

Martin Sallmann, Moisés Mayordomo, and Hans Rudolf Lavater-Briner, eds. *Johannes Calvin 1509–2009: Würdigung aus Berner Perspektive*. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2012. 304 pp. €36.80. ISBN: 978–3–290–17610–5.

It is well known that the Calvin jubilee year 2009, during which the 500th birthday of the church Reformer John Calvin (1509–64) was commemorated, has produced — almost worldwide — quite a number of academic publications. While Karin Maag dealt with some of these publications in her paper at the 2010 International Congress on Calvin Research (“Calvin 2009 — The Results,” in *Calvinus clarissimus theologus*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis [2012]: 228–41), Michael Beintker has discussed the most important of these more exhaustively (“Das Calvin-Jahr 2009,” *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 137.7–8 [2012]: 751–68). One of the jubilee publications, which was published too late to be part of the abovementioned surveys, is a volume, *John Calvin 1509–2009: An Appreciation from a Bern Perspective* (2012), composed of contributions from the Faculty of Theology of Bern, Switzerland, based on a series of commemoration lectures, complemented with two contributions from other Swiss institutions and published in German. Contributions include “Bern and the Reformation in Geneva” (Martin Sallmann); “The Reformed Churches in Europe” (Heinrich R. Schmidt); “Calvin and the (Ana-)Baptists” (Hans Rudolf Lavater); “Calvin and Castellio” (Maurice Baumann); “Calvin and the Women” (Isabelle Graesslé); “The Genevan Psalms” (Andreas Marti); “Calvin’s Ethic and the Ten Commandments” (Andreas Wagner); “The Sermon on the Mount and Calvin” (Moisés Mayordomo); “On Calvin’s Teaching of Double Predestination” (J. Christine Janowski); “Calvin’s

Economics Ethics" (Wolfgang Lienemann); "Catholic and Calvinistic World Mission in Early Modernity" (Mariano Delgado); and "Reading Calvin in South Africa" (Christine Lienemann-Perrin).

According to the editors, the purpose of the volume is to provide a critical introduction to the life and influence of Calvin and his significance for theological, social, and political themes (9–10). Although the first chapter focuses on the important historical aspects of Bern in the history of Geneva as well as in Calvin's life, "a Bern perspective" with regard to the other chapters is merely a reference to the authors and not to the content of the various contributions. The most important connection between the chapters is Calvin himself, or his influence (sometimes more and sometimes less directly), although the points of intersection and points of departure, as well as the structures of the various chapters, vary quite a lot. One chapter is exceptionally long (Hans Rudolf Lavater, "Calvin and the (Ana-)Baptists: About the origins of the *Briève*," 53–120), but the editors explain in the preface that it was contributed by the faculty's honorary doctor of 2008, and therefore received a prominent position in the volume.

The finishing touches of the volume are of a very high caliber, and as a whole this is probably one of the finest publications to emerge from the Calvin jubilee year. The character of the contributions is rather distinctive, varying from the historical to the theological, systematical, ethical, exegetical, and subjective-contextual.

The more historically orientated parts of the contributions are convincing in their thorough knowledge, control, and use of primary sources. Especially regarding the sixteenth century, important new perspectives are opened by most of the articles. Delgado also deals thoroughly with the difficult theme of "Catholic and Calvinistic world mission in early modernity." It is a pity that he — in contrast with the rest of his article — concludes it with an unfounded statement regarding South Africa, showing a lack of knowledge of standard works on the history of Christian missions in South Africa (e.g., by J. du Plessis [1911], and by G. B. A. Gerdener [1958]).

The last contribution in the volume, "Reading Calvin in South Africa," unfortunately creates the impression of dealing in a balanced way with Calvin's *Wirkungsgeschichte*, but it seems the author did not consult *The Calvin Handbook* (Herman Selderhuis, ed. [2009]: 505–12) on this topic. This has given rise to a number of one-sided judgments, generalizations, and oversimplifications. Several sentences in this article are historically inaccurate, for example, the allegation "[a]n dieses Gelöbnis, das lange Zeit in Vergessenheit geraten war, erinnerte man sich erst wieder in den 1930er Jahren" (284). Actually the commemoration on 16 December was commemorated in the nineteenth century and on occasion in the 1860s even together with the Zulus, and has been commemorated ever since. Another example is the sketch of the alleged influence of Abraham Kuyper (285–87) that is too limited and one-sided. To label an important philosopher like H. G. Stoker (who did his doctorate in Cologne under the supervision of Max Scheler) as a theologian (286) shows that the author has neither read Stoker, nor is she familiar with some

important primary sources of South African history or even other recent South African Calvin research (cf. the eight published volumes of the South African Congresses on Calvin Research).

With this last-mentioned exception, the volume — as a fruit of the commemoration of 2009 — is probably one of the most comprehensive contributions to Calvin research in general, and can be wholeheartedly recommended.

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