

use, and in his conclusion he compares their writings to early-modern hagiographical successors such as Georg Witzel, Laurentius Surius, and the early Bollandists.

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*Luther: Out of the Storm.* By Derek Wilson. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 2010. Pp. xvi, 399. \$24.00 paperback. ISBN 978-0-800-69718-1.)

This book, in the weaving together of Martin Luther's story with its context, is told in fresh, appealing form. It announces its goal: replacing Roland Bainton's widely readable account, *Here I Stand* (New York, 1950), with one designed for a post-Christian audience. The author, Derek Wilson, even follows Bainton's example in reproducing sixteenth-century woodcuts, effectively selected to offer glimpses into Luther's age.

The opening, which Wilson labels "a fanciful reconstruction" (p. 1), is not typical of his modus operandi, which relates the story in lively fashion but with fairly consistent faithfulness to the original sources. It is just that such occasional "reconstructions" do not enable strangers to his subject to sort out reliably when he is using this kind of alternative narrative. Indeed, the footnotes are very sparse and indicate little engagement with the two generations of scholarship since Bainton's book appeared. Wilson's sense of historical context arouses interest throughout and is thick with the detailed flavor of the societal and religious context at points, but is superficial in this regard at others.

Wilson largely sticks to his biographical focus, but with a figure like Luther, some attention to his thought belongs to the story of his life. The author often shows sensitivity to Luther's way of thinking, as, for instance, in his interpretation of the reformer's doctrine of justification that is imparted not as a legal fiction but as a re-creative Word of God. Wilson would have enhanced this section by unfolding Luther's anthropology of the two kinds or dimensions of human righteousness, active and passive; failure to do so passes over an important piece of Luther's view of both God and the human creature. It would have been preferable to read an exploration of the fundamental hermeneutical statement of Luther's "theology of the cross" at the Heidelberg meeting of his Augustinian order in 1518, where he laid down the underlying foundation of his new way of practicing theology, rather than encounter an altogether too facile and simplistic comparison of his Dominican opponents with the KGB (p. 103). But such silliness should not discourage those who know the landscape from reading the book, for, in general, those who know the story can experience this retelling as a fresh vista, which deserves and rewards a critical reading.

It is not clear why Luther's biography must be enlisted in the author's wrestling with the twentieth-century "German problem" when tracing it to

several strands of the Enlightenment would have been more helpful. But this is a common instinct among Westerners. Much more justified is Wilson's placing of Luther's thought within the context of the twenty-first-century religious scene, which he largely accomplishes with sympathy and sensitivity.

This is not the book that should be assigned to students new to Luther, but it can serve as a review or expansion of view for those who know something of his life or thought and is a delightful encounter with Luther's person.

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*The Correspondence of Wolfgang Capito, Vol. 2: 1524-1531.* Edited and translated by Erika Rummel with the assistance of Milton Kooistra. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2009. Pp. xxx, 538. \$165.00. ISBN 978-0-802-09955-6.)

The second part of this excellent project takes us to the heart of Wolfgang Capito's work as a reformer in Strasbourg. The years before 1524 had forced Capito to choose between the two lodestars of his career: his commitment to Erasmian humanism and his enthusiasm for church reform. It was not immediately apparent to Capito as he built his reputation that this parting of the ways would be necessary. As late as 1522 he was a trusted adviser to Albrecht of Mainz; in that year he visited Martin Luther in Wittenberg, a visit that seems to have been decisive in persuading him to abandon his previous support for Desiderius Erasmus on the key issue of free will. In 1523 Capito moved to Strasbourg as provost of the collegiate church of St. Thomas. His breach with Catholicism became manifest the following February when he was appointed parish priest of St. Peter's. By taking a wife, Capito made a further irrevocable statement of his new allegiance.

Once these steps were taken, Capito became a key member of the powerful group of reformers committed to the establishment of a fully evangelized church in Strasbourg. This was a complex and protracted process, involving three interlocking issues: the public proclamation of reformed allegiance and the building of an institutional church in conformity with the new order, the creation of a Christian people educated in their new faith, and the resolution of the jurisdictional and financial issues resulting from the transfer of church property. Capito gave himself willingly to these tasks, lending his support to collective appeals to the city magistrates. He also wrote fluently in defense of evangelical positions: here his close connections to the Strasbourg printing industry, through his relative Wolfgang Köpfel, were a further asset. But Capito also contributed his share to the problems that beset the Strasbourg reformers.

In many respects Capito, a renowned Hebrew scholar and intellectual, was ill-fitted for the hurly-burly of a turbulent urban Reformation. His polit-