

## Reviews



**David Fergusson and Mark W. Elliott, eds., *The History of Scottish Theology, Volume 1: Celtic Origins to Reformed Orthodoxy* (Oxford: OUP, 2019), pp xii+389, ISBN 978-0198759331. £95.00**

The OUP *History of Scottish Theology* is a three-volume set tracking Scottish theology from Celtic origins right through to around 2000. This first volume covers Celtic origins to Reformed orthodoxy (early 1700s). The set fills a significant gap, providing something of a reference work in the history of Scottish theology. The work seeks to present the mosaic of Scottish historical theology, not seeking to tell a specific story, but to illuminate the various contexts, themes, and texts. As with all multiple-author works, accessibility of articles varies. Some are very readable and highly accessible, whereas others will be most profitably read by those with significant learning in the area. Overall, this volume is an excellent work and should find a prominent place on the shelves of theological libraries in Scotland and beyond.

The volume is divided into 25 chapters, with the first of those chapters an editorial introduction to the three-volume set, by David Fergusson and Mark W. Elliott. Subsequent chapters cover various aspects of Scottish theology: from “Theology in Scotland before Scholasticism” (Chapter 2), by Thomas O’Loughlin; to “Boundaries of Scottish Reformed Orthodoxy, 1560–1700” (Chapter 25) by R. Scott Spurlock. No one story is sought, but rather the various by-paths of theology are illuminated. In this vein, the work does not focus exclusively on any one trajectory or denomination, but seeks to describe the theologies of Roman Catholic theologians, Episcopalian theologians, and Presbyterian theologians.

Chapter 5, on “Liturgical Theology before 1600”, demonstrates the value of a close examination of sources. Through the chapter, Stephen Mark Holmes discusses liturgical theology, what it was, and how it was practised. As Holmes writes, ‘Liturgical interpretation [...] seeks to understand Christian revelation as it is mediated to humanity through the symbolic world of the sacred liturgy’ (p. 54). Contrary to what one might assume, while Protestant sources attack the Roman Catholic interpretations, they do not so much attack the method itself. In fact,

liturgical interpretation is found in both Roman Catholic and Protestant sources. Holmes demonstrates continuity in the method, continuity which ‘warns us against taking the polemical dichotomies of the Reformation at face value’ (p. 66).

Throughout the volume there is a real sense in which research is aimed at contextually placing theological developments. Theologies and theologians are treated as people of their times, and a great effort is made to understand their work in this light. Some chapters suggest the need to reassess common pictures presented of certain theologies. In Chapter 20, Aaron Clay Denlinger examines the Aberdeen Doctors and Henry Scougal. He argues that superficial knowledge of the Aberdeen Doctors has led to them being co-opted for various theological convictions and ecclesiastical programmes. As such his essay aims to present the beginnings of a more balanced and accurate view of the scholarship of these figures.

Another chapter which stood out as particularly insightful with respect to contextualisation was the chapter on the *Marrow* controversy (1718–22). In Chapter 24, Stephen Myers re-examines the controversy as a natural development of Scottish federal theology. He shows how it could be that ministers with evangelical convictions could be found on both sides of the debate. This, he argues, is because the specific wording of the *Marrow* was on trial, wording which when viewed through two main variations of federal theology led to very different understandings.

Some chapters explore under-researched areas and suggest avenues of future research. For example, in his chapter on “Theology in Scotland before Scholasticism”, O’Loughlin highlights various findings which can provide insights into theology in Scotland before scholasticism. However, the main difficulties in this area lie in the paucity of discoveries. This period presents numerous challenges, but is also ripe for further study: study which, as O’Loughlin puts it, will illuminate ‘another set of local variations [...] within the mosaic of Latin Christianity’ (p. 21). Another area awaiting further research is “Early Modern Jurisprudence and Theology” (Chapter 23). In this chapter, Thomas Green explores some of the ways the Reformation and Scottish theology interacted with the laws of Scotland. Such work awaits further exploration, but demonstrates how seriously theological ideals linked to early Scottish covenantal theology were taken, with at least some expression in law. This research can also demonstrate where theological ideals failed to be taken up.

The volume explores theology which may be broadly described as Scottish. This means that it includes both theologies developed in Scotland and those developed outwith Scotland by Scottish expatriates and exiles. One prime example of the extension to theology developed outwith Scotland is found in Chapter 22, “Early Modern French and Dutch Connections”, by James Eglinton. Links between Scottish theologians and their French and Dutch counterparts are explored, with an emphasis on Scottish theologians who moved to France and the Netherlands.

Despite its manifold strengths, some minor criticisms may be levelled at the lack of accessibility in some areas. While much of the work should be accessible to people with various levels of academic study, some of the work will prove less accessible. Although this is generally due to the technical nature of the subject matter and so is not, on the whole, problematic.

Overall, this volume is an excellent contribution to its field. It is for the most part very readable and it does an excellent job of illuminating current scholarship on the mosaic of Scottish historical theology. I highly recommend this volume and look forward to poring through the subsequent volumes in the future.

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**David Fergusson and Mark W. Elliott, eds., *The History of Scottish Theology, Volume 2: The Early Enlightenment to the Late Victorian Era* (Oxford: OUP, 2019), pp. xvi + 446, ISBN 978-0198759348. £95.00**

The second volume of the OUP *History of Scottish Theology* picks up where the first left off in the 1700s and takes the reader through to the early 1900s. Unlike the first volume, the second lacks any section describing the scope of the series. However, from the first volume we know that the set seeks to present the mosaic of Scottish historical theology, not seeking to tell a specific story, but to illuminate the various contexts, themes and texts. As with the first, this volume is an excellent work, deserving a