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essays. However, the volume will really shine in graduate seminars, where one or two essays per meeting promises to motivate plenty of discussion. Further, because of the inter-disciplinary nature of the chapters, there are plenty of places from which the instructor can launch into more focused lessons or lectures.

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Nico Vorster, *The Brightest Mirror of God's Works: John Calvin's Theological Anthropology* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2019), pp. vii + 190, ISBN 978-1532660245. £20.00

This slender volume by Nico Vorster, Professor of Systematic Theology at the North-West University, South Africa, offers the most comprehensive and cumulative exposition of John Calvin's theological anthropology to date. This is a noteworthy achievement given that Calvin scholarship, while recognizing the lasting significance of Torrance's classic study *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (1949), has recognized the need for an up-to-date treatment of Calvin's anthropology. Vorster's monograph offers just this, combining the enduring facets of Calvin's anthropology, long recognized in the field, with the newer contributions of recent scholarship that address Calvin's attitude toward women and his theology of human society. The result is an impressively succinct but trustworthy introduction to Calvin's theological anthropology which will be of benefit to both experienced scholars and beginning students of Calvin and Reformed theology.

Vorster's book is broken into six chapters which consistently and clearly argue defensible and convincing theses relating to Calvin himself, and then relate these findings to constructive theological issues. Chapter One addresses Calvin's prelapsarian understanding of the human being, that is, humans before Adam's fall. Vorster explores Calvin's dynamic anthropology which understands humans primarily theocentrically, that is, deriving their being in relation to God, a relation that 'decenters the human



being' (p. 13). God created humans with body and soul (revealing a moderate, though not Platonist, dualism) and endowed the soul with the faculties of intellect and will in order to discriminate between good and evil and to choose the good, respectively. Vorster also explores Calvin's vision of the *imago Dei*, which for Calvin did not mean a self-referential human possession but the divinely-bestowed capacity for conscious communion with God immortally imprinted on the soul by grace (giving rise to the conscience, and the *sensus divinitatis*).

Chapter Two moves to Calvin's postlapsarian anthropology (humanity after Adam's fall), which Calvin consistently distinguished from humanity's original state. Vorster impressively notes the coherence of Calvin's claim that although humanity sins necessarily because of its corrupt condition in Adam, this sin is internally provoked, not externally coerced, and thus humanity is truly culpable, even though it is simultaneously helpless. Vorster notes how Calvin utilized the Aristotelian notion of a two-causes argument according to which God, existing on an ontologically different plane from creaturely contingency, cannot be held accountable for humanity's sin, even if it is true that 'Adam did not fall without the ordination and will of God' (p. 38). Vorster also notes how Calvin's rhetorically-loaded description of sinful man underwent a change during his career toward more moderate language. As Calvin recognized that it is theologically indefensible to maintain that the *imago Dei* is entirely 'obliterated' by the Fall, he changed his language to describe the image as totally corrupt; the *imago* remains, though only 'in the same manner that a ruin is reminiscent of the original beauty of a building' (p. 46). That is, while the supernatural gifts of communion with God were totally 'withdrawn', the natural gifts of organizing human society for the continued existence of human community remain.

Chapter Three is the longest and most ambitious chapter, undertaking an impressive foray of Calvin's Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology. Calvin scholars will recognize most of the themes addressed, including Calvin's Chalcedonianism, union with Christ, the *communicatio idiomatum*, the Spirit as 'the bond of our union with Christ' (*Inst.* 4.17.33), the *duplex gratia* (justification and sanctification), mortification and vivification in Christ, and the Christian life of self-denial, cross-bearing, meditation on the future life, prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Supper as real means of actual participation in the ascended humanity of Christ. After reviewing Calvin's



soteriological understanding of human renewal in Christ, Vorster moves in Chapter Four to the specific noetic/epistemological effects that this has for Calvin's anthropology. Consideration is given to Calvin's context as a Reformer who helped an age transition from the realist ontology and abstraction of Scholasticism to the practically-oriented anthropology of humanism.

Chapters Five and Six conclude the book with the most constructive contribution to Calvin scholarship, namely, considerations of Calvin's societal doctrine and Calvin's understanding of women in church and society. Vorster notes how Calvin's 'two-kingdoms' vision of society as both supernatural and natural was predicated upon his two-natures Christology and his microcosmic anthropology, according to which divine and human realities are 'united but not mingled' (p. 137). Just as Christ's divine and human natures and humanity's body and soul are differentiated for relation, so supernatural and natural (or common) grace are different spheres that operate respectively in the church and society. Chapter Six extends this discussion to Calvin's hierarchical view of the male/female relationship which was slightly artificial and out of keeping with the rest of his theology that considered male and female as equal image bearers in the spiritual sense. But as the child of his time, even though he made egalitarian advances beyond most of his contemporaries and forerunners, his patriarchal practice was inconsistent with his simultaneously egalitarian and complementarian view of the *imago Dei*, a contradiction he never resolved.

Vorster's book is a serious contribution to current Calvin scholarship's understanding of the Genevan Reformer's theological anthropology. He impressively combines a penetrating understanding of Calvin's theology with the best on offer of Calvin scholarship to date. The most impressive feature of the book is how Vorster carefully tows the line between historical accuracy and theological constructivism. He is able to deeply understand Calvin's own theology and then independently assess the coherence of that theology for the situation of Christians in contemporary society. One of the most important theses Vorster advances in both these respects is that Calvin consistently held divine and human realities on disparate ontological planes, and therefore was intent to never confuse God with humanity but was able to differentiate them precisely in order that they may be rightly related to one another in deep communion. This relation-through-differentiation approach to Christology, anthropology,



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and societal doctrine is one of the cornerstones of Reformed theology and, indeed, offers so many constructive ways to consider contemporary issues such as individualism, ecological ethics, gender relations, economic processes, and systemic sinfulness. Vorster is convincing in addressing both the weaknesses and the promises of Calvin's anthropology for today's theologians and today's societies.

No one seeking a comprehensive and reliable introduction to Calvin's theological anthropology will find a more accessible source than the excellent volume Vorster has produced. It is refreshing to find a serious Calvin scholar who so impressively translates the theological riches of this classic Reformer for humanity's self-understanding today. This is exactly what Calvin would have wanted.

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Mary Clark Moschella and Susan Willhauck, eds., *Qualitative Research in Theological Education: Pedagogy in Practice* (London: SCM Press, 2018), pp. xi + 292, ISBN 978-0334056775. £35.00

Within this landmark publication, the lasting influence of Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* provokes reflections from a theological symposium held at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Scotia during 2016. While theoretical approaches differ regarding Freirean interpretation among the contributors, their efforts unite around the methodologies common to qualitative research and employed in practical theological education.

Composed of essays, methodological explanations, (auto-)ethnographic descriptions, as well as expositions of theoretical frameworks, this book brings together the various strands of qualitative research relevant for practical theology. Much of the research profiled uses ethnography to shed light on communities of faith. Some perspectives reflect legacies of the 'narrative turn' in critical/hermeneutical theory (pp. 52–53), as elements

