

given the thesis of the work that true or evangelical Calvinism is infralapsarian and not supralapsarian. Does Westminster theology support this claim or not? And what of the accusation of Walls and Dongell that many contemporary Reformed theologians oscillate between compatibilist and libertarian views of human free will? One wonders if Peterson and Williams have limited the true scope of Reformed thought on this issue in order to defend their own versions of Calvinism not only from Arminians but also from some of their fellow Calvinists. If so then a more explicit treatment of these issues would have been welcomed.

Read in tandem these two volumes provide a fine survey of the strengths and weaknesses of the two systems and show why the issue of Calvinism vs Arminianism is a perennial point of contention in the church. In the wake of these two introductory volumes expect to see a number of more specific works come off the printing presses that seek to pick up the discussion these two works have initiated. If subsequent works can show the same irenic and Christian tone of these works then the church has much to be thankful to these authors for.

Myk Habets

Anthony N.S. Lane. *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's Institutes*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. (174 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-8010-3731-3]

Anthony Lane (Professor of Historical Theology, London School of Theology) is one of the leading Calvin scholars working today and has established a reputation for his articulate, precise, and exhaustive knowledge of Calvin, his contexts, sources, and theology. Over numerous books and articles Lane has proved himself a reliable and sympathetic reader of Calvin's thought, and yet as a first rate scholar he is able to turn the critical spotlight on Calvin and show where and how his theology is as much a product of his time as it is prophetic to his time. In this work Lane provides a 'reader's guide' to the 1559 edition of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* as it is found in the McNeill-Battles English translation (Westminster, 1960). As such this work is to be used specifically in conjunction with this English translation, with page numbers matching that work.

What is a reader's guide? It is a brief outline, summary, comment, and direction through the four large books of the *Institutes* and the eighty

chapters contained therein. For each Book and for each Chapter Lane provides a concise introduction which outlines the context and content of this part of the *Institutes*. This in itself is an extremely useful resource for those new to the work and a good reminder for those more familiar with it. For each major section Lane also provides a few questions to help focus the student as they read through the selected portion of the *Institutes*. Next follows summaries of each Section and select paragraphs, indicating which paragraphs to read from the *Institutes* and which to skip due to their historically localised nature or polemical content which is not essential reading today. In addition to these features Lane makes lucid and succinct comments on a variety of issues including theology, history, and the reliability or otherwise of the Battles translation, its footnotes, and other detailed features. The volume concludes with a two-page appendix which is a 'Table of Reading Lengths' which tells approximately how many pages of the McNeill-Battles edition of Calvin's *Institutes* are covered in each reading Lane has included. On average each reading is a manageable eighteen pages.

To take one example to illustrate how the work proceeds consider *Institutes* 1.6-9, 'The Bible and the Holy Spirit' (pp. 42-48). Lane provides a one paragraph introduction which summarises chapters 6-9, followed by the following Questions to ask as the *Institutes* are read:

Why do we need the Bible (1.6)? How does the Spirit bear witness to the Word, and what part does rational argument play in this (1.7-8)? How should we react to alleged manifestations of the Holy Spirit (1.9)? (p. 43.)

Then follows the summaries of the selected paragraphs of these sections, namely: 1.6-7; 1.8.1, 13; 1.9. On *Institutes* 1.6.2 he comments: 'The importance of Scripture and our need to study it. Calvin refers to the world as a theatre, even before Shakespeare's 'All the world's a stage,' (p. 43). On *Institutes* 1.7.4 we read:

Notice the first two sentences. Arguments of the authority of Scripture have some value but do not suffice. If we are to have the certainty that we need, we require the 'secret testimony of the Spirit' (sentence before footnote 12). In paragraph 2, we see why arguments do not suffice (see the first sentence). Arguments give birth to probable opinions, not to the certainty of fait. In the section after footnote 14, especially observe the reference to Isaiah, which gives us the heart of Calvin's case. Until the Spirit illumines our minds, we ever waver among many doubts (last sentence). (P. 45.)

One can see how Lane acts as a guide through the *Institutes*, bringing in ripe observations and informed scholarship, yet never allowing his own voice to eclipse that of Calvin's.

Lane designed the *Reader* to be used in classes on Calvin to aid teachers in getting students into the *Institutes* and actually reading it for themselves. The division of the readings into eighteen pages and the succinct comments Lane provides to guide readers through the work are brilliantly devised and most welcome. There is no doubt this text will be widely used in classrooms around the globe. Lane has done the academy a service in showing how a good reading course on the *Institutes* can proceed and as such has saved many of us a lot of time. I for one will turn to this book whenever students ask me to take them through the *Institutes* either in private reading groups or as part of a taught course. Now for Baker to contract someone to do the same with Barth's *Church Dogmatics*!

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John Piper. *John Calvin and His Passion for the Majesty of God*. Nottingham: IVP, 2009. (59 pp.) [ISBN: 978-1-84474-356-8]

John Piper is pastor for preaching and vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in the USA and while he is not a Calvin scholar he is one of the most widely recognised Calvinists writing today. Author of over forty books, Piper's work shows a consistent theme – to magnify the glory and majesty of God, captured in one of his many catchphrases, 'God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.' Such a motif as this provides a rationale for the books he writes centred as they are on Reformed figures and Calvinian theology. The present volume is no different as chapter one, 'God Is Who He Is' (a mere four pages) testifies to: it has nothing to do with Calvin directly but is an apologetic for the work: 'the unhidden and unashamed aim in this book is to fan the flame of your passion for the centrality and supremacy of God' (p. 12).

The present work is an extremely thin volume and is a reprint of what originally appeared as a chapter in *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin* (2000). The Quincentenary of Calvin's birth was the occasion to republish the chapter on Calvin as a separate volume. Added to this volume is a brief four-page foreword by Gerald Bray. Seven chapters and an appendix