

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.

Stephenson, the Reformed view by L. Van Dyk, the Baptist view by R.E. Olson, and the Pentecostal view by V-M, Kärkkäinen. Each contributor was specifically instructed to relate their discussion to key aspects of *BEM, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper No. 111 (1982) and comment on three defining questions: the person and work of Christ, the nature and mission of the Church, and the nature of the Christian life and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Each contributor took these instructions seriously and sought, to a greater or lesser extent, to do so. This gives a focus to the book which is helpful and informative. It also grounds each of the views in an ecclesial context rather than merely leaving the discussion at the level of theory.

In the IVP work each response is limited to two pages, sometimes less than that. These are incredibly concise responses, too concise in fact for the contributors to really respond in substantial and critical ways which would fulfil the task set by the editor of inviting robust and critical interaction with different views. Unlike other multi-view books these responses tended to be big picture comments rather than providing some specific critique. As such the value of the response are limited. Very rarely in this volume do the contributors make substantive critical comments which inform the reader and illustrate a charitable difference of view. Having said this, the work does model charitable and articulate presentations of theological ideas and gracious dialogue from significant ecclesial traditions.

The inclusion of a Baptist and a Pentecostal view was extremely useful to have, given the Baptists can trace their movement back to the Reformation and there are an estimated 463 million adherents today. The problems associated with both groups, however, are that neither of them have centralised governmental bodies, nor do they have settled theological positions on the sacraments. Both Olson and Kärkkäinen acknowledge this fact and thus present a position which they consider to represent most adherents of the respective traditions. As Olson states: 'This brings us to the problem of defining *'the* Baptist view of the Lord's Super.' No such thing exists. There probably is general consensus among Baptists about what the Lord's Supper *is not* (e.g., a means of grace), but little real consensus about what it *is*' (p. 93). Olson then turns to a brief historical survey to make his point. According to Olson, the Baptist tradition began in 1525 with Anabaptism and a basic Zwinglian - memorialist view of the sacraments, a view most Baptists would probably accept. To illustrate the general Baptist theology of the Lord's Super Olson proceeds to canvass its theological history, creeds, confessions, and significant figures for crucial reflection upon the meaning and significance of the Lord's Supper. What is especially

interesting are some of the more contemporary reflections which are happy to move towards a more realistic and thus Reformed view of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Olson is clear to remind readers that this may not be the view of most laypeople in Baptist churches but it is one of the directions Baptist scholarship is pursuing.

In the responses to Olson's contribution the other contributors note and appreciate the emphasis on individual faith within the Baptist tradition. Gros, a Roman Catholic notes that '...the significance of conversion, personal faith and the gathered community, not to mention the untiring witness to religious freedom – these are the biblical heritage all Christians, stewarded by the Baptists' communities' (p. 110). Stephenson, a Lutheran, fails to see how the position outlined by Olson is any different from the standard Reformed view and doesn't step back from distancing a Lutheran view from it when he writes, '...I find the three 'Reformed' contributors united in denying the all-decisive word and deed of the supreme Teacher of Christendom, Christ our enfleshed God...Like Luther...I will take 'pure blood with the pope' any day over 'mere wine' with those to whom the Reformer referred with an uncomplimentary epithet (*Schwärmer*...). Why do none of the three descendants of Zwingli deal with Paul's commentary on the words of institution, which simply do not mesh with any of the species of Reformed doctrine that they set forth?' (p. 112). Van Dyk simply notes the many convergences between a Baptist and Reformed view of the Lord's Supper, while Kärkkäinen, from a Pentecostal perspective, expresses his desire that 'I would love to hear more about the christological and ecclesiological ramifications...Or is it the case that a faithful presentation of Baptist sacramentology dare not say too much of either Christology or ecclesiology for the simple reason that the movement's emphases have not been there when it comes to the spirituality and theology of the Lord's Supper?' (p. 116). Significant food for thought for Baptists wanting to think through their sacramentology today!

The second work under review appears in Zondervan's 'Counterpoint' series and is in direct competition with the IVP book. *Understanding Four Views on the Lord's Supper* includes the Baptist view by R.D. Moore, the Reformed view by I.J. Hesselink, the Lutheran view by D.S. Scaer, and the Roman Catholic view by T.A. Baima. The same format is followed in that each view is presented and then the other contributors provide concise critical replies. In addition the Eerdmans work includes two appendices, the first including statements on the Lord's Supper in Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms (pp. 160-181), the second consists of various quotations on the Lord's Supper from well known figures in

the history of the church (pp. 182-204). The first appendix was useful, the second seemed unnecessary. (The IVP concludes with a select annotated bibliography and is of immense use as a quick reference guide to works on the sacraments from the representative traditions [pp. 149-154].)

The responses in this work range from two pages to over five and thus constitute a more substantial interaction with each contributors work than in the IVP work. This can be illustrated by focussing on the Baptist view once again. Moore presents a memorialist view of the Lord's Supper, an ordinance – not a sacrament – in Baptist understanding. In response to some baptistic practice he helpfully clarifies the sign aspect of the Lord's Supper and gives a compelling argument that it should be more of a celebration, a 'victory lap' (p. 33) which announces the triumph of Christ over the powers of sin, death, and Satan. This sets Moore up to expound the Lord's Supper as proclamation and as communion. Moore asks Baptists to think about celebrating the Lord's Supper weekly, and making it a compelling part of the service both for believers and visitors alike. Along the way Moore comments on the role of the community, the individual, and church discipline as implications of a memorialist view of the Supper.

The responses to Moore's chapter are not surprisingly varied. Hesselink, from a Reformed perspective, likes much of what he sees but asks Moore to explain just what the Supper is a sign of. In his estimation Moore (and Baptists generally) are unable to clearly state what it is the sign signifies. This leaves the baptistic view insufficient in his opinion. Scaer, a Lutheran, provides a lengthy response in which he gives no ground, arguing that the Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper is diametrically opposed to the Baptist view. The major disagreement is over the nature of the presence of Christ in the elements. In his estimation Lutheran theology recognises the presence of Christ in the elements while the Baptist view settles for a memory of the presence of Christ only, thus, strictly speaking, a Baptist view of the Lord's Supper is less than a sacrament and more of a human ritual. Baima, the Roman Catholic respondent, offers a gracious summary of where Moore's thought could be acceptable to Catholics, and then points out some continuing differences, notably that the Baptist view does not recognise in the elements anything more than bread and wine which bring to memory what Christ has done rather than also being a real participation in the work of Christ through his body and his blood.

The editors of both volumes expressed their desire to include more essays representing the wider Christian traditions, both specifically

mentioning the views of the Eastern Orthodox, yet space did not permit such an extensive survey. Each also identifies key aspects of debate, what Armstrong calls the 'two most important questions', namely, (1) What is the meaning and significance of this Supper? (2) Why should we regularly celebrate the Lord's Supper in our church communions? (see pp. 153-159). Both volumes are useful surveys of contemporary thought, both offer initial critiques of each position, and both will prove useful for laypeople, clergy, and teachers.

### Myk Habets

**Brian Haymes, Ruth Gouldbourne and Anthony R. Cross *On Being the Church: Revisioning Baptist Identity* (Studies in Baptist History and Thought 21). Milton Keynes, Paternoster, 2008. (217 pp). [ISBN: 978-1-84227-121-6]**

This valuable series has offered a wide range of historical treatments of Baptist experience. Baptist theology has been less well represented. To date a standout has been *Track and Traces* (2003), a collection of material on Baptist identity and practice by Paul Fiddes, who contributes a typically incisive foreword to the volume under review. *On Being the Church* takes a number of key discussions forward in a thorough and stimulating manner. The authors have been key figures in Baptist debate in Britain for many years. All have an association with Bristol Baptist College and two (Haymes and Goldbourne) have been or are in ministry at Bloomsbury Baptist Church in London.

The book is a collaborative effort in the most difficult sense of being co-written. Rather than individual chapters or sections being identified with particular authors, all three present the whole as their joint work. As they acknowledge in their preface, this has made the process longer, but perhaps more authentic. In any case the result is a cogent picture of many aspects of ecclesiology from both a Baptist and a Trinitarian perspective. Thus the first substantive chapter talks about God and the *missio Dei*, setting up in turn a general picture of God's people and their calling. Attention then moves to the shape, boundaries, life and practices of this people followed by the implications for the church's engagement with other faiths, society and the cosmos.

The effort at collaborative writing has been rewarded. The authors together present an integrated picture of the church which is at once