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SELECTED BOOKS IN PRINT ABOUT LUTHER—IN ENGLISH AND IN GERMAN, 1983

AN ANNOTATED REVIEW

Egil Grislis

The celebration of Martin Luther’s 500th birthday has become a publishing event as well. While the book market generally is sharing the present economic difficulties, the number of new publications and reprints indicate that high hopes have again been placed on Luther’s ability to appeal to many readers.

In this brief survey our main attention will be directed to books about Luther rather than Luther’s own writings.

RECENT STUDIES OF MARTIN LUTHER

Althaus, Paul. The Theology of Martin Luther, Fortress, 1966, and The Ethics of Martin Luther, Fortress, 1972. A perfect directory to the entire thought of Luther. Knowledge of Luther scholarship is assumed, and rapid reading is very difficult. For the mature scholar.

Bainton, Roland. Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther. Mentor, 1950, paper. The best biography: insightful, charming, truthful. It has not been updated to include the research of the last 30 years.


Bornkamm, Heinrich. Luther in Mid-Career: 1521-1530, trans. by E. Theodore Bachmann, Fortress, 1983. An exciting, very detailed, and most illuminating phase of Luther’s career. It really is worth the US $36.95.

Brockhoff, John R. Luther Lives! Preaching Resources on the 500th Anniversary of Martin Luther’s Birth, Lima, Ohio: The C.S.S. Publ. Co., 1983, paper, 97 pp. A master craftsman of preaching. Supplies brief biographical data, useful quotations, and very fine sermons for the kind of preacher who does not have time to write his own sermons.

Ebeling, Gerhard. Luther: An Introduction to His Thought, Fortress, 1972, paper. A semi-popular outline which will stimulate the thoughtful non-theologian.


1. The author’s gratitude is expressed to the Faculty Fellowship Division of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada which has enabled the research for this study.

Erikson, Erik H. *Young Man Luther*, Norton, 1958, paper. The most widely read biography of Luther by history students. Written by a famous psychiatrist. The major assumption that from the early childhood experiences it is possible to decipher Luther's true character and life-style for later years has indeed been much questioned. Cf. Roger Johnson, ed., *Psychohistory and Religion* which contains brilliant articles by Bainton, Spitz et al. But Erikson has been well informed about Luther's later life and need not have deduced everything from Luther's childhood; his insights are very often valuable.


Gerrish, Brian. *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther*, Univ. of Chicago, 1979, paper. Despite Luther's outrageously critical statements about reason, Luther was not an irrationalist and could ascribe to reason a positive role as well. A first rate study.

Grisar, Hartmann, S.J. *Martin Luther: His Life and Work*, 1930, trans. and abridged from a 3-volume German work. Quite pre-ecumenical, but learned, and insightful with occasionally erroneous statements. Although surpassed by more recent Catholic scholarship, still of value for the scholar.

Gritsch, Eric W. *Martin - God's Court Jester: Luther In Retrospect*, Fortress, Announced for November, 1983. Prof. Gritsch, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, is known for his deep wisdom and great wit, as well as his ability to challenge accepted views. An eagerly expected book.

Hacker, Paul. *Ego In Faith: Martin Luther and the Origins of Anthropocentric Religion*, an abridged version of *Das Ich im Glauben bei Martin Luther*. The warts of Luther's thought eagerly explored under a magnifying glass by a Roman Catholic convert (formerly Lutheran). Though some insights are, no doubt, of value, the main significance of the study is that it allows us to see how Luther appears from a very conservative Catholic point of view.

Haile, H.G. Luther: An Experiment in Biography, Doubleday, 1980. Pays major attention to the older Luther, soundly based on primary sources, but sparing in the use of needed secondary sources. Beautifully written.


Hendrix, Scott H. Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict, Fortress, 1981. By a former student of H.A. Oberman, a young American scholar of major stature, teaching at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C. His earlier study Ecclesia in Via, 1974, was an outstanding contribution to Luther's early ecclesiology.

Hoffman, Bengt R. Luther and the Mystics: A Re-Examination of Luther's Spiritual Experience and His Relationship to the Mystics, Augsburg, 1976. An often overlooked perspective, presented thoroughly and readability.

Hoffman, Bengt R., ed. The Theologia Germanica of Martin Luther. Luther wrote a preface to it and published this anonymous tract, because he valued it very highly.

Holl, Karl. The Reconstruction of Morality, Augsburg, 1979, paper, and What Did Luther Understand by Religion?, Fortress, 1977, paper, are very much belated translations of the great German Luther scholar from the early part of this century. Still readable and very much worth reading.


Johnson, Wayne G. Theological Method in Luther and Tillich: Law-Gospel Correlation, Univ. Press of America, 1982, paper. Although it compares two giants and jumps over centuries, the work will be of interest to Tillich admirers and Luther readers.

Kerr, Hugh T., Jr., ed. Compend of Luther's Theology, Westminster, 1966, paper. Luther's thought is so deep that he can offer rather contradictory statements without actually contradicting himself. Selected quotations, which fail to note the context (and to observe what else did Luther say that appears to be something different) are harmful to sound Luther scholarship.

Kirchner, Hubert. Luther and the Peasants’ War, Fortress, 1972, paper. A sober account by an East German author.

Leaver, Robin A. Luther on Justification, Concordia, 1975, paper. A sound but pedestrian statement without the sparkle of Gerhard O. Forde.


Loeschen, John R. Wrestling With Luther, Concordia, 1976, A re-written Ph.D. diss. from Graduate Theological Union. Great enthusiasm and dedication, but occasionally rather thin grasp of contemporary Luther research.


Manns, Peter and Harding Meyer in collaboration with Carter Lindberg and Harry McSorley, with forewords by James R. Crumley, Bishop of the L.C.A. and John R. Roach, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Luther’s
Ecumenical Significance: An Interconfessional Consultation, promised by Fortress for October, 1983, paper.


Montgomery, John W. In Defense of Luther, Northwest Publ., 1970, 175 pp, essays on hermeneutics, science, libraries, politics, missions - passionate, filled with learned footnotes, obviously diligent, but nevertheless myopic and vacuous.

Nestingen, James A. Martin Luther: His Life and Teachings, Fortress, 1982, paper, 80 pages. For the person who does not want to read much; basically reliable and insightful.


Pelikan, Jaroslav J. Luther the Expositor, Concordia, 1959. A companion volume to Luther’s Works and the best book on Luther’s hermeneutics.

Prenter, Regin. Luther’s Theology of the Cross, Fortress, 1971, paper. A magisterial presentation of the most central theme of Luther’s theology.

Preus, Herman A. A Theology To Live By, Concordia, 1977, paper. A popularly cast introduction to Luther’s thought.


Preus, Samuel J. Carlstadt’s Ordinationes and Luther’s Liberty, Scholar’s Press, Calif., 1974, paper. An outstanding introduction to the very sources of magisterial reformation’s split with the radicals, appropriately complex, yet very readable.


Schwiebert, Ernest G. Luther and His Times: The Reformation Era From a New Perspective, Concordia, 1950. A detailed and well organized study with major emphasis on historical matters yet without neglect of theology. Written with immense love for Luther; pre-ecumenical in perspective, yet still very valuable as a reference work.

Siggins, Ian. Luther and His Mother, Fortress, 1981, paper. Scholarly, well written.


Steinwede, Dietrich. Reformation: A Picture Story of Martin Luther, Fortress, 1983, paper, 56 pp. For those who like small booklets with black and white as well as colored pictures. Admittedly, such as these are not all that readily found elsewhere.


**REPRINTS OF OLDER WORKS**

Although often quite useful for the scholar, older works are ordinarily of little value for the general reader. If the general reader, however, already finds them in his library, they can be used in conjunction with more recent studies. Hence references to the latter are immediately supplied.


Froude, James A. *A Comparative Analysis of the Philosophies of Erasmus and Luther*, 1868. rpr. 1981. For a more reliable understanding of Luther, read the suggestions of this bibliography; for Erasmus, see Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom*, Scribner’s, 1969.


Koestlin, Julius. *Life of Luther*, 1883, rpr. R. West. A work of genuine learning and immense influence on all other Luther biographies. Of course, now surpassed by the generations whom he has taught. A book to be read with reverence and caution.


WEST GERMAN STUDIES

With typical German thoroughness, the recent publications on Luther are all listed in the *Dokumentation*, Nr. 8a, February 1983, published by the Evangelischer Pressedienst, Haus der Evangelischen Publizistik, Friedrichstrasse 2-6, 6 Frankfurt/Main 17, Bundesrepublik Deutschland, West Germany. Without attempting to reprint the entire statement, we propose to begin with a listing of the various editions of selected works of Luther.

Of these, the most impressive is the 8 volume edition by Otto Clemen (N.Y. and Berlin: De Gruyter) which includes texts both in Latin and German, as well as provides page references to the definitive Weimarer Ausgabe. Other editions are ordinarly new translations or modernized versions of Luther's German texts.


Bornkamm, Heinrich, ed. *Luthers Vorreden zur Bibel*. Frankfurt/Main: Insel Verlag, 1983, 9.00 D M.

Bornkamm, Karin and Gerhard Ebeling, eds. *Martin Luther: Ausgewaehlte Schriften*. Frankfurt/M: Insel Verlag, 1982, 1900 pp. in 6 vols., 42.00 D M.

Brandt, Theodor. *Luther als Seelsorger in Briefen und Gespraechen*. Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1983 (Taschenbuch Nr. 20336), 122 pp. 6.95 D M.


Kandler, Hans-Joachim, ed. *Gebete Martin Luthers: Eine Gebetshilfe*. Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1982, 72 pp. 7.50 D M.


Zeller, Reimar. *Lutherbriefe aus dem Alltag*. Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1982, 1900 pp., 42.00 D M.

A number of the publications also deal with Luther’s life story and the general overview of his teaching. The most sprightly with a noticeably anti-Catholic thrust is the paperback by


Diwald, Hellmut. *Luther: Eine Biographie*. Bergisch-Gladbach: Gustav Luebbe Verlag, 1982, 384 pp., 39.80 D M. Profound, precise, well-written by a professor of history; has been on the German bestseller list for several months.


Loewenich, Walter von. *Martin Luther - Der Mann und das Werk*. Muenchen: List Verlag, 1982, 432 pp., 38.00 D M. A very impressive summary statement of a long life spent on Luther research.


Muelhaupt, Erwin. *Luther im 20. Jahrhundert*. Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982, 480 pp., 40.00 D M. A wise, gracious and most diligent reader of Luther, Professor Muelhaupt, now long in retirement, offers the seasoned insights of a lifetime.

Oberman, Heiko A. *Luther, Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel*. Berlin: Severin und Siedler, 1982, 384 pp., 39.80 D M. By the former Harvard professor, now at Tuebingen Univ., expert in late medieval thought and the most famous continental Luther scholar, a witty, insightful overview, cast in popular vein. A must for the beginner and the mature scholar alike.

Rogge, Joachim. *Martin Luther: Sein Leben, Seine Zeit, Seine Wirkungen*. Guetersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1982, 400 pp., 78.00 D M. Rogge has been known for his meticulous scholarship and brevity of statement.

Steinwede, Dietrich. *Martin Luther in seiner Zeit: Eine Diaserie fuer Schule, Erwachsenenbildung und Gemeinde*. Freiburg: Kaufmann-Christophorus, 1982, 36 Dias, ca. 64 Seiten Text, Mappe, 68.00 D M.

Zahrnt, Heinz. *Martin Luther: In seiner Zeit - Fuer unsere Zeit*. Muenchen: Sueddeutscher Verlag, 1983, 288 pp., 192 Abbildungen, 68.00 D M. The author is well known for his journalistic skill, overstatement, and one-sided generalizations — but also for his seriousness and insight.

A number of new publications also undertake to investigate the following specific problems:

Aland, Kurt. *Martin Luther in der modernen Literatur*. Bielefeld: Luther Verlag, rpr. of 1972 ed, 677 pp., 40 D M.


Brandt, Theodor. *Luther als Seelsorger in Bienen und Gespraechen*. Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus Verlag, 1983, Taschenbuch Nr. 20336, 122 pp., 6.95 D M.


Loewe, Hartmut and Claus Juergen Roepke, eds. *Luther und die Folgen: Beitraege zur sozialgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der lutherischen Reformation*. Muenchen: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1983, 272 pp., 15.00 D M.

Manns, Peter and Harding Meyer, eds. *Oekumenische Erschiessung Luthers*. Frankfurt/M: Lembeck Verlag, 1983, 300 pp., 48.00 D M.

Manns, Peter, ed. *Zur Lage der Lutherforschung heute*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1982, 128 pp., 22.00 D M.


Pesch, Otto Hermann. *Hinfehrung zu Luther*. Mainz: Matthias Gruenewald Verlag, 1982, 280 pp., 39.00 D M.


**EAST GERMAN STUDIES**

The *Documentation*, listed above in section III, includes (pp. 13 ff.) annotated East German publications contained in *Martin Luther: Werk und Persoenlichkeit*, 1982 (Buchexport, Postfach 160, 7010 Leipzig, Deutsche Demokratische Republik, East Germany). Since Luther country is now part of East Germany, it stands to reason that the descriptions of notable towns from the age of reformation would have been authored there.


Staatliche Museen Berlin, eds. Von der Gewalt der Bilder: Kunst der Reformationszeit, Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1983, 430 pp., 95.00 M.
However, it is to be noted that East Germany has also produced statements of serious theological content. Without attempting to be exhaustive, the following works can be appreciated as first rate accomplishments:
Looss, Sigrid. Luther in Worms, Berlin: V E B Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1983, 44 pp., 3.50 M.
Rogge, Joachim. Anfaenge der Reformation: Der junge Luther (Kirchengeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen, II/3), Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983, 300 pp., 25.00 M.
Rogge, Joachim. Martin Luther: Sein Leben - Seine Zeit - Seine Wirkungen, Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983, 396 pp., 68.00 M.
Schuffenhauer, W and K. Steiner, eds. Das Reformwerk Martin Luthers im Spiegel der deutschen buergerlichen Philosophie, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1983, 740 pp., 48.00 M.
Wolf, Herbert. Martin Luther: Eine Einfuehrung in germanistische Lutherstudien, Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983, 192 pp., 9.00 M.

It may be safely assumed that the Luther year 1983 will bring forth additional publications. Should their number, and, above all, the readers' response warrant it, a follow-up report will be prepared. In the meantime, there appears to be a sufficient amount of Luther literature on hand to satisfy even the voracious reader, particularly if we take in account also the out-of-print publications.2