

Title: Claude Pajon (1626-1685) and the Academy of Saumur
Author: Albert J. Gootjes
Date: 2012 Degree: Ph.D., Calvin Theological Seminary
Supervisor: Richard A. Muller
External Reader: Maria-Cristina Pitassi

Digital full text not available

Call Number: BV4070.C2842 2011 .G66

Published as *Claude Pajon (1626-1785) and the Academy of Saumur: The First Controversy over Grace*.
Brill's Series in Church History 64. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the life, writings and polemics of Claude Pajon (1626-1685) throughout the first so-called Pajonist controversy (1665-1667). Previous scholarship situated him in the context of a development it saw within the theology originating from the Academy of Saumur and passing from John Cameron (ca. 1579-1625), through Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664), and then to Pajon. This study argues that this trajectory needs revision. Pajon developed a theory of grace which denied the necessity of an immediate, internal work of the Holy Spirit on either intellect or will, preceding the mediate work through the Word and other means. To characterize this as a development from Amyraut is inaccurate in at least two ways. First, Pajon implicitly – and, on one occasion, also explicitly! – rejected his former teacher's view. Secondly, he did not himself devise his theory on grace but adopted it from Paul Testard (ca. 1596-1651), pastor of Blois, who as another disciple of Cameron had already defended it during Amyraut's time. Pajon appears to have adopted Testard's view shortly after his formal education at Saumur when he completed his training under this pastor's mentorship at Blois. When Pajon began to disseminate this view in (manuscript) writings, a controversy broke out which pitted him as a "radical" Cameronian against the "moderate" Cameronians. Cameron's works suggest that Pajon had at least a good case in claiming to represent his true theological heritage, although their ambiguity means that neither Pajon's nor his opponents' interpretation can be entirely excluded. In light of the demonstrable importance Cameron's writings had both in Pajon's writings and in the ensuing polemics, this study also places serious questions behind the frequent identification of him as a Cartesian. Finally, by way of an analysis of the controversy, it seeks to explain why Pajon received support from the academy and Provincial Synod of Anjou during the 1660s, only to have both institutions condemn his views a decade later during the second Pajonist controversy. That institutional and intellectual developments which took place at the academy and in Pajon's thought in the intervening time were of decisive importance only invites further study.