

Comments on Daniel Deutschlander's book  
*The Theology of the Cross – Reflections on His Cross and Ours*

In 1518 Martin Luther prepared a set of theses for a debate to be held during a meeting of Augustinian monks at Heidelberg, Germany. In Theses 18-21 Luther brought up the subject of the theology of the cross. He would come back to this truth repeatedly during his career. The theology of the cross, however, was not new with Luther. The early church knew of this teaching because it is revealed in Scripture.

Although Professor Deutschlander's book refers to Martin Luther, this is not a book about Luther. Deutschlander takes us back to the basis for Luther's teaching; he takes us back to the Word. Frequent references to the Old and New Testaments make it clear that our salvation is found in the cross of Christ. Unfortunately sinful people tend to overlook the cross and its demands. Instead they focus on a glory which they believe they should enjoy now simply because they call themselves Christians. As a result they take their eyes off Jesus and turn their attention to themselves. This book deals with the seeming paradox between the theology of the cross and the theology of glory. In true Lutheran fashion Deutschlander plumbs the depths of "what does this mean" for our lives?

This volume deals with a weighty theological issue. Yet it is not simply a book on doctrine. This book is a devotional exercise. By posing questions and then exploring the rich responses of Scripture, Professor Deutschlander helps the reader to understand and to appreciate what God has done for us in Christ. At the same time he explores our relationship to Christ and the Savior's impact on our daily lives. There is much here that is a practical application of Scripture to my life.

Too many today have lost sight of the forgiveness of sins won for us by Christ. They have replaced justification with an emphasis on sanctification, as if the Bible was nothing more than a "how-to-do" book; as if Christianity was nothing more than instruction in moral living. Deutschlander helps us to see that Christ's cross is our cross. He reminds us that our good works have no value for our salvation. Yet our good works are valuable as fruits of faith done out of gratitude for God's gift of salvation.

This book is a worthy addition to a professional and a personal library. It deepens our understanding and appreciation for God's gift of life in Christ. It warns us of Satan's efforts to turn us from Christ to ourselves. It comforts us with the assurance that the cross of Christ leads to heavenly glory.

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