

as undermining the Church of England's claim to apostolic authority, and consequently as undermining his third hypothesis.

In the final chapter, Morgan treats Newman's last Oxford University sermon and his *Essay*, in which he comes to settle on his final hypothesis: the Church of Rome is the ecclesial authority needed to guarantee doctrinal continuity amid change. The bulk of this chapter is an extended and quite helpful commentary on the major ideas from the *Essay*.

Throughout this book, the reader becomes acquainted with writings from Newman's letters, journals and other sources within his vast corpus. Morgan does a great service in bringing these together. While some of the extended treatments of scholarly debates and historical details might be of limited interest save for the Newman scholar, following Newman through the various difficulties with which he wrestled sheds light on many important issues surrounding the development of doctrine. This fine book, then, will surely be of much interest to both Newman scholars and, more generally, those seeking to account for continuity while encountering change.

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Lyle D. Bierma, *Font of Pardon and New Life: John Calvin and the Efficacy of Baptism*

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In Lyle Bierma's *Font of Pardon and New Life*, we are faced with the dual questions of how 'instrumentalist' is Calvin's doctrine of baptism, as well as how (and to what extent) Calvin developed this over his life. Eschewing the static models (from Brian Gerrish) of 'symbolic instrumentalism', 'symbolic memorialism' and 'symbolic parallelism', Bierma directs us to a group of scholars who have lately noted the chronological progression and development of Calvin over time (in which Calvin himself sometimes wanders in and out of Gerrish's three categories). The strength of these scholars (Janse, Riggs, Lusk, Zachman) is that they can account for Calvin's diplomacy, attempts at compromise and theological development over the years. The downside is that this rich body of work is not only spread out through many sources, but conflicts within itself – and Bierma desires to remedy that lacuna with this monograph.

Bierma generally follows Janse in his developmental division of Calvin's career, beginning with the 1536 *Institutes*; then his first ministry period (Geneva, 1536–8; and Strasburg, 1538–41); his return to Geneva (1541–8); the *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549); and his final writings (1549–59). In Calvin's first writings (chapter 2), the sacraments serve a pedagogical function of teaching, explaining and showing. Their efficacy derives from their status as legal promises for people who have a hard time believing and whose faith is weak. Although there are a 'few indications' (p. 26) that they might be able to impart that to which they are testifying, that is not the general tenor in these early documents. Calvin's primary emphasis is rather on the *subjective assurance* that

baptism brings, not an objective reception of benefits. Despite this evidence which generally shows Calvin's similarity to Zwingli, Bierma believes that this is not a 'Zwinglianizing' phase (p. 36), but an example of Calvin already moving away from the pole of 'pure symbolism' (p. 40) and 'challenging' (p. 50) the Zwinglian views of his opponents.

Moving on to Calvin's next phase (chapter 3) during his first ministry period, some scholars have detected a 'Luther-friendly' leap while Bierma wants to advocate for a more moderate growth in Calvin (based on his belief that Calvin isn't very Zwinglian in his first phase, due to a paucity of references to the word 'instrument'). Again, in the next phase (chapter 4) of Calvin's ministry in Geneva, where other scholars find major shifts in Calvin toward sacramental objectivity, Bierma argues instead for minor 'changes in emphasis'. Be that as it may, Bierma also confirms that Calvin begins to use the term 'instrument' in a much more heavy-handed way, along with a shift from a subjective (means of assurance) to objective (means of grace) role of baptism, probably due to Bucer's mentoring, as well as the three Catholic colloquies. Conceptual shift or change in emphasis? Let the reader decide.

The last two stages, the *Consensus* (chapter 5) and the final writings (chapter 6), reveal Bierma's greatest concern: to show Calvin as flexible compromiser (rather than Calvin in full retreat). Where other scholars (Janse and Rorem) find that Calvin undermines himself by unhooking the sacraments from grace and linking them to predestination, Bierma argues that this has been in Calvin all along. While Calvin may have 'loosened the tie between sign and signified in a way that was more palatable to Bullinger' (p. 104), Bierma argues that this is certainly within the Calvinist faith, though 'muted and truncated' (p. 106). This is Bierma's evaluation of the final writings as well: that Calvin neither over- nor understates grace's tie to the sacraments, but continues to chart the course seen from the beginning.

From Bierma's research, he concludes that Calvin's doctrine of baptism fits into none of Gerrish's three categories, nor with any of the current developmental approaches. Not surprisingly, even as Calvin grew to appreciate the more objective side of baptism, this was not a flirtation with stronger sacramentality but one that was moderated by equal attention to the roles played by the Word, election, the Spirit and faith. Bierma concludes that, although Calvin's doctrine of baptism did undergo change, it did not do so to the extent that some developmental scholars have advocated. Bierma rounds out his study with two closing chapters on the development of Calvin's doctrine of pedobaptism (chapter 7) as well as the codification of his baptismal theology in the various Reformed confessions (chapter 8). These are well-documented, and provide a way forward for the reader to assess the impact of Calvin's thought as it relates to baptismal efficacy in children, as well in the Reformed confessional tradition. These last two chapters are a wonderful gift.

All in all, the most interesting parts of the book were those that both registered and settled into some of the cracks in Calvin's own theological system. Bierma admits that Calvin slowly narrows the 'gap he had created' between baptismal symbol and instrumental reality (p. 50), but it seems to me that Calvin falls into the gap as often as he avoids it. Would it not be better to explore the reason for the gap in the first place? Ganoczy aptly names Calvin's 'aversion to binding grace to carnal elements', and Bierma charts this aversion through the various developments in Calvin's life. Perhaps the story of Calvin is the story of us all. Could it be that Calvin doesn't solve the problem, but is a part of it?