

Luther and Calvinism

Image and Reception of Martin Luther
in the History and Theology of Calvinism



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Edited by
Herman J. Selderhuis

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Violet Soen (Leuven), Zsombor Tóth (Budapest),
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Abkürzungen

ADB	LILIENCRON, ROCHUS FREIHERR VON (Hg.) (1875–1912), Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot.
AKG	Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte (1925–), Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
ANK	Archief voor Nederlandsche kerkgeschiedenis (1885–1899).
ARG	Archiv für Reformationgeschichte (1903/04–).
BBKL	BAUTZ, FRIEDRICH W./BAUTZ, TRAUGOTT (Hg.) (1975–), Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon, Hamm: Bautz.
BSLK	DINGEL, IRENE (Hg.) (2014) Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche. Vollständige Neuedition, im Auftrag der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
BHR	Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance (1934–).
BSSV	Bolletino della Società di studi valdesi (1884–).
BEvTh	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie (1940–).
CEH	Central European History (1968–).
CH	Church History. Study in Christianity and Culture (1932–).
CO	BRETTSCHNEIDER, KARL G./BINDSEIL, HEINRICH E. (Hg.) (1834–1946), Corpus Reformatorum, Halle: Schwetschke.
DNR	Documentatieblad Nadere Reformatie (1977–).
EHS	Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe 23, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.
EJb	Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst und vaterländische Altertümer zu Emden (1872–1994); Emdener Jahrbuch für historische Landeskunde Ostfrieslands (1995–).
ELH	English Literary History (1934–).
EvTh	Evangelische Theologie (1934–).
FBESG	Forschungen und Berichte der Evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft (1943–), Stuttgart: Klett.

HBBW	BULLINGER, HEINRICH (1973–), Werke. Zweite Abteilung: Briefwechsel. Im Auftrag des Zwinglivereins herausgegeben vom Institut für Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte.
HWP	RITTER, JOACHIM/GRÜNDER, KARLFRIED/GABRIEL, GOTTFRIED (Hg.) (1971–2007), Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Basel: Schwabe Verlag.
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift (1859–).
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History (1950–).
JGNKG	Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte (1895–).
JL	Jaarboek voor liturgie-onderzoek (1985–).
KD	BARTH, KARL (1932–1967), Kirchliche Dogmatik, Zürich: EVZ.
KuD	Kerygma und Dogma (1955–).
LThK	KASPER, WALTER (Hg.) (1993–2001), Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
LuJ	Luther Jahrbuch (1933–), München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag.
LW	PELIKAN, JAROSLAV/LEHMANN, HELMUT T./BROWN, CHRISTOPHER (Hg.) (1955–), Luther's Works, St Louis: Concordia/Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress.
MW	SHARROCK, ROGER (Hg.) (1976–1994), The Miscellaneous Works of John Bunyan, Oxford: Clarendon.
NAK	Nederlands archief voor kerkgeschiedenis (1900–2005).
NDB	Historische Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Hg.) (1953–), Neue Deutsche Biographie, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.
OS	BARTH, PETER/NIESEL, WILHELM/SCHEUNER, DORA (Hg.), Joannis Calvini opera selecta, München: C. Kaiser Verlag.
QFRG	Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte (1911–), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.
RDK	SEMRAU, MAX/SCHMITT, OTTO (Hg.) (1937–2015), Reallexikon zur Deutschen Kunstgeschichte, Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung.
RGG	BETZ, HANS D. U. A. (Hg.) (1998–2005) Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, 4. Edition, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
RGST	Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte (1906–), Münster: Aschendorff Verlag.
RHPR	Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses (1921–).
RThPh	Revue de théologie et de philosophie (1868–).
SHAW.PH	Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse (1910–).

SKGNS	Studien zur Kirchengeschichte Niedersachsens (1919–), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
SMHR	LEPPIN, VOLKER (Hg.), Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation (2007–), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
SMRT	Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought (1966–), Leiden/Boston: Brill.
SVRG	Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte (1883–), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.
SVRKG	Schriftenreihe des Vereins für Rheinische Kirchengeschichte (1956–), Köln/Bonn: Rheinland-Verlag/Habelt.
TGET	Texte zur Geschichte der evangelischen Theologie (1965–1974), Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag.
THR	Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance (1950–), Genève: Librairie Droz A.S.
TRE	MÜLLER, GERHARD/KRAUSE, GERHARD (Hg.) (1977–2004), Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
TSHTH	Texts and Studies in the History of Theology (2001–), Mandelbachtal: Cicero Verlag.
VIEG ARG	Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte. Abteilung für Abendländische Religionsgeschichte (1952–).
VIEG UG	Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Universalgeschichte (1952–), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
VIÖG	Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung.
WA	D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (1883–), Weimar: Böhlau.
WA Br	Briefwechsel, in: D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (1883–), Weimar: Böhlau.
WA DB	Deutsche Bibel, in: D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (1883–), Weimar: Böhlau.
WA TR	Tischreden, in: D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (1883–), Weimar: Böhlau.
ZKG	Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte (1877–).
ZDTh	Zeitschrift für Dialektische Theologie (1985–).
ZHF BH	Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, Beiheft (1985–), Leipzig/Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.
ZHVSt	Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark (1903–).
ZRG Kann.Abt.	Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Kanonistische Abteilung (1911–).
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche (1891–).
ZZ	Zwischen den Zeiten. Eine Zweimonatsschrift (1923–1933).

Vorwort

Calvin ist der grösste und wohl auch einzige "Schüler", den Luther wirklich gehabt hat, d. h. der ihn zutiefst verstanden und, von ihm ausgehend, das Werk der Reformation mit einer eigenen Durchdringung der Botschaft des Evangeliums fortgesetzt und zu einer eigenen kirchlichen Gestalt gebracht hat (Meinhold: 1964, 264).

Diese These des Reformationshistorikers Peter Meinhold wurde soweit wir sehen weitestgehend unwidersprochen akzeptiert. Sie steht in der Tradition der bereits mehr als einhundert Jahre alten Beobachtung von August Lang, der 1909 zu dem Schluss kam:

So hat Calvin das ursprüngliche Heilsverständnis Luthers, wonach die Vergebung der Sünden, die Gerechtersprechung, sowie die Gabe des Glaubens und die Rechtmachung, die aus dem Glauben hervorstachsende Heiligung gewissermaßen in eins zusammenfallen, treuer bewahrt und theologisch schärfer zum Ausdruck gebracht als irgendein Dogmatiker der Reformation (Lang: 1909, 70).

Ungeachtet dieser sehr prägnanten und eindeutigen Beurteilungen wurden die Rezeption und die Nachwirkungen Luthers im Calvinismus abgesehen von wenigen Ausnahmen kaum untersucht. Dies ist um so auffallender, als die intensiven Debatten zwischen Lutheranern und Calvinisten, die mit dazu beitrugen, dass den Calvinisten ihre rechtliche Existenz im Reich über längere Zeit entzogen werden sollte, durchaus mehrfach thematisiert wurden. Auch existieren verschiedene vergleichende Studien zu Luthertum und Calvinismus, es fehlen aber bislang einschlägige Arbeiten und Untersuchungen, die nach den inneren Zusammenhängen beider konfessioneller Richtungen fragen und diese erhellend darstellen. Überdies fand das Bild Luthers in der calvinistischen Tradition in der Forschung kaum Interesse. Dies erstaunt umso mehr, als Luther sich im Calvinismus oft größerer Verehrung als Calvin erfreuen konnte und der Wittenberger Reformator im calvinistischen Pietismus ungleich mehr gelesen wurde als der Reformator aus Genf.

Die hier nunmehr präsentierten Forschungsbeiträge der internationalen Konferenz *Luther and Calvinism. Image and reception of Martin Luther in the*

history and theology of Calvinism, die vom 23.–26. September 2015 in der Johannes a Lasco Bibliothek Emden stattfand, bieten einen ersten Gesamtüberblick der immensen Wirkung Luthers auf den Calvinismus und verstehen sich als Impuls zu weiteren Forschungen zum Thema. Die Konferenz war als internationales RefoRC-Kooperationsprojekt zwischen der Johannes a Lasco Bibliothek Emden und der Humboldt Universität Berlin, der Internationalen Martin Luther Stiftung, dem Institut d'histoire de la Reformation Genève, der Hungarian Academy of Sciences, der University of St. Andrews und der Theological University Apeldoorn organisiert.

Ein ganz besonderer Dank gilt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) und der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), ohne deren finanzielle Unterstützung diese Tagung nicht möglich gewesen wäre.

Der vorliegende Band versteht sich als ein weiterer Meilenstein auf dem Weg zur Erforschung der Bedeutung Martin Luthers für die Geschichte und Geistesgeschichte Europas und darüber hinaus. Zudem geben die Herausgeber der Hoffnung Ausdruck, dass der mit der zugrunde gelegten Fragestellung beschrittene Weg nunmehr weiter fortgesetzt und in einem internationalen Kontext erweitert werden möge.

Ein besonderer Dank gilt Frau Dr. Dagmar Bronner (Johannes a Lasco Bibliothek), die die Korrekturen las und die Register erstellte, und Herrn Arjan van den Os (Theologische Universität Apeldoorn), der die einzelnen Beiträge vereinheitlichte.

Emden, am Reformationstag 2016

Herman J. Selderhuis und J. Marius J. Lange van Ravenswaay

Literatur

LANG, AUGUST (1909), Johannes Calvin. Ein Lebensbild zu seinem 400. Geburtstag am 10. Juli 1909, Leipzig: Verein für Reformationgeschichte.

MEINHOLD, PETER (1964), Calvin und Luther, Lutherische Monatshefte 3/6, 264–269.

Topics: Luther in Calvinist Tradition

Karin Maag

The Place and Image of Luther in Calvinist/Reformed Historiography

In his preface to volume one of his 1720 *History of the Reformation*, the Dutch Remonstrant Gerard Brandt articulated his vision of the historian's craft:

A writer of History cannot escape hatred, for as it is one of his principal obligations to say nothing that is false, nor to forbear saying anything that is true, nor to suppress or conceal any virtues; so Truth does particularly require of him, that together with the bad qualities of his friends, he should impartially relate the good ones of his enemies (Brandt: 1720, fol. c1r).

In the course of this investigation of the place and image of Luther in Reformed historiography, Brandt's strong advocacy of historians as truth-tellers opens significant areas of enquiry. In what ways, if at all, did Reformed historians seek to tell the truth about Luther in their works? Did they consider Luther as a friend or an enemy? Did they make any claim to be impartial? How did they portray Luther's character and address any of his shortcomings? How did their analysis vary depending on their context and the nature of their audience?

The starting point for this study is clear. Catholics persistently accused Protestants of adopting new-fangled heresies, and accentuated the contrast between the long centuries of Catholic tradition and orthodoxy and Protestant innovation and heresy (cf. Gordon: 1996). Thus, the need to respond to these accusations impelled Reformed historians to construct narratives of the history of the true church from the time of Christ to the present day. In the process, Reformed Christians in the early modern period who wished to provide a historical account of the Reformation and its role in bringing the true church back to full strength could hardly avoid dealing with Martin Luther and his contribution to the movement. While including Luther in the narrative was accepted practice, assessing his significance was rather more challenging, mostly because of the difficulties in presenting Luther and his actions in the early Reformation without providing fodder for Catholic accusations that he was primarily responsible for fracturing the unity of Christendom. The charge of sectarianism and divisiveness against Luther was heightened by the theological controversies that had divided

the Reformed and the Lutherans from the late 1520s onwards (cf. e.g. Burnett: 2005, 45–70), another topic that most Reformed historians sought to address. Finally, Reformed historians had to find a way to highlight Luther's crucial work without turning him into a saint or over-emphasizing his role, especially when addressing a Reformed audience.

The research conducted for this contribution has shown that there is no one single Reformed perspective on Luther in historical writings up to 1750. Instead, the image of Luther in these works varies depending on the genre and the audience of the work in question. In other words, when Reformed writers penned a history of the Reformation rebutting a Catholic perspective, the Reformed tended to give a positive view of the German Reformer. When writing for a Reformed audience, the historians tended to be more willing to highlight Luther's weaknesses or flaws. If the work was intended as a historical account, the assessment of Luther was more even-handed than in works that sought to give a providential reading of history, as in martyrologies, for instance. Later works, written a century or more after 1517, tended to weigh Luther in more human terms rather than seeing him as a divine instrument. Across the board, however, Luther remained an inescapable figure in Reformed historiography. In the end, the range of perspectives on him, and the lack of any one common approach reflect the continued Reformed ambivalence about how to portray someone who contributed so much to the early phases of the Reformation in particular, but ended up as the leader of a separate confessional group.

1. Luther, the starting point of the Reformation

For Reformed historians and chronologists who wanted to provide a straightforward narrative of the course of the Reformation with minimal commentary, Luther served as a key chronological reference point. Among the earliest such chronologists was Jean de Hainaut, a pastor in the Genevan countryside, whose work, *L'état de l'église* first appeared in 1556, published by Jean Crespin in Geneva. Hainaut's account was popular, republished at least eight times before 1600, translated into English in 1602, and into Dutch in 1606. An expanded version was prepared by Jean Taffin the younger, and published in the Netherlands in 1605 (cf. Gilmont: 1981, I:70–71; Watson: 1996, II:40–41).

In his account, Hainaut first mentioned Luther not in 1517 but in 1521, highlighting the German Reformer's strong stance at the Diet of Worms against what Hainaut described as "that error which so long time had been maintained under the tyrant of Antichrist" (Hainaut: 1602, 500). Hainaut saw Luther as "well-fortified by the spirit of God" and noted that through Luther's testimony, "the true church of our Lord Jesus Christ hath again begun to renew itself, and his

kingdom to take and gather more forces: and the kingdom of Antichrist hath begun to diminish and approacheth its ruin” (Hainaut: 1602, 500–501). By positing a sharp separation and portraying Luther as the champion of the true church beginning in 1521, Hainaut could depict Luther as the stalwart champion of Protestantism from the very start, and avoid the more complex narrative of Luther’s growing distance from the Catholic church. Hainaut’s other references to Luther in his work were brief and sporadic, offering little in the way of analysis or assessment. The Reformed pastor did describe briefly the controversy over the theology of the Lord’s Supper between Luther and Zwingli, noting that the end result was dissension among the Protestants: “Of long time hath Satan with his dark clouds obscured the doctrine of the Supper: and now by contentions and debates he also seeketh to take away from men the true taste thereof” (Hainaut: 1602, 506). It is worth noting that Hainaut was careful not to clarify which of the two sides of the argument he supported, putting instead the blame for the controversy on the action of Satan. This tactic enabled Hainaut to highlight Luther’s actions without having to make either side responsible for the breach.

A much more expansive study of Luther’s actions appeared in Johannes Sleidanus’ massive *Commentaries (De statu religionis et rei publicae)*, first published in 1555. Sleidanus never made his own confessional allegiance crystal-clear: if anything, he was closest to the mindset of the moderate Strasbourg Reformation, as led by Martin Bucer and Johannes Sturm (cf. e. g. Kess: 2008, 46–52). His work covered the history of the Reformation from 1517 to 1555, and offered a comprehensive overview of the course of the Reformation, not only in the German lands, but elsewhere in Europe as well. Sleidanus’s detailed account of what took place largely left out however any analysis of motivations or any assessment of Luther or other Reformation leaders. Indeed, in his desire to work from a factual basis, Sleidanus ended up largely leaving interpretation aside (cf. e. g. Dickens: 1977, 17–43; Kess: 2008, 89–118). Thus Sleidanus began his work by introducing Luther in 1517 responding to the papal indulgences campaign, and noted his admiration for Luther’s courage and for the caliber of his writings, but made no effort to characterize Luther’s involvement or tie his actions in to a wider vision of providential history (Sleidanus: 1557, fol. 1r.–45v.).

2. Luther, God’s instrument

A second set of Reformed historical writings took a different approach to Luther and to history as a whole. Works in this category argued that God acted repeatedly in history to save his people, and that Luther was one of God’s chief instruments in the divine plan to restore the church. These works were primarily directed at a Reformed audience in need of edification and encouragement in the

face of continued persecution. Thus, the Genevan Reformer Theodore Beza in his 1580 *Histoire ecclésiastique* (otherwise entirely focused on the course of the Reformation in France) praised both Luther and Zwingli as “two figures of truly heroic character who were simultaneously called forth by God to uncover the abuses and superstitions of the Roman church” (Beza: 1580a, I:9). Here, as in other works surveyed in this study, one way Reformed historians implicitly downgraded Luther’s central role in the Reformation was to highlight Zwingli’s contribution. Indeed, in several works Reformed historians were careful to point out not only Zwingli’s contribution but also the fact that he came to his own understanding of the Reformation completely independently from Luther (Foxye: 1837, IV:279; Sleidanus: 1557, fol. 18v.). Jacques Basnage highlighted Zwingli’s key role most clearly when he simply stated, “Zwingli was the first Reformer” (Basnage: 1699, 1489).

In his *Icones*, first published in Geneva also in 1580, Beza included Luther in the first pages of his work, describing him as the scourge of the Roman antichrist. Beza praised Luther’s outstanding courage, great piety, and particular zeal, all of which were inspired by God. Beza also highlighted Luther’s unshakeable confidence, maintained in spite of multiple threats from hostile religious and political powers. The prime actor in this short biographical sketch was however not Luther but God: “the ever-gracious and all-powerful God, who had compassion on humanity” (Beza: 1580b, Dii). Indeed, Beza’s assessment of Luther still sounded a note of criticism: “...the Reformed church...would owe him even more if the sins of men and the unruly spirit of some of his disciples had allowed him to display as much prudence and moderation in all things as burning zeal” (Beza: 1580b, Dii). Although Beza was careful not to blame Luther directly, the call for more prudence and moderation underscores the Reformed discomfort with Luther’s forceful denunciation of fellow Protestants.

Otherwise, the Reformed works with a historical focus most likely to include praise of Luther were martyrologies. The French martyrologist Jean Crespin, his English colleague John Foxe, and his Dutch colleague Adriaan van Haemstede each prepared an extensive overview of the history of the church from its earliest days to the present time, focusing on recounting the stories of those who suffered and died for the faith. Their aim was to show that the true church had existed from the very beginning, and that from the early church onwards, martyrs had testified to this truth with their blood. Haemstede, Foxe, and Crespin all wrote from a Protestant perspective, targeting the Catholic Church as the source of persecution from the early middle ages onwards. In order to set these accounts in their context, however, each of these three writers found it necessary to provide a more or less succinct analysis of Martin Luther’s actions and influence on the course of the Reformation.

Crespin's *Histoire des Martyrs*, first published in 1554 in French, in 1560 in Latin and in a revised French edition in 1570, introduces Luther as the crucial turning-point figure of the Reformation. Indeed, the section in which Crespin discusses Luther's work and impact is titled, "A historical discourse on the horrors of the times that preceded the arrival of Martin Luther and other faithful teachers of the Gospel" (Crespin: 1885, I:234). Although much of Crespin's five-page section on Luther is taken directly from Philip Melancthon's 1546 biography, *Historia de vita et actis M. Lutheri*, Crespin did provide his own assessment of Luther's influence. In Crespin's narrative, God is the actor, moving against the sorcery and superstition generated by the Catholic clergy who were themselves directed by Satan. Crespin described how God in his infinite mercy brought Luther to the fore: "He was a man from a modest but respectable family, in no way famous, but a man who had a fine mind and outstanding knowledge. God gave him marvelous courage and equipped him with unbelievable confidence" (Crespin: 1885, I:235). In Crespin's presentation, Luther was God's chosen instrument to begin the restoration of the church. Indeed, Crespin characterized Luther (and Philip Melancthon) as God's standard-bearers (Crespin: 1885, I:237; cf. Watson: 1996, II:39–58).

For his part, in his *Historie der Martelaren*, first published in 1559, the Dutch Reformed pastor Adriaan van Haemstede gave a more succinct assessment of Luther's impact, though Haemstede, like Crespin, put God at the forefront, and portrayed Luther as God's instrument. Having depicted the growing power and confidence of the Catholic hierarchy headed by the pope (whom Haemstede described as the Antichrist), Haemstede then continued, "But finally, the almighty and everlasting God prevented this by awakening the spirit of the holy man Luther, through which he shone the light of the Gospel resplendently over the whole of Christendom" (Haemstede: 1980, 96). Haemstede went on to give a brief description of the conflict over indulgences between Luther and Johannes Eck. He concluded by explaining that while God prevented the whore of Babylon and her associates from killing "the holy man of God Martin Luther," Catholic forces were still free to turn their persecution against others, "who through the teachings and writings of Luther had come to a knowledge of the truth" (Haemstede: 1980, 97). Although Haemstede's assessment of Luther was brief, the Luther section stands out by being the only entry that did not directly discuss someone being tortured or killed for their faith (cf. e.g. Pettegree: 1996, II:59–76). Zwingli, Calvin, and other reformers are completely absent from Haemstede's narrative. Luther was the only one to be included, again because of his crucial role in getting the Reformation underway.

In contrast to Haemstede's brevity, John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, first published in 1563 and revised in 1570, provides an extensive presentation of Luther's actions and influence. Foxe, who described himself as a church historian

rather than a martyrologist, portrayed Luther as the one who “gave the stroke, and plucked down the foundation, and all by opening one vein, long hid before, wherein lieth the touchstone of all truth and doctrine, as the only principal origin of our salvation, which is, our free justifying by faith alone, in Christ the Son of God” (Foxe: 1837, IV:259). Therefore according to Foxe, Luther’s significance lay in his ability to bring to light the way of salvation that had been obscured due to the corruption of the Catholic Church.

Foxe highlighted the work of Johannes Sleidanus and of Philip Melanchthon in providing accounts of Luther’s life (Foxe: 1837, IV:259), and noted that he based his own narrative largely on Melanchthon’s. One of the challenges Foxe was trying to answer in his portrayal of Luther was the constant Catholic attack on the fragmentation of Christendom caused by the Reformation, and on the apparent disunity between different groups of Protestants. In his portrayal of Luther, therefore, Foxe attempted to respond to these accusations, by downplaying any intra-Protestant conflict and highlighting Luther’s role as God’s instrument. In the process, Foxe tried to explain away some of Luther’s actions, so as to make them more acceptable to his audience. For instance, when discussing Luther’s perspective on images in churches, Foxe argued that Luther would indeed have removed all images out of churches if he could have, but in order to maintain order and avoid any accusations of sedition, he allowed images to remain. (Foxe: 1837, IV:315–16). When noting the conflict between the Lutherans and the Swiss Reformers over the Lord’s Supper, Foxe offered a robust defense of the need for intra-Protestant solidarity:

In which division, if there have been any defect in Martin Luther, yet is that no cause why either the Papists may greatly triumph, or why the protestants should despise Luther: for neither is the doctrine of Luther touching the sacrament so gross, that it maketh much with the papists; nor yet so discrepant from us, that therefore he ought to be exploded. And though a full reconciliation of this difference cannot well be made (as some have gone about to do), yet let us give to Luther a moderate interpretation; and if we will not make things better, yet let us not make them worse than they be, and let us bear, if not with the manner, yet at least with the time of his teaching; and finally, let it not be noted in us, that we should seem to differ more in charity (as Bucer said) than we do in doctrine (Foxe: 1837, IV:318).

In other words, Foxe’s assessment of Luther sought to minimize the areas of tension between Lutherans and the Reformed. Foxe carefully noted the importance of considering the context of Luther’s actions: the situation had changed significantly between the early decades of the Reformation and Foxe’s own day. He also chastised some of his contemporaries for turning against Luther solely because the German Reformer held a different theological perspective on the Lord’s Supper, an issue Foxe characterized as “one small blemish” (Foxe: 1837: IV:317). Although motivated primarily by the need to maintain

Protestant unity in the face of Catholic attacks on their internal divisions, Foxe's unwillingness to give an ahistorical blanket judgment on Luther gives credence to Foxe's own claim to be a historian.

Taken together, the works described in this section highlighted both God's actions in inspiring Luther and Luther's own role as God's chosen instrument. Where one might expect a more critical mindset regarding theological differences between Luther and the Reformed, these authors worked to minimize any apparent lack of harmony. One of the reasons for this flattening of confessional discord may simply be the need to provide a flowing narrative of the history of the true church from the martyrologists' perspective. Any critique of Luther would jeopardize the coherence of the narrative. It should be noted, however, that Foxe was much harsher towards the Lutherans of his own day, whom he accused of slavishly following Luther without regard for the context of the German reformer's own time (Foxe: 1837, IV:316).

3. Luther the great man

All of the histories analyzed up to this point were written by Luther's near-contemporaries. However, the aim to fit Luther within a Protestant narrative of church history persisted in several Reformed works that sought to provide a historical account of the Reformation from the vantage point of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Some of these later Reformed historians structured their work in response to earlier Catholic accounts. These polemical histories offer a helpful insight into how Reformed historians in subsequent generations viewed Luther. One example is that of the Huguenot pastor and writer Jacques Basnage. Born in 1653, after service as a pastor in his native France, Basnage fled in 1685 when the Edict of Nantes was revoked. He spent the rest of his life in the Netherlands, where he died in 1723. Basnage wrote several historical works, including his *Histoire de l'Eglise depuis Jesus-Christ jusqu'à présent*, first published in Rotterdam in 1699. This massive two-volume work was largely directed against the earlier Catholic history, *Histoire des variations des églises protestantes* published in 1688 by Jacques Bossuet, the Catholic bishop of Meaux in France.

Like the martyrologists of the preceding century, Basnage took as his starting point the corruption of the Catholic Church prior to the Reformation, though his analysis put more weight on human malfeasance rather than satanic inspiration (Basnage: 1699, II:1473). In the same vein, Basnage was careful not to turn Luther into a divinely-inspired being without flaws. Indeed, he was quick to point out, "We do not turn our Reformers into saints to be adored, or infallible men, or vicars of Jesus Christ, or God's lieutenants on earth. We agree that they had their faults and that they may have been mistaken in their decisions" (Basnage: 1699,

II:1479). This measured judgment contrasts both with the earlier Reformed portrayal of Luther as God's instrument, and (as Basnage intended), with contemporary Catholic claims for divine inspiration for the Pope. Basnage's portrayal of Luther's character highlighted a more human-centered biographical approach.

Luther had a fiery temperament. The persecution he underwent soured his spirit. He believed he had the right to injure through his words those who were violently trying to destroy his honor and his life. He had some of the faults of great men. It may be true that the unexpected success of his undertaking bloated his pride. This pride, coupled with the barbarity of his century pushed him too far at times. However, he retained the devotion he had experienced from his earliest days. He was full of zeal for the glory of God and the rebuilding of the Church, and he displayed a strength of spirit that could not be shaken even by the greatest dangers (Basnage: 1699, II:1480).

Basnage's lucid assessment of Luther's character flaws was positioned alongside his praise of Luther's positive characteristics. Basnage specifically criticized Luther for giving permission to Philip of Hesse to commit bigamy (Basnage: 1699, II:1485), but defended him against Catholic accusations of having supported the peasants' revolt and of encouraging sedition (Basnage: 1699, II:1496–1497).

In response to Catholic critiques of Protestant divisiveness, Basnage pointed out that the early church has been revered in spite of early church leaders' tendency to mutually anathematize each other. Therefore, Basnage concluded that evidence of flaws in the Reformers' character or major disagreements between Reformers should not entail a condemnation of their church (Basnage: 1699, II:1505–1506). In fact, throughout his work, Basnage sought to ensure that Luther's admitted flaws did not serve as the grounds for a wholesale repudiation of the Reformation.

Among other later Reformed histories was Isaac de Beausobre's account, *Histoire de la Réformation, ou origine et progrès du lutheranisme*. Beausobre died in 1738. His four-volume work was published nearly fifty years later, in 1785. As a Huguenot pastor, Beausobre had left France at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. He served subsequently as a court preacher and chaplain in various German princely courts. With Beausobre, the biographical approach shifted dramatically, from one in which Luther was God's instrument, albeit with certain flaws, to one that sought an even-handed and non-theological assessment of Luther's impact. For instance, Beausobre offers this statement in summarizing his approach to Luther:

At this point, we will make no attempt to describe the character of this great man, nor will we influence the reader by providing a flattering portrait. It is better to leave to each person the freedom to gain an accurate understanding of his [Luther's] mindset and

perspective, and to base this understanding on his [Luther's] actions and his writings (Beausobre: 1785, I:49).

If anything, Beausobre's stance echoes most closely that of Johannes Sleidanus. Beausobre's careful approach emerged also in his critique of Catholic accounts of Luther's life, which he condemned not on theological grounds but because these accounts, according to him, were based on a combination of wild imagination and malice (Beausobre: 1785, I:49). For his part, Beausobre felt history should be based on factual evidence. He also highlighted the gradual change that took place in Luther's theology, rejecting the notion of a radical theological shift or break: "...because he [Luther] was not propelled by a sudden inspiration, but by gradually dawning light that followed on from his work, we should not be surprised that he only slowly broke through the cloud of errors that covered the church" (Beausobre: 1785, I:84).

Beausobre's claim to provide an even-handed account of Luther left room for criticism. Thus the Frenchman condemned Luther for his hostility against Reformed believers (Beausobre: 1786, IV, 117–18), noting that several of Luther's writings on the subject displayed "blind anger, inflated pride, and ridiculous fanaticism" (Beausobre: 1786: IV:138). According to Beausobre, Luther felt that "his fame was in jeopardy, and hid his fear under the veil of violent and uncontrolled zeal" (Beausobre: 1786, IV:138). By distancing the German Reformer's actions from any claim of divine intervention in human affairs, Beausobre opened up room for critique that was more difficult for earlier historians such as the martyrologists to articulate. Once God was no longer front and center as the one propelling Luther's actions, weighing Luther's actions and character and finding these wanting did not jeopardize any theologically-based narrative of the history of the true church. It also seems that the further these authors were from the actual events, the more freedom they felt they had to adopt a critical mindset towards Luther.

4. Conclusion

This overview of the place and image of Martin Luther in Reformed historiography has shown that Luther remained a key figure in the history of the Reformation from the Reformed perspective in the early modern era. Whether Reformed historians wanted to highlight God's action in maintaining and reviving the true church, or whether they wanted to assess Luther's strengths and weaknesses from a more human perspective, they could not ignore him and his contributions. They admired Luther for his pioneering courage and his willingness to take a stand against the powerful forces of the Catholic church arrayed