

Christ. It is the form of Christian freedom and now a new law' (p. 207).

Though I may have erred on the side of a positive review for this book, I am convinced the few shortcomings may be carefully overlooked. As noted earlier, I began reading this book with a particular question in mind: have the essayists adequately anchored the particular Christian humanism of Bonhoeffer in a theological ground or have they mistakenly relied upon some sort of ambiguous principle or abstract philosophical conceptual tool? I strongly believe the authors have carefully considered Bonhoeffer's own commitment to a Christ-focused theology, which not only forms the basis of an anthropology that liberates such consideration from any static reduction of being but also constructs a vision of human action that embraces a particular becoming in concert with Christ. Ultimately, this is an important selection of essays for any one interested in the writings and vision of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Moreover, it is a vital work for those who may want to better understand the meaning and implication of *participation in Christ*.

Ashley Moyse

Tributes to John Calvin: A Celebration of His Quincentenary.
The Calvin 500 Series. Edited by David W. Hall. Phillipsburg,
NJ.: P & R Publishing, 2010. (xxii + 566 pp.) [ISBN: 978-1-
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Throughout 2009 Christians around the world celebrated the 500th anniversary of the birth of the Genevan Reformer, John Calvin. Alongside such celebrations were the requisite publishing ventures. The closest thing to an official celebration of the quincentenary was the Calvin500 Project, an international, interdenominational, and interdisciplinary celebration of John Calvin's life, theology, and significance. The Calvin500 Project hosted two concurrent conferences in Geneva and commissioned an eight volume series of books entitled 'The Calvin 500 Series.' The conferences were directed by Dr David Hall, senior pastor of Midway Presbyterian

Church in Powder Springs, Georgia, and sponsored by a number of significant American Presbyterian Seminaries such as Westminster Theological Seminary, Westminster Seminary California, Reformed Theological Seminary, and Erskine Theological Seminary.

The two concurrent conferences run by the Calvin500 Project consisted of the Tribute Conference, a 4-day international symposium with leading scholars in the historic *Auditoire* in Geneva (July 6-9, 2009); and the Commemorating Calvin Conference, a 5-day international symposium with leading ministers in Calvin's church, St Pierre Cathedral (July 5-9, 2009). The articles comprising *Tributes to John Calvin* come directly from those presented at the Tribute Conference. 'The essays in *Tributes to John Calvin: A Celebration of His Quincentenary* illuminate Calvin's times, thought and legacy, and provide a celebratory tribute to one of the most influential people in history. This book commemorates the quincentenary of Calvin's birth (July 10, 1509) and attests to the remarkably enduring influence of his life and work' (from the Dust Jacket).

Tributes to John Calvin consists of twenty-three essays from some of today's leading Calvin scholars and Reformed theologians, arranged into three broad sections: 1) Calvin's Times: introducing Calvin the man, his times, and his context; 2) Calvin's Topics: spanning a diverse array of key themes from his life and thought; and 3) Calvin Today and Tomorrow: in which various essays survey Calvin's ongoing influence and importance. Most of the essays are newly commissioned pieces and advance the scholarly discussion on Calvin and Calvinism considerably.

Most of the contributors to the volume are well known Calvin and Reformed scholars, such as Robert Kingdon ('Calvin and Ecclesiastical Discipline'), Henri Blocher ('Calvin the Frenchman'), Douglas Kelly ('The Catholicity of Calvin's Theology'), R. Scott Clark ('Calvin's Principle of Worship'), Anthony Lane ('Calvin's Doctrine of Assurance Revisited'), Andrew McGowan ('John Calvin's Doctrine of Scripture'), Michael Horton ('Calvin's Eucharistic Ecclesiology'), Richard Gamble ('Calvin Bibliography'), Darryl Hart ('Consistently Contested: Calvin Among Nineteenth-Century Reformed Protestants in the United States,'), Bruce

McCormack ('Union with Christ in Calvin's Theology: Grounds for a Divinization Theory?'), and Herman Selderhuis ('See You in Heaven: Calvin's View of Life, Death, and Eternal Life'). Other less well-known but no less accomplished contributors also appear such as John Witte Jr ('Calvin the Lawyer'), Isabelle Graessle ('Calvin and Women: Between Irritation and Admiration'), Richard Burnett (John Calvin on Sacred and Secular History'), and David Hall ('Calvin's Principles of Governance: Homology in Church and State'). Each contributor brought to the conference (and now to this volume) a distinct specialty and expertise, which enriched the volume as it spanned cultural studies, biblical themes, historical criticism, and theological construction. While not at the Conference, Albert Mohler Jr provides a brief Foreword for the work in which he reflects upon Calvin's continued relevance for church and society today.

One is not able to mention every essay in a critical review such as this but several stand out for explicit comment. John Witte Jr, Professor of Law at Emory University School of Law, breezed into the Conference, known to some but not to others who were there. His paper on 'Calvin the Lawyer' stands out as one of the clearest and compelling of the conference (and thus of the volume), possibly because the theme he took up was not a common one in Calvin studies. Witte presents Calvin the jurist and takes the reader on a tour of Calvin's Geneva with its 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances, the 1542 Edict of the Lieutenant, and the 1543 Ordinances of Offices and Officers, constitutional laws that together defined the new structure, power, and relations of church and state in Protestant Geneva. Calvin went on to draft major new ordinances on marriage, children, social welfare, public morality, and education – more than a hundred new ordinances in total. Witte then perceptively deals with two themes in Calvin's thought – the balancing act between liberty and law, and that between church and state. This essay has the clarity of a lawyer's mind and is compelling reading.

Unfortunately, and inexplicably, one of Henry Blocher's two presentations at the conference was not included in this volume, 'Calvin on Divine Election.' This is unfortunate for I found it one

of the best presentations of the entire conference from one of the best Calvin and Reformed scholars of our time. The essay included in this volume, 'Calvin the Frenchman,' is a delightful and winsome piece of work which gently reminds North Americans, and the rest of us, that Calvin is first and foremost a Frenchman, and understanding *that* goes a long way to understanding *him*. However, it is the essay not included here that was the real gem. Here Blocher challenged popular readings of Calvin's doctrine of election and presented a sophisticated, and to my opinion, largely accurate, and more evangelical reading of election, its place in Calvin's thought and, importantly, its function. Perhaps we shall see this essay appear in print in a journal at some stage.

The doctrine of assurance lies at the heart of many Reformed debates and Calvin's own work has been mined many times in order to resource such work. Having written on Calvin's doctrine of assurance in a major journal article in 1979, renowned Calvin scholar, Anthony Lane, here revisits his earlier arguments and calls aspects of it into question, before presenting what he believes is a far more accurate assessment of the issue. Lane clearly shows how Calvin considered assurance to be of the essence of faith and how this was coordinated with various other aspects of this theology, notably with the doctrine of election. Throughout the essay Lane shows Calvin the pastor-scholar and not the cold, heartless man he is often portrayed as being. Like everything Lane writes, this is a well researched and well written essay, by one who has a unique familiarity with Calvin's work.

A conference on Calvin without an essay on his doctrine of Holy Scripture would be incomplete and thus Andrew McGowan took up this theme and continued to substantiate his recent work on the topic. In short, McGowan argues that Calvin held to a high view of Scripture which may best be summarized around the theological doctrine of infallibility. He did not, however fit neatly into what became known as the doctrine of the Bible's inerrancy. To substantiate such claims, correct claims in my opinion, McGowan examines Calvin's overall approach to Scripture, the inner dogmatic structure of the *Institutes*, and his understanding of the relationship between Word and Spirit. In a conference dominated by

conservative Reformed and Presbyterian theologians, and representing the most significant Presbyterian seminaries in the United States, McGowan's remarks were perhaps the most controversial of the conference. Until recently McGowan was adjunct professor of theology at several American Presbyterian Seminaries, however, due to the views represented in this essay, he now spends most of his time in his home country and on the continent.

Two final essays of note are worth mentioning. First, Bruce McCormack continued to outline his objections to any form of divinization theory in Calvin's theology, and thus in Reformed theology more generally. McCormack shows the robust forensicism of Calvin's doctrine of justification, a doctrine which, in McCormack's mind, leaves little room for anything approaching a divinization theory. He then examines the central role the doctrine of our union with Christ plays in Calvin's theology and seeks to account for the often noticed fact that Calvin treats of sanctification before justification in the *Institutes*. Second, Herman Selderhuis concludes the volume with his essay on Calvin's eschatology. At the conference Selderhuis handed out Calvin 'mints' before his presentation, saying these may aid us all in keeping awake. While the candy was nice, he needn't have worried. As one of the foremost Calvin scholars working today, Selderhuis provides a pithy summary of Calvin's views on life, death, and eternal life, drawn principally from Calvin's letters and the Psalms, before concluding the essay with insightful comments on the way in which Calvin's theology became practice. The biographical section of this essay is what may interest many readers, as we learn of the sadness and the great emotional effect the suffering and death of many of Calvin's friends had on him. He writes of his tears over the death of Claude Féray, a decagon and good friend of his, we learn that he was an 'emotional wreck' after the death of his dear son Jacques. However, it was the death of his wife, Idelette, which severely affected Calvin. After her death he claimed he had lost his best friend and his most cherished supporter. He once wrote that he would have to continue life in her absence as 'no more than half a man, since God recently took my wife to Himself' (p. 541).

Several of the essays (and presentations) are torpid and predictable affairs. R. Scott Clark argues yet again for a strict principle of worship whereby ‘only that may be done which must be done, and what must be done is that which is commanded by the Word’ (p. 269). He shows how this was Calvin’s practice, albeit with some practical adaptability on his part for the sake of the unity of the church, in dialogue with Luther, Bucer, the Anglicans, and other who did not share his understanding of the second commandment for public worship. Similarly, Douglas Kelly’s essay on the catholicity of Calvin’s thought presents the now familiar argument that predestination is not the centre of his thought and does not act as a controlling motif; rather, it is the ‘catholic’ nature of his theology that forms the integrating centre. By ‘catholic’ Kelly has in mind the totality of Scriptural truth. By means of extensive quotations from Calvin’s *opera* Kelly seeks to justify his claim and put to bed all other counter arguments. Likewise, in ‘Calvinism in Asia,’ Jae Sung Kim simply narrates a history of Calvinism in Asia, especially in Korea, and moves through a general geographical overview of the impact and permutations of Calvinism. While not an unimportant essay, it does seem out of place in this volume and would perhaps have been better presented elsewhere.

While stilted and one of the less engaging papers of the conference due to its subject matter, Richard Gamble’s ‘Calvin Bibliography’ provides an important resource and he is to be thanked for tirelessly compiling a bibliography of books published on John Calvin from the year 2000 to 2009. ‘The method employed is a quick look at the overall flow of Calvin’s life, followed by a topical analysis of Calvin as theologian, social reformer, and churchman’ (p. 419). More than an annotated bibliography, this is a research essay in its own right and is extremely useful in gaining a comprehensive ‘state of the play’ of Calvin studies over the last decade.

Having been privileged to listen to these essays presented first hand, in Calvin’s historical *Auditoire*, it is now a pleasure to have these in print and collected in one volume for further use and reference. The editor, David Hall, has done a superb job in commissioning the papers in the first place, and seeing them

through to completion in such a fine manner. Much of the presentations appear to have had only minor editorial adjustments to them compared to their original delivery, giving the essays a lively feel and tone; a very good move indeed. *Tributes to John Calvin* offers its readers a generous serving of Calvin's times, themes, and significance and as such promises to be a valuable and well used resource on Calvin scholarship. Read alongside the other volumes in The Calvin 500 Series, this is a major and significant publishing venture and will undoubtedly resource Reformed scholarship until the next major celebratory milestone of Calvin's life and thought comes along.

Myk Habets

Koester, Craig R. *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. (xiv + 245 pp). [ISBN 9780802829382]

To speak of 'a theology of' something is not a particularly clear statement. A number of means could be intended regardless of what area of theology a person is referring to. For example 'a theology of mission' could refer to a theological mandate to practice mission, or it could mean a theological exposition of what mission is. It could refer to mission in scripture, mission in history, mission in contemporary thought, etc. The same is true of 'a theology of pastoral care' or 'a theology of Christian leadership.' However, this use of the term theology seems to miss the mark. To speak theologically is to speak primarily about God and about his involvement with the world. This is precisely what Craig Koester has done in his work. In the preface he writes, 'To read the Gospel theologically is to ask, Who is the God about whom Jesus speaks? Who does the Gospel say that Jesus is? And how does the Gospel understand life, death, sin, and faith?' (p. ix) This is precisely what one should expect when reading a book with the title *A Theology of John's Gospel*.

In this book Koester is able to cover most areas of theological interest within John's Gospel, and he does so in a clear and logical