

LUTHERRENAISSANCE: PAST AND PRESENT.

Edited by Christine Helmer and Bo Christian Holm. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2015. Pp. 253. Hardcover, \$100.00.

This book contains papers from conferences at the University of Aarhus and Northwestern University, exploring questions that twentieth-century European and twenty-first-century American theologians brought and bring to Martin Luther's theology. The book's first half, in which the essays are entirely in German with short English summaries at the conclusion of each chapter, focuses on the twentieth-century German Luther Renaissance, but in focusing on German scholarship strangely omits Scandinavian contributions to the movement (by Gustav Aulen, Anders Nygren, and Gustav Wingren). At the forefront of these explorations is questions of the relationship between Luther's theology and the German political situation after World War I. The book's second half, comprised of essays in English (with short German summaries at the conclusion of each chapter), explores constructive aspects of this scholarship, such as the relationship between Luther and modernity, how should mysticism be understood in relation to doctrine, and ways non-European cultures can responsibly engage Lutheran traditions. This volume will be of great interest to scholars and practitioners of Lutheran theology.

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THE CROSS: HISTORY, ART, AND CONTROVERSY. By Robin M. Jensen. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017. Pp. vii + 270. Hardcover, \$35.00.

This book is an engaging and beautifully illustrated history of Christ's cross in Christian theology and art from the biblical period to the present day. It begins with the nature of crucifixion in the Greco-Roman world, and moves from there to the portrayal of Christ's crucifixion in the Scriptures. But the work is primarily concerned with the ways the Cross appears in both art and in material culture such as seals, sculptures, and other cross-related relics. The book explores the relationship between changing understandings of the cross in art, Christians thought about the meaning of the cross over time, and ways shifts in understanding changed Christian art. This work is different from others on the same topic because of its accessibility; undergraduates and those with little theological training can follow the book's argument. At the same time, the book's organized bibliography provides ample references to more scholarly literature. Most importantly, the book shows the mutual conversation between theology, art, and material culture across time in a vivid way given the book's numerous clear photographic plates of both art and object. Historians of art, theologians, and intelligent general readers will be enlightened and informed by this

magnificent book. It should interest both theologians and art historians, as well as intelligent general readers.

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Philosophy of Religion

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: SUBJECTIVITY, IRONY, AND THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY. By Jon Stewart. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. vii + 210. Hardcover, \$39.95.

In *Søren Kierkegaard: Subjectivity, Irony, and the Crisis of Modernity*, Stewart takes up Kierkegaard's doctoral thesis *The Concept of Irony* as a means by which to introduce Kierkegaard and his life's work. Defended months before the pseudonymous task was set into motion, Kierkegaard's dissertation serves a binocular function: it familiarizes the budding pupil first with historical contexts which served to shape his life's task, and second with the conceptual contexts from which his own, often reactionary conceptualizations have been derived. These lenses set the stage for his Socratic role and for the cast of characters conscripted in his authorial production, and while the historical lens establishes a narrative background in multiple acts, the conceptual lens brings themes and notions central to both avenues of authorship more clearly into focus, preparing the reader to engage with these works in more detail in the final chapters. Stewart zooms out at critical junctures to relate the crisis of meaning in Kierkegaard's post-Enlightenment world to our own post-modern situation, providing the reader with occasions to reflect upon her own struggle to become an individual. As the plot of this text unfolds it becomes a play within a play, an occasion for reflection; with clearer vision the reader discovers herself at center stage, having become—one can only hope—an actress in crisis.

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Ethics

WHITE ALLIES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR RACIAL JUSTICE. By Drick Boyd. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015. Pp. xii + 324. \$30.00.

To combat the paralysis many Whites feel when confronted with their complicity in racist structures, Boyd catalogues the stories of White antiracist allies from abolition to today, role models that Whites who long for racial justice can identify with and emulate. Take the story of Robert Graetz. Graetz absorbed the racism of his segregated community in West Virginia in the 1930s and 1940s. But through an interesting series of events he later found himself serving as pastor of all-Black Trinity Lutheran Church in Montgomery, Alabama. When he