

interventions and more in its capacity to foment and enable further study. In this respect, van Liere succeeds admirably. Each chapter provides a sketch of an aspect of “The Medieval Bible.” Frequently, van Liere supplements his broad narratives with an exemplary case study. His discussion of Haimo of Auxerre’s commentary on Jonah (113-116) in “Medieval Hermeneutics” is especially insightful. Perhaps most useful to the more advanced student are the selected bibliographies, which conclude each chapter. Ultimately, this book is—as introductions ought to be—more useful than revolutionary. Having taught portions of this book to undergraduates, I can happily affirm that several of the dreaded course evaluations singled out van Liere’s book as particularly useful. Final assessments of van Liere’s work, however, will depend on the quality of scholarship it inspires in the next generation.

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doi:10.1017/S0009640715001079

***John Calvin as Sixteenth-Century Prophet.* By Jon Balsarak.**

New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. x + 224 pp. \$84.00 cloth.

Jon Balsarak’s *John Calvin as Sixteenth-Century Prophet* is a significant work of historical scholarship. Employing such primary sources as Calvin’s sermons and letters, the author argues that the Reformer harbored and exhibited a prophetic understanding or mentality about himself. Calvin believed he was called by God to act as a prophet in a time of transition—indeed, his was a time of drastic political and religious change and religious violence. The author’s close analysis of Calvin’s writings reveal compellingly that Calvin felt his vocation was to further the Protestant Reformation in Europe, particularly in Geneva and France, if need be by also embracing religious war. (Calvin sent ministers and scholars, trained in Geneva, to France.) Balsarak’s analysis of Calvin’s prophetic awareness in his writings is situated within a broader examination of Old and New Testament prophetic figures as well as other sixteenth-century “prophetic” Reformers like Martin Bucer and Martin Luther. This book is a welcomed addition to Calvin studies, one that will be appreciated and valued by students and professional historians alike, for it illustrates some of the mindsets of some important figures of sixteenth-century Europe. The reader obtains a better understanding of not only Calvin the Reformer, but the place and agency of the leading individuals in Reformation Europe.

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