

*Remembering the Reformation: An Inquiry into the Meanings of Protestantism.*  
Thomas Albert Howard.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. xiv + 190 pp. \$40.

*Protestantism after 500 Years.* Thomas Albert Howard and Mark A. Noll, eds.  
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. xvi + 362 pp. \$99.

*Remembering the Reformation: Martin Luther and Catholic Theology.*

Declan Marmion, Salvador Ryan, and Gesa E. Thiessen, eds.

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017. xxvi + 248 pp. \$79.

These three books provide excellent resources for understanding theological aspects of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, its interpretation through the centuries, and important dimensions of Protestantism that have emerged in the 500 years since the Reformation got underway. Thomas Albert Howard, in *Remembering the Reformation: An Inquiry into the Meanings of Protestantism*, studies Reformation commemorations during various anniversary years, writing that “social memory” is displayed through public remembrances that both “reflect and even foster modifications of identity” (6). For example, Howard notes that the Reformation in 1817 “was remembered both as a recovery of religious truth and as the *fons et origo* of modern political freedoms and (German) national identity. Such politicization of the memory and meaning of the Reformation in the modern era is a recurring theme of this book” (6). Howard argues throughout that the *Jubiläum*, or special anniversary celebrations, have “functioned as a crucial ritual of memory, a prophylactic against group forgetfulness and its corollary, the dissipation of identity. At the same time, jubilees have served as a vehicle to modify identity and group consciousness, often through politicization of memory” (7). Howard sees himself as a geologist who drills into the earth discerning sediments of the past. But in his case the drilling is into layers of social memory of the Reformation from 1617, 1717, and 1817, as well as 1883 with “Luthermania, Germania, and the *Novus Ordo Seclorum*,” commemorating the 400th anniversary of Luther’s birth, and finally, in “A Memory Still Mutating: The Twentieth Century.” In his conclusion, Howard raises ethical and ecumenical questions about the relationship of the present and the past.

The 1617 centennial of Luther’s Ninety-Five Theses took place when Europe was marked by divided religious confessions. At the center of the 1617 commemorations were issues of religious identity that took shape in the context of the Holy Roman Empire, where religion and politics had blurred lines between them. So 1617 events were “religio-political” in nature. The commemorations were important in helping to form and shape European historical consciousness, and “solidified the view of Martin Luther in the Protestant imagination as the definitive ‘great man’ of the Reformation, the ‘Moses’ or ‘Noah’ of Christianity in his times” (12). By 1717, Calvinism had become a recognized religion in Europe, aided by the Peace of Westphalia (1648). But

again, the person of Luther was central, his memory now accompanied by medals and medallions of kings who ruled by “divine right” (26).

A turning point came in 1817 with the profoundly changed intellectual and political circumstances of Europe. Howard notes the powerful effects of the Enlightenment, Pietism, the birth and rise of historicism (*historismus*), and early German nationalism. The Reformation commemoration in the wake of Napoleon and the theme of historical progress meant the 1817 remembrance helped “inaugurate a new vision of historical progress and freedom” (46). On both sides of the Atlantic, the Reformation can be seen as being “read” as seeking to establish “a firm causal link between sixteenth-century church reforms and modern liberalism, the spirit of the modern world” (58). The tone of the 1883 celebration in Germany, on the other hand, was set by Kaiser Wilhelm I, whose 21 May 1883 edict enjoined “all of Protestant (*evangelische*) Christianity to offer thanks to God for blessing our nation with the Reformation” (70). Luther here was the historical hero who foreshadowed the German Empire and German nationalism. Today, Howard muses about “what the future holds for Europe’s own religious identity 500 years after the Reformation” (154). He hopes these historical reflections will help foster “reflection and self-examination, and—with respect to painful and divisive memories—perhaps change for the better ‘the way the past is remembered in the present’” (157).

The fourteen essays in *Protestantism after 500 Years* come from a 2013 conference at Gordon College and ask how the Protestant Reformation should be commemorated 500 years after the Luther event of the Ninety-Five Theses. The pieces are divided into three groups: “Looking Back,” “The Present,” and “Theological Considerations.” The first group of pieces are particularly relevant to historians, with experts discussing the Reformation in relation to topics of legal culture (John Witte Jr.), “The Sacred and the Supernatural” (Carlos Eire), “Protestantism and the Making of Modern Science” (Peter Harrison), “The Reformation and Higher Education” (Karin Maag), and “The Reformation and Modernity” (Brad S. Gregory). Each of these essays open up intriguing questions not only of historical importance, but also in terms of the implications of these topics for today.

Provocatively, Brad Gregory argues that “we can see the modern democratic state . . . with its politically protected guarantees of freedom of religion and irreligion, as not only the product of the Reformation era but also the institutional incubator of what has been called the postmodern condition. By the open-ended ideological pluralism that it permits, it indirectly fosters the *impression* of relativism—the view that all truth claims can only be a matter of individual, subjective, and irrational personal preference, a theater of constructions and projections” (158). “In the public sphere,” writes Gregory, “not only are all Protestant views derived from the principle of *sola scriptura* and its adjuncts protected but so are any and all religions, religious claims, and post-religious claims that fill a similar niche” (158). As the editors summarize, Gregory argues that we can see “how the commitment to the principle of *sola scriptura* uninten-

tionally sowed the seeds for the individualization and privatization of 'religion' within modern liberal states" (12).

A wider, global angle of vision of the Reformation is provided in Philip Jenkins's "What Hath Wittenberg to Do with Lagos? Sixteenth-Century Protestantism and 'Global South' Christianity" and Sung-Deuk Oak's "Protestantism Comes East: The Case of Korea." These pieces open a number of issues. Jenkins's focus on the Global South leads him to consider elements from the earlier period in relation to now. Jenkins asks, "Might we foresee any parallels with our own era in the Global South?" as he stresses how "similarities between Global South churches and early Protestants, and the strong Pentecostal/charismatic current in these modern bodies, particularly leads us to see resemblances with the Radical Reformation" (224). While no assured predictions of the future can be made, Jenkins does suggest that "past experience is the best model that we have to go by presently, and an instructive guide" (226).

Three instructive essays conclude this volume. Sarah Hinlicky Wilson writes on "Martin Luther at 500 and the State of Global Lutheranism"; Matthew Levering considers "Looking Forward by Glancing Back: Calvin and Aquinas on the Holiness of the Church"; and Timothy George presents "The Reformation and the New Ecumenism." In a vigorous afterword, Ronald Rittgers questions Jaroslav Pelikan's description of the Reformation as "a tragic necessity" (17). Instead, Rittgers suggests that it is better "to speak of the Reformation as tragic but salutary, or as simultaneously tragic and salutary (*simul tragicus et salutaris*), for it was certainly both" (337). He goes on to say that a "larger goal of 2017" should be to anticipate 2054, the millennial anniversary of "the tragic, unnecessary schism between Catholics and the Orthodox" (338).

A theological primer on the Reformation in relation to Roman Catholic theology is provided in the eleven pieces in *Remembering the Reformation: Martin Luther and Catholic Theology*. Margot Käßmann in the foreword points to the Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran Federation signing the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification" in 1999. This document asserted that "the condemnations issued by the two churches in the sixteenth century do not apply to their teaching today" (xiv). In this, Käßmann sees "a chance to give a clear ecumenical dimension to the Reformation anniversary" since "it is crystal clear that whatever the differences and whatever the nature of our own profiles, there is more that binds us together than separates us" (xiv). The essays in the volume divide into "Historical Foundations," "Luther and the Medieval Tradition," "Luther and Catholic Theology," and "What Can Catholics Learn from Luther?" All the pieces are rich in discussing Luther's theological views in relation to historic figures, contemporary theologians, and issues of ongoing significance today.

From the historical sections, Phillip Cary's "Luther and the Legacy of Augustine" is especially helpful. Cary points out that on a fundamental issue, Augustine speaks of

law and grace while Luther speaks of law and Gospel. He notes that “when Luther thinks of this difference he speaks of law and gospel, because he takes the gospel to be an external means of grace, having a kind of sacramental efficacy” (37). “For the mature Luther,” writes Cary, “the gospel not only requires us to believe we are forgiven, it gives us the comfort of a gracious God whom we can love” (50) since “the gospel gives the righteousness that the law demands” (50). This is significant in relation to Augustine because of what Cary believes is “the most essential difference between Augustine and the mature Luther: instead of a prayer for grace, we have a promise of grace; instead of a human word seeking God’s gift, we have a divine word giving it. As a result, Luther now has something external to cling to when he is fearful and anxious about his sins” (51). The contrast with Augustine is that for Augustine, “words and signs never have the power to give what they signify” (39). Cary claims “the notion of a specifically sacramental kind of efficacy, whereby external things can be an effective means of grace, arises within the Augustinian tradition of the west long after Augustine.” In this regard, “Luther is closer to Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas [than] to Augustine. He is . . . more Catholic than Augustine” (39). In the end, “what Luther wants us to learn . . . is to cling to the gospel as an external word that gives us Christ and, in Christ, all good things” (54).

In “What Can Catholics Learn from Luther?” Thiessen considers “Luther and the Role of Images”; Saarinen writes on “Luther and the Reading of Scripture”; and Helmer presents “The Common Priesthood: Luther’s Enduring Challenge.” David Bagchi’s epilogue advocates for the ecumenical study of Luther. This approach “provides us with the opportunity for mutual learning and a genuine appropriation of new insights, not merely a formal recognition of the validity of our respective positions” (239). In short, says Bagchi, “Catholics and Lutherans can learn from each other, and those of us who stand outside the process can learn from both” (239). To that end, this volume stands as a model source and resource for Luther study today, and tomorrow.

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*Music and Culture in the Middle Ages and Beyond: Liturgy, Sources, Symbolism.*  
Benjamin Brand and David J. Rothenberg, eds.  
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This collection groups its fifteen essays into three themes reflecting its dedicatee Craig Wright’s interests in sources, ceremonies, and symbolism. The editor’s introductory chapter frames the volume, but also provides a useful literature review within these fields and of Craig Wright’s distinctive contributions. Thomas Forrest Kelly pieces together the fragments of the almost-vanished liturgy of Capua in Southern Italy, a set-