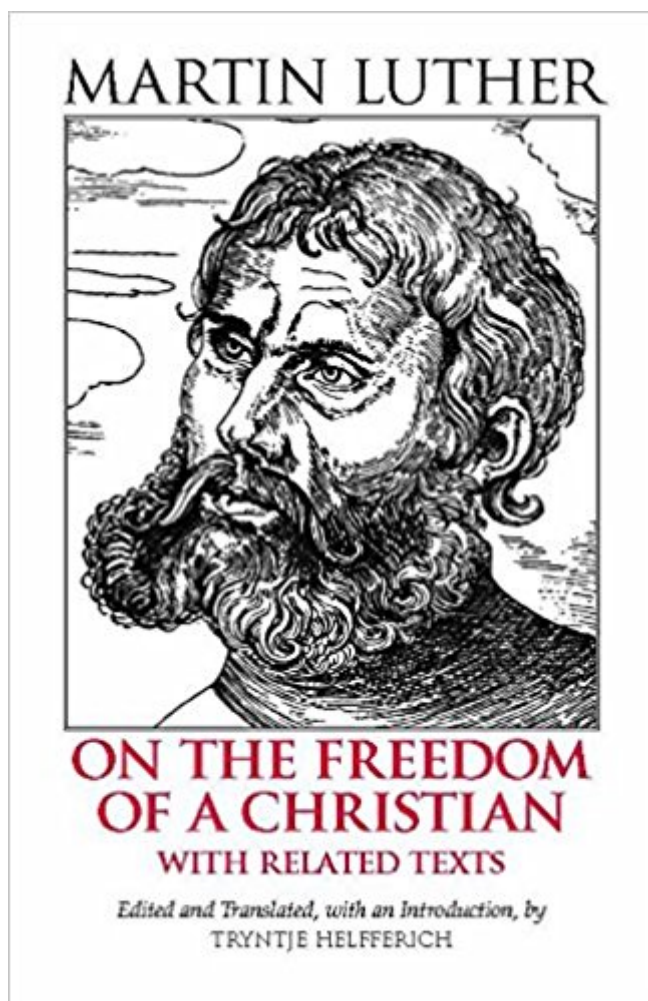


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# On The Freedom Of A Christian: With Related Texts (Hackett Classics)



## Synopsis

Perhaps the clearest and most influential statement of the principles driving the early Protestant reformers, Martin Luther's *On the Freedom of a Christian* (1520) challenged the teachings and authority of the old Church while simultaneously laying out the blueprint for a new one.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With a few key primary sources, [Helfferich] introduces the Reformation in all its complexity. While emphasizing the centrality of religion and belief in the Reformation movement--including key theological concepts of Luther and the mainstream Reformation, of Catholic theologians, and of Muñtzer and the more radical elements in the Reformation--the texts collected in this volume also introduce readers to its social, cultural, and economic aspects, topics of so much of the recent scholarship on the Reformation. The work includes an excellent general Introduction that, in a lucid and systematic manner, presents the reader with those key aspects of the period's Christian thought and practice against which Luther would react in *On the Freedom of a Christian*. And although individually brief, the cumulative effect of the various introductions [to each related text] is to provide the reader with a broad range of information about the Reformation in general.--Robert J. Christman, *Luther College* The translations are accurate and clear, and the introductory essay does a wonderful job of distilling complicated theological controversies into terms that are comprehensible by an undergraduate audience. The edition's greatest asset, though, is the range of texts that

it includes. By including works by Luther's Catholic opponents and his erstwhile allies, this edition demonstrates that *On the Freedom of a Christian* represented not only a high point in Luther's thought, but also a starting point in a debate that spanned Christendom and had massive social and political implications.--Philip Haberkern, Boston University  
A highly readable translation, with excellent contextualization and annotation.--Joel F. Harrington, Vanderbilt University

Tryntje Helfferich is Associate Professor of History, The Ohio State University at Lima.

The initial distinction Luther draws between the soul and the body dissolves as soon as he discusses Christian love towards other human beings. If faith alone is sufficient to save the soul, then all the works of the body are useless unless directed towards the fellow humans in love. The soul is necessary to be made right with God in faith, the body is necessary to serve others, and thus "become a Christ" for their sake. The good man does the good works and not the other way around, as Luther puts it. Having been freed from condemnation, we are free to love others. Thus freedom from the economy of works and production leads to the freedom of love. For Luther, freedom enables love. This is the soul transcending the body in the Levinasian sense.

To be reminded of these truths is wonderful. Of course the language *À f Â ç Ã â Ñ Ã â* takes some getting used to.

A scholarly and well done redo of Luther's work.

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