

ST LUKE THEOLOGIAN OF REDEMPTIVE HISTORY, by Helmut Flender. Translated by Reginald H. and Ilse Fuller. *S.P.C.K., London, 1967. 179 pp. 32s. 6d.*

To disapprove of St Luke as a theologian has been fairly customary among German protestant scholars. Recently, however, there has been a swing towards a positive appreciation, for example, in the writings of Ulrich Wilckens. Flender's important book, originally a doctoral dissertation presented at Erlangen in 1964, continues this work of Lucan rehabilitation. He argues that we should value Luke as 'an independent theologian in his own right, alongside of Paul and John' (p. 164). Flender's study contains much well argued criticism of previous views, such as Conzelmann's triple time division for Luke-Acts. His chief contribution is a thorough-going attempt to interpret Luke's thought dialectically: the old world is set over against the new divine world, past

redemption against present salvation, the Spirit's action against the responsible decisions of men, the heavenly against the earthly sphere, the revelation of the kingdom against its concealment, the Church's earthly, worldly dimension against its openness to the divine work of salvation. Repeatedly Flender brings out Luke's ability to join a straightforward narrative in a single dialectical whole with an appeal to faith. At the time he writes Luke faces the 'theological problem posed by the fact that redemption has become an event in the past. . . . His solution is to give simultaneous expression to the supernatural mystery and the earthly visibility of Christ and his history' (p. 167).

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SALVATION IN HISTORY, by Oscar Cullmann. *S.C.M. Press, London, 1967. 352 pp. 55s.*

'To the Secretariat for Christian Unity as a token of thanks for the invitation to take part in the Second Vatican Council as a guest and observer, and as a contribution to the dialogue between Christians of different confessions, in the faith and hope that even what separates us may contribute to the fluctuating and circuitous progress of salvation history.' This faith and hope in which Dr Cullmann dedicates his latest book might alert the Catholic reader to mark interconfessional differences. In fact this book could only confirm our choice of salvation history as the common basis of ecumenical dialogue, and show that with its author we are not only talking the same language, but saying the same things. This is all the more poignant since the separation which comes to light here is the yawning gap within Protestantism between the proponents of a salvation-historical theology and the dominant attitude of Bultmann and his followers. It seems to be presented as an essay in reconciliation with their position, but it is unlikely that

they are talking the same language, much less saying the same thing. Those who are interested in the dialogue between confessions cannot be unconcerned about the success or failure of intraconfessional dialogue, and yet it is doubtful what contribution this will make to closing the gap between the salvation-history view and existential self-understanding. The conviction that the Christian lives now in a period which has its meaning from a past in which God chose Israel as his people and among whom he worked to the fulfilment in Christ, has to meet the objection that free decision is excluded by a plan.

In *Christ and Time* Dr Cullmann outlined the linear conception of history which he considered to be tacitly assumed by the NT writers; here he tries to account for the origin of this salvation-historical perspective, its development in the NT and its importance for early Christian faith, thought and activity. The call to decision as the basis of a new understanding of ourselves is seen by Bultmann as the essence of the NT