

*Scholasticism Reformed: Essays in Honour of
Willem J. van Asselt*

Maarten Wisse, Marcel Sarot and Willemien
Otten (eds.)

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SUMMARY

Scholasticism Reformed is a collection of essays published in honour of Willem van Asselt, a leading figure in the study of Reformed scholasticism and a pioneer of the 'new school' of its interpretation. It is undoubtedly an important work for it not only extends the reach of current studies on Reformed scholasticism, but also addresses the relevance of the scholastic method for the modern theological enterprise. On the whole, the essays vindicate the new school interpretation of Van Asselt and his colleagues, demonstrating not only the metaphysical sophistication of Reformed scholasticism but also its intimate link to the piety and exegesis of the Reformation age.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Scholasticism Reformed [Reformierte Scholastik] ist eine Sammlung von Aufsätzen, die zu Ehren von Willem van Asselt veröffentlicht wurden, einer der führenden Personen auf dem Gebiet der Reformierten Scholastik und einer der Pioniere der „Neuen Schule“ ihrer Interpretation. Es ist zweifelsohne ein bedeutsames Werk, weil es nicht nur über die Reichweite gegenwärtiger Studien zur Reformierten Scholastik hinausgeht, sondern auch die Relevanz des scholastischen Ansatzes für die moderne Theologie anspricht. Insgesamt rechtfertigen die Aufsätze die neue Auslegungsschule Van Asselts und seiner Kollegen. Sie zeigen nicht nur die metaphysische Gelehrsamkeit der Reformierten Scholastik auf, sondern auch ihre enge Verbindung zu Frömmigkeit und Auslegung im Zeitalter der Reformation.

RÉSUMÉ

Voilà un ouvrage collectif publié en l'honneur de Willem van Asselt, grand spécialiste de l'étude de la scolastique réformée et pionnier de la « nouvelle école » d'interprétation dans ce domaine. Cet ouvrage est important car il élargit le champ des études actuelles sur la scolastique réformée et parce qu'il aborde aussi la question de la pertinence de la méthode scolastique pour l'entreprise théologique moderne. Dans l'ensemble, les auteurs défendent la nouvelle école d'interprétation de Van Asselt et de ses collègues. Ils montrent la sophistication métaphysique de la scolastique réformée, mais aussi son rapport étroit à la piété et à l'exégèse du temps de la Réformation.

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Scholasticism Reformed is a collection of essays published in honour of Professor Willem van Asselt, a leading figure in the study of Reformed scholasticism and a pioneer of the 'new school' of its interpretation. Van Asselt is especially known for his work on Johannes Cocceius

and Gisbertus Voetius and his discussion of the development of later federal theology. With his research group 'Classical Reformed Theology' he has also promoted the controversial thesis that the conceptual kernel of Reformed ontology lies in the Scotist notion of synchronic contingency.

The first section of the volume addresses the theme of 'Reformed Scholasticism and the Scotist Heritage'. Here the essay by M. Bac and T. Pleizier is programmatic in suggesting that the Reformed scholastic method is characterised by both rigorous analysis and a desire for reverent exposition of authorities. These themes are taken up in the essay on modal ontology by A. Vos and E. Dekker, which demonstrates in detail the sophisticated framework of Francis Turretin's discussion of necessity, contingency and freedom and its debt to Scotist metaphysics. While both these essays take seriously the methodological character and fruitfulness of the Reformed scholastic enterprise they are challenged by the other two essays in this section. In a light-hearted offering R.A. Mylius disputes the fruitfulness of Scotist metaphysics for Reformed theology, arguing that it could involve its practitioners in inextricable metaphysical difficulties. A more serious challenge is provided by Otten, a noted medievalist, who disputes the methodological character of scholasticism *tout court*, arguing that medieval scholasticism is by no means reducible to a purely conceptual enterprise.

The second section, entitled 'Reformed Scholasticism at Home and Abroad' focuses on the connections between Reformed scholasticism, piety and exegesis and the continuities between Protestant orthodoxy and Reformation theology. A.J. Beck highlights the participationist framework of knowledge shared by Voetius, the high scholastic, and Melancthon, the Reformer, and thus draws important lines of continuity between their scientific understanding of theology in the best spirit of the new school. In a similar vein F.G.M. Broeyer and R.A. Blacketer explore intimate links between method and piety in Reformed scholasticism, while A. Goudriaan revisits the Synod of Dordrecht demonstrating that debates over justification by faith were at the heart of the Reformed – Remonstrant disputes of the early seventeenth century. Significantly, this section also includes essays by R.A. Muller and C.R. Trueman, co-founders with Van Asselt of the new school. They highlight the vitality of the scholastic method demonstrating respectively its allegiance to earlier patterns of Christian scholasticism in opposition to the 'new philosophy' of the seventeenth century and the biblical grounding of its developed federal theology.

The third section, on 'Scholasticism and Modern Systematic Theology', is likely to be the most relevant to those outside the narrow field of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed theology. While the essays by R.H. Reeling Brouwer, Wisse and S. Rehnman provide important constructive examples of the new school methodology in action over issues of covenant theol-

ogy and theodicy, it is the remaining essays which are likely to provoke the most comment. For these address quite pointedly the usefulness of the scholastic method in modern dogmatic construction, displaying a complete spectrum of opinions. Most critical is G. van den Brink who argues that Reformed scholasticism was largely responsible for the marginalisation of the Trinity in seventeenth-century theology. At fault he views the conceptual tools of scholasticism itself which divorced discussion of the divine trinity from the divine essence. Much more positive evaluations are given by Sarot and by L.J. van den Brom, with the former arguing that the conceptual tools of philosophical theology reflect a new, reformed mode of scholastic enquiry and the latter suggesting the contemporary fruitfulness of an 'open scholasticism' able to appropriate the relational and covenantal language of Reformed theologians such as Cocceius. In the final essay of the collection, B. Loonstra provides a brief but stout defence of the Reformed scholastic enterprise, arguing that all realist accounts of the theology presuppose an analytic method.

Scholasticism Reformed is an important work which not only extends the reach of current studies on Reformed scholasticism, but also addresses the relevance of the scholastic method for the modern theological enterprise. On the whole the essays vindicate the new school interpretation of Van Asselt and his colleagues, demonstrating not only the metaphysical sophistication of Reformed scholasticism but also its intimate link to the piety and exegesis of the Reformation age. While difficulties concerning the new school interpretation are raised, notably by Otten and Van den Brink, these are unlikely to prove insuperable and will hopefully lead to further nuancing of our understanding of the scholastic enterprise broadly conceived. In terms of contemporary theological application it is clear that Reformed scholasticism, with its metaphysical subtleties and secure biblical grounding, is once again becoming a force to be reckoned with. While its philosophical form and idiom are unlikely to prove attractive to all evangelical theologians this is nevertheless a very welcome development.

Simon Burton,
Edinburgh, Scotland

The Reformation of Feeling. Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany

Susan C. Karant-Nunn

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 342 pp,
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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur analyse l'influence des ecclésiastiques catholiques, luthériens et réformés sur les émotions religieuses dans la première période de l'Allemagne moderne. En présentant les traits caractéristiques des expressions d'émotion dans les différentes traditions, essentiellement en comparant les

productions homilétiques, elle aboutit à un curieux panorama historique d'expérience religieuse inter-dénominationnelle. Un aspect unique de son travail réside dans la description de la piété émotionnelle de la gent féminine laïque. Malgré certaines ambiguïtés conceptuelles, l'ouvrage apporte une contribution importante à l'étude historique de l'expérience religieuse. Les pasteurs, les théologiens et les historiens tireront profit de cet excellent travail.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Susan C. Karant-Nunn analysiert, wie katholische, lutherische und reformierte Kirchenleute zur Bildung religiöser Gefühle im Deutschland der frühen Moderne beigetragen haben. Sie verfolgt die emotionalen Charakteristiken der unterschiedlichen Traditionen, meist auf dem Weg des homiletischen Vergleichs, und unterbreitet einen faszinierenden historischen Bericht über überkonfessionelle religiöse Erfahrungen. Ein einzigartiges Merkmal von Karant-Nunns Projekt ist ihre Beschreibung der emotionalen Frömmigkeit weiblicher Laien in der frühen Moderne. Trotz einiger gedanklicher Unstimmigkeiten, leistet das Buch einen beträchtlichen Beitrag zur historischen Erforschung religiöser Erfahrung. Pfarrer, Theologen und Historiker werden gleichermaßen Gewinn aus diesem ausgezeichneten Werk ziehen.

SUMMARY

Susan C. Karant-Nunn analyses how Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed ecclesiastics shaped religious emotions in early modern Germany. In tracing the emotional features of the different traditions, for the most part by means of homiletic comparisons, the author presents an intriguing historical account of inter-denominational religious experience. A unique feature of Karant-Nunn's endeavour is her description of the emotional piety of early-modern female lay persons. Despite some conceptual ambiguity, the book contributes greatly to the historical study of religious experience. Pastors, theologians and historians will equally benefit from this excellent work.

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With *The Reformation of Feeling*, Susan C. Karant-Nunn, Professor of History at the University of Arizona, ventures into a stimulating study located at the crossroads of history, psychology and theology. The author aptly defines the goal of her challenging endeavour as: 'this book is about the ways in which Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist ecclesiastical leaders in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Germany tried to shape the religious feelings of those in their charge' (3). With historical sensitivity and literary elegance, Karant-Nunn successfully delivers on this promise and takes the reader back to a fascinating time. In the first three chapters, she carefully analyses the homiletic characteristics of Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist clergymen and traces the emotional content and the impact of their sermons on the listeners.

According to the author, Catholic preachers focused