Harry Loewen. *Luther and His Opponents: Ink Against the Devil.* Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2015.

The late Harry Loewen was much respected in the field of Anabaptist-Mennonite and Reformation studies. His latest book, *Luther and His Opponents: Ink Against the Devil*, was completed a few months before his untimely passing. At approximately double the size of the original edition, entitled *Luther and the Radicals*: *Another Look at Some Aspects of the Struggle Between Luther and the Radical Reformers* (1974), the new edition offers expanded scope and vastly more information. Given this impressive new scholarship and enlarged material, *Luther and His Opponents* deserves to be reviewed on its own terms.

While the book is geared toward graduate or upper-level undergraduate students and the informed layperson with its jargon-free style, professional historians will nevertheless appreciate the vigorous, erudite research that underpins its insightful evaluation and application of Luther's polemical writings.

In addition to the Radical Reformers, Loewen examines Luther's new targets. After providing historical background to Luther's theological legacy, the author examines the smoldering ink that Luther spilled against his many infernal enemies, and provides a brief overview of the different types of radicals of this period and their reasons for opposing Luther. The volume is then logically organized according to the groups he opposed: Wittenberg radicals from Karlstadt to the Zwickau Prophets, peasant revolutionaries including Thomas Müntzer and his ilk, Erasmus and the Humanists, the Swiss Brethren, deranged Münsterites, Spiritualists, Rationalists including the Antitrinitarians, supporters of religious tolerance, European Jews, Muslim Turks, and the papal church.

However, the most meaningful contribution of this volume is its incisive, refreshing attention to apposite contemporary issues—or rather, how Loewen believes the book will and should be received in today's context. Although the historical stream coursing through its pages is the ink Luther spilled to malign his opponents, this volume is a personal plea for more ecumenism and religious tolerance. As modern-day wisdom literature from a seasoned sage, *Luther and His Opponents* is primarily concerned about

the negative effects—subconscious or deliberate—of past prejudices on the present.

Loewen decries the old vitriol that has inspired more recent hateful acts, the Holocaust as a primary tragic example. Happily, he also notes that stumbling blocks between Protestants, Catholics, and Anabaptists that fostered animosities in the 16th century exist to a lesser extent today, citing the increase in to scholarship on these themes that has led to formal apologies and greater interfaith cooperation. In this sense, *Luther and His Opponents* has a distinct purpose: to encourage greater ecumenicity and unity in the church, and to avoid the in-fighting that characterized Luther's vicious attacks on others.

Rather than scapegoating Luther, however, the author asks whether such a characterization is unfair, given Luther's context as a man of his time who acted like most of his contemporaries. Or was he unique in his vulgarity? Despite the inhospitable reception by Mennonites to this book's first edition because it refused to attack the Magisterial Reformation with more force, Loewen says he felt "that as scholars we needed to be fair in understanding the positions of both Luther and those who dissented from him" (xiii–xiv).

Yet, given the contemporary context animating the sentiments behind the new volume, it would appear that Loewen modified his stance, hardening his opposition toward Luther—or else understanding the differences between Luther and his opponents as points of substance rather than mere emphasis. Interestingly, when Loewen delves into the reasons for Luther's attacks, foremost among them is the principle of *sola scriptura* that, according to Luther, did not open the eyes of all humanity despite increasing accessibility of the "clear" Scriptures—the Jews bearing the brunt of his attacks in this respect.

Luther and His Opponents is carefully researched, and written in readable, lively language. It is a pure pleasure to read. Loewen uses parenthetical notes sparingly but enough to urge the reader to explore his insights and evaluations further without becoming a distraction. Often overlooked but nevertheless important to bibliophiles, this volume is a well-designed, high quality publication from beginning to end. It is an essential work for scholars who explore historical precedents of interfaith dialogue and sectarian hostilities in order to inform and guide interreligious

peacebuilding and relationship-building, to undermine mutual suspicion, and to encourage humanization of the Other today.

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Catherine Keller. *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2015.

Catherine Keller is a pre-eminent voice in negative theology and process thought. Her reputation has been solidified by popular works such as *Face of the Deep* (2002) and *On the Mystery* (2008). In *Cloud of the Impossible: Negative Theology and Planetary Entanglement*, she unites various voices in a transdisciplinary conversation that highlights how theology is always political, ecological, and diverse. Keller aims to stage a series of encounters between the relational and the apophatic, rooted in her understanding of both theological and nontheistic texts. Through bringing these voices together, she creates an account of humanity's interpersonal entanglement in light of a God who is impossible to identify.

Part I, Complications, begins in the Old Testament, with Keller looking at how history has portrayed a God who appears in scripture as a "dense cloud" (Exodus 19:9). She accounts for patristic elucidations of this theme from theologians such as Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory of Nyssa, who helped show that a negation in speech can portray characteristics of the Divine.

For the author, this understanding of "apophasis" acts as literary groundwork, seen most clearly in the final chapter of Part I. Here she brings together Nicholas of Cusa and the defining voice of process philosophy, Alfred North Whitehead, to track how knowing and unknowing contribute to both the relational and that which supersedes relation. Acknowledging