



Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment

Eric W. Gritsch

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In this book Eric W. Gritsch, a Lutheran and a distinguished Luther scholar, faces the glaring ugliness of Martin Luther's anti-Semitism head-on, describing Luther's journey from initial attempts to proselytize Jews to an appallingly racist position, which he apparently held until his death.

Comprehensively laying out the textual evidence for Luther's virulent anti-Semitism, Gritsch traces the development of Luther's thinking in relation to his experiences, external influences, and theological convictions. Revealing greater impending danger with each step, *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism* marches steadily onward until the full extent of Luther's racism becomes apparent. Gritsch's unflinching analysis also describes the impact of Luther's egregious words on subsequent generations and places Luther within Europe's long history of anti-Semitism.

Throughout, however, Gritsch resists the temptation either to demonize or to exonerate Luther. Rather, readers will recognize Luther's mistakes as links in a chain that pulled him further and further away from an attitude of respect for Jews as the biblical people of God. Gritsch depicts Luther as a famous example of the intensive struggle with the enduring question of Christian-Jewish relations. It is a great historical tragedy that Luther, of all people, fell victim to anti-Semitism -- albeit against his better judgment.

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