

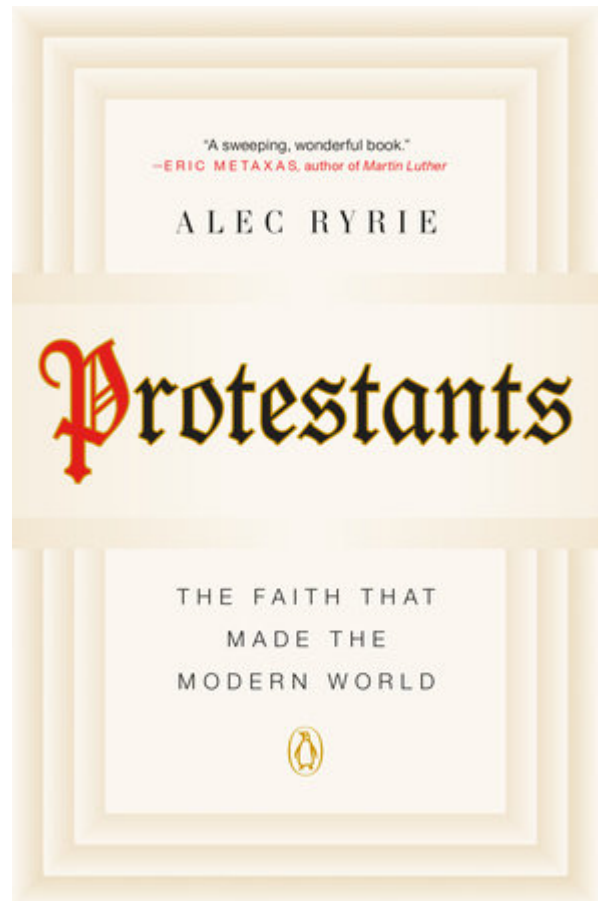
Review: Protestants

October 19, 2018

Protestants: The Faith that Made the Modern World

By Alec Ryrie (Penguin)

The word “sweeping”—used by many reviewers—is an apt one-word description of *Protestants*.



Opening with the pebble of Martin Luther cast off from the boulder of the Catholic Church, Alec Ryrie—preeminent historian of Christianity—takes the reader, somewhat breathlessly, through the next 500 years. How else to write such a survey but sweep

In his highly accessible narrative style, Ryrie explains the relationship between Christendom and the crown throughout Central Europe during Luther's time and beyond. Perhaps because of these close connections and the tight geography, the pebble's ripple reverberated through Switzerland with Calvin and Zwingli, into Scotland with Knox and later back and forth in England as Protestants and Catholics battled for the throne.

The religious infighting among Europeans continued to echo into the 19th and 20th centuries as the originating DNA of Protestantism produced further splintering. Liberalism and fundamentalism took shape, along with the correlating religious left and right, once again accentuating the power of politically connected religion.

Ryrie concludes with a quick tour of Protestant Christianity around the world, a section one ought to read alongside Philip Jenkins' [*The Next Christendom*](#).

Ryrie's unflinching examination of the Protestant baptism of slavery is a must-read, as is his treatment of Protestant complicity with Nazi Germany and the KKK in America.

*Eric Black, executive director/editor/publisher
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