

Foreword

YAROSLAV VIAZOVSKI'S BOOK IS IN HALVES: THE FIRST IS A DISCUSSION OF Calvin's theological anthropology, with an emphasis on his metaphysics, his alleged Platonism, and the relation of the mind to the body. Calvin is a Platonic dualist, tailored in the Augustinian manner, not dismissive of the body, yet with no room for hylomorphism. Calvin's doctrine of the *imago* is also reflected on. There is a freshness to this discussion that is attractive, quizzing the Reformer at a basic level. Due notice is taken of secondary sources, but most attention is to the primary texts of Calvin. The four chapters devoted to Calvin's anthropology may be said to provide an excellent entrance into his entire theology.

Yaroslav is concerned with the suggestion of opposition of the body to the soul, with the virtues of monism against dualism and vice versa. The text therefore is not merely historical or antiquarian, but Calvin is pitted against some contemporary views, in what Yaroslav calls a *functional* comparison of the place of each view in a person's theology more pervasively. This comparison is made in an effort to get his own understanding of Calvin clear and balanced; it is not destructive criticism. But there is no sense of anachronism, perhaps because these are perennial issues.

The exposition and evaluation of Barth's anthropology, the second half, has all the virtues of the exposition of Calvin, though the actual treatment is different. He notes the epistemological gulf which separates the two, that between late-medievalism and modernity. In placing Barth's anthropology within his theology more generally, Yaroslav takes pains and exercises patience with the mass of material there is, skillfully paraphrasing and interrogating it. His effort is targeted on getting Barth clear, discerning where the anthropology sits in relation to Barth's overall scheme of things. Following Bruce McCormack he sees his metaphysic in actualistic terms. The comparison with Calvin is at the level of their respective systems. As with Calvin, there is little or no critique of Barth. The secondary sources are

interrogated with positive intent, in effect to formulate Barth's anthropology and eschatology in christological conceptuality.

The result is rather startling. To begin with, it is shown Barth's primary interest is not in the relation of the soul to the body, nor with its immortality. In terms of the traditional categorization Yaroslav argues that Barth is a mortalist. It has been debated whether or not Barth is a universalist. Yaroslav's conclusions, if sound, undercut such a question. Barth understands man in his relation to Christ. Christ is the real man, elected by God, and humanity has its identity in Christ. So Yaroslav argues that Barth has no place for the last article of the Apostles' Creed, 'the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting.' Or rather, for Barth the prospect of the human race's persistence after death is fulfilled in and exhausted by Christ's own resurrection, and in nothing more. What this resurrection is and isn't remains puzzling. Nevertheless Christ's resurrection is the general resurrection; there is no other.

Anyone with a developed interest in Calvin, Barth, and with the trajectory of Reformed theology that has taken Immanuel Kant seriously, will be engaged by this well-crafted, highly-intelligent work.

—Paul Helm