

understanding of Antichrist and the last days. Finally, one should note that although Augustine did understand the Millennium to represent the period between Christ's first and second comings, he did not expect, as Ball states, that "the Last Judgement would take place in the year A.D. 1000 or thereabouts" (pp. 214-215). In fact, Augustine repeatedly argued against interpretations attempting to date the last days.

These blemishes, related as they are to the discussion of non-Puritan theology, do not depreciate several major contributions of *The English Connection*. First, the book brings together in manageable form a vast amount of information concerning the Puritan tradition, including the thought of learned theologians, more radical spokesmen, and even literary figures such as Milton and Bunyan. In the past, studies have concentrated on the more radical political and millenarian aspects of Puritanism in the early seventeenth century and have generally concluded after the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660. However, Ball also examines the work of later Puritan writers not often studied, and he synthesizes a vast amount of original source material, drawing out the significant points and showing relationships.

The book makes two other significant contributions, particularly in light of contemporary Adventism. Even while wishing for more detailed comparison of specific Puritan and Adventist doctrines, one applauds Ball's choice of doctrines to examine, for these include the very basics of Christian belief (e.g., the authority of Scripture and the nature of man and of Christ). Similarly helpful is the book's reminder that Adventism derives from an essentially radical—rather than Lutheran—branch of the Protestant Reformation. The roots of Adventism go back to those who believed that early Protestantism had not completed the necessary re-formation of Christian doctrine. Thus, in its analysis of Puritanism, *The English Connection* directs our attention further back into history, to the ideals of the apostolic church.

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Edwards, Mark U., Jr. *Luther's Last Battles: Polemics and Politics, 1531-46*. Ithaca, N.Y., and London, Eng.: Cornell University Press, 1983. 250 pp. \$27.75.

In recent years, Luther scholars have begun to focus at last on the less dramatic years of the Reformer's life and work. Gerald Strauss, for example, has investigated the attempt to educate the masses into the Reformation and shown the disappointment that Luther and his followers

felt at the progress of the Word, while Susan Karant-Nunn has demonstrated the decisive rôle played by the electors of Saxony in organizing the new church, sometimes overriding the wishes of the Wittenberg theologians. Mark U. Edwards's well-documented study of Luther's polemical works after 1530 confirms and illuminates both these findings, as it seeks to discover why Luther wrote in such a violent and abusive way in the last years of his life.

Old age and painful illness may have had something to do with Luther's vehemence in his later years, but Edwards shows that there is no direct correlation between bouts of pain and choleric outbursts in print. If pain was involved, it may have been of a different order. The 1530s did not live up to Luther's expectations. Neither the Word nor anything else seemed capable of doing all that he had expected. And the more that men failed to respond, the more Luther convinced himself that they had hardened their hearts. The need to woo was thus past. All that was left was the prophetic duty of rallying the faithful against the forces of antichrist for the last great battle.

This is a convincing explanation, based on Luther's works themselves, on an analysis of the narrowing circle of places of publications, and on Luther's correspondence. Edwards does not investigate the possibility that the language of hyperbole might on occasion have been used as a last desperate attempt to win over the uncommitted, but even this modification would leave his central thesis intact. In the main, the harshness of Luther's language is that of the general seeking to muster his forces in defence of the innocent and unwary against a dreadful foe.

The foe took many guises. The Jews, of whom Luther had been so hopeful in the early 1520s, were leading men astray by their cunning exegesis, he felt. So too were the Anabaptists (who receive scant attention in this work) and the papacy, the latter of which he variously identified as the antichrist and the false prophet of the book of Revelation. Together with the Turks (the "little horn" of Daniel and the Gog of Ezekiel and Revelation, according to Luther), these groups represented the forces of the Devil gathering for the last great conflict. But the Turks were also seen by him as the scourge of God upon a careless and ungrateful Empire, which, for the most part, had either rejected the gospel or neglected its deeper claims. And the rejection, Luther sensed pessimistically, was final. So the Jew, the papist, the radical reformer, and the Turk were to be fought tenaciously with whatever weapons were at hand.

Thus, if Luther was the victim of anything in his latter years, it was not his physical illnesses, but rather his frustration and disappointment, and his belief in his own prophetic rôle. "Victim" is too strong a word, however, for he was able to modulate the volume of his abuse as the occasion demanded.

What the occasion demanded was often what the Elector of Saxony required. At times, as in the Schönitz affair, Luther was restrained until John Frederick became convinced that there were no political gains to be made by moderation. At other times, as in the cases of resistance to the Emperor and attendance at a General Council, Luther's advice was sought and rejected, and the Reformer was asked to think again. The result was that in respect to the General Council, Luther found himself defending a position in which he did not fully believe—namely, that Protestants should not attend—and in respect to resistance to the Emperor, reaching a theory that might never have occurred to him—namely, that when the Emperor acted as the sword-arm of a blasphemous papacy, he forfeited all claims to obedience.

Again, in 1541, Luther was persuaded to ordain a bishop he did not want, as the result of a takeover of which he did not approve, and then to defend the actions with his pen. Luther was not quite his own man. It was disingenuous of the Elector to excuse himself by talking of Luther's independent spirit, when the latter reached the height of his abusive vulgarity in *Against the Papacy* in 1545: The tract was written with conviction, but it was written at John Frederick's request. The Prince knew what to expect, the Professor knew what was expected. Edwards does not ask us to believe the crude picture of Luther as the Elector's lackey, but he does show us clearly the political constraints within which Luther worked.

Another major point to emerge from this study is that even in his polemical works, Luther finds space—often considerable space—for carefully argued theology and church history. Indeed, Edwards argues that Luther's increasing knowledge and use of church history is one of the features of the 1530s. He is, perhaps, a little too trusting of Luther's contention that he was now able to demonstrate *a posteriori* what he had previously held *a priori*. Like so much that the great man wrote, this is an exaggeration. Luther's early conviction that the papacy was the antichrist came not *a priori*, but from his study of the decretals while preparing for the Leipzig disputation of 1519.

The book is undoubtedly a valuable addition to Luther literature and increases our understanding of the still somewhat dimly lit later period of the Reformer's career. The less wary, however, will need to remind themselves that the work does not intend to give a well-rounded portrait of the Reformer; Luther the lecturer, pastor, and devotional writer is not represented here.

The Cornell University Press is to be congratulated on printing some of the woodcuts from *Against the Papacy*. They are, to our more delicate and irenic age, a grim reminder of the spirit in which the battles of the Reformation were fought. The reproduction is excellent. Unfortunately, the same adjective cannot be applied to the proof-reading. The author's

reasoning is completely obscured on p. 17 by two sentences on lines 24-26 which occur again, this time rightly, on lines 32-34. And one wonders whether the computer upon which, the author tells us, the book was composed, edited, and typeset is responsible for the use of "who" instead of "whom" (p. 17) and for such words as "imminentness" (p. 17), "thusly" (p. 50) and "signators" (p. 74), as well as for such phrases as "Zapolya . . . had a falling out with Suleiman" (p. 102). Again, while repetition across chapters is understandable in a topical analysis, repetition within them is more difficult to excuse.

However, one cannot but admire an author who has given us so much to think about and whose generous spirit prompts him to offer his computer printouts (the fruit of the tedious task of listing and classifying Luther's works) to any scholar who cares to ask for them. It is the spirit that informed Luther himself in his better moments.

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Emmerson, Richard Kenneth. *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981. 366 pp. \$19.50.

Almost a century ago Wilhelm Bousset, in an entry for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, observed that "to write the history of the idea of Antichrist in the last centuries of the Middle Ages would be almost to write that of the Middle Ages themselves." Richard Emmerson's study of medieval apocalypticism, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, is the latest major contribution in a long line of works—beginning with J. Ernest Renan's *L'Antéchrist* (1873) and Bousset's own *The Antichrist Legend* (1896) and extending to Marjorie Reeves's *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (1976)—which attempt to clarify our understanding of this immense and complicated theme. Emmerson's study is comprehensive, informative, and often fascinating; but it would be presumptuous to conclude, in the light of Bousset's judgment, that the final word had yet been written on the medieval obsession with Antichrist.

Emmerson's book is largely what it purports to be, an interdisciplinary study of medieval eschatological thought concentrating on the Antichrist tradition. It draws upon a variety of sources, including commentaries, manuscripts, sermons, drama, and poetry. The disciplines that will benefit most from Emmerson's work are clearly those of medieval history, art, literature, and theology, with a heavy, and perhaps inevitable, bias to the theological.