Church reform in fifteenth-century Germany was, Brady suggests, lackluster, but its political cousin was vibrant. Between 1450 and 1520, forms of governance were transformed. Brady sums this up as “the institutionalization of dynastic power over specific, feudal but heritable lands or, in a word, territorialisation.” This had important consequences for the development of the Reformation and Counter Reformation when they arrived on the German scene. As the German lands had not pursued the conventional route toward becoming a nation state, there was no possibility of enshrining a single state religion. That this could result in conflict was perfectly clear, but the situation was not an unmitigated disaster. All the princes, nobles, and magistrates who were determined to reform and defend their churches did much to codify and clarify regional religious identities. Brady posits a very convincing thesis about one of the key factors behind the emergence of the confessional order and also provides a clear narrative account of the German Reformation. Even the student unversed in the subject will emerge with a good understanding of all the significant events and personalities. The specialist will be especially impressed by the early part of the book: a rich and detailed account of the social, political, linguistic, geographical, economic, educational, and religious contours of the fifteenth-century Empire.

Jonathan Wright
Hartlepool, UK


This book is a substantially revised version of Johnson’s doctoral thesis, which was completed in 1991 under the supervision of R. Scribner. In this monograph, Johnson examines religious culture in the south German principality of the Upper Palatinate over a span of nearly two centuries. The structure of this study is patterned after a three-act Jesuit drama of 1693, entitled The Palatinate Deformed by Heresy, Informed by Bavaria and Reformed by Faith. Part one analyzes Lutheranism and then Calvinism in the Upper Palatinate between 1556 and 1621, part two assesses the period following the annexation of the principality under Maximilian of Bavaria in 1621, and part three concludes with an assessment of popular devotion shaped by the Catholic reformation up through the middle of the eighteenth century. This study is recommended to scholars of popular religion and the early-modern period for several reasons, of which two will be mentioned here. First, Johnson’s analysis of unpublished archival sources and his interdisciplinary approach that draws upon popular spirituality, confessional theology, and political history produces a groundbreaking contribution to European Reformation and early-modern studies. Second, Johnson’s equitable yet substantial challenge to confessionalization, whereby he argues that popular devotional practices interacted with both the church and the state in a symbiotic relationship, warrants ongoing evaluation.

Matthew J. Pereira
Columbia University


What were the goals of the Reformations? Various earlier studies from S. Ozment to J. Delumeau have made that question particularly urgent. In an evaluative historical moment, one finds it impossible to assess the success or failure of a reforming movement until one establishes the goal at which it aimed. But every reforming movement had at least several discernible objectives. In an enormously interesting study, Karant-Nunn takes on the question of emotions: at what religious feelings did the three main confessions working in early modern Germany—Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism—aim? Karant-Nunn defines her field by concentrating upon sermons on the Passion, and on death and dying. She broadens this by recourse to art, liturgy, and music, generating a clear intellectual historical effort. Although she contextualizes that character with some brief considerations of the responses of laity, the real value of the book lies in her consideration and analysis of a number of sermons on two clear topics, across confessional lines. Karant-Nunn finds that the emotions that clergy wished to evoke from their flocks differed significantly. Catholic homileticians sought the palpable emotional response to and identification with Christ’s suffering. Lutheran pastors aimed at consolation and allowed some of the details of the accounts to fade into the background. Reformed preachers aimed most particularly at self-incrimination for their congregations for their participation in the sins that required Christ’s sacrifice. This is a remarkable book, one that will engage scholarship for decades.

R. Ward Holder
Saint Anselm College


Mannermaa is well known to anyone acquainted with contemporary Luther studies, particularly as such studies relate to ecumenical discussions. Given that he writes mainly in Finnish, we are more than normally in the debt of translators such as Stjerna for making his material available in English. Mannermaa is most famous for arguing that Luther has been fundamentally misread by traditional and modern scholars, whether of the Holl, Althaus, or Ebeling schools, and that his theology is far closer to Eastern Orthodoxy, particularly the notion of theosis, than
has typically been acknowledged by post-Kantian German scholarship. There is no room here to analyze this claim; suffice it to say it is contentious, and, in arguing his case, Mannermaa has generally placed a disproportionate emphasis on Luther’s earlier writings. Here, however, he uses Luther’s theses in the Heidelberg Disputation to argue that at the heart of the Reformer’s theology lies a basic distinction between a love that is reactive and a love that is creative, and that it was the medievals’ failure to distinguish these that lay at the root of their poor soteriology. The book is very readable; the thesis is interesting and, perhaps, somewhat less controversial than his major works on theosis. I was still left with the impression that Mannermaa’s emphases are not those of Luther: while love is key to the Heidelberg theses, it is arguable that humility, as much if not more than love, is the underlying key; and, of course, it is faith that comes to dominate Luther’s mature thought and that ultimately shaped the Lutheran confessions, from which Luther cannot be separated. Nevertheless, Mannermaa is always stimulating, and this brief book is a fine way to access one influential strand of Luther scholarship.

Carl R. Trueman
Westminster Theological Seminary


The recently retired Mullett has done students of the Reformation a huge favor by compiling this book. It is a straightforward, accurate, and thoughtfully devised dictionary of the era’s people, places, movements, and events. It will be of use at all academic levels and warrants a place on every library shelf. Mullett’s decisions about what to include are astute, and the book’s value is increased by the addition of a detailed chronology and an extensive bibliography. There is also a fine introductory essay that confused undergraduate students will adore.

Jonathan Wright
Hartlepool, UK


This important book carefully sorts through the complex relationship between pragmatism in France and the American pragmatists (especially William James), and between pragmatism and the Roman Catholic Modernists. In so doing, it locates RC Modernist thinking in the larger context of turn-of-the-century philosophy. The results are illuminating. The book’s purpose is less to demonstrate the dependence of one thinker on another than it is to analyze the similarities and differences. The transatlantic conversation was not a distant one. Personal correspondence took place between James and some of the French figures, and, in journal articles and reviews, they commented on each other’s writings. The main concern of the French philosophers and theologians was to find an alternative to neoscholasticism with its overemphasis on reason and objective truth. The neoscholastics accused the RC Modernists of endorsing pragmatism and thereby entering the slippery slope to agnosticism. Some Modernists, most notably É. Le Roy, affirmed the concept, but in ways that revealed differences as well as similarities with the Americans. As the book’s chapters make clear, the term “pragmatism” had meaningful content but was used in one way by the opponents of RC Modernism, in another by those French thinkers who adopted the term, and still differently by James and Peirce. Readers somewhat familiar with the early twentieth-century theological and philosophical landscape will find this book clearly written, with sufficient background included to make its claims understandable. Although authored by different scholars, the chapters fit together very nicely. Recommended for faculty, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates with some background in philosophy and theology.

Darrell Jodock
Gustavus Adolphus College


For nearly two generations, scholars have debated the origins of the Reformation in the German Imperial Cities. The dominant line of argument, following the researches of B. Moeller, F. Lau, and H. Schmidt, depicted the Reformation in the cities as a “top-down” event. In this fascinating study of the Swabian cities, Close suggests an alternative way of seeing the origins and course of urban reform. Drawing on the rich literature of late medieval city leagues and recent studies of political communication within the German Empire, Close argues that the Reformation in the cities cannot simply be viewed in terms of internal social and political factors. Rather, the politics of the Empire as well as the long-standing practice of intercity communication—the “negotiation” of the title—were both critical for the process of religious reform. Close examines the Reformation in the smaller cities of Donauwörth and Kaufbeuren in light of the attempts to create new forms of urban solidarity in the aftermath of the Swabian League to the outbreak of the Schmalkaldic War. The advice and influence of members of the Three Cities League–Nuremberg, Ulm, and above all Augsburg–played a decisive role in religious reform in both cities. Close successfully challenges older conceptions of urban reform, demanding that one re-examine the regional and imperial contexts, as well as the impact of corporate politics. Thoroughly researched and well written, this book provides an example of how engagement with late medieval