persecutors are not convincing. It is noteworthy that Anabaptists were not coerced into confessing things they did not do; many or most of the victims of the witch craze were. So we have two forms of "state terror," of different dimensions, with different sorts of victims, yet committed by the same sort of persecuting authorities. With full respect for the Anabaptist/Mennonite martyrs, who were rehabilitated in the eyes of their neighbors well before the governments stopped killing them, the madness of the European popular culture and elite culture was much the greater in the case of the witch hunt.

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John Calvin and the Grounding of Interpretation: Calvin's First Commentaries. By **R. Ward Holder**. Studies in the History of Christian Traditions CXXVII. Leiden: Brill, 2006. x + 318 pp. $125.00 cloth.

While no one would dispute that the credo *"sola scriptura"* underpinned much of sixteenth-century Protestant reformers' theology, modern scholars still have much to learn about how these reformers specifically approached, understood, and preached the Bible. R. Ward Holder's important new book, *John Calvin and the Grounding of Interpretation*, helps remedy the situation, offering a close and perceptive examination of Calvin's commentaries on the Pauline epistles. While these specific commentaries make up a relatively small portion of Calvin's biblical commentary, Holder argues convincingly that any study of Calvin's approach to Scripture must begin with his writings on the Pauline epistles (produced between 1540 and 1551) because Calvin directed his first efforts at biblical commentary toward these texts. Holder wants to establish the underlying "principles and rules" (11) that guided Calvin's work on the Pauline epistles, and makes the altogether reasonable point that if scholars wish to explore whether Calvin's approach to Scripture changed over time, we must first establish his initial methods. Toward that end, Holder calls upon Karlfried Froelich's differentiations between hermeneutical principles and exegetical practices in patristic exegesis, then applies these distinctions to Calvin. Such an application, maintains Holder, not only allows us to understand Calvin's scriptural commentary as coherent and purposeful from the outset (*contra* those who, like Michael Monheit, argue that Calvin's first commentaries

suffered from incongruous interpretive methods), but also can provide scholars with a "baseline" for evaluating Calvin's development (or lack thereof) as a biblical interpreter.

For Holder (as for Froelich), hermeneutical "principles" are those basic conceptions and assumptions—often unexamined—that an interpreter brings to any encounter with a text. For Calvin, these would include certain theological convictions, such as that human reason has but limited access to divine truth, the Holy Spirit guarantees the authority of Scripture, God "accommodates" believers by revealing himself to them in terms they can understand, and the two testaments are inextricably linked. These notions shaped Calvin's approach to the text in profound ways. Exegetical practices, on the other hand—the "rules" of interpretation—are practical methods, consciously employed, used to extract meaning from the text. Calvin turned to a variety of these exegetical tools; among the techniques that Holder brings to light are paraphrase, contextualization, and using one part of Scripture to clarify another part.

Almost half of the book is devoted to laying out the method that encompasses these two themes, which strikes this reviewer as the book's most important contribution. That is not to say that the later chapters are not worthy of attention. Chapter 4 articulates Calvin's understanding of the aim of biblical interpretation (to reveal Christ). Chapters 5 through 7 look at Calvin's relationship to historical tradition and detail how Calvin rejects, transforms, and renews received traditions regarding Scripture and the Church.

At times, the boundary between hermeneutic principles and exegetical practices can blur; for example, Holder lists a "stance of humility" as an exegetical tool, but one might just as easily express it as an a priori assumption, or hermeneutic principle. Likewise, Holder understands Calvin's use of a "proto hermeneutic circle" (my term, not his) as an underlying hermeneutic principle but describes it as though it functions as an exegetical method.

Nonetheless, there are real benefits to Holder's paradigm. For example, separating out principles and rules allows us a much more nuanced understanding of where Calvin adheres to and departs from Augustinian doctrine. Calvin and Augustine share hermeneutic principles, according to Holder, but employ vastly different exegetical methods, for example, Calvin's rejection of allegory, an exegetical technique often employed by the bishop of Hippo (Holder points to John Chrysostom as Calvin's exegetical precursor). In chapter 5 (and into chapter 6), Holder offers a very convincing analysis of the complicated relationship between Calvinist and Augustinian thought, convincing in large part because of earlier attention to the difference between hermeneutical principles and exegetical rules. In addition, Holder sheds light on how we might understand Calvin's

relationship to Renaissance humanism. Calvin's exegetical techniques are grounded in humanistic techniques, argues Holder, but his hermeneutical principles both precede and occasionally overrule his humanistic training and impulse.

As Holder points out, most recent work on Calvin as a biblical commentator has focused on Calvin's exegetical methods within a historical context. Holder's attention to hermeneutical principles and his insistence that we recognize the difference between such principles and exegetical practices offers a more nuanced historical context into which scholars can situate Calvin. Moreover, *John Calvin and the Grounding of Interpretation* not only offers the reader new insights into Calvin's commentaries on the Pauline epistles, but it also provides a valuable foundation for further investigations of Calvin's relationship to Scripture.

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Calvin and the Bible. Edited by **Donald K. McKim**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xiv + 297 pp. $75.00 cloth; $29.99 paper.

Don McKim has pulled together an impressive array of U.S., Canadian, and European Calvin scholars in this work. Individual chapters deal either with major books of the Bible (for instance, Genesis) or major portions of the Bible (the Prophets, for example, and the Pauline Letters). Many of the authors involved have dealt with the biblical books under consideration in other venues, and so what is presented in this volume can be seen as the distillation of scholarly work and analysis accomplished over, in some cases, years (for example, Susan Schreiner's chapter on Job, which clearly reflects her previous endeavors—her articles, presentations, and her very fine book, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found? Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994]). Thus, we have here an excellent volume that serves as a good entry into Calvin's work on the Bible.

Of course, at one time, it was common to hear that Calvin was a man of one book—the *Institutes*. Elsie McKee, in publications in the late 1980s, showed the importance of the commentaries for understanding at least some things in the *Institutes* (though there were occasional suggestions before then that such was probably the case). And David Steinmetz, in his distinguished career,