

Anabaptists eschewed publishing commentaries on these particular books, we are treated to an occasional remark from Menno Simons, Hans Denck, Balthasar Hubmaier, and Dirk Philips with regard to God's promise to David of an eternal dynasty. One might expect only Protestants to appear yet commentary from Catholic scholars Alonso Tostado and Cardinal Cajetan pepper the presentation with their rather different point of view. All of this serves to advance scholarship in the fields of history, Bible, theology, and pastoral care, not least by the unearthing and translation of little-known works.

When these goals are coupled with an absolutely first-rate introduction to the historical context of the Protestant Reformation, the Reformers and how they read Scripture, and the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the result is a delightful view of these books through the eyes of the reformers. The explicit format is a welcome guide on our journey: Following Reformation-era practice, the text is divided into pericopes or passages drawn from the English Standard Version of the Bible. These passages are then followed by very useful overviews of the subsequent comments pointing out exegetical, theological, or pastoral concerns by the editors. Finally, headings identify the nature of the comments gathered together under each pericope.

The reviewer's copy was curiously flawed in that pages 475–522 were inserted upside down and backwards right after 2 Kings 17, the description of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria, rendering the so-called “ten lost tribes of Israel” a textual as well as a historical occurrence!

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Gift and Promise: The Augsburg Confession & the Heart of Christian Theology. By Edward H. Schroeder. Edited by Ronald Neustadt and Stephen Hitchcock. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. xxiii + 206 pp.

With three chapters written by Seminex retiree Schroeder, and nine others from his students, this volume robustly and unguardedly presents the theology of the Augsburg Confession through the lens

of Luther's theology of the cross for today. It is a contemporary presentation of the theological legacy of the "promising tradition," influenced by Werner Elert and articulated by the late Robert Bertram and his student Ed Schroeder. Appealingly, each chapter has a pastoral dimension. Six of the authors are pastors, including one ELCA bishop, four are teaching theologians, and one a law professor. Ever in these authors' minds is the question: What makes Christ necessary? As long as humans believe that they have something to contribute to God, then Christ is not necessary. Hence, Schroeder begins with articulating the theology of the cross that describes how sinners "despair of themselves" when they realize they can claim no merit before God. Nothing other than God's grace is left for them, and it is abundant in providing them new life (6).

With respect to the atonement Schroeder notes that against Anselm's law-based theory, Christ simultaneously fulfills the law and abrogates it. Jesus dies for sinners but in executing Jesus the law opposes its own liege Lord. In so doing, it too must die, that is, suffer the consequences of its own sin (51). Refreshingly, Schroeder highlights Luther's thinking that the resurrection is already beginning in human life: Christians are already "more than half" resurrected since they have a "defiant comfort" in Christ (57). For Arthur Repp, the triune God is not an expression of the hidden God (*deus absconditus*) but instead the God of the gospel since the trinity has made human salvation its mission (68). Feminist theologian Kit Kleinhans notes that whether humans sinfully establish themselves as the center of their world or whether they demurely establish someone else in that role "God is still displaced." Hence, "When our loves are disordered, we fail to love God as God should be loved, and we also fail to love ourselves and our neighbors appropriately, whether too much or too little" (76). With respect to the oft-repeated charge that the atonement is "divine child abuse," Kleinhans writes, "If our redemption could have been accomplished another way, if sin could have been cured by any other treatment plan, would not a wise and loving physician have done so?! Read backwards, from the perspective of faith, the death

and resurrection of Christ witness that no other solution to the problem of human sin was possible" (79). With pastoral sensitivity, Marcus Felde examines the practice of ministry by a case study of marriage preparation. Leading pre-marriage counseling is not a task that many pastors relish, but Felde finds it an opportunity to teach justification by faith alone: "Christian righteousness, even within marriage, is not an endpoint but a starting point, a gift given us in our baptism" (94).

Steven Albertin highlights baptism as a way to revitalize mission and illustrates his stance with what he does best, offering a sermon on Mark 1:4–11. Bishop Marcus Lohrmann looks at Christology through the lens of the Gospel of Matthew accentuating that Christ is the Host at the Lord's Table, noting that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners and that this holy meal ought to empower people to do their vocations in the world. Marie Failinger examines the ethics of the Augsburg Confession in light of the contemporary concerns for affirmative action. She concludes that human need, not sin, must be foremost in shaping secular law. To yield to racism in the long run is more damaging to humans than matters like murder (139). Michael Hoy notes that one does not need to be a Christian to be moral in society since ethic is grounded in reason, though works apart from faith cannot claim the "freedom of being 'good works', or 'the new obedience', which is the evangelical-ethical accent of the Reformers" (147). Steven Kuhl makes a case for the legalization of same-sex marriage since marriage is preferable to lust regardless of one's sexual orientation. Jukka Kääriäinen notes that the fact that for Luther God is hidden even in non-Christian religions provides a point of contact or "bridge" for proclaiming the gospel as promise outside of Christianity (195).

In light of both the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and ELCA bishop Elizabeth Eaton's call for renewal within Lutheranism, this Schroeder legacy can be a powerful resource for reclaiming evangelical identity and revitalization of ministry.

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