The Historical Journal, 50, 3 (2007), pp. 761–767 © 2007 Cambridge University Press
Printed in the United Kingdom

OTHER REVIEWS

The Historical Journal, 50 (2007). doi:10.1017/S0018246X07006346,
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Post-Reformation Reformed dogmatics: the rise and development of Reformed orthodoxy, c. 1520 to c. 1725. By Richard A. Muller. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003. 4 vols. Pp. 2176. ISBN 0801026180. $200.00.

Richard Muller begins his magnum opus with the observation that 'the theology of orthodox or scholastic Protestantism has never been accorded the degree of interest bestowed upon the theology of the great Reformers', and with the complaint that post-Reformation theology 'has seldom been given the attention it deserves both theologically and historically' (I, p. 27). This massive publication does much to abate the force of this complaint, for here we have a brilliant parsing of Reformed orthodoxy in its development, and in its polemical, philosophical, and exegetical contexts. Muller's narrative of the codification or, from the perspective of social history, the institutionalization of Reformed theology will surely reinforce the author's position as the undisputed leader of an international revisionist movement which has, in two decades, dramatically altered our understanding of post-Reformation historical theology.

Muller's first volume on post-Reformation Reformed dogmatics entitled *Prolegomena to theology*, discusses the much neglected topic of prolegomena to theology. The study is an updated and expanded edition of his 1987 publication on the subject, and has since that time set the agenda for many subsequent studies. The first part of the volume provides the *prolegomena* for this study of *prolegomena* and for the set as a whole. As in each of the four volumes, the first part of the book is an historical survey where the subject is traced from the medieval (and sometimes patristic) periods, through the Reformation, to the decline of post-Reformation orthodoxy and its influence in the academy and the church. Here the author also demarcates the different phases of development in post-Reformation thought, (re)defines key terms and outlines the problems in the field. Muller, following Otto Weber, sees Early Orthodoxy in two phases (c. 1565–1618; 1618–40), beginning with the death of a large number of Reformers, divided by the synod of Dort, and concluding with the end of the Thirty Years War and the calling of the Westminster Assembly. High Orthodoxy also appears in two phases (c. 1640–85; 1685–1725); Late Orthodoxy trickles into the eighteenth century and is largely outside the purview of these volumes.

Of course 'orthodoxy' itself requires definition. For Muller, it refers to persons or ideas within the Protestant confessional framework and, since this framework is dominant for a limited period of time, 'orthodoxy' also 'functions as a historical denominator' (I, p. 30). Orthodoxy is tied up with all things 'scholastic', which the author understands to mean 'academic', implying a method and not a content. Scholastic can also indicate a tone or style: early modern writers sometimes use it as a term of opprobrium, implying that a person or work is arid, tedious, or irrelevant – much as medieval theologians are viewed by many modern theologians and, indeed, this is the reading which many modern historians adopt. But early modern writers also employ 'scholastic' to mean that method

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which is used to teach in the schools, and they distinguished their own scholasticism from 'the several phases of medieval scholasticism' (I, p. 36).

The problems in the field of post-Reformation studies are many, but chief among them are the dogmatic value judgements on the part of neo-orthodox systematic theologians (e.g., Karl Barth and Thomas Torrance), or British (e.g., Brian Armstrong, Alister McGrath) and American historians of theology (e.g., Donald McKim and Jack Rogers). What Muller argues specifically in a later volume is indicative of his concern with older historical theology: 'theological or dogmatic claims made initially by systematic theologians' are 'later adopted on less than historical grounds by various historians of Reformation and early modern-era Christian thought' (III, p. 154). This volume and its companions seek to re-establish the nature of Reformed theology in the early modern period.

The second part of the volume includes chapters on the development of theological prolegomena, the meaning of the terms theology and religion, theology as a discipline, the usual parts or divisions of theology, and on the late seventeenth-century idea of basic principles or fundamental articles of theology. Perhaps the finest chapter in this volume is the study of philosophy in theology. The author finds earlier historians oversimplifying the relationship between early modern theology and philosophy. Too often theologians are neatly categorized as 'Platonic' or 'Aristotelian' without recognition of the extensive development and selective appropriation of ancient philosophy by medieval and Protestant scholastic theologians. As well, the widely varying influence of seventeenth-century philosophers is insufficiently understood, with charges of rationalism often levelled at theologians who use logical inference or deduction. In this study, Muller argues that philosophically, most early modern theologians were eclectic. In his second volume he argues that the extensive use of medieval and early modern categories and structures on the part of post-Reformation theologians was undergirded by a prior and more fundamental commitment to the primary authority of scripture.

What is obviously missing in the first volume – chapters on scripture and on tradition – is supplied in the second volume entitled *Holy scripture, the cognitive foundation of theology*. This work too is a second expanded edition, updated in its argument and bibliography. Like the other volumes in the series, it begins with a fascinating overview of scripture in history with one particularly strong chapter on scripture in the medieval period, and a second chapter on the same subject in the Reformation and post-Reformation eras. Muller argues that the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura* is a development of one of the medieval traditions regarding scripture which, contrary to popular Protestant perceptions of the medieval church, upheld the primary authority of scripture over the authority of the church and its traditions. Also in this volume Muller outlines how scripture functioned as the *principium cognoscendi theologiae* or cognitive foundation of theology. He further details the post-Reformation orthodox understanding of scripture as divine, and discusses the properties, canon, and interpretation of scripture. As in the previous volume, each chapter begins by explaining the varying statements of the Reformers (and sometimes the medieval doctors) on a given topic, followed by the Reformed orthodox view of the same. Also following the pattern of the earlier volume, Muller intersperses – and often introduces – his treatment of the different subtopics with an offensive against the majority of writers who criticize the Reformed orthodox for their theological and methodological discontinuity with the Reformers. From an historiographical perspective, these volumes are a sustained attack on the thesis, or general impression, that Protestant scholasticism is a dry, rigid scholasticism which differs widely from and degrades the work of the first- and second-generation Reformers.

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In his third volume, entitled *The divine essence and attributes*, Muller explains the post-Reformation positions on the unity and perfections of God. The first two chapters trace discussion of God's unity and his attributes from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries. Woven into this account is the story of early modern philosophical developments and their impact on theology. Striking in its absence is the story of early modern biblical exegesis, but the biblical dimension appears in force in the second part of the volume. Here (for the first time) scriptural references dominate Muller's pages just as they do the pages of the Reformed orthodox. Yet it is unclear if the additional scripture references are due to a stylistic change on Muller's part or an increased use of scripture for this locus among post-Reformation divines.

The second part of this volume contains a discussion of the unity of existence, essence and attributes in God and of natural theology, and incisive treatments of the divine names and essential attributes of God, further attributes of life, intellect, and will, and attributes relating to the exercise of God's will. Here some soteriological issues are treated, so far as they relate to God's righteousness, holiness, goodness, and justice. These chapters are useful in detailing, once more, the large areas of agreement and the minor variance among and between the Reformers and the Reformed orthodox. They are invaluable for outlining the range and variety of terminology associated with the Reformed orthodox, and for placing questions in the philosophy of religion in their historical contexts. Helpfully, volume III also marks a dramatic increase in use of English sources and of later Dutch writers such as Wilhelmus à Brakel (recently translated into English) and Petrus van Mastricht, and a corresponding increase in sections outlining what the Reformed orthodox considered the practical 'uses' of the doctrine of God.

The final volume entitled *The Triunity of God*, presents unique dimensions, since the doctrine of the Trinity has received much more scholarly attention than the subjects of the other volumes, and since the doctrine of the Trinity has been a subject of sustained discussion since the early church, East and West. Indeed, patristic formulations of the doctrine were critical to the Reformers and the post-Reformation orthodox. As well, the Reformers and their successors tend to favour a different set of medieval doctors when the Trinity is discussed than when the unity and attributes of God are in view. This story is told in the opening Part of the book and, as in the other volumes, many readers will probably find these opening chapters the most engaging and enjoyable to read. In fact, for many readers, a realistic approach to the set as a whole may be to read the first part of each volume and then plunder the remaining topical chapters by means of the table of contents and index.

In this volume the subsequent topical chapters are predictable: two chapters discuss the doctrine of the Trinity, one defining terms and the other relating theology and exegesis. The following three chapters detail what the Reformed orthodox had to say about the deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit respectively. Each of the four volumes interacts heavily with the main opponents of the Reformed: Socinians and Roman Catholics. Here Muller argues that pressure from these opposing forces had the effect of pushing the Reformed toward the Church Fathers, in part to combat the heresy of Socinianism, and in part to avoid Catholic charges that the Reformed were heretics themselves.

The volume concludes with a chapter bringing Muller's multi-volume argument about the nature of post-Reformation scholasticism and orthodoxy to a close. The argument can perhaps be summarized under four points. First, the Reformers and post-Reformation divines need to be viewed in relationship with their contemporaries and against their late medieval and Renaissance background. Studies that 'pose neat oppositions between

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persons' – usually Calvin and later 'Calvinists' – are particularly unfruitful (IV, p. 383), especially since, with many topics, there is often as much theological variance within a generation as there is between them. Having acknowledged these differences, Muller sees substantial continuity from the medieval through to the post-Reformation period. Of course it is significant that Muller does not treat doctrinal loci such as soteriology, sacramentology, and ecclesiology, where this observation will not obtain. Nonetheless it is surely noteworthy that such continuity is present 'on the grand scale' in theological prolegomena and in key loci such as 'the doctrines of God, creation, providence, and Christ' and in the Augustinian traditions 'concerning predestination, human nature and sin' (I, p. 97).

Second, Muller attempts to correct the perhaps still reigning historical paradigm that much of Protestant theology is shaped or even directed by one or two doctrines. The problem with this 'central dogma' theory is that there is little evidence of a central dogma in post-Reformation thought, and no evidence of a central dogma that functions as an organizing principle, much less as a Cartesian-like foundation upon which all theology is built. The author's correction comes in the form of the now familiar argument that post-Reformation Reformed orthodox actually tend to draw each doctrine from the results of their exegesis of biblical texts.

Third, theologians have argued that the placement of a locus such as predestination in the chapter headings of an early modern text is a reliable indicator of the role of that doctrine in a theological system. But chapter placement alone does not determine the importance of a topic in a system of theology. Nor indeed does chapter length, which may be an indication of its complexity, of the number of parts in a given loci, or of the number of its opponents. This is just the case with predestination, for there is no indication within the theologies of the post-Reformation orthodox that predestination has a determining role in the shape or content of other doctrinal loci. In part as a result of a tiring reduction of post-Reformation theology to predestination (or 'providence' in Puritan studies) other doctrines of equal or greater importance to early modern Reformed thinkers have gone largely unnoticed. Such is the case with the doctrine of God, which underwent sustained reflection and development in the post-Reformation period.

Finally, Muller also restates his understanding of 'scholasticism', 'orthodoxy', and the unhelpful tendency of theologians to disdain the medieval period and to paint philosophical details on to their picture of post-Reformation theology with too broad a brush. There is variety between and within medieval and early modern strands of philosophy, and early modern Protestant theologians were rarely committed to a consistent (let alone deterministic) use of the philosophers that they cite or silently use in the development of their theology.

One of the real strengths of this work is the author's integration of the history of philosophy into this history of theology. So too is the author's endeavour to remain theologically neutral in his analysis. Most of all, the work is finely tuned historically. Careful attention is paid to synchronic and diachronic variations in the theology of the Reformers and the Reformed orthodox, especially in the first volume where the diachronic analysis is superb. Later volumes contain a few changes that result in the loss of some precision. Whereas volume I makes frequent use of distinctions between early, high, and late orthodoxy both in the opening narrative portion and in the topical chapters which follow, later volumes increasingly relegate questions of development to the narrative part of the volume only. Perhaps it was unwieldy to include chronological subsections for the Reformed orthodox in every chapter, but in the absence of such divisions the study loses some of its historical sensitivity. This change is not insignificant, especially in the light of

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Muller's carefully nuanced argument that developments in philosophy and exegesis, as well as the rise of Socinianism, led to some significant shifts in the shape and content of orthodox theology, especially in the last decades of the seventeenth century. On the other hand it clearly does not affect the centre of Muller's argument.

An almost unmitigated strength of the work is its clear structure and accessibility. The table of contents is detailed and helpful, the bibliography (which draws on printed works only) is vast and well integrated into the text. The combined subject and name index is dependable, and the typographical errors, given the size of the work, comparatively few. The only real fault with these volumes is the publisher's choice of an undignified binding. The only addition that could be supplied is an index of biblical texts. 'Exegesis' has busy entries in the subject indexes of each volume, but the lack of a scriptural index works subtly to undermine Muller's thesis that scriptural exegesis served as a *principium cognescendi* for the Protestant orthodox. An index would reinforce this key contention of these volumes and, since biblical texts were often linked to doctrinal topics, it would serve as an additional entryway into this excellent study.

With the publication of these volumes, the academic community has been given a work of great consequence. The 'Muller thesis' has profound significance for historians and theologians alike, for this is much more than a prolonged and devastating critique of neo-orthodox historiography. The comprehensiveness of its analysis and the force of its argument makes this study one of the truly essential works on post-Reformation history and theology. No future research in post-Reformation polemic and theology, whether orthodox or heterodox, can afford to ignore these volumes.

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The Historical Journal, 50 (2007). doi:10.1017/S0018246X07006358,
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The path not taken: French industrialization in the age of revolution, 1750–1830. By Jeff Horn. Cambridge, MA, Massachussets Institute of Technology Press, 2006. Pp. ix + 383. ISBN: 0-262-08352-3. $45.00/£29.95.

This book makes a new foray into an old debate: France's apparent failure to keep pace economically with Britain in the nineteenth century. Since the 1970s, the so-called 'revisionists' have established that, on a per capita basis, French economic growth matched that of Britain in the years 1815–1914. This suprising result led Patrick O'Brien and Caglar Keyder to posit in *Economic growth in Britain and France* (1978) the existence of a 'French path' of economic development, not as spectacular but as solid as the British Industrial Revolution. Jeff Horn goes one step further and analyses the politico-cultural foundations of this French path. French political leaders did not fail to emulate Britain's model of unfettered competition, he argues, but devised their own model based on state management of technological innovation and administrative mediation between entrepreneurs and their workers. The roots of this strategy lay not in a deep-seated and irrational French taste for *dirigisme*, but in a justified fear of the 'revolutionary politics' of the labouring classes in France, or what Horn refers to throughout the book as 'the threat from below'. The French elite therefore self-consciously eschewed British laissez-faire after 1793 and embraced a more pragmatic approach 'that melded Physiocratic notions

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