

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*!

Myk Habets

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

provide Piper enough scope to lay bare the life of John Calvin in order to bring out the central theme of his life: the all-consuming and constraining majesty of God over all things. This is then, a tiny biography of John Calvin, with the zeal to illustrate the glory of God (p. 16) in all things as the controlling motif.

Piper chooses to open his life of Calvin with his reply to Cardinal Sadolet in 1538. As is well known, Sadolet wrote to the citizens of Geneva appealing to them to return to Roman Catholicism after their recent tryst with the Protestant Reformation. Despite being exiled from Geneva at the time, Calvin wrote a reply to Sadolet in six days and it has remained one of the outstanding treatises both of Calvin's time or any other. Piper starts here for it outlines what he sees as central to all of Calvin's life and thought. Calvin's chief contention with Rome was that it had displaced the centrality, supremacy, and majesty of the glory of God. Calvin recommends that Sadolet follows Calvin's example and aim to 'set before [man], as the prime motive of his existence, zeal to illustrate the glory of God' (p. 16). It now becomes obvious why Piper chose to begin here.

Chapter Three examines Calvin's doctrine of the assurance of salvation, based as it was on both the Word written and the Holy Spirit (the 'internal testimony of the Holy Spirit'). What unites both in Calvin's experience, and by derivation in the experience of all Christ's followers, is the Word mediates the majesty of God and the majesty of God vindicates the Word so that believers can have a firm and fixed assurance of salvation that is centred on God and not on the self (as became the case in post Reformation Reformed theology and in many forms of contemporary evangelicalism). Chapter Four details how Calvin's many works, filling forty-eight volumes, were 'hammered out on the anvil of pastoral responsibility' (p. 32). Piper's point is that Calvin was not an ivory-tower academic working in tranquil isolation (despite this being what he wanted). Instead, Calvin was the consummate pastor-scholar, one who lived to serve Christ's church. Chapter Five acts as something of a cameo as Calvin's marriage to Idelette, the birth of their three children who all died young, and the eventual death of Idelette is chronicled. Calvin the man, the husband, the father, and the emotional and tender lover are on display here. Clearly Piper is trying to establish a rounded view of Calvin against the many caricatures he has received. In Chapter Six Calvin's constant ill-health and unpopularity are mentioned in order to highlight the constancy of his perseverance. Piper highlights the fact that Calvin applied to himself the goal he encouraged in others when in his commentary on Job 33.1-7 he calls preachers to an 'invincible constancy' (p. 44). Chapter Seven continues this theme but

turns the spotlight on Calvin's commitment to expounding the Word of God in the pulpit and on paper.

Throughout this little volume Piper's prose is spritely and focussed on the central motif outlined in the first chapter. Some key snapshots of Calvin's life are helpfully brought into focus and Calvin the man, not the myth (this accounts for the inclusion of the small appendix entitled 'Calvin's Barbaric World: The Case of Michael Servetus,' pp.53-59), stands out as a warm, committed, serious, sinner redeemed by God and living in the gracious awareness that were it not for God in Christ he would be nothing.

Piper's work does border on hagiography as he paints Calvin in the best light and rarely if ever takes a contrary position to his. Calvin scholars will not find anything here they don't know already and those that aren't familiar with Calvin or dislike him are unlikely to buy or read this work. That leaves those already predisposed to Calvin and his thought as the most likely target audience, but they would pass over such a work as this for more substantial treatments like that of Charles Partee's recent work. If anyone other than such an economic draw card as Piper had written this work it surely would not have been accepted for publication. In my opinion this little volume worked best when it was part of a larger work that traced common themes across several key thinkers.

Myk Habets

***The Lord's Supper: Five Views.* Gordon T. Smith, ed. Downers Grove: IVP, 2008. (157 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-8303-2884-5]**

***Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper.* P.E. Engle and J.H. Armstrong, eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. (224 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-310-26268-8]**

Multi-views books by major publishers are now standard fare and have proven to be useful teaching aids and informative introductions to many areas of study. The latest topic to be considered from two of the major Christian publishers concerns differing views on the Lord's Supper. In these two books we are treated to a discussion between established scholars from differing traditions as they critically interact with each other's perspective.

In *The Lord's Supper: Five Views* from IVP the five views canvassed are: the Roman Catholic view by J. Gros F.S.C, the Lutheran view by J.R.