. Obviously the kingdom of God meant a society in which God's will would prevail. As Jesus conceived it, the kingdom of God was to be the gift of God and was not to be achieved by men's striving.⁷

The cost of the Kingdom was the cross. The cross is the culmination of the Gospel, for, along with the empty tomb, it forms the heart of the Christian message. Paul summarized for us the apostolic Gospel: (1 Cor. 15:1-9):

Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast — unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles . . .

The consistent New Testament witness is this: the work of Jesus

was to live a perfect life and died as the faultless ransom for the human race. And "What must we do, to be doing the work of God? . . . This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (John 6:28, 29 RSV).

This is a work a Muslim cannot do, because Islam denies the death of Jesus.

4. The Death of Jesus.

While Western scholars have detected a fundamental contradiction in the Quran as to whether or not it teaches that Jesus actually died (sura 19:3 quotes Jesus as saying, "peace upon me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive"; and sura 3:474 has Allah say, "O Jesus! I will make thee die and take thee up again to me"), most Muslim authorities favor the text in sura 4:156, 157 which denies the crucifixion of Christ:

They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: "We have put to death the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah." They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did.

On that basis Muslim commentators have taught that Jesus avoided the cross and that a substitute — possibly Simon of Cyrene, Judas Iscariot, Pilate, one of the disciples, or even one of the Master's enemies — died in his place. Numerous tales have been devised to explain what actually happened on Good Friday. One of these, possibly a confused interpretation of such passages as Luke 4:30 and John 8:59, where Jesus really did escape premature death, states that Jesus hid in a niche in a wall in Jerusalem and that one of his companions was killed in his place. Another, recited by Wahab, mentions the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, the preparation of the cross, the darkness at noon, the advent of protecting angels, who, in the night-like conditions, were able to help Jesus escape and who left Judas to be crucified. Yet another, associated with Tabari, reports that Herod gave the order for Jesus to be executed. Jesus fled and went into hiding until he was betrayed by Simon Peter. Jesus was captured and dragged to the cross. The Jews also had a thief named Joshua (Jesus). God worked a miracle and transformed the features of Joshua the thief to resemble those of Jesus the prophet. Quite literally a "Jesus" or Joshua died on the cross while the real Jesus of Nazareth escaped. For seven days the body of Joshua the criminal was on the cross, and each of those days Mary the mother of Jesus came to Golgatha to weep. On the eighth day Jesus, the son of Mary, made himself known to his mother, comforted her, and ascended into heaven. Such are a few of the historic alternative versions of the

crucifixion story that have been found in Islam.

In spite of the evidence of the New Testament and the arguments of modern historical science (even secular scholars in the West do not doubt the death of Jesus), Muslims persist in their teaching that Jesus escaped death on the cross. Today there are at least three novel accounts of the Good Friday events among Muslims:

- a) Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the Indian Muslim, taught as follows:
 . . . crucifixion itself does not cause the death of a man, because only the palms of the hands, or the palms of his hands and feet are pierced . . . After three or four hours Christ was taken down from the cross, and it is certain at that moment he was still alive. Then the disciples concealed him in a very secret place, out of fear of the enmity of the Jews.⁸

This analysis is the basis of the Ahmadiyya Sect of Islam, which teaches that

. . . Jesus was truly crucified and buried, but that he was revived in the tomb by means of a miraculous ointment known as the 'Marham Esau,' or Jesus salve. Then, they say, he left Palestine for India, where he eventually died and was buried at Srinagar, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, claimed to have found Jesus' tomb in Srinagar.⁹

- b) In his book, *City of Wrong*, the celebrated Arab author, Dr. Kamel Hussein, rejected the conventional Muslim teaching that a substitute mounted the cross for Christ. Hussein wrote:

. . . the idea of a substitute for Christ is a very crude way of explaining the Quranic text. They had to explain a lot to the masses. No cultured Muslim believes in this nowadays. The text is taken to mean that the Jews thought they killed Christ but God raised him unto him in a way we can leave unexplained among the several mysteries which we have taken for granted on faith alone.¹⁰

- c) A few contemporary Muslim writers would go so far as to say that only the body of Jesus died on the cross, but his soul lived, in keeping with what Christ said in Matthew 10:28, "be not afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul . . ."

There are, undoubtedly, many other Muslim variants — both ancient and modern — of the last days in the earthly life of Jesus. The exact form of the explanation is not nearly so important as the consistent Muslim assertion that Jesus did not die on the cross. This is very puzzling to Christians. The unanimous witness

of the Bible is that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried . . ." Furthermore, the Good Friday Story is one of the few events in the life of the Master almost universally accepted in both ancient and modern times by non-Christian scholars. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans of yore, nor the secular historians of our own time have doubted that Jesus died. Muslim resistance to this teaching is based on a deep-rooted theological bias — a resistance to the central doctrine of Christianity, salvation through the shed blood of the Redeemer. As H. A. R. Gibb pointed out at the turn of this century, Islam "is distinguished from Christianity, not so much . . . by its repudiation of the trinitarian concept of the Unity of God, as by its rejection of the soteriology of Christian doctrine . . ." ¹¹

The Sources of the Quranic Christ

What we must now do is to seek the sources of that theological prejudice in the history of Islam. It is time to ask the question: "What are the sources of the Quranic Christ?"

Where did Muhammad acquire the information that he incorporated into the sermons, poems, stories, and sayings that are now perpetuated as the Quran? Three answers to that question are possible; divine revelation, human imagination, and heretical Christian speculation. Let us consider each of these in sequence.

1. Divine Revelation

Today we know the basic facts about the Life of Muhammad. A member of the Qurayish tribe born about 570 near Mecca, Muhammad was early orphaned, raised by relatives, worked as a caravaner, married his employer, retired to a cave to pray, experienced a midlife crisis in 610, believed himself to be the recipient of a revelation from God, preached a religion called Islam, was initially persecuted, fled with his followers to the adjoining oasis of Medina, established earth's first Muslim Commonwealth, taught fervently and fought successfully, converted and conquered most of the Arabs, entered Mecca in triumph, and died in 632 as the Prophet-King of the East. In retrospect it is obvious that the turning point in his life came when he claimed to be the last of the Abrahamic prophets.

How shall we evaluate that assertion?

Muhammad boasted that he exhibited seven of the criteria connected with prophethood in the Old and New Testaments. Like such prophets as Moses and Jeremiah, he authored (or at least dictated) a book. Furthermore, like Amos and Micah, his message had a strong moral and ethical content, urging personal sanctification and social regeneration. Also, like Samuel of old,

his word was with power and he was an “enabler” of the laity. As Gabriel ministered to Mary and Jesus, so he brought Muhammad the Quran. As Isaiah saw a vision in the temple, so Muhammad heard bells, voices, and ringing, and saw a spiritual sight. As Elijah condemned idolatory and restored the ancient faith of Israel, so Muhammad cleansed the Kaaba and returned the Arabs to the religion of Ishmael. And like Joshua, Saul, and David, Muhammad was successful in war and was vindicated by military triumph. For these reasons Muhammed and his disciples have testified to his prophetic role — he was ecstatic and ethical, energetic and blessed with angelic visitation, he was a reformer of the existing religion (like Josiah, or Luther, or Zwingli), he had a book, and he was rewarded with honor and glory.

A Christian, however, has different criteria by which to measure Muhammad, and it is clear from these standards, derived from the Scriptures, that Muhammad was a *false* prophet. Two of these tests which we must apply to Muhammad’s testimony are as follows:

a) There is the Christological test. Does his message give a true and accurate account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus? It obviously does not, and therefore Muhammad falls under the indictment levelled by Christ in Matthew 24 (23-26):

Then if any one says to you, ‘Lo, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Lo, I have told you beforehand. So if they say to you, ‘Lo, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; if they say, ‘Lo, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.

Because Muhammads’ rendition of the life of Jesus contradicts the self-confessed purpose of the Master’s life, “to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28 RSV), it cannot rest on divine revelation.

b) There is the canonical test. Does his message square with the written Word of God, the Holy Bible? It obviously does not. Muhammad’s teachings contradict the Living Word, Jesus; the Spoken Word, Christian preaching; and the Written Word, the Bible. We have it on apostolic authority that we are to cling to the Scriptures, and, in Paul’s words, “even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8 RSV). The fact that Muhammad claimed angelic deliverance for his message, therefore, does not vindicate it because it openly contradicts Scripture. As St. John the Divine wrote at the conclusion of his

Prophecy, in words placed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit at the conclusion of the entire Biblical Canon, and, therefore, applicable to all the Scriptures: (Rev. 22:18-19):

I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if any one adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if any one takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in three of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

Because Muhammad's account of the life of Christ contradicts that given in the Sacred Scriptures, it is obviously not based on divine revelation.

2. Human Imagination

Because Muhammad did not obtain his ideas from God, he must have acquired them from his environment. The question then is this: Must we look at the inner or outer environment? Did Muhammad create his Christ out of the richness of his own imagination, or did he generate his version of Jesus by drawing on existing heretical accounts? Richard Bell, the celebrated Islamicist, suggested:

. . . Muhammad's own originality may have worked upon very slender information. According to his theory, so often expressed in the stories of the prophets, they were always delivered from the catastrophe. Jesus, had He actually been crucified by His enemies, would have been the only exception. Add to this that he had learned that Christians believed in a living Christ exalted at the right hand of God, and that before the end all God's people would be brought to know him. In that, I think, we have sufficient to generate in Muhammad's mind the account which he gives, without attributing to him any intimate knowledge of Christian speculation, or supposing him to have been influenced by obscure sects which he otherwise shows no knowledge of.¹²

Bell's theory, shared by others, is that Muhammad's theodicy, or philosophical explanation of evil, caused him to defend God's honor by denying that any true and faithful prophet would be allowed to die in shame and disgrace. That tenet seemed to be vindicated by reference to the lives of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, all of whom were successful. In similar fashion, therefore, so Muhammad reasoned, Jesus must have ascended in triumph to heaven, rather than dying in tragedy on the cross. While there is much to commend this interpretation, it is much to facile in its denial of an obvious fact: there is nothing taught by Muhammad

in the Quran that was not previously stated in heretical Christian speculation. It is more reasonable to see the Christ of the Quran as having its origin in the interplay between the fertile imagination of Muhammad and the many heretical Christologies then in circulation in the East.

3. Heretical Christian Speculation

It has been pointed out that there are probably a million ways to miss a target. One can go with his bow and arrow and miss the bullseye by firing backward, or upward, or downward, or side-ward, let alone shooting forward and missing the goal by only a small margin. In the same way, there are quite literally thousands of false ways in which to tell or interpret the story of Jesus. The landscape of the ancient church is littered with hundreds upon hundreds of these erroneous Christologies. Gnosticism, Marcionism, Ebionitism, Arianism, Monarchianism, Sabbellianism, Pelagianism, and many more “isms” long since forgotten, came up with alternative narrations of the life of Christ. Many of these heterodox histories denied the crucifixion of Christ. For instance Mani, the Persian teacher who died in 276, taught that Jesus, “the son of the widow” (he apparently confused Christ with the son of the widow of Nain), fell victim to the devil, who desired to have him crucified; but, in a clever last-minute transaction, Satan, not the Savior, was nailed to the tree — and Jesus escaped unscathed. Or again, the *Travels of the Apostles* claimed that “Christ had not been crucified, but another in his stead.” Yet again, the *Acts of John* has our Lord

. . . represented as talking to John in a place apart while the people are supposed to be crucifying Him. He says: ‘Unto the multitude in Jerusalem I am being crucified and pierced with lances and gall and vinegar is given Me to drink. But unto thee I speak.’ ‘Neither am I he that is on the cross, whom now thou seest not but only hearest a voice. I was reckoned to be that which I am not, not being what I was to many others.’ ‘Nothing, therefore, of the things which they will say of Me have I suffered.’¹³

Or, according to Ignatius, as early as the year 115 “some believed that Jesus suffered only in semblance.” Or, still again, in the *Gospel of Peter* Jesus was silent on the cross, “since he felt no pain.” Cerinthus taught that “before his crucifixion Christ withdrew himself, leaving Jesus to suffer and to rise again, while Christ, as being a spiritual being, remained unpassible.”¹⁴ There are literally hundreds of such tales.

One of the most fascinating and frustrating is that associated with the name of Basilides, a popular philosopher during the reign

of emperors Adrian and Antoninus Pius (120-140). This figure is fascinating, because his views seem to have been plagerized by the Muslims in order to obtain their account of the death of Christ. But he is also frustrating, because his ideas are known only through their quotation by his enemies — and his orthodox opponents do not ascribe to him a consistent Christology. St. Irenaeus attacked Basilides for teaching that

. . . Jesus appeared in human form and taught, but at the crucifixion changed forms with Simon of Cyrene, so that the latter was crucified in the form of Jesus, while Christ Himself stood by and mocked at his enemies in the form of Simon; for since He was incorporeal, He was essentially invisible, and so He returned to the Father. Hence no one who really knows the truth will confess the Crucified, for, if he does so, he is a slave of the world-angels; but if he understands what really happened at the crucifixion, he is freed from them.¹⁵

While other theologians denied that Basilides taught these doctrines (they ascribe even more heretical views to him), the point is obvious: deviant versions of the life of Jesus were quite common by the time of the immediate post-apostolic generation. Furthermore, there is nothing in Islam that is not contained already in some of these ancient Christian heresies. Since “nothing has sprung from nothing,” we should probably seek the origins on the Quranic Christ in the heterodox thought of the second century of the Christian Era.¹⁶ More careful searching amidst the rubble of the false theologies of antiquity would doubtless provide ample proof that Islam is, in fact, a very successful *Christian* heresy.

We who preach the Christian Gospel, finally, must see in our own hearts the *one* source of the Quranic Christ that ultimately counts — man’s false pride that seeks a remedy for sin anywhere else than in the shed blood of the Lamb of God. Having identified that sin, let us confess it, allow the Holy Spirit to purge it, and then resolve with Paul that “we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:23, 24 RSV).

FOOTNOTES

1. Samuel M. Zwemer, *Islam: A Challenge to Faith*, second revised edition (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1907), pp. 93, 94.
2. Geoffrey Parrinder, *Jesus in the Quran* (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1965), p. 16.
3. *Ibid.*

4. H. Spencer, *Islam and the Gospel of God* (Delhi: S.P.C.K., 1956), p. 9.
5. At points in his ministry Muhammad was an idolater. For a while to win the allegiance of the Tha'qif tribe, Muhammad allowed them to keep *Allat* (the feminine form of Allah) as their idol, and once Muhammad even admitted that there were three goddesses, the daughters of Allah. It has also been suggested that since Islam teaches the eternity of the Quran alongside Allah, it in fact proclaims not monotheism but ditheism.
6. Spencer, *Islam and the Gospel of God*, p. 8.
7. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1953), p. 37.
8. As quoted by Parrinder, *Jesus in the Quran*, p. 113.
9. John Elder, *Biblical Approach to the Muslim* (Houston: Leadership and Training International, 1974), p. 72.
10. Quoted Parrinder, *Jesus in the Quran*, p. 112.
11. H.A.R. Gibb. *Mohammedanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 69.
12. Richard Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1968), p. 154.
13. J. Windrow Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology: A Study of the Interpretation of Theological Ideas in the Two Religions* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1945), p. 30.
14. George Salmon, "Docetae," *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines*, edited by William Smith and Henry Wace (London: John Murray, 1877), I, 865-867.
15. A. S. Peake, "Basilides, Basilidians," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), II, 428.
16. W. St. Clair Tisdall, *The Original Sources of the Quran* (London: SPCK, 1905), p. 11.

The Lutheran Confessions as a Distinctive Contribution to World Christianity

Henry P. Hamann

One of the most common false antitheses heard in the Lutheran Church today may be stated very baldly thus: "Not Lutheran, but Christian"; or more intelligibly like this: "Our real concern must be to make Christians of people, not Lutherans." Now, this sentence is almost wholly wrong in all of its implications; so wrong, in fact, that it amazes me that it could have gained the popularity it has actually achieved. There is no statement so wrong as that which looks like the truth.

The most obvious criticism of the statement is that there is no antithesis between the two ideas, being Lutheran and being a Christian. A person could surely be a Christian and a Lutheran at the same time. Just as he could be a Methodist and a Christian at one and the same time. Another criticism may be put in the form of a number of questions. What is there in Lutheranism that is not Christian, that falls short of being Christian, or that goes beyond it? There must be something, and the speaker of the antithesis must know what it is, or else he could not rationally or logically make the statement at all. Imagine the nonsensicality of the sentence: "It is more important to be Christian than Lutheran, but I don't know what the difference between the two is." And then the next question must be put to the defender of the antithesis: "Very well, if that is the case, if it is better to be Christian than Lutheran, why are you a Lutheran? Why do you put up with the inferior state? Or what are you doing to remedy the lacks of your Lutheran state, so that it may be more Christian?"

There are other observations that could be made that would be pertinent as a criticism of this very misleading antithesis, but I shall proceed to a thought that is directly germane to the topic in hand. The only defensible sentence combining the two concepts is: "Since I am a Christian, therefore I am a Lutheran." A Christian living in the twentieth century cannot simply eliminate the many centuries of history and the development of the Church which link him with the beginnings of Christianity. He must somehow take account of that history and make his peace with it. He must be part of one of the historical churches, or he must establish one. Or better still, in the words of Charles Porterfield Krauth, "Every Christian is

bound either to find a Church on Earth, pure in its whole faith, or to make one."¹ And a Lutheran, to bear that name rightly, declares that it is in the Lutheran Church true to her confessions that the Christian faith is most purely proclaimed, taught, set forth. If that were not the case, he would not be Lutheran at all. Christian, therefore Lutheran—this paper is in essence a defence of that phrase, although its method will be to proceed in the opposite way, to show that the centre of the Lutheran Confessions and certain truths directly related to this centre are a true setting forth of the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and for that reason just those things which the whole Church of Christ needs to the end of time.

Part I

The statement just made concerning the way this paper is to go involves the implicit rejection of what is on occasion advanced as a distinctive contribution of the Lutheran Reformation to world Christianity. It is a mistake to think, for example, that Luther's great gift to the world was the assertion of the right of private judgment in matters of religion. Luther was as far from asserting the right of private judgment as his opponents. He was as bound as they were. However, his private judgment was captive to a different power, that of the Word of God as opposed to that of the Pope or Church or Council. Nor did Luther urge the right of every man to read the Bible and formulate his own doctrines. It was rather his position that the Bible's own determination of its centre was to determine the individual's decision. The Christian is not free over against the Bible; the Bible asserts authority and is to assert authority over him.

Similarly, certain contributions of Lutheranism to the store of what is excellent in human achievements, in the way of culture, the arts and the sciences, cannot be regarded as distinctive contributions to world Christianity or, beyond that, to the world as such. We may be able to point to the treasures of hymnody arising within the Lutheran Church from Luther on to the end of the seventeenth century and beyond, or to the incomparable Johann Sebastian Bach and his prodigious output of church music of the very highest excellence, to the remarkable number of great men in Germany who came from the Lutheran manse. But there is nothing especially distinctive about this. There are many examples of exceptional flowerings of the human spirit, whether inspired by Christianity or not, which are in no way inferior to the Lutheran contributions just mentioned. We can think here of the extraordinary number of eminent men in a large variety of fields produced by the small

city state of Athens in the century following the battle of Salamis, or to eminent artists, writers, architects, painters, and sculptors which Florence produced in the late medieval and Renaissance periods, or, again, to a similar phenomenon in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with the golden Elizabethan age in the centre. We shall have to look elsewhere for what are distinctively Lutheran contributions to world Christianity.

I think it must be granted that any distinctive Lutheran contributions to the church as a whole must be related to what the Lutheran Confessions regard as being the *raison d'être* of the Lutheran Church. What could not be regarded as of the essence, the centre, the heart of its own being could hardly be a distinctive contribution to the church as a whole. Now, there can be no doubt what the Lutheran Confessions mark out as being central to their witness. It is the teaching of justification by faith: the teaching that man as sinner is justified, or has the forgiveness of sins, not by works, but by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. It may be regarded as a work of supererogation to enter upon a demonstration of the fact that justification by faith is indeed the central concern of the Lutheran Confessions, since it is so generally stated or conceded to be the case. However, it seems to me to be important, at least from the point of view of the balance of this paper, to indicate, however briefly, in what ways the central position of justification by faith in the Lutheran Confessions is pointed to by the confessional writings themselves.

We have, first of all, those few passages which directly make this assertion. The Formula of Concord,² quoting the German version of the Apology, makes the statement:

In the words of the Apology, this article of justification by faith is "the chief article of the entire Christian doctrine," "without which no poor conscience can have any abiding comfort or rightly understand the riches of the grace of Christ."

The more decisive and fuller statement is contained in the Smalcald Articles, where the teaching of justification for Christ's sake is held to be the only reason for the existence of the Lutheran movement in its opposition to Rome.

The first and chief article is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, was "put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25) . . .

Inasmuch as this must be believed and cannot be obtained or apprehended by any work, law, or merit, it is clear and certain that such faith alone justifies us, as St. Paul says in Romans 3. "For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law" (Rom. 3:28),

and again, "that he (God) himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal should be destroyed . . .

On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world. Therefore we must be quite certain and have no doubts about it. Otherwise all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all our adversaries will gain the victory.³

The contrast that follows immediately is very germane to the point being made at the moment: "The Mass in the papacy must be regarded as the greatest and most horrible abomination because it runs into direct and violent conflict with this fundamental article."⁴ The worst faults are those which conflict with what is best.

We may point, next, to the fact that a very full treatment is given in various articles to this teaching of the Confession: Articles IV, VI, and XX of the Augsburg Confession; especially article IV of the Apology; Articles III, IV, and V of the Formula of Concord. A short statement of the doctrine crops up repeatedly in other articles as well, in over half of the twenty-eight articles of the Augsburg Confession, and the same is true of the Apology.

The doctrine determines the position taken in matters not directly connected with justification. Thus, in almost all the articles dealing with abuses which have been corrected in the churches presenting the Augustana the position taken is tied up intimately with the teaching of justification and how the abuses involved relate to it. One would *expect* justification and the forgiveness of sins to be made central in the article dealing with confession (AC XXV), but the next one on the distinction of foods starts with justification also. "In the first place, the grace of Christ and the teaching concerning faith are thereby obscured . . ."⁵ In the article dealing with monastic vows the same situation is to be noticed: "First, it is not a legitimate vow if the one making it supposes that by it he merits the forgiveness of sins before God or makes satisfaction for sins before God."⁶ Article XXVIII tells the same story:

. . . our opponents' only reply is that bishops have the power to rule and correct by force in order to guide their subjects toward the goal of eternal bliss . . . These are the words of the Confutation, by which our opponents inform us that bishops have the authority to create laws which are useful for attaining eternal life.

In the church we must keep this teaching, that we

receive forgiveness of sins freely for Christ's sake by faith.⁷

As a final indication of the centrality of the doctrine of justification we mention the fact that a statement of the doctrine shows up in all sorts of unexpected contexts. This fact is almost more convincing than direct statements concerning the centrality of that teaching. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks," and the pen writes. The doctrine of justification is so central that it comes out even when it is completely unnecessary. One example will suffice. When Roman theologians make the suggestion that celibacy is a purity which merits justification more than marriage, issue is quite properly joined with the opponents. The exposition goes on to say that one gift surpasses another, but there is no excess of righteousness on that account. Examples are given and the following conclusion drawn:

But as eloquence does not make an orator more righteous before God than building makes an architect, so the virgin does not merit justification by virginity any more than the married person does by performing the duties of marriage. Each should serve faithfully in what he has been given to do.

But the Apology does not stop there. It goes on to make the addition—quite unnecessarily and almost annoyingly because of the repetition—"believing that for Christ's sake he obtains the forgiveness of sins and that through faith he is accounted righteous before God."⁸ A by-the-way phrase likewise shows most illuminatingly the centrality of justification for the confessors, like the well-known phrase in the Small Catechism: "where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

Part II

How is the doctrine of justification by faith a distinctive contribution of the Lutheran Confessions to world Christendom? The first aspect of the answer to be developed now is that the Lutheran Confessions in making justification by faith the centre of their witness are pointing the whole church to the heart and centre of God's revelation in the Sacred Scriptures. The heart of the Lutheran Confessions is also the heart of the Scriptures. This is not to assert a merit or an achievement; it is no assertion of special intelligence, spirituality, insight, virtue on the part of the confessors. It is simply to state a fact; it is to acknowledge a gift. It is not to state that in this emphasis the Confessions could not err; it is to say that they did not err. Some sort of demonstration of the claim being made here must

be given, but the complete demonstration would be the subject for a whole volume or even more than one.

The New Testament writer closest to the Lutheran Confessions is undoubtedly St. Paul. (The discussion here is limited to the New Testament because it is the final speaking of God to this world, Heb. 1:1.) A reference to three central passages of his shows both his teaching of justification and the centrality of that teaching for him. There is, first of all, Romans 1:16-17.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live."

Secondly, consider Romans 3:20-25.

For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law, since through the law comes the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith.

There is, next, 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation . . . All this is from God . . . in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them . . . For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Finally, we have Paul's deliberate confession of Philippians 3:8-9.

Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

It would be hard to produce a sharper formulation of the teaching of justification by faith or a more incisive statement that it is at the very centre of the Gospel.

Some have held that the sharp formulation of Luther, *simul iustus et peccator* (righteous and a sinner at one and the same time), is not to be found in the New Testament and that a

permanent attitude or disposition of repentance is strange to it. I should hold that Romans 4:5 ("And to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness"), taken together with the natural understanding of Romans 7:14-25, is so close to a *iustus et peccator* view of the Christian in this life as to be indistinguishable from it.

When we turn to the other New Testament writings, we find a different terminology but no different view of what the Gospel is. "Forgiveness of sins," "salvation," "life" are terms that become prominent to describe the gift of God in Christ to be received by man, the unworthy. Paul, by the way, knows these terms too. Forgiveness is a synonym of righteousness or justification (Rom. 4:6-8); so is salvation (Rom. 1:16, 17); and so is eternal life (Rom. 5:12-21). John has given us the whole purpose of his gospel, a purpose which he develops very thoroughly in every chapter and with admirable discipline, right at the end of the gospel proper, John 20:30,31.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

There is no material difference between this and St. Paul's justification doctrine. The big word in the Synoptics is the "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven." Many parables and sayings of Jesus set this kingdom forth as a precious gift to men from God. It is the consistent view that this kingdom and this gift are linked inseparably with Jesus. In Matthew's Gospel he calls all to come to him that they may have rest (Matt. 11:28-30). Both Matthew and Luke give a certain prominence to the teaching of forgiveness, Matthew in the episode of the Man Paralyzed (9:1-8), in the parable of the Unforgiving Servant, and in his version of Jesus' words in the institution of the Lord's Supper, "which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins"; Luke in the story of the sinful woman of 7:36-50, in his chapter dealing with the lost sheep, coin, and son (ch. 15), in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican (18:9-14), and in his form of the commission which the Risen Lord gave his disciples, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations" (24:46-47). Luke's Acts is an unfolding of the theme of this preaching. Mark's Gospel begins with the message of the Baptist, "who preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4) and, although there is doubt whether 16:15,16 is part of this gospel, there is no real

doubt that the whole Gospel with its strong and virile presentation of the work and suffering of Christ tends to the debated words: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

If we turn to some of the non-Pauline epistles, we shall find that there, too, it is possible to demonstrate the centrality of the doctrine with which we are concerned. This is true, even though one does not expect a letter addressed to a specific issue or problem to contain a compend of Christianity and of its main thrust. Hebrews quite plainly sets forth Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the great priest of our salvation and so the end of the Law on the ceremonial side, as Paul set him forth as the end of the Law in its other aspects—the end of the Law, "that every one who has faith may be justified" (Rom. 10:4). I Peter contains the programmatic passage, "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot . . . Through him you have confidence in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1 Pet. 1:18-21). James knew, too, that we are justified by faith, but in the famous passage of his letter, 2:14-25, he is concerned that only faith deserving the name, no dead thing of mere words, is the faith that justifies. The first letter of John belongs closely together with his gospel. As he does in the gospel, so in the letter he tells us what his purpose is: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1:3). A few verses further on the apostle John tells us the basic structure of this fellowship (1:6-9):

If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

My first assertion, then, concerning the distinctive contribution of the Lutheran Confessions to world Christianity is that their big concern, their overriding interest, their whole reason for existence, to bear witness to the teaching of justification by faith, is just what the Holy Scriptures themselves (and these all churches and churchmen regard as being a

constitutive authority in the Church in one sense or another) point to as central, essential, as the message for which they exist.

Part III

Now, closely connected with this contention is a second one, which is that the Lutheran Confessions point the Church to an essential principle of interpretation of Scripture. It is sometimes stated that it is characteristically Lutheran to hold to the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. This is not the case. It is Lutheran, but it is not a distinguishing mark of Lutheranism. There is no teaching on Scripture as such in the Confessions, although there are many references to its divine authority throughout the Confessions. There was no dispute on the nature of the Bible at the time of the great Reformation conflict with the Papacy. There was considerable conflict with Rome, indeed, on the respective authority of Scripture and Church, which came to a head in the Leipzig Debate, but not on the actual nature of the Bible itself. Reformed churches down the ages have been as insistent on the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible and its inerrancy as Lutheran churches. Many of the sects are quite vocally and adamantly devoted to plenary inspiration, and so are many modern charismatics.

Complete acceptance of verbal inspiration and inerrancy cannot by itself preserve the Church from error, as the errors of churches and sects mentioned just now already indicate. By themselves the concepts of verbal inspiration and inerrancy are not even a clear guide to the understanding of Scripture—particularly, if they are linked to a view of Scripture which sees no differences, which treats all of the very considerable body of material in Scripture as of the same nature, which cannot separate between prophecy and fulfilment, which pays no attention to a sentence like Hebrews 1:1: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son." On such a view of Scripture one cannot argue against the Seventh Day Adventists on such matters as the Sabbath and diet. If one insists on certain New Testament passages, he insists on the Old Testament.

On the other hand, it is not Lutheran to set the Gospel up as an authority in the Church over the Scriptures. This is done, for instance, in a short pamphlet put out by the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strausbourg. It was published last year and bears the title *Lutheran Identity*. In it some ten basic theological convictions are advanced as essential components of the Lutheran identity, the ten together giving supposedly a

profile of what is Lutheran. The eighth one reads: "Using Holy Scripture as the norm for the church's proclamation and teaching while at the same time observing the differentiation (but not separation) between gospel and Scripture." In explanation of this phrase we find the following:

The gospel of Jesus Christ is witnessed in the Holy Scripture in a fundamental way. For this reason Scripture is the decisive and permanent norm of the church's teaching and proclamation. Nevertheless, as a collection of texts, Scripture is not the living gospel of Jesus Christ by which faith and the church live. Only the gospel is the liberating message of salvation disclosed to us by the Holy Spirit. It is the 'centre of Scripture' and in its light all statements and texts of the Bible are to be interpreted. It has to be imparted to people in living proclamation. Through this proclamation, bound to Holy Scripture as its norm, the Holy Spirit creates and bestows faith.

Emphasizing this position is a further statement: "The distinction between gospel—as the centre of Scripture—and the Scriptural text itself should, at any rate, be numbered among the basic convictions of Lutheran theology" (p. 27).

It is clear that if the Gospel is distinct from the scriptural text and set over it, then the scriptural text cannot be its source. So we must find some other source for it. What this source must be we can all conclude for ourselves, either tradition or our own reason. *Tertium non datur*. And then it is not reasonable or logical or sensible to go on to declare that "Scripture is the decisive and permanent norm of the church's teaching and proclamation." Scriptural authority has been effectively eliminated by setting up the Gospel as the "centre of Scripture" without making it derivative from the text of Scripture. Suspicion of the text, distrust of the written Word, and fear that the Bible will become a paper Pope, have led the writers of *Lutheran Identity* to surrender the *sola Scriptura* principle, which the Formula of Concord insists on so strongly: "We believe, teach, and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged."⁹

The true Lutheran contribution on Sacred Scripture is that the doctrine of justification by faith, or the Gospel if you like, is that which gives unity to the whole Scripture, its central teaching which controls all Biblical interpretation. Note well the difference between this statement and the one rejected. The rejected statement separates the Gospel from the Scriptural text; my statement makes the Gospel the specific thrust,

emphasis, and teaching of the Scriptural text. It should also be noted what the claim just made does not suggest. It does not suggest that the doctrine of justification by faith is that from which all teaching may be deduced, a new norm and source and rule of teaching. What it does say is that Scripture cannot teach anywhere or be made to teach anywhere what runs counter to the doctrine of justification by faith. It is a negative norm, if I may put it that way, not a positive norm. No one could deduce the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper from the doctrine of justification by faith, but it is also quite obvious that they are completely in harmony with that teaching. Both of them are derived from specific dominical and Scriptural sentences, and so all teachings of the Church must be derived from specific passages dealing with the matters in hand. The inspiration of the Scripture, the truthfulness of God, and the consistency He must show in all His acts and doings, give us the confidence that nothing of the Scripture will be or can be contrary to or contradict what that same Scripture declares to be its centre and the very purpose for which it was written in the first place.

It would take us beyond the scope of this paper to give the full demonstration in the Confessions of this hermeneutical function of the central teaching of the Christian faith. Only a few salient passages of the Confessions can be referred to and an illuminating example:

The distinction between law and Gospel [and this is basically the same thing from a different point of view as the teaching of justification by faith alone without the works of the law] is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be explained and understood correctly.¹⁰

[The article of justification] is of especial service for the clear and correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible . . .¹¹

To these clear and specific passages we may join the exegesis of certain passages dealt with in the lengthy article in the Apology devoted to the exposition of the central doctrine, Article IV. The obvious one to mention here is the treatment of James 2:24, "You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone." This sentence, as a summary of the lengthier section, verses 14-25, can indeed be well harmonized with the teaching of the apostle Paul and the New Testament generally, but not in the way the Apology tries to do it. The immediate

point is, however, that the Apology is determined in its exegetical method by the principle that James must be understood from the principle of justification by faith alone or, at least, that he cannot be understood in opposition to it. In this concern, the Apology is wholly right and completely consistent with the passages just quoted. In some ways, indeed, it may seem that the Confessions are similar in their treatment of the Scriptures than the Romanists or the Enthusiasts. They harp on one string like the others. The similarity of principle is crystallized in two sentences of Luther: 1) *Ipsi ponunt fundamentum ex suo captu et postea zufahren und glossieren omnes scripturas*;¹² and 2) *Nun müssen wir den Text führen, ne sit contra fundamentum hoc*.¹³ There is no harm in understanding the whole of Scripture from one basic point of view, from one comprehensive understanding of its meaning. The really important thing, however, is that this one comprehensive understanding be the right understanding of what Scripture is all about. And that right understanding, so we claim, is the one which permeates the whole of the Lutheran Confessions, that summed up in the three phrases: *solus Christus, sola gratia, sola fide*. Only when these three are kept intact, is there any real value in the *sola scriptura*.

Part IV

A third distinctive contribution that the Lutheran Confessions make to world Christianity is to be found in the fact that their central concern, justification by faith, makes for, produces, creates a life-style of the highest excellence, one that combines freedom and unselfish love of the neighbour. Because God is a God of grace, love, and mercy, who forgives men their sins freely for the sake of the obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection of his own Son, therefore the Confessions conclude, like St. Paul in Romans 8, that He is wholly love, that the world and the universe which He has created is one which shows forth His love and concern. The creation is a good creation; all that this world contains is there for man's use and welfare, for his blessing and happiness. Nature with its beauty and its provision for man's food and drink, clothing and shelter, man himself with his various and multifarious abilities of body, mind, and spirit, the arts and sciences in all their proliferation, also the course of history with all its complicated and mysterious happenings—all this is of God's good creation, all part of His fatherly guidance and control, in which He has at heart nothing but man's welfare, especially the welfare of those who are His children in Christ Jesus. The Confessions know, too, of the dangers and temptations for men in the things of the world, these are not to be forgotten or treated as mere

bagatelles. But the abuse to which men so frequently put what this world has to offer is no argument against the very good use which these things in themselves are to serve.

A combination of the assertions of faith in both the first and second articles of the Creed, the truths of redemption and creation, leads the man of faith to see in himself, as Luther says, a lord of creation. All that happens and all that is around him, all serves him, is a blessing to him. He cannot achieve more security for himself, no matter what measures he undertakes or how hard he works, than he has by faith in the God who has created him and who has redeemed him in Christ Jesus. All possible causes and grounds for worry and anxiety for himself have been rendered inoperative because of the promises of the Gospel. Nothing prevents him now from living as a free man in Christ, free in faith, and free to become a slave of the fellowman, the neighbour, all those who are in need of his help and assistance. Freedom and unselfish love are a necessary result in the one who has the faith the Gospel calls for and creates and to which the Confessions witness. Part of this attitude of free and unselfish service of the neighbour is the Lutheran view of vocation: the view that I can serve my neighbour by any common, everyday action, that I can serve him best in the work I do and that I should therefore prepare myself for that work, job, calling in life for which I am best suited by the physical and mental gifts that I have inherited or that God has given me. McGiffert in *Martin Luther—The Man and his Work* remarks: "The great significance of Luther's ethical teaching . . . was his subordination of all human duties to the one end of human service . . . That one may better serve his fellow-men, for this he strives to be a better man. The effects of this principle were epochal."¹⁴ *Lutheran Identity*, too, picks out this Lutheran lifestyle as noteworthy ("The affirmation of the world as God's good creation . . .") and adds as part of the elucidating commentary:

The Lutheran reformers were opposed to an ideal of piety which sees Christian perfection in a turning away from earthly reality, rather than turning towards it. They considered this false ideal to be embodied in both monasticism and the 'enthusiast' movements of the time with their rejection of marriage and secular vocations.¹⁵

This particular aspect of the Lutheran contribution to world Christianity is, to be sure, not given particular prominence in the Confessions as a whole. It is Luther's writings which are full of this teaching, and not many of these are part of the Confessions. However, we should note that the Formula of Concord deliberately sets Dr. Martin Luther forth as determining authentic Lutheranism: "Dr. Luther is rightly to be

regarded as the most eminent teacher of the churches which adhere to the Augsburg Confession . . . therefore the true meaning and intention of the Augsburg Confession cannot be derived more correctly or better from any other source than from Dr. Luther's doctrinal and polemical writings."¹⁶ And we should note further that where the point just being stressed is found is in Luther's Small Catechism, in his comments on the First Article and in the section on Confession and Absolution, in other words, in that confessional writing meant especially for the instruction in the faith of the simple layman, the common man, just where, in other words, one might expect the matter to be taken up. Augustana XVI, "On Civil Affairs," presupposes the same insight.

Part V

As a final aspect of the contribution to world Christianity made by the Lutheran Confessions, I point to its teaching concerning the Church. This is particularly appropriate and valuable in this present century, when the Church and its unity has been the dominant interest of Christianity. But one cannot say that the contribution of the Confessions has been generally recognized; in fact, very scant attention has been paid to it even by most Lutherans.

It is not always appreciated that Lutherans were the first to formulate doctrinal, confessional statements on the nature of the Church. And what the confessional writings have to say in definition is basically very simple and uncomplicated. Luther remarks in the Smalcald Articles, with thanks to God, that even "a seven-year-old child knows what the church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd." A more complete definition appears in the Apology where, in addition to the hidden character of the church, the marks by which the hidden church may be recognized are pointed out:

But the church is not so much a society of external rites like other states, but it is above all a society of faith and the Holy Spirit in the heart. However, it has external marks so that it may be recognized, namely, the pure preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in agreement with the Gospel of Christ. It is this church which alone is called the body of Christ.¹⁷

The Augsburg Confession adds to its description of the nature or essence of the church a sentence concerning its unity: "For the true unity of the church it is enough [but also necessary!] to agree concerning the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments." The direct connection of all

these statements concerning the church, its nature, marks, and unity with the teaching of justification by faith is immediately discernible. At the same time, almost all of them are commonly rejected in outward Christianity. Christianity as a whole thinks only in terms of a visible church—the church of Christians in fellowship with the Pope, or the continuation down the years of the one, apostolic, catholic church in the Eastern Orthodox Churches. This general rejection of the Lutheran Confessions on the teaching of the church is due to various factors, but one of the most powerful today is undoubtedly the ecumenical movement. One wonders how long it will take before Christianity comes to see that the ecumenical movement has not only not succeeded in uniting the church but has almost succeeded in destroying it.

Part VI

It seems appropriate to conclude with a few observations on the present and future of the Lutheran Church in relation to its distinctive contribution to world Christianity. The first of these concerns the relation between inheritance and development. If the Lutheran Confessions set forth the Gospel in its most Christian form, and such has been the contention of this paper, does this imply that there is nothing for the Lutheran Church to do but to repeat and continue to repeat that Gospel in its Lutheran dress as accurately as it can from here on to the end of the world, and that there can be no development in any direction of the presentation of the Christian Gospel as it has been confessed and set down in the Lutheran confessional writings? The criticism has been repeatedly raised against confessional commitment that creeds and confessions are limitations on intellectual freedom. The proper attitude is held to be one approximating that of the university, that no truth is final and that progress is made only by gradually discarding the past. The only loyalty is to be to freedom and the future. The Golden Rule is that there is no golden rule. *Lutheran Identity*, for instance, really takes this position in the tenth and last of its basic theological convictions:

Intensive theological quest for the truth of the proclamation which is to take place here and now.

Salvation in Jesus Christ is offered to people in the living proclamation of the gospel. The canon of the Holy Scripture, the church's confessions and office are essential presuppositions and instruments of this proclamation. But they are not identical with the gospel to be proclaimed in a living way nor can they, as such, secure and guarantee right proclamation. The

sovereignty of the gospel therefore demands an unremitting theological effort in quest of the truth of the message to be proclaimed here and now.¹⁸

It is plain that the framers of these statements mean more than that the Church must find the right way, the proper language, the adequate vehicle for bringing the Gospel clearly, convincingly, understandably to each new generation. No one could not quarrel with *that* demand. What is actually being demanded, however, is a continued quest for the Gospel itself, as if this were an elusive something which no Holy Scripture, no church tradition or confession can really set forth in appropriate words. We seem to be back with the famous parable of Lessing and the apparently humble choice made by the hero that he would rather spend all his life in the pursuit of truth with the proviso that he would never find it than be given the truth complete and entire for taking without effort.

No person committed to the Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions could possibly accept the position upheld in *Lutheran Identity*. God's revelation is a clear one, and it is an unchanging one. We have an everlasting Gospel to proclaim to all the world. Loyalty to Christ is also loyalty to the tradition of the apostles. Remember St. Paul and his description of his task: "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you" (1 Cor. 11:23)—where he uses technical language about the accurate passing on of a tradition; he does the same in other places like 1 Corinthians 15:3 and Galatians 1:9 and 1:12. Preaching and teaching the Gospel *is* in great part the passing on of a tradition; and the overriding requirement of such an activity is loyalty and faithfulness to the tradition. The Church has a perpetual reminder of the essential, unchanging, permanent character of its Gospel in the Sacraments. These have remained unchanged down through the history of the Church, and are in their very nature unchangeable, as they are also in their very nature pure Gospel. The same, I should say, is also true of the absolution. There *is* a static quality about the Gospel, and this is the case in the last analysis because it is of God, and God is One, unchangeable, the only unchanging entity where all things are in a state of flux.

But there is also a dynamic quality about the Gospel, and commitment to the Confessions must embrace such dynamism within itself. The history of the Church indicates quite plainly the sort of development which I have in mind and which is in keeping with the unchangeable character of the Gospel. Let us remind ourselves of the development of the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ. From the primitive confession "Jesus is Lord" to the statements of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Chalcedonian Decision, and Articles VII and VIII of the

Formula of Concord there is a very great development indeed. However, the development is one that is wholly in keeping with the biblical statements concerning Jesus. So also the soteriological significance of the work of Christ is only in embryo in the Nicene Creed, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven . . .," but appears with some considerable maturity in the Lutheran Confessions and, of course, in other writings of the Church as well. In this case too there is a development harmonious with the Scriptural material, not a development which in effect denies it. This sort of development we must allow for in our acceptance of, committal to, and churchly use of the Lutheran Confessions.

It would probably go far beyond the limits of this essay to indicate areas where such development of the positions taken by the Lutheran Confessions is desirable, but a mere reference to them may be of some value. Have we said the last word, for instance, in the matter of the Two Kingdoms? Is there not room here for some considerable refinement and development of our Lutheran position? And what of the doctrine of creation? Our knowledge of the world is so much more accurate than that of the Lutheran confessors that there seems to be an immense field for theological thought to plough and sow and reap. And what of the doctrine of the Church? Has not the tremendous theological as well as practical attention given to all aspects of the Church in this century made it possible to speak of Church more deeply and more comprehensively than the sixteenth century Confessions could do? And the same observation could certainly be made concerning the doctrine of Holy Scripture, which is not even taken up for special treatment in the Confessions.

I cannot think of a better way of putting my thoughts on this matter than in the way used long ago by St. Vincent of Lerins, and so I shall quote from his notebook:

Is there to be no development of doctrine in Christ's Church? Certainly there should be great development.

Who could be so grudging towards his fellow-men and so hostile to God as to try to prevent it? But care should be taken to ensure that it really is development of the faith and not alteration. Development implies that each point of doctrine is expanded within itself, while alteration suggests that a thing has been changed from what it was into something different.

It is desirable then that development should take place, and that there should be a great and vigorous growth in the understanding, knowledge and wisdom of every individual as well as of all the people, on the part of each member as well as of the whole Church, gradually

over the generations and ages. But it must be growth within the limits of its own nature, that is to say within the framework of the same dogma and of the same meaning.

Let religion, which is of the spirit, imitate the processes of the body. For, although bodies develop over the years and their individual parts evolve, they do not change into something different. It is true that there is a great gap between the prime of youth and the maturity of later years, but the people who reach these later years are the same people who once were adolescents. So, although the size and outward appearance of any individual may change, it is still the same person, and the nature remains the same.

The limbs of infants are tiny, while those of young men are large, but they are the same limbs. The man has no more parts to his body than the little child: and if there are parts that appear with age and greater maturity they are already present earlier in embryo. As a result, it can be said that nothing new is produced in old men that was not already present in an undeveloped form when they were boys.

I shall conclude with a second observation which concerns the Lutheran Church's own response to its distinctive contribution to the world. My impression is that there is very little real appropriation by Lutheran churches and Lutheran people of the treasures their confessional writings contain. The Lutheran churches of the world generally seem to be unable to find a solid position between Catholics on the one hand and the Reformed on the other. Justification by faith seems to be more of a philosophical principle to play around with than an existential word of God which sets me right with God and puts me right with myself, with the world in which I live, and with my neighbour. Lutherans hesitate between rank Fundamentalism and a liberal attitude to the Scripture which most decisively overthrows the formal principle of theology. Lutherans speak of the Church in the same way as everybody else and find themselves a prey of ecumania. How many Lutherans live as men who know themselves forgiven by God, as His friends in Jesus Christ, as His children and heirs; as men who need fear no future, no foe, no catastrophe since the God who has redeemed them has also created them and still preserves them; as men who can freely serve their fellows, and are glad to do it especially in their respective callings, since in Christ they are masters of this world and universe; as men who can enjoy all that this world has to offer, while being alive to the dangers in it which may entrap their souls? My experience

seems to suggest that men like this are few and far between and that the great majority of Lutherans, too, live as though the Law were God's final word to men, and not his Word in Christ Jesus.

To be committed to the Confessions means continuing to confess them. It is possible for them to have a merely formal authority. They can be written into a church's constitution, while the actual life of that church is determined by different factors and influences altogether. It is a case of the proper understanding of James on faith and works all over again. What we want is not merely talk about the Confessions and what a blessing they are and the contribution they can make to the Church, but actual use of the Confessions. We need the Confessions as living, active factors in the existence of the Church, not as museum pieces. The call of the hour for the Lutheran Church is for church leaders, theologians, pastors, and teachers who can transmit the profound spirituality of the Confessions to all the members of the Church. We need men who are so on fire with the truths of which the Confessions are full and whose lives are so obviously expressions of that conviction that those who know them and hear them cannot but be gripped by the actual confessing that is going on in their very presence. Confessions are to be held as a sacred trust, but they are also to be confessed as a continuing, living reality. Where that happens, not only on the part of a small spiritual elite but by whole churches, there we may well be surprised by the powerful effects and the rich blessings which the Spirit of God will work in this world.

FOOTNOTES

1. *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1871), p. 195.
2. FC, SD III, 6.
3. Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 292.
4. Tappert, p. 293.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 464; cf. pp. 503, 504.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 558.
11. *Apology* IV, 2 (German).
12. WA 27, p. 56, 11.
13. WA 27, p. 299, 15.
14. McGiffert, p. 176.
15. *Lutheran Identity*, p. 23.
16. Tappert, p. 576.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 169 (Tappert's translation is slightly different from the one in the text).

18. *Lutheran Identity*, pp. 29, 30.

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Theological Observer

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION-NOTHING NEW

With the plethora of Bible translations currently available, one must question the reasons behind the production of yet another one. It is true that Bible sales remain brisk today and thus make entry into this market potentially quite profitable. However, strong popular devotion to translations like King James Version or Living Bible makes it necessary that a new translation have some improvement or new approach if it is to snatch readers away from the favorites. Confessional Lutherans have longed for a new translation which would both escape the occasional faulty renderings and archaic language of KJV and also avoid the paraphrastic muddiness of Living Bible and Good News Bible. Despite the fact that some in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod apparently had a hand in its production, the New International Version does not appear to be any improvement over what is currently available.

Doctrinally, the NIV is to be commended for its basically conservative approach (Is. 7:14 — “the virgin . . .”; Ps. 2:12 — “Kiss the Son . . .”), though one gets a little perturbed at the RSV-style footnotes in Job 19:25ff. Even more disturbing, however, are the subtle inclusions of Reformed theology. In this tendency the NIV is potentially more insidious than the Living Bible with its coarse emendations, because the doctrinal problems are less easily recognized. For example, 1 Peter 2:8b (Calvin’s proof-text for election to damnation) reads, “They stumble because they disobey the message — which is also what *they were destined for*”. One also bristles at the millennialistic implications of “they came to life” in Revelation 20:4.

There are also numerous renderings which, whether containing doctrinal error or not, cause one to wonder about the translators’ intentions. A “report of fornication” in Matthew 5:32 becomes “marital unfaithfulness” (does the latter cover what divorce courts call “gross neglect of duty?”). Those who ate with Jesus in Matthew 9:10ff. are called “tax collectors and ‘sinners’”; the placing of “sinners” in quotation marks seems to indicate that they really were not sinners at all. “Of the apostles” is deleted from the title of Acts on the basis of Codex Sinaiticus alone, without even a footnote, but no similar treatment is given to Mark 16:9-20, despite stronger witness against it.

Romans 1:3 reads, “as to his human nature,” but the parallel in the next verse reads, “through the Spirit of holiness,” which in context appears to allow for some sort of adoptionistic Christology. Also puzzling is Romans 1:17, “For in the gospel *a* righteousness from God is revealed” (are other ‘righteousness from God’ revealed elsewhere?).

The NIV had a golden opportunity to correct some of the mistakes of past translations, but instead has perpetuated most of them. The RSV’s queer rendering of 1 Corinthians 11:16 — “we recognize no *other* practice” — is retained, although the Greek Word means exactly the opposite — “no *such* practice.” The erroneous translation of Luke 2:2 — “while Quirinius was governor of Syria” — quoted by some as an example of an error in the Bible (since apparently at the time Quirinius was not governor of Syria, but rather was ruling Syria under martial law) is not corrected, despite the fact that the text employs a predicate participle rather than a noun. Also retained is the translation of John 3:5, “born of water and the Spirit.” It may at first seem trivial, but the text contains no article in front of either “water” or “Spirit.” The fact that in most translations “water”

lacks the definite article while "Spirit" has it has been used by certain fundamentalists to deny a connection between the Spirit and the water in baptism.

This observer has long desired a translation that would be more consistent than those available in its renderings of given words. Admittedly, a given Greek word does not always mean the same thing in all contexts; but when one word in Greek is translated five to ten different ways in English, such things as concordance study become impossible for most laymen. The NIV in this area is anything but an improvement. Two examples — *hades* occurs only ten times in the New Testament, yet the NIV translates these few occurrences with four different English words: "Hades" (Mt. 16:18, et al.), "hell" (Lk. 16:23), "grave" (Ac. 2:27, 31) and "the depths" (Mt. 11:23 and Lk. 10:15). *Thlipsis* occurs much more frequently, but does this justify ten entirely different renderings? Compare Matthew 13:21 ("trouble"); 24:9 ("persecution"); 24:21 ("distress"); John 16:21 ("anguish"); Acts 7:11 ("suffering"); 14:22 ("hardship"); Romans 12:12 ("affliction"); 2 Corinthians 8:2 ("trial"); 8:13 ("hard pressed"), and Revelation 7:14 ("tribulation"). The latter reference is the only occurrence of *thlipsis* in the New Testament which the NIV translates "tribulation." Since "tribulation" has become a technical term among millennialists for the seven-year horror period between the "rapture" and the establishment of the millennial kingdom, one wonders about the motives behind using "tribulation" in a millennialistic "proof-text," while employing other terms in passages which clearly teach that the "tribulation" began with Christ's ascension (e.g., Rev. 1:9).

Although there are certainly worse translations on the market, there appears to be little about the NIV which encourages replacing the New American Standard Bible, the Modern Language Bible (the "Berkeley" version), or even an expunged RSV with it.

ROMAN CATHOLIC RECOGNITION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

One remarkable development of modern church life has been Roman Catholic participation in ecumenical relations. Among the more theologically productive associations has been the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogues in the United States. A significant step in relationships between the two churches could be the possible Roman Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession. This confession has a normative function in Lutheran Churches and at least an honored position among the Reformed. Recent Roman Catholic attention to the Augsburg Confession certainly gives this document an important place in any discussion of church reunion in Western Christianity. Historically it testifies to the formal rupture between Lutheranism, the Reformed tradition, and Roman Catholicism.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Archbishop of Munich, has been one among many German Catholic scholars who have studied Luther and has been a prime mover in seeking Roman Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession. In a recent issue of the officially church approved theological journal *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* (XXIX [3], 1978, pp. 225-237), Ratzinger describes the nature of this recognition in his article "Anmerkungen zur Frage einer 'Anerkennung' der Confessio Augustana durch die katholische Kirche" — "Remarks on the Question of a 'Recognition' of the Augsburg Confession by the Catholic Church." Regretfully Roman Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession will not resemble what Lutherans understand as confessional subscription.

The cardinal is quite forthright in seeing the Augsburg Confession within the context of Luther's, rather than Melancthon's, theology. The cardinal makes no attempt to reconstruct the classical Lutheran understanding of the confessions. He knows that whatever ecumenical avenues appear open within the Augsburg Confession are closed by the other Lutheran confessions, especially the Smalkald Articles (p. 232). He also is not pleased with the Melancthonian division between the doctrinal (I-XXI) and abuse (XXII-XXVIII) articles within the Augsburg Confessions. From a Roman Catholic viewpoint all the articles are doctrinal, a concept clearly held by Luther, as the cardinal points out. The real subject of these articles is justification and not merely ceremonies. Any attempt to mollify the theology of the Augsburg Confession, in the opinion of the cardinal, "not historical" and "ecumenically worthless" (p. 236). Understanding the Augsburg Confession apart from Luther would be pure fiction and out of step with reality. It would hardly provide a sound scholarly foundation for ecumenical theology.

The cardinal is willing to ascribe to the Augsburg Confession what he describes as an "Entscheidungscharakter" in contrast to an "Erklärungscharakter" (p. 236). By this he means that the Augsburg Confession has a decisive and definite function within the processes and development of churches which share the Reformation heritage. But he would not grant it a normative function. Roman Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession would mean that it would occupy an important place as Lutheran confessional theology joins in dialogue with the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church.

Amazing is the cardinal's understanding of the confessional principle in Lutheran theology, though he obviously cannot accept it. Ecumenical-minded Lutherans have not infrequently attempted to isolate the Augsburg Confession from the rest of the Book of Concord and the writings of Luther in order to establish links with both Catholicism and Calvinism. This procedure the cardinal finds historically irresponsible and ecumenically counterproductive. There are, unfortunately, relatively few Lutherans holding to the classical views of confessional subscriptions which Cardinal Ratzinger accurately and vividly describes. The Leuenberg Concord subscribed by the large state-related European Lutheran Churches has in effect, stated that the Reformation controversies between Lutherans and the Reformed have been superceded in the modern era. Perhaps the cardinal can teach these Lutherans what it means to be Lutheran!

What the cardinal offers to Lutherans in the Roman Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession is regrettably an imitation olive branch. Lutherans would have to surrender the *norma normativa* character of their confessions and be swept into the stream of Roman Catholic tradition with its inexact and indeterminate boundaries. The genius of Catholicism is that one organization embraces all. In the pope's house there are many rooms, and there is no reason why one cannot be reserved for the adherents of the Augsburg Confession.

Since 1555 the Augsburg Confession has had the debatable honor of having civil status in certain parts of Germany. In an age of vigorous ecumenical exchange it is unlikely that the Roman Catholic Church, especially in Germany, could avoid commemorating in some way the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 1980. The cardinal's understanding of the Lutheran Confessions is, sadly, more profound than most Lutheran pastors, but his understanding of what Roman Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession means is unacceptable to true Lutherans.

The Lutheran Church, in setting forth the Augsburg Confession, did not intend that it would describe one period of church development, but meant it rather as an ecumenical document in the sense of the three ancient creeds. The Augsburg Confession is the doctrine not merely of some German churches in the sixteenth century, but the doctrine of the *una sancta*, the doctrine delivered by the Holy Spirit to the apostles and believed by Christians everywhere. Within these perimeters all Christians in all times and places are embraced. They embrace the cardinal himself in so far as he accepts the doctrine of the Augustana.

David P. Scaer

Book Reviews

1. Biblical Studies

THESE THINGS ARE WRITTEN. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF THE BIBLE. By James M. Efir. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1978. 169 pages. Paper. \$4.95.

James Efir, who is currently Associate Professor of Biblical Languages and Interpretation at Duke Divinity School, has endeavored to meet the needs of academic and religious communities to furnish an introduction to the religious thought of the Bible. The former Director of Academic Affairs presents for the reader the fruits of his scholarship to enlighten current and historical issues in modern Biblical studies.

The presuppositions which underly this volume are those of the various forms of the historical-critical method. The entire literature, as well as the views of conservative Biblical scholarship, is ignored. Efir especially considers the chronological development of the religious ideas of the Bible. Thus he covers the Pentateuch, the development of the Old Testament, the conquest and the kingdom, the prophets, and the post-exilic period. Then Efir focuses on the New Testament, its background as well as the rise of the apocalyptic writings. Bibliographies are given at the end of each chapter to encourage further study. With few exceptions all books suggested for further reading advocate the historical-critical approach to Scripture and even the few he recommends (Bruce and Ladd) have made concessions to a negative form of higher criticism.

With the espousal of the historical-critical method it's not surprising to find a view of the Holy Scriptures, about its doctrine of revelation and inspiration, that is not true to the Bible's own teaching. For Efir the Bible merely contains records of God's mighty acts to which men make their responses and thus affects them in their thinking and acting. Those wishing to see what kind of Biblical information is given students taking religion courses in departments of religion at universities and even church related colleges will find Efir's volume instructive.

Raymond F. Surburg

THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Volume III. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1978. 463 pages. Cloth. \$18.95.

This is the authorized and unabridged translation of *Theologisches Woerterbuch Zum Alten Testament*, edited by G. J. Botterweck, Professor of Old Testament, Faculty of Catholic Theology at the Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelms-Universitaet in Bonn, West Germany and Helmer Ringgren, Professor at the University of Uppsala, Sweden. The English translation was done by John T. Willis and Geoffrey W. Bromiley (pp. 1-358) and David Green (pp. 359-463).

This theological dictionary is referred to under the abbreviation TDOT. When this major philological and exegetical work is complete, it will comprise twelve volumes. The editors and publishers believe that TDOT will be as fundamental for Old Testament studies as is the Kittel-Friedrich *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* for New Testament studies.

Beginning with 'abh, "father" and continuing through the alphabet, the key Hebrew and Aramaic words of the Old Testament are discussed in depth. Volume III discusses fifty-seven significant words, beginning with *gillulim* and concluding with *haras*. The word studies are written by thirty-seven different European and American scholars.

Leading scholars of various religious traditions, such as Anglican, Reformed, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Jewish, were selected as contributors for volume III. In the three volumes which so far have appeared, scholars from the United States, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Greece, Holland, and Israel have written word studies. The two European chief editors also consulted with George W. Anderson, Henri Gazelles, David Noel Freedman, Shermarjahu Talmon, and Gerhard Wallis.

In the editor's preface of Volume I Botterweck and Ringgren explained the word "theological" as used in the title of *A Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* as follows:

But in this context, what is meant by "theological"? Since the Old Testament certainly "speaks about God," the purpose of this dictionary is to analyze its religious statements with the aid of all accessible resources and to present them in their peculiarity, in order to shed as much light as possible on the connections of the content of the Old Testament thought in a given text, tradition, or institution. Thus "theology" is understood primarily in a descriptive, just as one might speak of the theology of Augustine or the theology of Luther.

The TDOT treats under each keyword the larger groups of words that are related linguistically or semantically, thereby endeavoring to avoid restricting the focus of the way it has been done in a number of theological dictionaries. TDOT does not only give comprehensive surveys as found in the literature of the Old Testament, but it incorporates the word's occurrences in Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, and Ethiopic. Ugaritic and Northwest Semitic sources are also taken into account, as are the texts from the Qumran and the texts from the Septuagint. In cultures where no cognate words exist, frequently cognate ideas are noted and evaluated. Throughout the volumes of TDOT emphasis has been placed on Hebrew terminology.

The English edition has been prepared with the needs of students of the Old Testament in view, especially also for those who do not possess the linguistic background of more advanced scholars, without sacrificing the needs of the specialists. Ancient scripts (Hebrew, Greek, etc.) are regularly transliterated in a readable way and the meanings of foreign words are given in many cases where the meanings might be obvious to advanced scholars. Where the Hebrew text versification differs from that of the English Bibles, the English verse is given in parentheses.

With such a large number of scholars participating in the TDOT, it is not surprising to find a lack of homogeneity. The reader will find more than one exegetical school represented. The editors believe that this lack of homogeneity will result in a more complete and reliable interpretation. Those who do not use the historical-critical method, with its commitment to a radical type of literary criticism, to form and redaction criticisms will need to be careful how they employ the conclusions of those scholars who clearly use them. The views on revelation and inspiration which underlie the various word studies will need to be evaluated from the perspective of what the Old and New Testaments teach about these fundamental theological doctrines.

The various volumes of TDOT contain a storehouse of valuable information, but assumptions and conclusions should not be accepted simply because they are printed in this prestigious Old Testament wordbook.

Raymond F. Surburg

OLD TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES. AN ENGLISH HEBREW AND CHALDEE LEXICON AND CONCORDANCE. By William Wilson. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1978. 566 pages. Cloth. \$19.95.

This helpful volume is a reprint of the 2nd edition, 1870 of Wilson's *The Bible Students Guide to the More Correct Understanding of the English Translation of the Old Testament* by Reference to the Original Hebrew, published by Macmillan, London. Dr. William Wilson (1783-1873) spent an incredible amount of time in putting together this philological reference book, which Wilson embarked upon for the purpose of illustrating the precise meaning of words. The book was to be a manual for consulting when the investigator of the precise meaning of Hebrew no longer had time. Dr. Wilson, Canon of the Winchester Cathedral, knew that the English translation in the English versions was not always able to give the precise and correct meaning of the original Hebrew text. It often happened that different Hebrew words, which nuances in meaning, were rendered by the identical word in English, which were synonyms, yet did require a distinction of meaning if the intended fine point of the original was to be realized. Often false deductions were made by exegetes based on the English text, which upon closer examination with the Hebrew were not justified.

Wilson states in his preface that a knowledge of Hebrew is not absolutely necessary to be able to use this volume and derive the benefit from its intelligent usage.

Old Testament Word Studies is a most exhaustive dictionary and concordance of all the words in the King James Version, the corresponding Hebrew words and their meanings from which they were translated and all the passages in which the meaning occurs.

The users of *Old Testament Word Studies* will find that its compiler employs the alphabetical arrangement under which is listed every Hebrew word with its literal English meaning plus Biblical references of their English usage. In addition there are offered detailed references where the same shade of meaning is used.

This reference volume should prove to be an invaluable aid for the understanding of word meanings; a great help in arriving at the correct interpretation of difficult Biblical passages. A valuable interpretative tool for seminarians, pastors and even laymen.

Raymond F. Surburg

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN FOCUS. By Keith N. Schoville. Introduction by Menahem Mansoor. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1978. 511 pages. Cloth. \$15.95.

The author of this informative volume on Biblical archaeology is associate chairman of the department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Schoville has travelled extensively in Bible lands and has participated in excavations at Dan. The organization and format of the volume are the result of experience obtained from teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses on Biblical archaeology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison over a ten-year period.

In explaining the arrangement and possible use of materials in his volume the author states:

It has been arranged so that one can read introductory material in the first material in the first five chapters and then study information on those archaeological sites that are most attractive to the individual. For class-

room information or for individual research, I have suggested bibliographic information and have included useful bibliographic information for each chapter.

This book is based on extensive archaeological research as they pertain to Bible lands. A careful reading will enable the person to acquire an informed overview of this fascinating field of human learning and also be an aid in understanding the Bible better.

Part One gives the necessary background information. A number of chapters cover the dimensions and development of Biblical archaeology, exploration financing and dating finds, the development of writing, and the relationships of the Bible and archaeology.

Part Two provides information on sites in Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and the Holy Land. Included into this site-by-site report is a description of Bible peoples and of the historical backdrop to both Biblical and intertestamental times.

Schoville believes that *Biblical Archaeology in Focus* should also have an appeal for a large body of lay students who have become interested in archaeological research in Bible lands. He hopes that groups in Church and synagogue will use his volume profitably as they endeavor to enrich their knowledge of Bible lands.

Many books on Biblical and Palestinian archaeology have been published in recent years, and some might wonder whether another book was necessary. However, *Biblical Archaeology in Focus* does have many unique features that would justify its appearance and it does make an important contribution to this discipline. The materials have been presented in simple, yet scholarly language, which the readers should have no difficulty in understanding. Here the lay person can find a balanced presentation on archaeological topics which the press has often described inaccurately and in a sensationalized manner. Dr. Menahem Mansoor believes that "the text may well become a standard reference work in that field."

Raymond F. Surburg

THE MOON, ITS CREATION, FORM, AND SIGNIFICANCE. By John C. Whitcomb and Donald B. De Young. BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana. 180 pages. \$7.95. Cloth.

The authors of this book are a theologian and a scientist respectively. Whitcomb is a member of Grace Theological Seminary faculty and De Young is a science professor at Grace College. Both have authored previous publications of significance. Since the Apollo moon project much popular interest has been spawned in the moon and in the area of astronomy. Dr. Larry G. Redkopp, Associate Professor of aerospace engineering, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, wrote the forward and in it notes that this book "provides a profoundly different perspective to lunar studies in particular and astronomy in general. Current scientific writings commonly address the topic by dealing exclusively with naturalistic speculations for the existence of the moon together with a discussion of the present state of the lunar surface and events observed thereon."

Whitcomb and De Young in this interesting and informative volume in addition to dealing with the topics generally discussed by scientists writing about the new views and theories currently held and advocated, go further and discuss the origin, state and observables of the moon together with answering the questions: How did the moon originate? What is its significance in the cosmos? And

What will be its destiny? Correctly Redkopp observes: "Such a combination of topics appearing in a single context is unique in astronomical literature and adds an illuminating dimension to any study pertaining to origins."

The authors believe in the reliability and inerrancy of the Bible and accept its scientific teachings, which are sometimes expressed in phenomological language. They accept those Scriptural teachings about science that are enunciated in the Old and New Testaments. They are opposed to the evolutionary theory, whether it be expressed in terms of atheistic language or the accommodationists' theistic explanations.

Relative to the important question about the moon's creation Whitcomb writes: "The creation of the astronomical universe was not only *ex nihilo* (i.e. From no previously existing matter, as stated in Heb. 11:3), but it was also, by the very nature of the case, *instantaneous*. Its origin could not, therefore, have been spontaneous or self-acting. The evolutionary concept of a gradual build up of heavier and heavier elements throughout billions of years is clearly excluded by the pronouncements of Scripture" (p. 73).

Concluding his chapter on the geology of the moon De Young writes: "The final conclusion must be that a complete understanding of the physical nature and history of the incredibly complex earth and moon, based on scientific method, is entirely impossible. Similar to the dilemna arising from the precarious and conflicting lunar origins leads one ultimately back to the Genesis account of a moon created by God. The moon, geologically fascinating even in view of its inhospitable condition, was created with correct geological properties to fulfill its divine purposes of illumination and time-keeping.

James B. Irwin, Apollo 15 Astronaut, has authorized the following statement about this book: "This book presents the best comparison of the various moon origin theories I have ever seen. I congratulate the authors of the material." (Statement on the back of the book)

In Appendix three the future of the moon is discussed. As believers in a millennium, the authors place certain astronomical moon phenomena in the Kingdom Age, the last of the dispensations of those holding to the dispensational interpretation of the Bible. This reviewer does not believe in a coming reign of Christ on earth during a millennium and therefore disagrees with the positions on the future destiny of the moon.

Our readers will find the book interesting and instructive.

Raymond F. Surburg

BIBLICAL CRITICISM: HISTORICAL, LITERARY, and TEXTUAL. By R.K. Harrison, B.K. Waltke, D. Guthrie and G. Fee. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1978. 183 pages. Paper. \$5.95.

The four articles that comprise this book have been selected from the introductory articles that make up volume 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, copyright 1978 by The Zondervan Corporation. This volume is now also a part of Zondervan's well known *Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives* series. Half of the book deals with the Old Testament and half with the New Testament.

In the preface the publishers correctly inform the evangelical reader that he should not misinterpret the word criticism, of which three different kinds as they apply to both Biblical Testaments, are discussed. Conservative evangelicals are opposed to the use of the historical-critical method as practiced today by many Biblical scholars, many of them attached to famous universities in the world and theological seminaries in America, Europe, Central and South America, Asia,

Africa and Australia. Because of the fact that rationalism and a Christian faith loyal to the doctrines of Scripture have been battling each other for a number of centuries, has led some Christians to believe that all forms of criticism are hostile to God's inspired and inerrant Word. The types of criticism engaged in this volume have not been a problem for Lutherans ever since the days of the reformation. "Reason, as a gift of God, should not be looked upon negatively, but should be considered a tool for sharpening discernment and understanding. As such, it is in no way opposed to faith, but complements and enhances it. Having accepted the Bible as God's inerrant Word, it remains for us to discover, insofar as possible, the original form of the text, answering the questions: What does the text say? and How was it understood in the earliest centuries of the New Testament era? This investigation is called textual (formerly "lower") criticism" (p. vii).

R. K. Harrison of Wycliffe College, University of Toronto in his essay: "The Historical and Literary Criticism of the Old Testament" treats the actual and literary content of the Old Testament. The part dealing with historical criticism treats the Middle Bronze Age, Iron Age, Babylonian Period, Persian Period, and Greek Period. The Pentateuch, the liturgical tradition, the books of Isaiah and Daniel are specifically discussed in the second part of the essay.

Bruce K. Waltke of Regent College deals with "The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament." Here the readers will find the latest thinking about the history of the Hebrew Old Testament text, beginning with the manuscripts from earliest manuscripts to the present. The Septuagint, the Aramaic Targums, the Old Latin and Latin Vulgate and the Syriac Peshitta are discussed in their relationship to the original Scriptural text. The article concludes with a listing of the basic canons of Old Testament textual criticism.

Seventy pages of the volume are devoted to the New Testament. Donald Guthrie in "The Historical and Literary Criticism of the New Testament" explains trends in modern criticism, discusses various approaches to historical criticism, comments on theories and forms of literary criticism, and concludes with a discussion of the question of criticism and its relationship to Biblical authority. Guthrie, Senior Lecturer in New Testament Language and Literature at London Bible College, is the well known author of *New Testament Introduction* (1054 pages), a textbook used in many conservative seminaries and Bible Colleges.

Associate Professor Gordon Fee of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, furnishes the reader with the most recent thinking in the highly technical area of New Testament textual criticism. He compares the Greek manuscripts, the ancient versions and patristic citations with the purpose of tracing their history of variations within the text.

Those of our readers who have not kept up with these areas will find the volume helpful. It should also be a resource for neophytes in the theological studies.

Raymond F. Surburg

SCRIPTURE, TRADITION, AND INTERPRETATION. Edited by W. Ward Gasque and William Sanford La Sor. Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1978. 331 pages.

This is a *Festschrift* tendered to Everett F. Harrison by his students and colleagues in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday. Everett F. Harrison, Emeritus Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, has been a very influential conservative Biblical scholar, for between 1943 and 1976 a plethora of journal articles and books flowed from his fascile pen. (cf. the bibliography of

publication, listed on pp. 313-319).

Of the nineteen essays in the *Festschrift* the editors state "that they represent not only the high regard which many contemporary New Testament students, young and old, have for the recipient, but they also represent the theological and exegetical issues with which he has wrestled and upon which he has focused attention of those who sat at his feet. He has shared with us a love for the written Word of God which has been contagious, and he has constantly challenged us by example and by exhortation to resist the temptation to squeeze Scripture into a mold of our own creation" (P. vii).

The President of Fuller Seminary begins the volume with a tribute to the honoree, in which nearly five pages give a brief outline of the life and accomplishments of Dr. Harrison. The latter's scholarly contributions are grouped under three categories: I. Scripture; II. Tradition; III. Interpretation. Seven members of the present faculty of Fuller have contributed. The other essays are by twelve writers, most of whom are connected with other theological schools.

Some of the essays reflect the controversy with Dr. Harold Lindell, who attacked Fuller for having forsaken the position on Biblical inerrancy, which was the first position of Fuller when founded. This is done especially in the contribution of Professor Jack B. Rogers, entitled: "A Third Alternative: Scripture, Tradition, and Interpretation of G. C. Berkouwer." Dr. George Eldon Ladd begins his essay: "Why did God Inspire the Bible" in this way: "If one reads the modern literature about the Bible produced by those of us who are heirs of fundamentalist theology, one would be likely to conclude that the main reason God inspired the Bible was to give modern theologians the opportunity of debating the meaning of inerrancy or infallibility. Many evangelical scholars assume that if God inspired the Bible, it must as a matter of course be perfect and without errors of any kind . . ." He claims that 2 Tim. 3:16 which states that all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" says nothing about the inerrancy or infallibility of the Bible (p. 49) Neither does this passage mention other attributes of Scripture, but that does not mean that they are not taught by other passages of Holy Writ, either by direct statement or by logical deduction!

These nineteen essays are interesting and some quite provocative. Lack of space prohibits setting forth their contents as well as taking issues with assumptions and conclusions of a number of the contributors.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE METHOD AND MESSAGE OF JESUS'S TEACHINGS. By Robert H. Stein. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1978. 188 pages. Paper. \$7.95.

Stein simply ignores the major contemporary preoccupation with determining Jesus's actual words and the different emphases and themes of the four Gospel writers and launches directly into setting forth His method and content. The goal is admirable for two reasons. (1) Since those prepossessed in looking for the historical Jesus are self-admittedly fatalistic in their own ability to complete their quest, there is no use in waiting for their results which will never be final anyway. (2) It recognizes that Jesus is God's final revelation and teacher.

In the first chapter Stein isolates titles of Jesus as teacher. Regretfully it is not pointed out that those who recognize Jesus only as a religious educator are not among His real followers. The author's arguments for an Aramaic speaking Jesus are not convincing and only delay getting into the book's real substance.

Chapter two is a review of a course in hermeneutics. Such matters as overstatement, hyperbole, pun, etc., etc. are laid out. The chapter on the parables includes a definition of the parables, their authenticity, the history of their interpretations, and examples of their interpretation. Championed is the view of Juelicher that each parable has only one point of comparison, a view also held by Luther. This reviewer sees this principle being so often broken by its proponents that his only conclusion can be that perhaps that principle should be readjusted. Four chapters cover the content of Jesus's teaching: kingdom of God, Fatherhood of God, ethics of the kingdom, and Christology. In the first three of these chapters a useful historical summary of previous positions is included. Stein sees kingdom as centering in Jesus and existing within the tension of present and future. The special relationship of Jesus to God as Father is stressed. The section on ethics concentrates on the Sermon on the Mount and particularly the Beatitudes, a section on which unanimity of interpretation has been evasive. Stein seems to provide the best solution in seeing that Jesus is the fulfillment of His own requirements. "Jesus was unique in his moral teachings in that he proved an embodiment of his idea" (p. 111). The chapter on Christology analyzes Jesus's actions, words, and titles.

There are several points where this reviewer would have liked the author to have altered or expanded his views. The title the Son of Man does have overtones of deity that could have been made clearer and the parables might have been mined deeper as a source of Christology.

Exegetical theology since the eighteenth century has meant that systematic theology must be performed differently than it was in the classical period of Protestantism. The cleavage between Jesus and Paul, regardless of how untenable and immoral, means today that Jesus must be understood as a teacher in his own right. Stein is aware of the new ground rules in theology and working within this new framework has set forth a Jesus who is rejected if He is not acknowledged as Lord and God. Extensive notes further corroborate that the author has immersed himself in the pressing exegetical and theological problems.

David P. Scaer

COMMENTARY ON LUKE. By I. Howard Marshall. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978. 928 pages. \$24.95.

The first paragraph of the Foreword of this book reads: "The present volume is intended to be the first of a series of commentaries which will be published jointly by The Paternoster Press, Exeter, England, and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, USA, under the title of *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*."

Anyone who has followed Lukan studies during the last decade will recognize the name of the author of this commentary immediately. In 1970 his book, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, was published as an answer to the various redaction critics who denied or at least cast grave doubt on the historicity of the Gospel of Luke. It was an answer primarily to Hans Conzelmann who considered the theology of Luke as ethical injunction to Christians during the early part of the second century who were suffering from persecution and who were lacking endurance. They needed to be told that the *parousia* lay in the far distant future. Marshall demonstrated that Luke is not only theology but that it is also true history. On page 17 of the book under review Marshall states: "I found it helpful to crystallize my views on the theology of Luke by writing what is in effect an introduction to the commentary: *Luke: Historian and Theologian*." In a sense, there-

fore, the present volume is a continuation of that first volume.

The amount and variety of books and journal articles on the Gospel of Luke produced during the last fifty years is simply staggering. Marshall refers to this on page 16: "I am particularly conscious of the shortcomings of this work which arise from my own ignorance and the sheer impossibility of familiarity with all that has been written on the Gospel." But he surely must be admired for the amount of research which has gone into this book. As one reads he grows weary, not from what he is reading, but, simply out of sympathy for the amount of material which Marshall has had to digest, summarize and evaluate. If he has omitted anything, very likely it is not worth reading.

In view of the confusion caused by tradition criticism and redaction criticism Marshall himself admits that it is still too early to assess the results and he says that he hopes that this commentary will provide some "sort of guide to the present state of scholarship." He believes that the Gospel was written by Luke (p. 34). On the next page he states: "The complete lack of interest in the fall of Jerusalem in Acts and the way in which that book ends its story before the death of Paul are strong indications of a date before AD 70." That is refreshing for Lutherans who believe that Luke is, in very truth, the inspired Word of God. However, he seems to be a firm believer in the two source hypothesis, Mark and Q. That is apparent everywhere in the volume. He tries his best to meet the critics on their own ground and then to indicate that Luke is, very likely, true history. With reference to the virgin birth (p. 73) we find this: "The motif of the virgin birth is not a Lukan invention." . . . "It can be safely assumed that the story is older than the Gospels." . . . "It can be safely said that derivation of the idea direct from pagan sources can be ruled out." With reference to the Benedictus, which has often been called an "early Christian hymn" we find this on page 87: "It is most probable that the hymn is a unitary composition (though possibly taking up motifs of contemporary Jewish hymns) and that it refers to the births of both John and Jesus." With reference to the genealogy of Jesus, this on page 159: "It is only right, therefore, to admit that the problem caused by the existence of the two genealogies is insoluble with the evidence presently at our disposal. To regard the lists, however, as merely literary constructions is to go beyond the evidence." With references to miracles, this on page 192: "It must suffice here to state our position, namely that the category of the miraculous is not to be rejected out of hand; if we accept the reality of the resurrection of Jesus, the possibility that he worked miracles becomes highly credible, and it is from this standpoint that the historicity of each individual story must be assessed." Marshall rejects the wild interpretations of redaction critics with reference to Luke 21: "After much discussion of the problem it seems to be established that the fundamental points of view in the two discourses (Mk. 13 and Lk. 21) are not dissimilar." . . . "Its contents cohere sufficiently with the teaching of Jesus elsewhere in the Gospels to make it probable that the ultimate origin lies in his teaching, although the task of working back to this origin through tradition-historical criticism is one of extreme intricacy." Lk. 21:31 is one of Conzelman's main passages to exhibit the "delayed parousia" theory. Marshall says: "The kingdom is thus a future reality here (contrast 17:21), and Luke's point is that its advent is introduced by the coming of the Son of Man."

This does not mean that we subscribe to everything which Marshall writes. For example, on page 701 he says, with references to the Parable of the Pounds: "We may take it, therefore, that one original parable lies behind the two versions, although it is not absolutely excluded that Jesus himself told two similar parables on different occasions." If Jesus did not speak the Parable of the Pounds and the Parable of the Talents on two different occasions, does that not

cast doubt on the true historicity of Luke and Matthew? With reference to the Pharisees who asked Jesus at Lk. 19:39 to tell the disciples to quit shouting, Marshall says this: "It is possible that they are to be regarded as friendly to Jesus, as elsewhere in Lk. (references), but their advice is unacceptable . . . They may possibly have feared for Jesus' safety (and their own skins) if such outbursts led to a messianic demonstration. Or they may have felt simply that Jesus should not tolerate such extravagant and (in their eyes) unwarranted sentiments." This is surely contrary to what the Gospel of John says about the Pharisees at this point in Jesus' life. These two examples are cited (and others could be quoted) to indicate that the Lutheran reader, who considers the Gospel of Luke as the true Word of God, will not agree with everything that Marshall says. The entire book has a much more guarded style than did *Luke: Historian and Theologian*. Very often one reads "probably" "very likely" "it can safely be said." But it is clear that Marshall tries very hard to show that Luke wrote the book before AD 70 and that it is a book of true history about Jesus, the Messiah. The book is recommended.

Harold H. Buls

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. New Testament Commentary. By William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1978. 1122 pages.

This is Hendriksen's tenth volume in the New Testament Commentary series. Prior to this commentary on Luke he gave us Matthew, Mark, John, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon, I and II Thessalonians and I and II Timothy. Of special interest to Lutherans is the fact that he has great respect for Lenski. The reviewer has studied Hendriksen's Matthew, Mark, John, Galatians and now Luke. In each case he lists Lenski in his Select Bibliography. He very obviously admires Lenski for the latter's attitude toward Scripture. Neither Hendriksen nor Lenski have much patience with those who deny that the Scriptures are the inerrant, verbally-inspired Word of God. It would seem that Hendriksen is attempting to do for Reformed theology what Lenski did for Lutheran theology. The differences between Reformed theology and Lutheran theology are quickly apparent in the respective volumes of these two commentators. It is good to own Hendriksen's commentaries if for no other reason than that. But even beyond that, where differences between Reformed and Lutheran theology are not the issue, Hendriksen corrects Lenski or at times disagrees with him. And it is good to examine those differences. Sometimes a person decides in Hendriksen's favor.

The best thing about this voluminous commentary is its straightforward and direct style. He rarely leaves one in the dark as to what he thinks or concludes precisely. The man has done a tremendous amount of research and is thoroughly acquainted with the various interpretations of individual passages. Each section is followed by a set of verse by verse Practical Lessons and then a section entitled Notes on Greek Words, Phrases, and Constructions. The latter is valuable for the pastor or student whose Greek is weak. Hendriksen does a good job on syntax and morphology for each section. After a page of Select Bibliography (p. 1083) follows a General Bibliography on Luke (pp. 1085-1091), an impressive list. This is followed on pp. 1095-112, by a valuable Subject Index of the Synoptics. For example for the name Barabbas he lists the pages in his respective commentaries on Matthew, Mark and Luke where Barabbas is treated.

Hendriksen is quite conservative and makes no apologies for it. He concludes that Luke wrote this book A.D. 61-62 (p. 33). As to whether the ministry of John the Baptist began in A.D. 26 or in A.D. 28-29, he is not afraid to decide on the former, though the majority of commentators now assert that it was the latter.

This does not mean, however, that a Lutheran does not criticize Hendriksen's commentary. There is a vast difference between Calvinism and Lutheranism on the means of grace. With reference to the baptism of John the Baptist (pp. 200-201) we read: "... by means of baptism true conversion is powerfully stimulated." ... "For the person who in that spirit receives baptism the outward sign and seal applied to the body, and the inward grace applied to heart and life, go together." This is the Reformed view of baptism. Furthermore, the Calvinistic view of faith (synergistic) is maintained. For example, with reference to the parable of the sower, p. 426, Hendriksen writes: "... the teaching of the parable is, that the result of the hearing of the gospel always and everywhere depends on the condition of heart of those to whom it is addressed. The character of the heart determines the effect of the Word upon him." Furthermore, the Nestorianism of Calvinism is plainly maintained with reference to the person of Christ. With reference to Lk. 10:22 Lutheranism and Calvinism are bound to clash. With reference to the verb *paredothe*, Lenski quotes Luthers: "By this he indicates that he is true man, who has received them from the Father. For neither would God deliver all things to one who was only man, nor would one who was only God receive them from another. For neither is it possible for one who is only man to be over all things, nor for one who is only god to be beneath God. Thus in this one person true God and true man are joined together." Hendriksen rejects this on p. 590. He says: "It would seem, therefore, that also here in Luke 10:22 it is not necessary or even advisable to connect the action indicated by *paredothe* with one particular moment in Christ's existence, for example, with the incarnation. The entire process — what happened in eternity, at the incarnation, at the baptism, and even later — may well be indicated by the verb."

This book is recommended to the Lutheran Pastor or student who knows the difference between Reformed and Lutheran theology. He can learn much from it and it can readily be used side by side with Lenski for much has been written about the Gospel of Luke since the latter published his Luke in 1934, or for that matter, Arndt whose commentary on Luke was published in 1956.

Harold H. Buls

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES. The Greek Text with Introduction Notes and Comments. By Joseph B. Mayor. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids. Reprinted of the 1897 edition. 543 pages. Paper. \$6.95.

The back cover says of Mayor's work on the Epistle of James that it is "regarded by many as the most important critical commentary on James, the volume is certainly the most encyclopedic." By all calculations this is a modest appraisal. Though first written in 1891, nearly one century ago, it easily outshines other more recent works. There is no comparison. The introduction alone is 260 pages which is subdivided into the following sections: author, authenticity, relation to earlier writings, relation to other New Testament books, addresses, date, critique on 19th century series, grammar, style, the question of whether the letter was first written in Aramaic or Greek, bibliography, and the critical apparatus. The second section consists first of the full Greek text of the epistle alongside of the Vulgate and another Latin Version. Finally there is a 252 page phrase-by-phrase commentary on the entire epistle with an index to the Greek words. Of course there is no conversation with 20th century scholarship but this is a small price to pay for such an all-embrasive production.

Mayor was professor at King's College London and later honorary fellow at St. John's College, Cambridge. He is adamant in recognizing James as what she terms the "uterine brother of Jesus". Here his arguments are extensive and ov-

erwhelmingly convincing. The concept of Mary's perpetual virginity, the real cause in looking for a James more distantly related than an immediate brother, was not known by the early church. The ideas sprang up in the spocryphal writings. Major was first and last a scholar. The parallels between the text of James and writings both secular, Biblical, and post-apostolic, are laid out word for word so that the reader can easily examine the evidence for himself. The paper covered book deceitfully hides the panorama of scholarship. The author sees the lack of enthusiasm in the Epistle of James in that it was addressed to the rather limited audience of the Jewish Christian church in the east. One misses any extensive handling of the justification problem, so troublesome to many, including Luther. Righteousness is seen chiefly from the viewpoint of human morality. Mayor clearly wanted to steer clear of sticky doctrinal issues. The wealth of material that Major was able to put between two covers still makes this one of the major exegetical classics on the oft maligned Epistle of James.

David P. Scaer

EXPLORING HEBREWS. By John Phillips. Moody Press, Chicago, 1977. 222 pages. \$6.95.

Every now and then one reads a book about which one must say that it is not recommended. This is one of those books. Though the author evidently believes that the Bible is truly the Word of God, there is too much wrong with this book to merit a recommendation.

Pages 9-29 are almost wasted on a very detailed outline. The outline could easily be abbreviated for the same outline is found throughout the text. The exposition is shallow and really does not teach either pastor or layman that much about the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But the worst thing about the book is the theological presuppositions on which it is based. Mr. Phillips is a millennialist. With reference to Hebr. 12:22, page 201, we read: "It (the city of the living God) will be brought down from heaven during the Millennium and placed in stationary orbit over the earthly Jerusalem, to be the ultimate of authority during the golden age. The redeemed are so completely saved that, in spirit, they already have come to that city." And on page 204: "Since reference to Mount Zion has special significance in view of the Millennium, it would seem that the punishment emphasis here is millennial. Much of the training through which we are going today is to fit us for millennial position and responsibility. Believers can lose out on many a position of power, responsibility, and glory during the Millennium age. True, our position in eternity cannot be affected by a careless life, for everything here rests upon Christ's perfect and finished work, but our position in the Millennium Kingdom is an entirely different matter. That can be very much affected by the quality of life we live now during our probationary period on earth."

Hebr. 2:5-18 is based on Ps. 8. True Lutherans consider Ps. 8 Messianic not a "dignity of man" Psalm. Hebr. 2:5-18 speaks of the very deep humiliation which Christ experienced. Christ was made a little lower than the angels. Luther once said that to interpret Ps. 8 as anything less than wholly Messianic is to mix error with truth which is the death of truth. Ps. 8 and Hebr. 2:5-18 do not speak of the dignity but rather the fall of man and the incarnation of Jesus Christ who became man to redeem man. It does not speak of the restoration of man's rule over nature.

But the worst part of this commentary is found in the sections which deal with the stern warnings found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author suggests that the Epistle be read first with an omission of the warning passages and then read

again including the warning passages. That, in itself, is not a bad suggestion. It is only when a person reads the author's interpretation of these passages that one realizes what he means. We note only two passages in Hebrews. The first has to do with 6:4-8. The author entitles it: "To Those Who Are Wicked." Why does he say that? Let him speak for himself: "They had come a significant way toward real faith in Christ, but not far enough." . . . "But to be "a partaker" of the Holy Spirit is not to be a possessor of the Holy Spirit. To recognize the truth in Christ is not to be a Christian." . . . "There is no such thing as being saved and then lost and then saved again. Those who repudiate Christ prove that they never have been saved at all, and they sear their souls so that the initial work of repentance can never again be wrought in their hearts . . ." This is awful. The writer of Hebrews was addressing ALL his hearers. A true believer CAN fall away. Phillips' treatment of this passage would cause any believer, who reads his book, to doubt gravely whether or not he is truly a Christian. Phillips actually divides all Christians into two groups: those who can and those who cannot fall. That is stark synergism, mixing of Law and Gospel, to say nothing about poor interpretation. Evidently Phillips includes himself with the strong believers who cannot fall away. His treatment of 10:26-31 is similar to this. "The person envisioned here is one who professed faith in Christ and came, as it were, under the shadow of the cross and was outwardly identified with the Christian community. He was associated in the public eye with those set apart by Christ. He was identified with 'the blood of the covenant.' He professed to be sanctified. But it was not real. He has turned his back on all that now. One step more and he would have truly been covered by the blood and saved forevermore, but now he has willfully refused God's salvation." This is the old synergistic "once in grace, always in grace" theology which completely misrepresents the Word of God.

Furthermore, the teaching of Calvin concerning the person of Christ is quite apparent in this volume. On page 131 we are told: "He (Christ) has gone into the real Holy of Holies in heaven, into the very presence of God. He has taken with Him better sacrifices . . . He appears in God's presence TO STAY THERE (emphasis our own) in order to minister for us as our great High Priest and deal effectively with the power of sin in our lives." In other words, Christ's human nature has not been fully equipped with the attributes of the divine nature for full possession and use.

It should be quite apparent that, in the reviewer's opinion, the book is not recommended.

Harold H. Buls

II. Theological-Historical Studies

MAN'S NEED AND GOD'S GIFT. Readings in Christian Theology. Edited by Millard J. Erickson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976. 382 pages. Paper. \$7.95.

This anthology of collected essays follows a previous one by the same editor entitled *The Living God*. The four topics covered in the present volume are man, sin, and the person and work of Jesus Christ. These readings flow out of Erickson's work as a professor of Bethel Theological Seminary and fulfill a need among his students to have a convenient overview of the significant theological literature on a particular topic. The beginning student in theology is faced with what appears to him as fathomless past and a rapidly self-multiplying present of theological positions. Such medieval figures as Anselm and Aquinas appear alongside of contemporary notables as Pannenberg and Baillie. No one theological position receives attention at the expense of another. Each of the four sec-

tions begins with a brief introduction setting fourth the editor's rationale in making his selections. The introductions are themselves theological gems. The Racovian Catechism, the handbook for the first Unitarians of the post-Reformation era, holds, according to the editor, to liberation concept of atonement resembling that of Aulen's. Ordinarily one would expect to find that it would favor the moral theory. The late Missouri Synod professor John Theodore Mueller is represented in the anthology with an essay dealing with contemporary Christology against the background of the ancient church controversies. The writers comprise a "Who's Who" of theologians across the ages. With the flood of theological literature, the only solution is tasting a sample of each. Erickson's anthology makes this possible and enjoyable.

David P. Scaer

CYPRIAN. By Michael M. Sage. Patristic Monograph Series, No. 1. The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1975. Paper. \$7.50. Pages vi & 439.

The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation is a recently founded organization dedicated to the study of the life and thought of early Christianity. A principal project of the Foundation is the publication, at modest cost, of scholarly monographs in the patristic field. *Cyprian* is the first fruits of this endeavor, and if it be an accurate guide, we may expect further works of high quality and competence.

As the simple title, *Cyprian*, suggests, the book's purview is the whole life and work of Cyprian, a task of considerable proportions, and one not done with complete success by Sage. The high points are treated and generally with evident acquaintance with the sources: The Decian persecution and the attendant problem of the lapsed, the schism of Felicissimus, the baptismal controversy with Stephen, Cyprian's views on penance and the unity of the Church.

Although the Preface states the intention of utilizing "the sources of Christian literature to illuminate this period (i.e. third century A.D.) of Roman history," the book in fact operates in the opposite direction, using the sources of secular Roman history to illumine the life and work of Cyprian. Nonetheless, Sage's frequent reference to non-Christian primary sources (something one would expect from a student of Timothy David Barnes) to clarify and to illuminate the forces which shaped Cyprian's situation provides one of the strengths of the book. A second strength is the eight appendices at the end of the book which give brief discussion of various special problems surrounding the study of Cyprian. For this reviewer the appendices concerning the chronology of Cyprian's letters and treatises and the *Vita Cypriani* were especially noteworthy (however, a more intensive study of the chronology of Cyprian's letters is provided by Henneke Gulzow, *Cyprian and Novatian* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1975, 1-19). On the other hand, the appendix on the important fourth chapter of *De Unitate* adds nothing new.

Corresponding to his intent to illumine Cyprian in the light of his historical context, in the first chapter (pp. 1-46) Sage gives an overview of the political and religious situation of North Africa at midthird century. This is done with discernment, but the reportage is cumbersome to read (all too typical of dissertations) and all but the professionally interested will wonder whether it is worth going on. It is, but first the reader must surmount the second chapter (pp. 47-94) which deals with the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. As a detailed exposition of the problems surrounding the *Octavius* this chapter provides generally convincing argumentation. However, how a study of Cyprian is benefitted by discussion of such problems is anything but clear. Sage loses sight of his goal in

this second chapter.

The remainder of the book, which deals with the highpoints of Cyprian's career, is well done, bringing together a wealth of source material and generally covering the field of interpretive options before settling on his own solutions. This last, however, is the major drawback of this book. For the most part Sage's work is one of pure synthesis, a drawing together of data; no new appreciation of Cyprian as a man or as a thinker is, however, to be gleaned from these pages.

William C. Weinrich

EINSICHT UND GLAUBE. Aufsätze. By Jörg Baur. Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1978. Paperback. 294 pages. DM-28.

One of Germany's leading, up-and-coming younger theological voices undoubtedly is Jörg Baur, now of Göttingen, formerly of the University of Munich. Baur has been in increasing demand as a speaker at various ecclesiastical conclaves. Some of the essays in this volume are the fruit of these forums. They demonstrate Baur's incisive ability to cut through to the marrow of a subject, also his generally conservative stance. This latter at a time when theology in Germany has generally been assumed to have gone over to the liberal post-Bultmannian stance!

This collection of essays covers a wide range of subjects, ranging from the question of the soul's immortality (contrasting the Platonic with the Scriptural view) and the individual's resurrection grounded on Christ's triumph, to the Christian's and the Christian church's interaction in the social arena, and the significance of the Reformation for today. In the latter sphere Baur touches upon some notable doctrinal themes: Luther on justification; Chemnitz on soteriology and Christology; Falcus' "error"; and the Formula of Concord's definitive contribution on the person of Christ (Art. VIII) contra subjectivism.

Baur is an astute, Biblically-oriented voice successfully putting modern liberals on notice in Germany's theological arenas. He deserves attention.

E. F. Klug

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IN THE WRITINGS OF DR. C. F. W. WALTHER. By John Martin Drickamer. Paper. 440 Pages.

The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod is facing an ecclesiological test in the proposed synodical reorganization. It already passed through a similar test in the controversy of the mid-1970s when certain congregations ordained theological students who did not meet the synod's standards. The publication of a doctoral dissertation (presented to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) on Walther's views on the Church could not have been better planned. Synod ecclesiology received its firm and lasting impression by its first president and major theologian, C. F. W. Walther. The author of this study, Dr. Drickamer, is an alumnus of Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, and currently is an instructor at Concordia College, Ann Arbor. An introductory chapter presents a brief biography and the bibliographical data used as the basis of thesis. The remaining five chapters handle these topics: (II) The Church: The Invisible Communion of Saints; (III) The Churches: Visible Communions; (IV) The Congregation or Local Church; (V) Priests and Pastors: The Relationship Between the Congregation and the Ministry; and (VI) Cooperation and Fellowship: Relationships Between Congregations and Synods.

Throughout the work, Drickamer maintains as much as is possible the neutral position of an historical observer without drawing conclusions that might be

applicable for the current situation. The matter of congregations ordaining uncertified candidates would seem at variance with Walther's view (p. 332). While this reviewer would have appreciated the writer's own value judgments, the work remains more effective without them. Drickamer's work can thus be cited without his own opinions becoming obstacles. In preceeding with the writing of a dissertation of the most influential LCMS theologian, and about a topic which is now under discussion, Drickamer has made himself vulnerable for more criticism than if he had written about some unknown European. He is therefore to be commended for his courage in choosing his topic and for his posture in handling it.

Walther's position is not unknown among our readers, but his position as Drickamer sees it can be briefly reviewed here. The invisible church consists of all believers and the visible church consists of those who gather around word and sacrament. The true visible church is where word and sacraments are properly handled. False churches were those divided from true churches without doctrinal reasons and those who taught and believed falsehood. Authority centered in the local congregation to which the office of the keys had been given. Valid calls to the pastor came only through the congregation, but the congregation served only as God's instrument in the calling. The pastor remained the servant of God and not of the congregation during and after the call (pp. 387-92).

As the dissertation was presented to the historical and not the systematics department, the analysis of Walther's position is limited. This does not mean that the author does not defend his views on Walther with those of differing opinions (p. 313). Without compromising himself, however, the author might have entered into a conversation on certain points in Walther's theology. Here are several points where further analysis would be interesting. For Walther not every call which a minister received was divine. If the pastor was convinced that it was divine, it was the congregation's duty to share in his conviction and grant him a peaceful release from his duties (p. 278). But no objective criteria are given by Walther for judging the call's divinity. What should be done if the pastor and the congregation have differing convictions? Walther, on one hand, held that membership in a local congregation was not optional, but still held that it was not an absolute requirement for salvation (p. 193). Excommunication is considered an act of the entire congregation (pp. 211-2), but the author indicates that its first leader was removed in an entirely different way. "Stephan's deposition was accomplished swiftly in May, 1839. It was an action of the clergy with only perfunctory ratification by the laity (p. 13)." Here was a clerical excommunication with swift vengeance. Walther saw only the congregation with a pastor as divinely commanded form, but he himself served as *Oberpfarrer* of the St. Louis *Gesamtgemeinde* which was divided into four districts (p. 7), an arrangement which strangely resembles a diocese supervised by a bishop with assisting clergy. Walther chastised Grabau for holding that "The congregation was not to call a pastor without the advice and consent of a representative of the clergy" (p. 22), but he himself held that a neighboring pastor should be consulted when a congregation called a pastor. Perhaps Walther saw this opinion as an acceptable practice just as long as it was not seen as divinely mandated. While Walther did not see synod membership as divinely mandated (pp. 326-32), he did hold confessional fellowship among congregations as required (p. 358). Drickamer's study should open a lively discussion of the views which remain so basic to the LCMS.

At this writing, the author has only a limited supply of the first edition of his dissertation. Hopefully more will become available. Anyone entering into the

fray will have to become acquainted with this study. Many might be surprised to find out the differences between what Walther really taught and what some have thought he taught.

David P. Scaer

DEUTSCHLAND VON 1476 BIS 1648 (VON DER FRÜHBÜRGERLICHEN REVOLUTION BIS ZUM WESTFÄLISCHEN FRIEDEN). By Max Steinmetz. Deutscher Verlag Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1978. Cloth. 479 pages. DDR 10, 80 M.

The author is a highly regarded professor and Luther scholar at Karl-Marx University, Leipzig. He is also recognized in the Soviet bloc of nations as one of the foremost ideologists of the worker's movement of people's revolution in East Germany. It is self-evident, then, that Steinmetz finds within the early strivings of the worker-peasant class the seedbed for future uprisings, or revolutionary actions, including the 20th century's Communist version. Not surprisingly, therefore, Luther and his colleagues are portrayed in somewhat different light than what we are used to seeing, more as obstacles, and tools of the princes, in their opposition to radical, revolutionary ideas and people's champions like Thomas Muntzer. The latter obviously fits and comports well with 20th century Communist doctrine on the so-called workers' movement.

Aside from this patently political and presuppositional stance, however, Steinmetz's book is a scholarly effort that brings, along with its political slant, a wealth of material in typically tightly woven German style. It is a segment of a very large series of studies on German history, originating from Leipzig. The value of the book to a reader from this side of the Iron Curtain is to see firsthand how history, particularly that connected with the early strivings of the worker classes, is interpreted according to Communist ideologists.

E. F. Klug

AT THE EDGE OF HOPE. Christianity in Paradox. By Howard Butt with Elliott Wright. Seabury, New York, 1978. Paperback. 211 pages. \$3.95.

Names like Malcom Muggeridge, ex-president Gerald Ford, Peter Berger, James Reston, Martin Marty, *et al.*, are bound to add luster to any panel of speakers. This symposium of essays resulted from the North American Congress of the Laity, spearheaded and supported primarily by Howard Butt, vice chairman of the board of the H.E. Butt Grocery Co. in Texas, and an active, concerned layman of the Southern Baptist church. It is his conviction that evangelicals, different from their liberal counterparts, too often neglect their responsibility in society because they stress the need for soul winning as primary. Accordingly, states Butt: "This book is, in a sense, itself a paradox: less about the mechanics of lay witness and service than about a creative, responsive lay mindset needed as leaven in church and society; more about breaking through denominational, theological, and political barriers than about breaking down ecclesiastical doors." (9)

Cohesion is difficult to attain in the average symposium of writers who pool their intellectually specialized talents in a book like this. This volume is probably no more successful than previous efforts of this kind. But, then, it probably was not meant to be, that is, to end up with one crystallized end-point. Diverse opinions on the given problem were precisely the goal, to be aired for discussion. Not unexpectedly some of the most spirited inter-change resulted from the sharp clash between Muggeridge's view that both the Soviet and the

American "utopias" must be transcended by a program of Christian other-worldliness, one that is freed from the "dungeon of ego," and Berger's more down-to-earth insistence that there is a distinct choice and preference to exercise between political systems as varied as Soviet Communism and American democracy. Though far from perfect, the American can at least be said to be congenial to the existence and furtherance of Christian freedom under the Gospel, the liberty with which Christ has made men free in the Pauline sense.

The congress had definite ecumenical goals. The evident hope was that by interacting on common societal needs or problems a greater feeling of oneness might result. Just as often there was wide variance on a given issue. While James Reston (Presbyterian origin) diagnosed America today as "a moral pigsty," Peter Berger (a Lutheran) objected that "pigsty" was too pungent a comparison, and Michael Novak (a Roman Catholic) was of the opinion that "we are drowning in morality." Martin Marty drew the assignment of trying to pull these and other diverse viewpoints into some semblance of unity through his contribution, a workshop on creativity in Christian living.

If the reader can bear with the disjunction of the expert advice of a redoubtable assemblage of experts, he may conceivably, like the proverbial honey bee, manage to suck a bit of nectar from this motley garden. There were voices there, after all, worth listening to, and Butt (with his editorial helper, Elliott Wright) has done a creditable job of organizing them into a whole.

E. F. Klug

THE LUTHERAN HISTORICAL CONFERENCE: ESSAYS AND REPORTS, 1976. Volume VII. By the Lutheran Historical Conference, St. Louis, 1978. 188 pages. Paper. \$5.00 (plus postage).

The seventh volume of *Essays and Reports* produced by the Lutheran Historical Conference contains papers delivered at the Krisheim Study Center in Philadelphia between October 21 and 23, 1976. Appropriately enough a Bicentennial Theme is found throughout the work, which, in terms of content, can be divided into three general topics: (1) papers delivered on Lutheran Bicentennial Personalities (including John Hanson, "the first President of the United States in Congress Assembled," Bodo Otto, Revolutionary War surgeon, the John Conrad Weiser family, "The American Revolution in Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's Experience," an the United Empire Loyalists, Tory Lutherans who emigrated to Canada); (2) Lutheran Attitudes toward American Culture (with studies of Gettysburg Seminary through its 150 years, the American Ideology from a Lutheran perspective, and "Lutheran Music in Colonial America"); and (3) Materials and Methods of Lutheran Historical Research (with discussions of how to research congregational and synodical records, the use of biographical resources, models for a Lutheran biographical dictionary, utilization of oral and computer history, and essays on historiography and bibliography). "A Bicentennial Call to Action" by President August R. Suelflow and the reports and proceedings of the Lutheran Historical Conference complete this helpful book. I recommend this text to all those interested in recent thinking on the role of Lutherans in the American Republic, the American Revolution, or in new resources and methods of researching and writing the history of Lutheranism in North America.

C. George Fry

MAJOR BLACK RELIGIOUS LEADERS: 1755-1940. By Henry J. Young. Abingdon, Nashville, 1977. 173 pages. Paper. \$5.95.

Henry James Young is presently Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Theo-

logy at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. In this book Young hopes to familiarize the reader with the rich theological heritage with which the Black people have endowed this nation. He does so by offering twelve brief sketches of twelve leading Black religious leaders whose lives encompassed the years 1755 to 1940. The names will not be familiar to most of us, so it will be well to list them: Nathaniel Paul, Richard Allen, David Walker, Nat Turner, Daniel Alexander Payne, James W. C. Pennington, Henry H. Garnet, Samuel Ringgold Ward, Alexander Crummell, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Henry McNeal Turner, Marcus Garvey. Each sketch provides a cursory biographical section and then a brief overview of views on various theological motifs, usually God, Sin, Redemption, eschatology.

The Introduction (pp. 13-15) states two purposes to the volume: (1) to present these black leaders as thinkers who view spirituality in terms of its function, "as a phenomenon grounded in the transformation of society;" and (2) to correct the mistaken notion that black religion historically has been exclusively spiritualistic and heaven-oriented rather than interested in the transformation of political, social and economic structures. All of these thinkers, says Young, speak from a Christian context, but in light of an "organismic conception of reality" which does not allow spiritual liberation to be separated from physical liberation (p. 13).

A book like this could be very useful, indeed, enlightening. It is true that until the last ten years the contributions of blacks to theology have been ignored by the whites. We have heard of Jonathan Edwards, but most likely not of Richard Allen whose contribution to the American religious scene also is not inconsiderable. We welcome therefore such an endeavor as this book. All the more disappointing then is a book which fails to do justice to the task. Whether intended to be honest historical description or not, this book too often falls into the muck of journalism and editorialism. The result is that sections that should have been devoted to serious discussion of how a black theologian reflected upon God, sin, etc. from within the context of slavery became rather vehicles for superficial polemic against slavery as such or vehicles for other extraneous material. A few examples shall suffice. The discussion of Richard Allen's doctrine of God dissipates into a long digression on the opposition Allen met in the early years of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The "God" section on Daniel Payne loses its way and becomes a description of how slavery contradicted God's moral law. The "God" section on Samuel Ward provides occasion to give Ward's views on the high ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Nowhere do the journalistic overtones of this book become so obvious as in the one occasion when the author feels constrained to criticize the views of one of his subjects. Alexander Crummell understood black suffering under slavery to be both retributive for former sins and restorative, and he supported his claim by referring to the history of Israel wherein God brought his purposes to fruition through the suffering of his people (pp. 114-15). This view, of all the views expressed in the book, must be criticized. Why? It would free the slaveholders of all guilt and responsibility; it would condone slavery and make it an evil the blacks brought upon themselves. This is hardly good theological retort; it is rather party spirit which wishes to see only pristine purity on one side and the forces of evil on the other. But the author also scores Crummell because of too heavily grounding himself in biblical analogies (p. 117 — although it did not bother the author when other black theologians were justifying even violent actions on the basis of OT allusions, see pp. 36, 49, 59). It is not here a question whether Crummell or author Young are correct. It is rather that this book is not allowed

to fulfill its purpose: to introduce black thinkers who thought serious thoughts about God, sin, and redemption from within a context of abject suffering. The purpose of the book is finally found to be, so to speak, outside its covers: it is the editorial plea to Americans to finally grant blacks complete emancipation (p. 164).

Tragically lost in all this are the featured subjects themselves. They do not come off as serious thinkers or major actors; they rather are pictured as persons who rarely got beyond the strictures of a radically defined problem of theodicy. They were however men of thought and action, and their stories deserve telling. This book simply does not do that. One example: The *Appeal* of David Walker is mentioned several times as influential (pp. 53-54, 85), yet there is not the slightest discussion of the *Appeal* in the chapter devoted to David Walker! The task of giving these men the analytical and descriptive treatment they deserve remains.

William C. Weinrich

MYSTERIUM CHRISTI: KIRCHE BEI HANS ASMUSSEN SEIT 1945. By Juha Pihkala. Translated from the Finnish into German by Maria Hurskainen. Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft, Helsinki, 1978. 207 Pages. Paper. No price given.

Hans Christian Asmussen (1898-1968) was one of the most creative and controversial German churchmen of this century. A Lutheran, serving as a pastor in Flensburg, Albertsdorf, and Altona-Hamburg, Asmussen was dismissed by the Nazis from his clerical position and then served as a minister of the Confessional Church in Bad Oeynhausen and Berlin (where he was a founder of the Free High School), later ministering in Wuerttemberg (1943-1945). From 1945-1948 Asmussen was Executive Secretary of the Evangelical Church in Germany and then, after 1949, Provost of Kiel. Within a decade he had been honored twice with doctorates (St. Andrews, 1938, Kiel, 1948). Though himself a product of North German Pietism and a kind of residual Lutheran Confessionalism, Asmussen came to believe that the destiny of Lutheranism was intimately connected with Roman Catholicism (his wife converted; though he spent his last days in a Roman Catholic home for the aged in Speyer, Asmussen died a Lutheran). Caught in the ecumenical triangle — Geneva (Reformed), Moscow (Eastern Orthodoxy), and Rome (Roman Catholicism), Lutheranism, in Asmussen's opinion, too often capitulated (as in the World Council of Churches) to the Geneva-Moscow "axis." This, he was persuaded, as a denial of the natural affinity between Wittenberg and Rome. Asmussen dedicated much of his later years to an exploration of Roman-Lutheran relationships.

Juha Pihkala has rendered a valuable service to both biography and theology in his study of Hans Asmussen's thought about the Church in the years between World War II and his death in 1968. Originally presented as a dissertation, the manuscript was translated from the Finnish into German by Maria Hurskainen and has been made available to the public by the Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft. A handsome paperbound text (complete with a black and white photo of Asmussen made in 1968), there are very few typos (as Ganden for Gnaden, p. 88), and there is a helpful index of persons and a useful bibliography. Extensive documentation (at the bottom of each page) enables the reader to immediately locate the author's sources. Frequent quotations from Asmussen allows the man to speak for himself with a minimum of interpretation. The book is well written and carefully researched.

It is also well organized. Six chapters explore the ecclesiology of Asmussen in its historical and theological setting. The initial chapter, with its survey of ecclesiological thinking in nineteenth century Protestant Germany followed by

an account of the rise of the Confessional Church during the Third Reich, places Asmussen's theology in a proper perspective. The second chapter, with its insightful treatment of Asmussen's belief in "the ontological character of Theology" and the "complexio oppositorum", is particularly fruitful. Then the author provides discussion of Word (as *Ursakrament*), Sacrament, and Ministry (with a focus on the ruling and teaching function of the diocesan bishop) in Asmussen's writings. Subsequent chapters review the Church in terms of its unity (in the midst of diversity), its eschatological import (the old verses the new being), and its relationship to the "powers" and "orders."

Pihkala has written a concise survey of Asmussen's ecclesiology, viewed both contextually and structurally. It will remain valuable for years as an introduction and summation of the man's thinking.

C. George Fry

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD MISSION: A PANORAMIC VIEW OF MISSIONS FROM PENTECOST TO THE PRESENT. By J. Herbert Kane. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978. 210 pages. Paper. \$4.95.

J. Herbert Kane, professor in the School of World Mission and Evangelism, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, is well known for such previous books as *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* and *A Global View of Christian Missions*. I for one am happy that Dr. Kane has now turned his attention to writing *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission*. Combining simplicity of vocabulary with profundity of thought, Kane has produced a succinct, highly readable, and very reliable survey of the story of the expansion of Christianity from the time of the apostles to that of the astronauts. The fifteen chapters fall about evenly into two parts: Part I, covering the 1800 years from Pentecost to the beginning of Protestant mission societies in Germany, Great Britain, and North America; and Part II, an intensive study of missions in the last two centuries, primarily by means of a regional review of work in the Muslim World, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. Narrative and analysis are evenly balanced, and the tome concludes with a chapter on missions in retrospect and one on the prospects for missions in the near future.

As is inevitable with any history book that tries to cover almost twenty centuries there are errors of fact (Harvard was founded in 1636, not 1625, p. 65) and controversial interpretations (was Orthodoxy, both Lutheran and Reformed, as totally devoid of missionary consciousness as Kane states, p. 74). The volume, however, remains an extremely useful one — it is short, well outlined, and spirited! I highly recommend it for use not only in Bible schools, colleges, and seminaries, but also in congregational study groups. The text conveys not only much information, but also much inspiration! Finishing this, one is motivated to read (as the longer work, *A History of Christian Missions* by Stephen Neill) and to do more! World Missions remain alive and well — and there is room for more to be involved!

C. George Fry

THE CHANGING CHURCH IN EUROPE. By Wayne A. Detzler. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979. 256 pages. Paper. \$6.95.

An Associate Director of the Greater Europe Mission, Wayne A. Detzler has provided in this volume a very readable description of the religious situation in Europe at the end of the 1970's. The author is careful to survey the major ecclesiastical families — Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Eastern Ortho-

dox, and Reformed and Free Church; to compare conditions in both the Marxist East and the West; to study trends within the churches (as varied as Evangelicalism, Radicalism, and Pentecostalism); to analyze developments in society (primarily the triumph of secularism); and to offer some indication of future happenings (as the revival of Evangelicalism in the Anglican Church, the new openness of Roman Catholics to Bible-study, the steady triumph of Humanism in Continental Protestantism, the spread of "Eurocommunism" in the West and the persistence of Christianity in the East). Frequent quotation of significant leaders (as diverse as Peter Beyerhaus, Rudolf Bultmann, Cardinal Franz Konig, Pope John XXIII, and Billy Graham) and recent writings (as different as *The British: Their Identity and Their Religion* and the *Gulag Archipelago*) adds vitality to the text. The book, unfortunately, is marred by a few errors of fact (Estonia and Latvia are predominately Lutheran, not 90% Roman Catholic, as we read on page 120; Yugoslavia is better described as a multi-ethnic not multi-racial nation, as we note on page 123; it is the Byelorussian S.S.R., not Byclorussian S.S.R. as reported on page 140; and can one really state that Caesaropapism meant that the Byzantine Church dominated the Byzantine State, as indicated on page 197?) and the omission of a preface. But only God is perfect. I recommend this book as a report on religious Europe today and as a challenge to regard post-Christian Europe as a new mission field.

C. George Fry

THE THIRD WORLD WAR: AUGUST, 1985. By John Hackett and Others. Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1978. 368 pages. Cloth. \$12.95.

On August 20, 1985, a Soviet SS-17 missile's nuclear warhead exploded over Birmingham, England, killing an estimated 300,000 people. That piece of "future history" is but one of several "events" described in this novel (written as though compiled shortly after the end of World War III) by General Sir John Hackett, Former commander of the British Army of the Rhine and six other top-ranking NATO generals and advisors. Written to alert the Western Alliance to the ever-increasing dangers of Soviet Imperialism in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, this novel insists that a "conventional war" waged with non-nuclear weapons in Western Europe for "limited objectives" is perfectly plausible according to recent Soviet military thinking. Europe could become the "primary theater" of World War III, with Warsaw Pact forces occupying Yugoslavia, Italy, Scandinavia, and Germany as far West as the Rine in order to destroy the Federal Republic, neutralize France, intimidate the United Kingdom, isolate the United States, disintegrate the NATO Alliance, and secure a Soviet Empire from Alsace to the Aleutians. When Soviet forces are stopped short of their goals, they employ limited nuclear strikes on Birmingham to terrify the West. Capitulation to Soviet demands is touted by the Soviets as preferable to total annihilation. Hackett contends in this best-selling book that NATO, after a period of rearmament in the early 1980's proved able to retard the Russian advance, preserve the liberty of the Atlantic Community, save the NATO Alliance, encourage the oppressed peoples of Eastern Europe and Central Asia to revolt, and that, therefore, after "the one month war" the Soviet Union disintegrated to be replaced by a "New Europe" from "the Atlantic to the Urals" which becomes a Commonwealth of free peoples.

This is not light reading and it provokes serious thinking and makes heavy demands on the military knowledge of the reader. For those interested in the future of liberty, it is, I think, important reading. As I finished the novel, with its

"happy ending," I wondered if the will to resist Soviet Imperialism militarily can be present in a Western Europe rife with Eurocommunism and secularism unless there is a rebirth of the West spiritually. That is the challenge for us who are pastors and teachers — to point a "post-Christian generation" back to the sources of Western liberty in the Biblical legacy.

C. George Fry

III. Practical Studies

SPEAKING OF SALVATION: A LUTHERAN EVANGELISM TECHNIQUE. By Stephen Biegel. Available from the Rev. Stephen Biegel, Grace Lutheran Church, 1809 Main St., Fairgrove, Michigan 48733. 1976. Paper. 155 pages. \$2.50.

At the fifty-first regular convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod the need "for the affirmation of a Lutheran understanding of evangelism" was articulated. A resolution was passed reminding the Church that it is "the due and responsible service to Christ of each baptized Christian" to evangelize. There was, also, widespread recognition that the Lutheran Churches have been remiss in providing programs to train the laity to fulfill their obligation as witnesses.

The Rev. Stephen Biegel, pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Fairgrove, Michigan, has now offered this manual, **SPEAKING OF SALVATION: A LUTHERAN EVANGELISM TECHNIQUE**, as one method to meet the need in Synod. This book originated because of encouragement of students, staff, and faculty members at Concordia Theological Seminary, when it was located at Springfield, Illinois. Especially instrumental was the Reverend Otto Hintze, then Professor of Missions and Evangelism. Mr. Biegel also received support from the Central Illinois and Michigan Districts of the LC-MS and from the Board for Evangelism. This book is the result of the need, the suggestions of friends, much prayer and deliberation, research, and field-testing.

In his "Preface" the author admits his debt to Dr. D. James Kennedy, for "it seems that God used the approach developed by this man to really get evangelism training moving in the Missouri Synod." This work, however, in the words of Otto Hintze, in the "Foreward," seeks to make "that technique . . . more compatible with Lutheran Theology and the twin poles of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Christ's commission." To accomplish this, Pastor Biegel has authored this 115 page book, with seven chapters, and numerous helpful subheadings (ranging from "Five Reasons Why" we are to speak of salvation, through the procedure for a house call, to ways in which to evaluate the results), and with many suggestions on how to be more winsome in the parish in order to win some.

As we enter the 1980's it continues to be easy for many to attack evangelism, witnessing, and church growth — and to assume that the priorities of the Church are elsewhere (as in interdenominational unity, social action, or political engagement). Pastor Biegel, however, reminds us that in a growing world, with an exploding population, the percentage of Christians is decreasing in relation to the total (from 28% in 1976 to a probable 17% in 2000). If nothing else, this should challenge us to be the "greatest missionary generation in history." For, as Paul Foust, evangelism counselor for the Michigan District has noted, "We are faced with an emergency." To those who sense the urgency of national and global evangelization in our times, this book (which is also a how-to-do-it kit) on **SPEAKING OF SALVATION: A LUTHERAN EVANGELISM TECHNIQUE** will be a welcome addition to the resources of the parish.

C. George Fry

Books Received

- A CONTEMPORARY LOOK AT THE FORMULA OF CONCORD. By Robert D. Preus & Wilbert H. Rosin. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1979. 320 pages. Cloth. \$9.95.
- THE GREAT UNVEILING. By W. Graham Scroggie. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1979. 140 pages. Cloth. \$7.95.
- MAN IN ADAM AND IN CHRIST. (Volume III: The Doorway Papers.) By Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1975. 350 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- NOAH'S THREE SONS. (Volume I: The Doorway Papers.) By Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1975. 368 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- GENESIS AND EARLY MAN (Volume II: The Doorway Papers.) By Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1975. 331 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND THE INCARNATION. (Volume V: The Doorway Papers.) By Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1976. 400 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- TIME AND ETERNITY. (Volume VI: The Doorway Papers.) By Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 240 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- HIDDEN THINGS OF GOD'S REVELATION. (Volume VII: The Doorway Papers.) By Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 316 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- SCIENCE AND FAITH. (Volume VIII: The Doorway Papers.) By Arthur C. Custance. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1978. 249 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.
- PASTORAL ASSERTIVENESS. By Paul Mickey and Gary Gamble with Paula Gilbert. Abingdon, Nashville, 1978. 174 pages. Cloth, \$7.95.
- BEYOND EXISTENTIALISM & ZEN. By George Rupp. Foreward by Harvey Cox. Oxford University Press, New York, 1979. 113 pages. Cloth. \$9.95.
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- THE MOON: ITS CREATION, FORM, AND SIGNIFICANCE. By John C. Whitcomb and Donald B. DeYoung. BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1978. 180 pages. Cloth. \$7.95.
- HANDBOOK OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY. Edited by Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1977. 262 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- AT THE EDGE OF HOPE. By Howard Butt with Elliott Wright. The Seabury Press, New York, 1978. 211 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- WE BELONG TOGETHER. By Bruce Milne. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1978. 128 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- THE ROOTS OF FUNDAMENTALISM. By Ernest R. Sandeen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1978. 328 pages. Paper. \$5.95.

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- TRUST AND OBEY. By Jay E. Adams. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1978. 154 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- THE ANDROMEDANS. By Denis Osborne. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1977. 95 pages. Paper. \$2.50.
- THE HISTORY OF THE JEWISH NATION. By Alfred Edersheim. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1979. 553 pages. Paper. \$7.95.
- THE PRINCIPLES OF THEOLOGY. By W. H. Griffith Thomas. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1979. 548 pages. Paper. \$8.95.
- THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION. By Norman Anderson. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1978. 162 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- THE MORAL TEACHING OF PAUL. By Victor Paul Furnish. Abingdon, Nashville, 1979. 143 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH. By Charles Caldwell Ryrie. Moody Press, Chicago, 1958. 155 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN CAMPING. Edited by Werner C. Graendorf and Lloyd D. Mattson. Moody Press, Chicago, 1979. 223 pages. Paper. \$4.95.
- THE SEARCH FOR SALVATION. By David F. Wells. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1978. 176 pages. Paper. \$3.95.
- MATTHEW: A STUDY GUIDE COMMENTARY. By Howard F. Vos. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1979. 190 pages. Paper. \$2.95.
- THE TESTS OF LIFE. By Robert Law. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1979. 422 pages. Paper. \$5.95.
- NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN SPEECH. By Richard Francis Weymouth. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, 1978. 734 pages. Paper. \$9.95.
- THE TRIAL OF LUTHER. By Daniel Oliver. Translated by John Tonkin. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1978. 194 pages. Paper. \$7.95.
- BAKER'S DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. Edited by Carl F. H. Henry. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1973. 726 pages. Paper. \$11.95.
- THE NEW TESTAMENT STUDENT AND BIBLE TRANSLATION. (Volume IV: The New Testament Student.) John H. Skilton, General Editor. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978. 241 pages. Paper. \$5.00.
- THE IMPOSSIBLE COMMUNITY. By Barbara Benjamin. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1978. 128 pages. Paper. \$2.50.
- SINGLE ON SUNDAY. By Bobbie Reed. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1979. 103 pages. Paper. No price listed.
- ONCE UPON A LIFETIME. A Collection of Words, Pictures, and Memorabilia of the Recent Past in America. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1979. 80 pages. Paper. No Price listed.