

readers a detailed overview of contemporary research, contradicting the impression that Reformation research can be given up since there is nothing new to expect. On the contrary—there is much more to find.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.73

Beyond Indulgences: Luther's Reform of Late Medieval Piety, 1518–1520.
Anna Marie Johnson.

Early Modern Studies 21. Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2017. xii + 226 pp. \$50.

Ever since Karl Holl (1866–1926), efforts have been made to describe Luther's early development, based on Luther's own late autobiographical account from 1545. Holl and others have argued for a “rupture pattern” identifying a specific “Reformation breakthrough” in Luther's thinking. While there are still some scholars following this narrative, many others now argue that there was no single turning point, but many steps of evolution in Luther's career on the way to Reformation.

Anna Marie Johnson shares this emerging conviction in her careful study of Luther's writings from 1518 to 1520. Actually, her report starts in 1516, but this is only to make clear the background of Luther's attack on indulgences in 1517. The exploration in a strict sense then starts after the Ninety-Five Theses. While most scholars now would argue for a polemical Luther who engaged his adversaries, Johnson presents a pastor still writing for the people and in this way seeking to reform traditional piety. There are not many scholars focusing on exactly these pastoral writings, so Johnson's approach places her at the front of recent research. This includes her reassessment of a pastoral Luther preoccupied with spirituality and piety, countering the “misconception that Luther was primarily concerned about theology and not Christian life” (4). Johnson shows that Luther's spiritual writings started before the controversy around the indulgences with his edition of the late medieval mystical treatise *Theologia deutsch* and his interpretation of the seven penitential psalms. Both underpin an understanding of the Ninety-Five Theses as a plea for intensified interior penance.

In a small but important correction of the standard narrative of Luther research, Johnson stresses that after the publication of the Ninety-Five Theses the number of his pastoral writings increased remarkably. Among these treatises, Johnson includes *Luther's Explanation of the Ten Commandments*, which she understands as a text focusing on biblical advice for Christian life instead of “other, nonbiblical categories that had become popular in the late Middle Ages” (67). For the Lenten sermon of 1518, she is able to depict Luther's reorientation of piety as a biblical one that focuses on human “sinfulness and need for grace” (90). Interestingly enough, Johnson shows that

Luther maintained this spiritual approach in the summer of 1518. Despite the growing theological controversies, which forced him now to limit his discussion of penance to theological questions, he continued to touch on other, spiritual issues in the few pastoral writings he still had the time for.

For the following year, 1519, Johnson describes Luther as emphasizing more than before the friendly and loving side of God, a change evident in comparing Luther's treatments of Christ's Passion in 1518 and 1519 (118). In doctrinal terms one sees foreshadowed here Luther's concept of law and Gospel, but Johnson as a historian of spirituality is right to avoid these dogmatic categories. At the same time, she also remarks on Luther's advice on other parts of religious life, including Christian prayer as an interior, deeply grounded practice. The issues Luther now addressed followed principles laid down in 1518.

From this it is a consequent, though not necessary, step to reform not only individual practice but also the rites of the church. According to Johnson, Luther takes this step in the months from fall 1519 to summer 1520, when he developed a new understanding of the sacraments. Johnson ends her investigation with the sermon on good works, appearing just before the address to the German nobility. She has shown how Luther came gradually to a point where reform became real Reformation. Johnson does not need dogmatic theology to demonstrate this; she almost does not need the controversy, as she can show Luther's development through the spiritual treatises themselves. With this, she has broadened our view on Martin Luther's early development remarkably. One might wonder if after more than one hundred years of research about the young Luther there is still something new to detect. Johnson has shown that indeed there is.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2018.74

Debating Perseverance: The Augustinian Heritage in Post-Reformation England.
Jay T. Collier.

Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
230 pp. \$99.

This is a fascinating book that greatly enlightens some of the major polemical battles that troubled the post-Reformation Church of England. At the heart of Collier's study is an analysis of how divergent views on the doctrine of perseverance—largely influenced by divergent readings of Augustine—played a pivotal role in English doctrinal formulation and the battle for the established church's identity.

Central to Collier's thesis is his identification of a minority Reformed position on the doctrine of perseverance (henceforth, "minority view"), which, stated simply, affirmed the possibility that some nonelect people, despite ultimately not persevering in it, may