

and find ways forward where these appear in conflict with what God requires of us.

At certain points this book may disappoint some people who hold committed theological views. It must be said that this book was not written as a theological argument of what cultural features are right and wrong. Rather, it is about analysis of culture, often leaving the judgement of right and wrong for the reader to make. It should be accepted for use on this basis.

This book could prove of great value to the church in Scotland and more widely. I wholeheartedly recommend it to the church and to theological college libraries to have on their shelves. It is well worth the read for anyone seeking to engage a non-Christian culture and even for those seeking to bring greater unity within a denomination containing multiple cultures.

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Paul Helm, *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018), pp. ix + 282, ISBN 978-1601786104. £23.99

Although there has been a surge in scholarship aimed at retrieving the work of Reformed scholastics in their historical context, the majority of these studies have focused on the topics of prolegomena, doctrine of God, and the nature of free will. While such inquiries are helpful in revealing the fundamental methodological approach of Reformed Orthodoxy, there is another means of entry to their methodology which has yet to be directly surveyed: theological anthropology. Paul Helm contributes to the growing field of studies on the Reformed Orthodox tradition by providing a series of chapters surveying influential Reformed figures who wrote on anthropology from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. Though containing some oddities which could be improved in a future edition, overall the work is an excellent contribution to Reformation Studies which

fills a significant lacuna in contemporary literature on Reformed Orthodoxy.

The book is well organized with a topical rather than chronological progression which reflects its aim ‘to provide a reasonable and representative range’ of material predominately concerned with faculty psychology in Reformed thought from 1550 to 1750 (p. xi). The first chapter sets out to contextualize various Reformed figures against the background of the Patristic and medieval streams which shaped their thought the most: Augustinian Platonism and Thomist Aristotelianism. Importantly, Helm is careful to note the places where Christian commitments lead these early theologians to differ from their philosophical predecessors, such as Augustine’s denial of the soul’s pre-existence, or simply modify them to cohere with biblical concerns, such as Thomas’ slightly more dualist adaptation of hylomorphism to explain the soul’s persistence after death. In Chapter 2, Helm explains how both streams, though in tension with one another, enter Reformed theology via Vermigli and Calvin. Chapters 3 to 8 further unpack the diversity in Reformed thought by examining various subjects such as the nature of conscience, how the soul’s faculties relate to each other, and the philosophical influence of Descartes and Locke. Throughout the work, Helm brings theological anthropology into conversation with a wide range of doctrines such as creation, the fall, grace and free will, justification and eschatology. The book ends with a helpful summary chapter on the value of studying Reformed scholasticism and three concluding appendices.

Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards should be carefully read by academics and, due to its breadth in scope, will likely become a standard reference on the subject for many years to come. The depth with which Helm approaches topics like *homonculus*, *synderesis*, and synchronic contingency may discourage unfamiliar lay readers, but Helm’s lucid and accessible writing style goes a long way in making the conceptually complex material easier to understand for those with the patience to work through it. Furthermore, Helm brings out the anthropological assumptions present across other doctrines such as regeneration and the nature of faith, which explains the framework of thought behind the more pastoral writings of figures like Owen and Bunyan. Though some readers may disapprove of Helm’s inclusion of various Baptist figures, such as John Gill, Robert Purnell and others, in a work committed to Reformed

Orthodoxy, Helm rightfully chooses to bypass the contentious question of what is central to a 'Reformed' identity and instead focuses on the streams of diversity amidst continuity within the tradition. This is present both ideologically and geographically as Helm regularly interacts with various Scottish theologians who, although neglected in the twentieth century, have begun to receive increased scholarly recognition. Readers interested in the Scottish contribution to Reformed Orthodoxy will find references to John Weemes, John Strangius and Thomas Halyburton a welcome feature of the work. Finally, readers will appreciate the balanced approach throughout the work: for while Helm is clearly seeking to retrieve a Reformed contribution to anthropology, he does not hesitate to explain where tension or ambiguity can be found in their thought. For example, Helm points out Gill's denial of the maxim 'ought implies can', yet without subsequently distinguishing between moral and natural ability (p. 150). And while Helm is explicit in his commitment to the contested thesis that there is a predominantly Thomist influence upon the Reformed tradition (p. 19), he is willing to admit when a Scotistic influence can be found, such as in Theophilus Gale (p. 127), who stresses that the divine will sets the standard for moral action.

As would be expected for some experienced readers in the field, Helm's controversy with the Utrecht school regarding the question of synchronic contingency and the influence of Scotism features briefly at key points, but, other than a few references to Richard A. Muller's latest book, *Divine Will and Human Choice*,¹ Helm does little to respond to Muller's criticisms of his view beyond footnoting the relevant literature of their past debate. I would have found it helpful to have an appendix reviewing Muller's recent work, which directly relates to major themes concerning contingency and free will present in *Human Nature from Calvin to Edwards*. Additionally, although the work is admittedly a survey, at times Helm does little to justify or explain why he is appealing to a specific author. This is particularly surprising with lesser-known figures like Robert Purnell or Richard Bernard who deserve more by way of introduction to be useful. Finally, the appendix on John Locke could

¹ See Richard A. Muller, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017.

have been incorporated into the flow of argument in Chapter 8, which would have made its relevance clearer.

If philosophy is to be the handmaiden of theology, then Helm demonstrates how history is the nurse who can help give birth to new horizons for contemporary scholarship. Though faculty psychology has fallen out of favour in recent years, it is vital to understanding our theological forebears and is intimately related to issues across the doctrinal spectrum. Thus it needs to be considered in its theological context before being rejected for a more contemporary view.

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