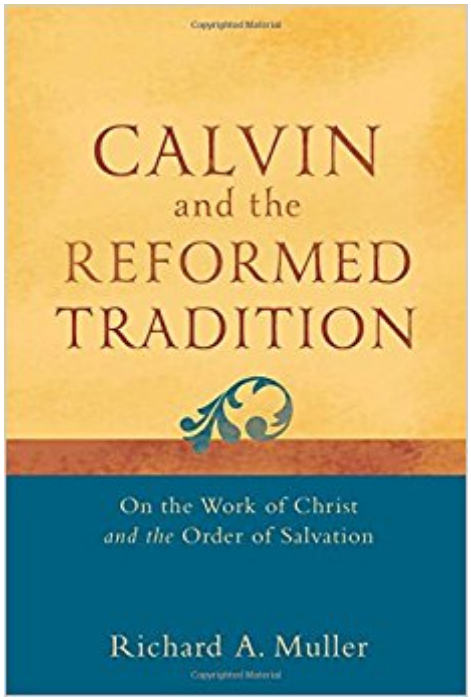
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Calvin And The Reformed Tradition: On The Work Of Christ And The Order Of Salvation



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Synopsis

A world-class scholar examines the relationship of Calvin’s theology to the Reformed tradition and provides historical perspective on topics of current interest.

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Customer Reviews

"This forcefully written and persuasively argued book casts in relief the diversity and complexity of the Reformed tradition in the early modern period. With an astonishing grasp of a broad range of sources, Muller offers a challenging and illuminating examination of the tightly woven relations between theology and history. The analysis is penetrating and the arguments break new ground, all in conversation with generations of scholarship on Reformed thought. Essential reading."--Bruce Gordon, Yale Divinity School"Once again, Muller has provided us with a sophisticated and provocative analysis of the Reformed tradition. He teaches us that this tradition stemmed from multiple backgrounds, relied on various predecessors and sources, and must be understood in terms of changing circumstances. This book is indispensable for understanding the development of the theology of the Reformed tradition."--Susan Schreiner, University of Chicago Divinity School"Written with Muller’s usual candor and suffused with a mastery of the original sources, these essays are a welcome defense of the integrity and independence of the Reformed tradition’s sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exponents against those who would distort the historical record or reduce them to a series of footnotes to a Calvin who never existed. Sensitive to historical context and literary genre as well as to the influence of theological traditions and biblical exegesis, these

essays are a clinic in responsible historical-theological method."--John L. Thompson, Fuller Theological Seminary; author of Reading the Bible with the Dead"Richard Muller has been the key player in the extensive revision of how the theology of Calvin and his contemporaries is understood to relate to that of the later Reformed tradition. Wide-ranging in scope, penetrating in argument, and breathtaking in scholarship, these essays are representative of Muller at his very best."--Carl R. Trueman, Westminster Theological Seminary"In this impressive book, Muller gives a clarion call for scholars to awaken from their dogmatic slumbers when approaching the early Reformed tradition and Reformed orthodoxy on the application of Christ's work, union with Christ, and the order of salvation. Full of nuance and fresh historical insight that cuts through muddy thinking, this is an indispensable resource."--J. Todd Billings, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan

Richard A. Muller (PhD, Duke University) is senior fellow of the Junius Institute for Digital Reformation Research and P. J. Zondervan Professor of Historical Theology Emeritus at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He is the author of numerous books, including The Unaccommodated Calvin, After Calvin, and Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics. He also serves as the editor for the Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought series.

As Scott Oliphint has said, Muller is omniscient when it comes to Calvin studies and Post-Reformation Reformed Orthodoxy. Here again Muller points out that Calvin has been appropriated by a number of groups who have tended to caricature his teachings partly because of the Remonstrants in Europe that were refuted by the members who penned the Canons of Dordrecht.

Solid history reporting, and comprehensive Bible knowledge collating. Unaffected by later Pietism, Methodism, Revivalism , Neo-orthodoxy, or Narcissistic American Evagelicalism. Just plain, rare, Augustinian-Calvin biblical orthodoxy. Misses one thing -- the teaching of eternal justification which is the basis for man's experience of justification in time.

Richard A. Muller, `Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work ofChrist and the Order of Salvation', Baker Academic (Grand Rapids:Michigan), 2012.This is a nicely presented book which is well written, and whichengages in academic historical theology to the very highest standardby one of the leading experts in the field.The book has footnotes where they belong, on the bottom of the pagethey are referenced on. These are mainly used to reference otherworks, but sometimes

contain comment on such referenced works. Thebook has one general index which contains both names and topicscovered. It does not have a collected bibliography, nor a Scriptureindex.The book has the following chapters:Chapter 1. From Reformation to Orthodoxy: The Reformed Tradition in the Early Modern EraChapter 2. Was Calvin a Calvinist?Chapter 3. Calvin on Christ's Satisfaction and its Efficacy: The Issue of Limited AtonementChapter 4. A Tale of Two Wills? Calvin and Amyrault and Du Moulin on Ezk. 18:23Chapter 5. Davenant and Du Moulin: Variant Approaches to Hypothetical UniversalismChapter 6. The Golden Chain and the Causality of Salvation: Beginnings of the Reformed Ordu SalutisChapter 7. Union with Christ and the Ordu Salutis: Reflections on Developments in Early Modern Reformed ThoughtChapter 8. Calvin, Beza and the Later Reformed on Assurance of Salvation and the "Practical Syllogism"Chapter 9. ConclusionsAnyone with even a passing acquaintance with contemporary Reformedtheology will know that appeals are still made to what John Calvin --the second-generation sixteenth-century Reformer who worked in Geneva-- taught. Someone with more exposure will be aware that on a numberof issues Calvin has been claimed to be more in step with one oranother (modern or historical) insight that deviates from thetraditional Reformed position. Muller's book is masterly review andrebuttal of these claims based on a number of crucial insights intohow historical theological scholarship should be performed, and anextensive knowledge of the primary and secondary literature.Muller's insights include:i) The Reformed tradition was always a confessional tradition, and hadmany teachers - not merely Calvin. Calvin himself worked within thistradition, and the later tradition drew not only from Calvin but fromnumerous other Reformed thinkers. The Reformed tradition never sawthemselves as "Calvinists" in the sense of being particularlyassociated with Calvin himself.ii) Calvin needs to be understood firstly in terms of his sixteenth-century context, and not as answering questions which only arose inlater theological debate.These two factors mean that the question of whether Calvin was"against" or "for" later "Calvinism" is often deeply problematic.In chapters 3-5, Muller tackles the complex question of therelationship between Calvin and the later Reformed tradition overwhether Christ's atonement was for a particular people or was anhypothetical universal atonement. Muller does a good job of showingthat "limited atonement" is an anachronistic and unhelpful term tounderstand any of the Reformed positions in the early to mid sixteenthcentury, and that there were other Reformed versions of hypotheticaluniversal atonement apart from Amyrault's version which was to causecontroversy with its talk of two "wills" in God.In chapters 6 and 7 Muller turns his attention to the question of theReformed ordu salutis, and in particular to whether or not earlymodern Reformed thought moved away from a Calvinian emphasis onunion with Christ to a causal ordu salutis which emphasisedpredestination rather than Christ. Muller convincingly shows

thatthere were significant commonalities between Calvin and the laterReformed theologians, including no attempt to add temporal aspects tothe ordu salutis other than the obvious ones, and the maintenance ofthe emphasis of union with Christ.In Chapter 8 Muller addresses R.T. Kendall's thesis that early modernReformed thought introduced legalism by grounding assurance ofsalvation on good works rather than faith in Christ, which Kendallclaimed, was Calvin's approach. Muller succeeds in showing both thatCalvin did point to evidences of sanctification as evidences of aeternal election, and that in Reformed theology this teaching avoidslegalism as the works in question are a result of being called andhence brought to faith, united with Christ, justified, and renewed,and not the cause of it.This book demonstrates massive erudition, and convincingly demolishespoor historical scholarship which has plagued this subject, as peoplehave tried to claim Calvin as their own. The arguments advanced arenot only based on better historical methodology, but are based on theacquaintance of a vast amount of early modern Reformed theology bydiverse theologians (often in Latin). This book is a must read foranyone planning to work in this field.However, this book is not suitable for anyone hoping to learn theologyfrom - say - Calvin. Muller is writing for fellow experts, and oftenassumes familiarity with the theological debate, and only focuses inon aspects of it which are controversial. Furthermore, Muller is sucha good historian - placing Calvin in his context - that generalsweeping application to contemporary modern theological debates andissues is missing. Indeed, it is exactly that kind of application ofCalvin that has distorted the understanding of the historical Calvin,and this is exactly what Muller is fighting against. Nevertheless, bybeing so focused on historical theology, it does mean that Muller hasfailed to meet the needs of those of us who study historical theologymore for the theology than the history.Overall, a masterly work that corrects numerous mistaken argumentsthat have distorted what Calvin actually taught, and how theReformed tradition actually developed.

In Calvin and the reformed tradition author Richard Muller provides an in-depth and thorough look at Calvin's soteriology as it relates to the reformed tradition. This work provides the reader with a historical theology focused on the work of Christ and the order of salvation.The high point of this book involves Mullers use of many sources, quoting them in their context and in their times and showing how they related to and influenced reform theology. The author shows that reformed theology grew out of many different backgrounds and influences besides Calvin himself. Again, this is quite evident when reading through this book and noticing the large amount of references and footnotes to other works. The amount of detail, research, and references that have gone into this book are truly outstanding. I was blown away with how much information was in here that I was not

aware of. This is truly a great historical work.This book however, is very deep and quite thorough. It is highly scholarly and historically heavy and should not be thought of or used as an introduction into reformed theology. It will take time and effort to wade through all the material presented here. With that being said, Calvin and the Reformed Tradition should be a must-have for anyone interested in understanding the development of the theology of the reformed tradition.I received a free copy of this book from Baker Academic in exchange for an honest review.

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