

itself or the Netherlands, France, Scotland, or England. Rublack is kinder to Calvin than many writers. One passage, introducing a section titled “A Religion of the Word,” seems to sum up Rublack’s underlying contention: “An everyday Protestantism evolved for which the biblical word was central, but which did not equate to a religion principally shaped by cognitive engagements of logocentric or individualized minds. Faith continued to be experienced through the body, the emotions, in relation to others and the material world” (175). In short, Protestant faiths tapped the same feelings, the same indispensable communal identities, and the same rootedness in the world as their Catholic predecessor. Ordinary lay people could have their religion no other way. They were not as radically changed as theologians hoped. In this assertion, Rublack affirms the position of the late Bob Scribner, to whom she pays tribute in the acknowledgments.

The brief bibliographic recommendations that conclude this book bear witness to Rublack’s recognition of—and I would add her participation in—the innovative scholarship of the last decade. The suggestions for further reading contained in the first edition are staid by comparison.

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Luther and the Reformation of the Later Middle Ages. Eric Leland Saak.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. xii + 400 pp. \$120.

Luther anniversaries have often been the catalysts for new scholarship and perspectives on the Reformer’s theology and life. This past anniversary (2017) has followed a similar pattern. Among the many works published for the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, Eric Leland Saak’s book on *Luther and the Reformation of the Later Middle Ages* contributes to our understanding of the Reformer in significant ways. Dependent on, though not quite a sequel to, his earlier *Highway to Heaven: The Augustinian Platform between Reform and Reformation, 1292–1524* (2002), this book expands upon his excellent work on the early history and thought of the Order of Augustinian Hermits. The main thesis of Saak’s *Highway to Heaven*—namely, that the Augustinians were an important and unique reform movement in the late Middle Ages—is now extended to the context of Luther’s early theological development and reform activity. The effect is to give us “Brother Martin,” deeply embedded in his monastic context, attempting to carry out in his own way the goals of the order’s catechetical and pastoral reforms.

On the one hand, Saak demonstrates his affiliation with Heiko Oberman and his larger body of work on the significance of the late medieval *Augustinerschule* for the history of the Reformation. Yet Saak’s work exhibits careful, independent research that

reveals aspects of Luther and his order that have yet to be appreciated. For example, we are given a detailed account of the spiritual and academic formation program of the Augustinians. In the days before the Western Schism (1378–1417), the program was rigorous, with at least sixteen years of required theological study. However, post-schism, the requirements seemed far less extensive. Luther's training does not even approach the rigor of the old system, studying hardly more than three years before receiving his doctorate. Thus, Saak suggests that even if there were a distinctive Augustinian theological tradition promoted within Luther's order, it is highly unlikely that Luther would have been immersed in it. Rather, Luther's Augustinianism aligns with the late medieval shift away from speculative theology toward a theology of a more practical and pastoral character—i.e., what Berndt Hamm coined *Frömmigkeitstheologie*.

From this vantage point, Saak attempts to take up a variety of questions about Luther's theological development. He reassesses (rather convincingly) Luther's "tower experience," both in terms of its date and its content. He also tries to recast (less convincingly) Luther as a moderating Aristotelian rather than exclusively a critic of the philosopher. Other topics are dealt with in a somewhat disjointed fashion. There are close readings of Luther but their contribution to the overall thesis of the book is less clear, appearing more as separate studies that may have found a better reading as articles in a journal. Still, Saak's close attention to detail and his exploration of less-examined texts makes it worth wandering a bit.

All of this, however, serves as precursor to the main argument of the book: namely, that Luther's true breakthrough marked the end (and failure) of one reform effort—the late medieval Augustinian reform—and the beginning of another (also ultimately a failure). This shift was not the insight into some Pauline passage or theological concept like faith or justification. Rather, it was the moment that Luther came to the conclusion that the papacy as such was the Antichrist and the last days had arrived. While Luther would begin to consider such a possibility after his meeting with Cajetan, in 1518, the decisive moment came in February of 1520. With rumor of a papal bull threatening excommunication, Luther came upon two consecutive discoveries. The first was that after having read Jan Hus's *De Ecclesia*, Luther realized that he shared his understanding of the Gospel with the Bohemian and that the church had condemned it. The second came four days later when he finally read the humanist Lorenzo Valla's definitive refutation of the controversial *Donation of Constantine*. The whole institution appeared to Luther to be built on lies: "I am so overwhelmingly horrified in the very depths of my being that I can scarcely no longer doubt that the pope is that very Antichrist!" (WABr 2, 49). The effect that this had on Luther's ecclesiology and his overall reform goals cannot be overstated. The world had changed for Luther and the sense of urgency that marked Luther's efforts thereafter forever changed all efforts at reconciliation and comprehensive reform.

Saak's work, in spite of some of the compositional weaknesses mentioned above, is an important contribution to our reading of Luther and those world-changing events

that unfolded five hundred years ago. Students and scholars of the Reformation should read his book with pencil in hand.

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The Personal Luther: Essays on the Reformation from a Cultural Historical Perspective. Susan C. Karant-Nunn.

St Andrews Studies in Reformation History. Leiden: Brill, 2018. xiv + 230 pp. \$127.

It goes without saying that the last few years have seen a rising wave of books on Martin Luther, cresting in 2017. Given that he was first and foremost a theologian and biblical scholar, a sizable percentage of the valuable books on him published in recent years have been written from the perspective of church history. Yet Luther's theology was embedded in a wider historical context, and the movement he initiated was more than theological, as reflected in the equally valuable books published from other historiographic perspectives, including the cultural history practiced by Susan Karant-Nunn in this volume of essays.

Dr. Karant-Nunn states that this book is not a biography, and yet there is a tremendous amount of biographical information here, centered on various subjects that come to focus in the phrase "the personal Luther." Luther is examined in terms of his ego, as reflected in his works; his conscience; his friendship with Frederick the Wise; his relationship with God as heavenly Father; what he had to say about the sex act; his masculinity; his calling as a father; what can be known of his heart; what his death tells us about him (and his age); and, finally, the role that personality (chiefly Luther's) played in the Reformation. In each of the chapters in which these topics are addressed, Dr. Karant-Nunn mines the Weimar edition of Luther's works, which is an inexhaustible source, always capable of surprising the researcher with yet another facet of Luther's personality and career.

Given that this book is a collection of essays written as individual pieces and over a number of years, some stand out more than others. In the estimation of this reviewer, the essays that form the latter half of the book (chapters 6 through 10) are the more engaging. For instance, the essays on Luther's masculinity (chapter 6), on his role as a father (chapter 7), and on his heart (chapter 8) seem to lend themselves more directly to the overarching theme of the "personal" Luther. Here we are introduced to Luther in his private life, out of view of the wider world, but that nevertheless had a direct influence on his public persona and actions. We learn of his "theology of being a man," and how that played out in his home life in his relations with the remarkable Katharina; we learn of the joy he had in his daughters (and the pain he suffered at the loss of Magdalena), and of his joy in his sons coupled with the disappointment they (at least, Hans) brought to him; and we learn of his heart—of the role of his emotion