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Speelman's "Melanchthon and Calvin on confession and communion: Early modern Protestant penitential and Eucharistic piety" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Speelman, H.A. (2016). *Melanchthon and Calvin on confession and communion: Early modern Protestant penitential and Eucharistic piety*. Bristol, CT:V&R Academic. 362 pp. \$125.00. ISBN 9783525550410

Herman A. Speelman, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in early modern Reformed theology at the Theological University of Kampen in the Netherlands, has produced a remarkable book entitled, *Melanchthon and Calvin on Confession and Communion*. This book is part of V&R Academic's Refo500 Academic Studies series, a set of books on the Reformation and Reformed theology written by leading scholars in the field, to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing the 95 theses to the church door and the start of the Protestant Reformation.

This book looks at piety in the late Middle Ages through the Reformation period. It is largely a historical study, though it does conclude with some reflections on how confession and the Eucharist, particularly the changes effected by the Reformation transformed how individual believers relate to God in the modern age; the largest change being a more direct relationship to God, and thus more personal responsibility for piety as the believer became somewhat divorced from relating to the church hierarchy, as she would have under the Roman Catholic system of the early modern era.

This is a well-researched and extensively footnoted work. It is also a superbly written book; if only all theologians would write like Speelman. Some theological background would be helpful when approaching this book, but it is not required in order to benefit greatly from it. Without a doubt, anyone interested in the Reformation should add this to their collection. It seems to be an essential addition to any libraries religion and theology collection.

Reviewer

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