

and helpfully annotated with biographical, geographical, linguistic and textual material. This volume will quickly become a standard reference point for scholars of seventeenth-century Reformed religion.

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The necessity of Christ's satisfaction. A study of the reformed scholastic theologians William Twisse (1578–1646) and John Owen (1616–1683). By Joshua D. Schendel. (Studies in Reformed Theology, 45.) Pp. xiv + 210 incl. 2 figs and 1 table. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2022. €54 (paper). 978 90 04 52085 1; 1571 4799
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This is a study of the very technical issue of 'the necessity of Christ's satisfaction', debated by Reformed scholastic theologians in the post-Reformation period. A major focus is on two English Reformed theologians who held varying views: William Twisse and John Owen.

The question centred on the work of Jesus Christ for salvation. The issue was whether the suffering death of Jesus Christ upon the cross was an 'absolute necessity' or a 'hypothetical necessity'?

Debates on the issue of the nature of the death of Christ as an atonement for human sin ranged over controversies of Reformed theologians with Remonstrants – on the scope of Christ's death satisfaction for sin; and Socinians on the nature of Christ's death – what it is and what Christ's death accomplishes. These were 'extra-Reformed debates' – the Reformed debating between themselves and those whom the Reformed viewed as 'outside the bounds of Reformed orthodoxy' (p. 3).

'Intra-Reformed debates' were controversies among the Reformed themselves about the work of Christ. Questions such as: What is the relation of the satisfaction of Christ to the decrees of God?; What is the scope of Christ's work?; and How is it best to understand the relation of Christ's satisfaction to the nature of God? were prominent. This latter question concerned the necessity of Christ's work. Dolf te Velde indicates that this dispute over the satisfaction of Christ was 'one of the major controversies *within* Reformed theology of the seventeenth century' (p. 3). Reformed theologians themselves recognised this as being the case.

Schendel's purpose here is not to detail all these debates in full detail. Instead, he focuses on the views of Twisse and Owen. These theologians shared similar historical contexts and represented 'two basic positions taken among the Reformed orthodox with respect to the necessity of Christ's satisfaction. They both stood at the headwaters of their respective positions' (p. 4). Other theologians appealed to each as authorities in their debates. Thus, says Schendel, Twisse and Owen 'may be called representatives of a basic position that would be taken, nuanced, and variously elaborated by others' (p. 4).

In the first part of this study, Schendel examines the precise statements of what is in dispute here. He discusses 'The rise and statement of the question among the Reformed Orthodox', and then turns to 'The medieval scholastic background to the Reformed debate' before summarising conclusions.

Part II is 'Analyzing the Answers'. Here one chapter is devoted to Twisse and then one to Owen with each examining the necessity of Christ's satisfaction. Schendel's summary and conclusions complete the volume.

The complexities of this topic are fully on display in Schendel's discussion. He notes that

the Socinians were united in their rejection of the necessity of satisfaction. Neither the Remonstrants nor the Reformed, however, were so united. Some Reformed theologians maintained the necessity of satisfaction against Socinian and Remonstrant theologians who denied its necessity; other Reformed theologians ... responding to Arminius, argued that satisfaction was not necessary. (p. 51)

This meant that 'answers to the question of the necessity of Christ's satisfaction do not neatly align along Protestant confessional lines' (p. 51).

It was important to the Reformed to state the question properly. Francis Turretin's taxonomy was important. Schendel indicates that for Turretin, two groups made this distinction: absolute necessity 'can be roughly characterized as that whose opposite is impossible for God'; hypothetical necessity refers to 'that which comes about subsequent [to] God's will but whose opposite is not impossible for God' (p. 53). This latter meant that although 'God *could* do otherwise, once he has willed to do some thing the thing cannot but be or be done' (p. 54).

In the context of polemical issues, and various ambiguities in the usage of terms, Schendel suggests that 'all of the Reformed orthodox were agreed that the satisfaction of Christ is necessary. All were likewise agreed that, strictly speaking, the satisfaction of Christ is not *absolutely* necessary. Rather, they affirmed the necessity of satisfaction is *hypothetical*, consequent upon God's decree' (p. 65). Differences came between 'those who maintained that the hypothetical necessity of Christ's satisfaction is solely grounded in the will and decree of God, and those who maintained that it was grounded *both* in the will of God and in his nature as *gubernator iustus*. In the terms of the scholastic form of the question, the former group maintained that God *could* save fallen humanity by other means than the satisfaction of Christ; the latter maintained that he *could not*' (p. 65).

Schendel's survey of the medieval scholastic background of the Reformed debate details medieval theologians and the developments in medieval theological terminology which provided sources from which the Reformed drew. He maintains Reformed 'continuity' with medievals can be discerned. One continuity was that medieval discussions were grounded in the Augustinian framework, which the later Reformed also used. A second continuity was Reformed employment of technical distinctions developed by the medievals, primarily that between the *potential Dei absoluta et ordinata*. The distinctions provided 'a rich array of tools for the analysis of the question concerning the necessity of Christ's satisfaction' (p. 100).

Schendel's research revealed that William Twisse's views stood 'in fairly strict continuity with the broad Augustinian consensus of the medieval scholastic tradition' (p. 177). Twisse adopted this view, that 'it was within God's power to redeem fallen humanity by some other means than by the satisfaction of Christ' (p. 177). While 'redemption of fallen humanity by Christ is necessary, it cannot be said to be 'absolutely necessary. It is hypothetically necessary, conditional upon the divine decree' (p. 178). This view placed Twisse 'firmly within the broader Augustinian and medieval scholastic mainstream and also firmly within the Reformed scholastic tradition' (p. 178).

John Owen, says Schendel, represented ‘a more creative appropriation of elements of medieval scholastic treatments of the question, in particular of Anselm’ (p. 178). For Owen, God is Lord of God’s creation and has the right to rule over God’s created works. God is ‘most good’ in God’s own self and ‘most ready to act rightly externally, should he act externally’. God’s external actions cannot be out of accord with God’s internal goodness and rectitude. Owen’s term for this was God’s *iustia absoluta*. From these convictions, Owen went on to argue for ‘the moral necessity *ad finem regiminis* that God must punish the rebellion of fallen rational creatures’. Here Owen followed Anselm by contending that ‘if a rational creature rebels against God, then God must either punish them or satisfy that punishment for them’. If God is ‘to redeem fallen humanity, then, he can only do so by means of the punishment of a sponsor, who must be the God-man’. This moral necessity is, according to Owen, ‘not strictly speaking an absolute necessity’. Yet, for Owen, this was ‘not simply a hypothetical necessary grounded alone in the will of God’. For God ‘*could not have* redeemed that fallen rational creature in any other way. It was necessary to redeem them by Christ, the God-man’. This necessity was not only or primarily grounded in the will of God, but primarily in ‘God’s divine nature as absolutely just and secondarily in his will. Thus a moral necessity includes both hypothetical and absolute elements’. Schendel sees Owen’s position to be ‘somewhat outside the mainstream of the medieval scholastic tradition, and outside the Augustinian heritage of that tradition’. While Owen appropriated ‘principles, distinctions, concepts, and lines of argumentation’ from the mainstream medieval tradition, Schendel says Owen ‘argued for a different conclusion’. Some Reformed before – and after – Owen followed his argumentation. In this way, ‘Owen, too, is firmly within the Reformed scholastic tradition on this question, though his was not the only position taken among the Reformed scholastics’ (p. 179).

Schendel wants to maintain that both Twisse and Owen – and Reformed scholastics as a whole – ‘explicitly appropriated the medieval scholastic theological tradition’ (p. 179). In this he contends that ‘those who have charged that this debate among the Reformed scholastics represents an anti-biblical, anti-Reformational, overly-speculative, and rationalist turn in the Reformed tradition have simply missed that broader context and continuity, and thus, have missed the reason for its perennial discussion and debate in the church’s theological history’. For Schendel, there was not radical break between the message of the Reformers and the theology of the Middle Ages (a question raised by Willem J. van Asselt). Schendel sees the primary contribution of his study here as ‘to provide further evidence for the conclusions of the revised historiography of the recent scholarship on the Reformed orthodox’ (pp. 179, cf. 11–18).

This work is a careful and illuminating study of the theological issue of the necessity of Christ’s satisfaction. In the seventeenth century, Richard Baxter wrote (1649) this had become ‘that great controverted point’, an issue of ‘great dispute’ among ‘many of our own divines’ (p. 37). Schendel’s book helps us understand the components and varieties of views these controversies engendered.

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