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western history that will no doubt be a staple resource for years to come.

W. Bradford Littlejohn

The Davenant Institute

*The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*. Edited by Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, Pp. xviii, 662. \$50.00, paper.)

On 31 October 1517, Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses against Roman Catholic indulgences to the church door in Wittenberg. This event changed the world by igniting the Protestant reformation, and it makes Luther possibly one of the most important people in the history of the western world. In 2017, we remember the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, and particularly Luther's role in it. Certainly at such a momentous milestone, I imagine that we can expect a huge amount of literature to appear regarding Luther and his work. Although *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* was published three years before the anniversary proper, it makes a tremendous contribution to our understanding of Luther and his significance in history. In my estimation, this book is likely a definitive resource and provides almost everything a scholar would need to introduce themselves to many aspects of Luther studies. For everyone except those whose research requires very detailed understanding of Luther's thought, this work may now be the only necessary work because it provides such a vast array of information with rich analysis of the material.

This is too large a work to survey all of its contents here, so instead I focus on pointing out its most useful features. Perhaps the greatest strength of this book is its breadth. It is divided into seven parts. The first is a brief biographical survey. The second concerns the medieval context of Luther's influences. The third is about his hermeneutical principles. The fourth covers his position on traditional theological topics. The fifth surveys Luther's understanding of the Christian life. The sixth examines how differing types of work shaped the way Luther expressed himself, e.g. how academic writing, preaching or polemics shaped his rhetoric. The last

addresses how Luther has been received in various lines of scholarship and in differing parts of the globe.

This volume is certainly a fine example of historical scholarship. Particularly, the treatments of how medieval theology and context affected the way Luther thought are alone worth the price of this book. They in fact have broader relevance than Luther studies, and would be helpful for anyone investigating how late medieval ideas shaped the early reformation and were received and adjusted within the beginning years of the Protestant church. On the other hand, this book does not ignore modern debates. Perhaps the most controversial discussion in recent literature has been about the New Finnish Interpretation of Luther, which argues that Luther's doctrine of justification was actually closer to the Eastern Orthodox position of theosis than traditional forensic understandings in western Protestantism. Much to this work's credit, it actually gives a chapter to each side of the debate, and so avoids pigeon-holing itself into a partisan position.

One of the most important issues surrounding Luther is how he has been received through the years. In this book, we have several essays discussing his appropriation in global scholarship. There is even an essay about how Roman Catholics have engaged Luther. The only thing that might be considered lacking from this volume is a focused treatment of how Luther was received by other Protestant communities in his own time and the subsequent early modern period. Specifically, it would be very useful to have an extensive treatment of how reformed Protestants, and perhaps the Anabaptists, interacted with Luther, engaged his thought and either appropriated or rejected his views. Yet, this is an incredibly useful work, and will be useful to any scholar who has interest in Luther and his historical context.

Harrison Perkins

Queen's University Belfast

*Resilient Reformer: The Life and Thought of Martin Luther*. By Timothy Lull and Derek R. Nelson. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015, Pp. xxix, 410. \$44.00, paper.)

The *Resilient Reformer* is a new biography of Luther, written in partial anticipation of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The book is a hybrid of the work of the late Luther

scholar Timothy Lull (who died suddenly in 2003) and his research assistant Derek Nelson, now a professor at Wabash College. Although the *Resilient Reformer* does not add many new insights to an already-crowded field of Luther research, it nevertheless represents a highly readable compendium of the most current research on the reformer.

The book begins with the familiar narrative of Luther's origins. Luther's background as the son of an upwardly mobile miner in Mansfeld and Eisleben is explored in detail. Through working in the mines, Luther's father was able to scrap together enough money to send him to Latin school and prepare him for a university education. Luther excelled in his education, and eventually attended Erfurt University. At Erfurt, Luther was increasingly troubled about his relationship with God. After being caught in a storm, Luther made a vow to St. Anne that if he survived he would enter a monastery instead of attending law school as his parents had intended.

At this point, Lull and Nelson deviate from the many of the older standard Luther bibliographies by giving a somewhat different account of Luther's activities within the monastery. Whereas more traditional biographies emphasize Luther's psychological suffering, Lull and Nelson tend to focus on the progress of Luther's personal and professional development. This shift of emphasis reflects newer reformation scholarship, which has increasingly seen Luther's later account of his monastic struggles as being a true, yet incomplete picture of his early life. Indeed, Luther accomplished much during his time in the Augustinian order. While he was indeed bothered by guilt, it by no means paralyzed him in the manner seemingly implied by older biographies.

This biography also breaks with traditional accounts of Luther by the absence of the "reformation breakthrough." That is to say, taking their lead from Luther's own later recollections in the 1540s, much nineteenth and twentieth-century Luther scholarship posited that there was a single point when Luther had a sudden conversion from late-medieval Roman Catholicism to the Reformation faith. In fact, for much of the twentieth century, there was something of a scholarly cottage industry trying to discover the exact moment of the Reformation breakthrough.

Scholarly conjectures dated the change from anywhere from 1509 to 1520. In accordance with the current state of scholarship, Lull and Nelson do not see the idea of a moment of "breakthrough" as congruent with the actual historical data. Instead, the book emphasizes the gradual nature of Luther's shift away from late-medieval theology.

Another important feature of the work is its lengthy and detailed discussion of Luther's late and violent anti-Judaism. Luther's dislike of the Jews was exclusively based on religion and was no sense racial or ethnic. Although Luther was in some regards friendly to the Jews during the early part of the Reformation, he increasingly became frustrated with the fact that the Jews continued to refuse to convert to his reformed version of Christianity. Much of this explains (though certainly does not excuse) his late and violent rants against the Jews. Lull and Nelson deal with Luther's treatment of the Jews and Judaism in a highly nuanced manner. On the one hand, they do not rely on easy moral equivalencies (i.e., Luther was not the precursor of Hitler). On the other hand, they do not let the reformer off the hook for his shameful language and encouragement of persecution.

Overall, *Resilient Reformer* is an excellent book. It presents the best contemporary scholarship and gives a thorough explanation of the life and theology of Martin Luther. It does so all in an incredibly easy to read format. For this reason, the book would make an excellent text book for adult parish education, as well as for seminary or college courses on Church History.

Jack Kilcrease

Aquinas College

*Atlas of the European Reformations.* By Tim Dowley with Cartographer Nick Rowland. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015, Pp. 160. \$24.00, paper.)

Although the back cover reports that this atlas was "consciously written for students at any level," it is a valuable resource for teachers and scholars. As an easy-to-use reference, the maps reveal a sense of place and the extent of certain movements and events perhaps better than words alone. A helpful tool is also the

“Timeline AD 1300-1700” which precedes the maps. Since the reformation progressed in many different places, the maps (and there are sixty of them) help in understanding why more recent scholars are using the plural “reformations” to discuss all that happened. (Note that the plural is used in the book’s title.)

The atlas is composed of the four usual divisions for this period and so designed to illustrate the break-up of the medieval church into various theological and political movements and divisions: Before the “Reformation,” “Reformation,” “Catholic Reform and Counter-Reformation,” and “Early Modern Europe.” Generally, each two-page spread has a brief review of the topic under consideration (e.g. “The Radical Reformation,” “the French Religious Wars”) with a corresponding full page map opposite. These brief reviews are adequate generalizations that remind the reader of major issues, events, and personalities, not only what happened but where it happened. And for the most part it is easy to see the connections between text and map, especially since the maps contain all kinds of information (that is where Dowley’s research really shows) and visually demonstrate even in a glance the geographical and political extent of events and movements; for example, the Peasants’ War, the spread of Anabaptism, the persecution and resettlement of the Jews, or the number of Huguenot centers.

The maps are beautifully done with decent (although not always successful) color contrasts. Map keys are always helpful, and often useful information is added within the maps identifying important dates and events, as well as borders and border changes. Illustrations are well selected and placed throughout the book. What I found interesting, perhaps as a result of my own work, is how central the position, the problems, and the leadership of the Holy Roman Empire seemed so often to be at the center of things—perhaps because it was territory at the geographical center of Europe where so much began, and we might say ended, considering with the Thirty Years’ War.

The editors “believe this atlas breaks new ground in being a digitally-designed and comprehensive historical atlas of the religious history of the early modern period in Europe and the wider-world” (11). By wider-world, what’s included visually is:

Portugal and Spain’s voyages of discovery, Roman Catholic missions to America, the travels of Francis Xavier to Asia, North American settlers and colonies, and the mission to Japan—all in one way or another the result of religious impulses unleashed during the reformation. What was also unleashed, of course, was significant and permanent disagreements. There were various, always strident, voices for religious change that created divisions, made all the more obvious, it seems to me, through the maps that reveal religious settlements, political instability, and the numerous wars waged throughout Europe—divisions that produced the changes in what we now label as early modern Europe. The book ends with two pages of “further reading.” The price is wonderful. This well-done atlas should be part of the libraries and those interested in religious conflict and change.

Rudolph P. Almay

West Virginia University

*John Calvin’s “Institutes of the Christian Religion”: A Biography.* By Bruce Gordon. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016, Pp. xix, 277. \$27.95.)

Bruce Gordon highlights some truly interesting moments in the reception of Calvin’s *Institutes*. Take, for example, John Cotton, who says in the seventeenth century, “I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep” (64), or John Wesley, who writes in the eighteenth, “I think on Justification . . . just as Mr. Calvin does. In this respect I do not differ from him a hair’s breadth” (84). An eighteenth-century African defended slavery by appealing to Calvin; a twentieth-century African found liberation in the *Institutes* instead. A new Chinese translation of the *Institutes* was printed in 2010, in Shanghai.

Gordon quotes the “prescient observation” (his words) of Roland Bainton that historians can avoid questions of correctness and think instead about what people did with what they had (155–56). In the same spirit, Gordon says this “biography” is neither a theology of John Calvin, a history of Calvinism, nor an overview of scholarship on Calvin or the *Institutes* (xi). The result: Gordon treats the