PAUL AND LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS
MARTIN LUTHER’S RECEPTION OF PAUL

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The vast corpus of the critical edition of the works of Martin Luther is now complete. In its final form, the “Weimar edition” consists of some 127 massive quarto volumes, the fruits of countless hours of labor offered up by generations of scholars, the product of a complex and costly publishing venture that took almost 120 years to complete.¹ The sheer volume of Luther’s writings put on display in this edition easily qualifies him as one of history’s most prolific writers, and a great deal of what he wrote had to do with the Bible. As a professor of Bible (Doctor in Biblia), Luther was quite naturally concerned with writings that came from, or were believed to have come from, “the Apostle”: Paul. As a priest and a preacher, moreover, he was often called upon to exposit Paul, and to apply what he had learned from Paul to the lives of his fellow Wittenbergers. Thanks to the industry of his admiring students, we have in the Weimar edition not only his formal exegetical work (typically classroom lectures later revised for publication),² but also his less formal sermons on Scripture, and many of these take up Pauline texts. The sheer scope of this material is intimidating. Indeed, the index entry for “Paul” in the “Writings” (Schriften) portion of the
