

Book Reviews

Calvin and His Times

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154pp Rand 7.50

This is a well-written, readable but authoritative work on the famous reformer's life and work, providing also a wealth of insight relating to the period.

There are 21 chapters beginning with Calvin as a student in Paris, then contrasting him as a humanist student and, later, as a student of the Bible. Calvin's conviction that the Church needed to be reformed and his attempts at reformation, particularly in Geneva, are detailed over 15 chapters. Other chapters deal with his married life, bereavement and his last years.

The value of the book is enhanced by a glossary of terms (pp.147-151) and two pages of bibliography. This is a book for church leaders but also one we can recommend to our church members for their profit and enjoyment.

Pulpit and People

Edited by Nigel M. de S. Cameron
and Sinclair Ferguson
Rutherford House Books,
Edinburgh
148pp.

Casebound: £11.90 Limp: £8.90

Here is a book written in honour of William Still, Aberdeen, whose influence on younger generations of

ministers and churches in Scotland over the past forty years has been considerable.

Sinclair Ferguson's biographical introduction to William Still is interesting but somewhat too brief. I suspect that the self-effacing subject of the biography may have ordered it this way! One important message, at least, is underlined by the biographer: "He took a radical decision: Abandoning the Saturday night 'rallies' he began a meeting for prayer instead. The effect was instantaneous and numerically dramatic. Between one Sunday evening and the next, the congregation at the evening service dropped by between two and three hundred ... But Mr. Still had stumbled on something which was to leave an indelible impression on him ... the challenge to become a man or woman of prayer, to share in the very nerve of the church's life ... From that time until today, his ministry has been to smaller rather than to large congregations ... he has set his heart on quality, even if it should be at the expense of quantity ..." (pp.3-4).

The book is divided into three sections. In the first section, James Philip provides an historical survey of expository preaching. His conclusion is that "even in the best evangelical preaching ... e.g. Charles Simeon ... and Charles H. Spurgeon ... it was the classical, Puritan tradition, which grew out of the *Artes Praedicandi* of the Middle Ages that was followed, rather than the simple homily of the Reformers and those who followed Calvin's

practice of systematic, consecutive exposition of the Scriptures in 18th, 19th and indeed in the 20th centuries ... have been conspicuous as exceptions rather than the norm. It is to be hoped that those in our own day who have the vision of the dynamic potential that this method represents will exercise an increasing influence on the preaching ministry of the late 20th century ... Without this, the process of decay in the life of the Church is likely to continue, and its future history likely to be short" (p.16).

The next article is by Douglas F. Kelly on **The Recovery of Christian Realism in the Scottish Expository Ministry Movement**. This is a challenging, penetrating chapter as the writer warns that historically the Church has been tempted to veer away from a real knowledge of God in Christ by going astray on one of two different directions, namely, 'liberal' idealism and 'conservative' nominalism. But in God's providence William Still and his Scottish expository school of ministers have given themselves to exercising a theologically realist ministry because this was scriptural and their major strength was in their "wholesale commitment to both the absolute authority and the full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures" (p.22). Other features of this Scottish expository school include the realistic way "it faces the high cost of letting the whole Christ through the whole Word loose in our whole lives" (p.24), the "cutting out of panicky, evangelistic gimmicks" (p.25) recognising that "the truest, deepest evangelism is carried out in the non-dramatic, regular course of

preaching through the various books of Scripture in the week-by-week, consistent ministry of the local church ... oiled and set on fire through the prayers of believers ..." (p.27) and, finally, its high view of the corporate church.

Nigel Cameron then writes on **Preaching and the Logic of Authority**, demonstrating the necessity and consistency of submitting unreservedly to the authority of the Bible.

The second section contains three articles by David Wright (**Word, Ministry and Congregation in the Reformation Confessions**), Howard Marshall (**Church and Ministry in 1 Timothy**) and Francis Lyall (**Concerning Confessions**). These three chapters are helpful, although predictable.

In the final section of the book there are seven chapters on **Building the Church Today** (George Philip), **The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship** (Sinclair Ferguson), **Psychological Aspects of Inner Healing** (Montagu Barker), **Reflections on a Biblical View of Man and Nature** (Rowland Moss), **The Children for Christ** (Douglas Macmillan), **The Problem of Apostasy in Hebrews** (Henry Tait) and **Suffering: A Study on Romans 8:18-30** by Brian Moore. All these contributions are basic, clear and stimulating but the reviewer was particularly impressed by Sinclair Ferguson on 'Sonship' and Douglas Macmillan on 'Paedobaptism'. The latter deserves a wide readership among Paedo-Baptists as it is a clear, forthright exposition of the subject. A good book with plenty to stimulate and challenge.

The Editor

S.O.S.! Books for the Philippines

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"Speaking the truth in love." Ephesians 4:15

I recall how a good friend once told me that he was somewhat disappointed, because in my exposition of the second chapter of this Epistle to the Ephesians I had not once mentioned Calvinism as I worked through the chapter. My simple reply to him was, The text does not mention that term. My friend was so much in the grip of a party-spirit that he was becoming doubtful of my position! A party-spirit is generally the result of approaching the truth in a purely intellectual manner, and also being governed by prejudice which is often the result of one's upbringing. Truth must produce passion, and in a truly Christian profession there is emotion and feeling. A truth which is only held in the intellect becomes hard, and arid and dry; and a man of whom this is true can never speak the truth in love.

D.M. Lloyd-Jones
