or demagification of religion favored by Reformed Protestants. For him, this means that anyone who claims “a particular modernity” for all Protestants must rely on “a one-dimensional conception of Protestantism” (280). Similarly, Kaufmann concludes that “The Reformation did not produce modern Western civilization, neither by itself nor as a major influence, any more than any other factor.” But he remains convinced that without the transformations wrought by “the Reformation,” our world would be different (282).

Although this book was obviously aimed at a German audience, its translation into English is highly valuable, for it provides Anglophone readers with a succinct summation of the era of the Reformations by one of Germany’s most eminent historians. In the process, the book also reveals much about the Germanocentric perspective that shaped much of “Reformation” historiography in Protestant cultures for four and a half centuries. Kaufmann sums up the characteristics of this viewpoint eloquently and, simultaneously, also allows his readers to clearly discern the context of his approach and the significance of his masterful survey:

“In no other country has so much been written about the Reformation, so many controversial judgments made, so many authors’ own thoughts, desires, and beliefs emphatically identified with Luther’s person and projected on the event of the Reformation. The colorful and highly ambivalent reception history of Luther leaves little doubt: there has hardly been a more ‘German’ figure than he” (245).

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Andreas Holzem’s Christianity in Germany, 1550–1850 examines a topic both immensely important and strangely understudied. Tracing the course of Christianity’s religious change emerging from the Reformation over three centuries—through war, revolution, intellectual ferment, and secularization from the Peace Augsburg to the Revolution of 1848—is a daunting task but crucial to understanding the nature of modern European religion. Scholars have
certainly examined each of these topics individually or in some combination. Attempts to cover the entire chronological ground, though, are almost unheard of. Holzem’s two-volume, sixteen-hundred-page opus takes on an enormous challenge, and whether or not it succeeds in the larger goal, the author has produced, at the minimum, a reference text essential to any scholar or institution concerned with the evolution of German (and European) Christianity in the early modern and modern ages. At such size and cost, though, the book is intended almost exclusively for library acquisition and would be well worth it.

The book, which first appeared in German in 2015, surprisingly opens not with the Reformation itself but with the highly symbolic deaths of Martin Luther and Charles V in midcentury. This starting point recognizes perhaps that the significance of the Reformation lies in what came after, in “working out” the consequences of the religious drama unfolding from 1517. Given that the “confessionalization” thesis has since the 1990s been the dominant historiographical frame for understanding German Christianity, it unsurprisingly appears as the singular focus of volume 1, named in each of the volume’s five chapter titles covering seven hundred thirty pages. Understanding the book, therefore, requires introducing two brief qualifications: first, “confessionalization” refers to the socio-ecclesiastical developments and new religious structures emerging from the fractured state of German Christendom after 1517. The competition among the newly defined Churches—Catholic, Evangelical (Lutheran), and Reformed—involves parallel movements toward bureaucratization, centralization, and discipline. This ecclesiastical competition went hand-in-hand with the extensive changes occurring in the varied, divided secular territories of the Holy Roman Empire, evident already in the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and other settlements. Second, the disjointed and scattered character of these areas limits the project of “confessionalization” to German-speaking polities rather than to Europe as a whole, about which Holzen has also written. Holzen can thus justify his intense focus on “Germany” itself.

Holzem’s opening discussion of confessionalization makes clear the argument’s “German” nature. From the nineteenth century onwards, the term “Reformation” was used to describe modern German religious identity privileged Protestantism, emerging from Martin Luther, as the central characteristic. German nationalism in the nineteenth century developed at the same time as modern Luther studies emerged. In the twentieth century, as Holzem notes, a number of German Catholic scholars (Hubert Jedin, Joseph Lortz, Erwin Iserloh) wrestled with the issue as well. With Ernst Walter Zeeden, and followed particularly by Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhardt, the idea
of confessionalization as encompassing all the post-Reformation Christian sects in Germany came to dominate the historiographical discussion.

Given this background, it would be easy for Holzem to focus on the politico-religious developments. Instead, though—and this is a great merit of his account—the author begins with the obscure prosecution by Catholic authorities of an even more obscure cottage laborer in Westphalia in the 1750s, Schlüter by name. When his wife died and his son fell seriously ill, the laborer did the predictable—he went on two pilgrimages to plead with the Virgin Mary for aid. There was nothing remarkable about this, of course, but unfortunately, Schlüter's acts of devotion had been encouraged by consulting a peasant (and unordained) soothsayer who had seen the dead wife's revenant form near Schlüter's cottage. Catholic authorities focused on Schlüter's unacceptable use of a peasant soothsayer to inspire a perfectly orthodox devotional practice. That this case took place in the "enlightened" 1750s rather than the sixteenth century only enhances the author's case about the long-term significance of confessionalization and its complications. Of equal importance in understanding Holzem's argument is the low status of the subject, Schlüter—he represents the confessional regime not as a theory but as an everyday fact in the way German Christians of all classes and churches practiced their religion. One can also witness the author's determination to detail actual cases involving the promise and peril of "confessionalization" throughout volume one—the illuminating experiences of the Danish anatomist cum convert and apostolic vicar Nicolaus Steno (1638–1696) and the Nuremberg patrician Christoph Oelhafen (1571–1631) provide just two examples.

It is in the second volume that Holzem's even larger and more problematic question appears concerning the sprawling social and revolutionary events from 1750 to 1850: "Could the religio-cultural diversifications and conflicts, and conditions under which they emerged, be related to the findings of Confessionalization research" (1329)? The author contends that any far-reaching effects of confessionalization can only be evaluated by looking at the nature of religiosity as it emerged in the modern era. This religiosity he defines as the experience by humans of a transcendent divine available only through Christian revelation and experience. Holzem contends that religious outcomes depended not exclusively on ecclesiastical-social developments but on "typologies of sanctity" appropriated and adopted by Christian churches themselves. As a result, the psychic and spiritual lives of believers were always a factor in historical development, which remained contingent, unpredictable, and anything but inevitable. Holzem argues that war, revolution, and secularization—including the dissolution of religious institutions in lands such as Bavaria—did not unravel the confessional structures of the sixteenth
and seventeenth centuries. Instead, both Protestant and Catholic churches adopted a confrontational or accommodationist stance to modern culture and the state based on institutions and habits inculcated earlier. Ecclesiastical centralization, along with a newly professional clergy, allowed the churches to maintain independent identities and forms of sanctity while also enabling them to operate politically within the context of the state. One need only look at the Ultramontane Catholic milieu of the late nineteenth century to see the continued effectiveness of the institution in the face of modernity and the Kulturkampf. In addition, Holzem notes that a distinctive and novel element of the nineteenth century was the “social-charitable commitment of both confessions” (1371). One should also note that this commitment also resulted from the perceived need of Protestants and Catholics alike to appear socially useful—their worth as churches now depended less on wielding transcendent and immutable sacred power than on participating in the betterment of their society.

A splendid example of Holzem’s thoroughness is his extensive discussion of the Jesuits’ role in German Christianity, both as spiritual educators and reformers and as significant “players” in the drama of confessionalization. In volume one he dedicates close to fifty pages to recounting the early history of the society and its role in sixteenth century German reforms. Interestingly, the Jesuit arrival in German lands corresponds closely to the opening chronology of Holzem’s book—at 1550. This means the Jesuits were central to the reorganizing programs of the mid sixteenth century in the Habsburg empire. Holzem’s concise account alone could serve as the basis for a course on the early Jesuits.

Holzem is clear about the impact of the Society of Jesus in forming a Catholic confession in Germany. He notes the rapid decline of numbers and energy in the wake of Luther’s reformation. In response, the Jesuits’ extensive system of schools and colleges led to political influence as well as a determined missionary effort to blunt and reverse the fortunes of Protestantism. Even when not extensively and specifically treating the Society, Holzem is well aware of their pervasive influence in religious politics, polemics, education, and in the minds of their opponents in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His concise account of the incremental suppression of the order between 1759–1773 illuminates the ubiquity of Jesuit institutions such as schools as well as the pervasiveness of attacks on the order throughout Europe: “... anyone who wanted to attack the bastion of education, elite recruitment, and political counseling of the European Ancien Regimes based on the maxims of Enlightened religious criticism invariably had to zero in on the Jesuits (869).” The Jesuits were an unavoidable and inevitable target, practically identified with
Catholicism itself. Yet, as their presence conditioned the confessionalization of German life until the Enlightenment, their suppression (until 1814) and subsequent very gradual reappearance diminished their significance in the crucial first half of nineteenth century modernizing.

Holzem’s massive account is a tour de force—not only a cogent account of Christianity’s adaptation to modernity in a new German nation and empire but also an amazingly useful compilation of individual stories and episodes. That emphasis adds to his argument about the importance of “typologies of sanctification”—forms of individual piety crafted within each confession. Without going deeply into some of the arguments (necessitating another fifteen hundred words!), one can safely argue that Andreas Holzem’s contribution will crystallize and shape the historiographical debate over German Christianity for decades to come.

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Peter Canisius is best known as a catechist, owing to the hundreds of editions of his three catechisms, the Large, the Small, and the Smallest Catechisms. In 1893, Otto Braunsberger, S.J., the editor of his letters and the consummate expert on Canisius, published his seminal study, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu*. Another German Jesuit scholar, Friedrich Streicher, produced the indispensable critical edition of the Latin and German catechisms in two volumes (1933, 1936). At the beginning of our century, Hubert Filser and Stephan Leimgruber published a German translation of the first edition (1555) of the Large Catechism, the *Summa doctrinae christianae*, in a volume of scholarly essays. Paul Begheyn, S.J., the greatest authority on Canisius in our time, produced a detailed bibliography of 330 editions of the catechisms printed until 1597, the year of the Canisius’s death, as well as a bilingual (Dutch, English) introductory survey.

Thomas Flowers has boldly redirected attention to Canisius the catechist. His focus is on the first edition of the *Summa*. He insists on its unique character in the history of catechesis, attends to its words and not simply its structure,