

David L. Puckett, *John Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament*

John Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament, by David L. Puckett. Columbia Series in Reformed Theology. Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1995. 179 pp. \$17.00. ISBN 0-664-22044-4.

Puckett's study provides a clear and attractive exposition and analysis of Calvin's methods of exegesis of the Old Testament and of the reasoning behind his interpretation. He begins by articulating the sixteenth century spectrum of exegesis, then locates Calvin upon it, taking into account other modern evaluations. Puckett explores Calvin's presuppositions of the dual divine and human authorship of scripture and of the unity of scripture through the Old and New Testaments. He shows how Calvin's emphasis upon historical exegesis—his use of Hebrew, lexicology and grammar, and literary and historical contexts—leads him to criticize the excesses of much Christian interpretation and gives his work a "Jewish" appearance. At the same time, his use of the New Testament as an exegetical guide to the Old provides him a basis for criticizing those Jewish interpretations which deny clear references to Christ and gives his work its distinctively Christian character. Thus Calvin chooses a middle way. He rejects allegorization as a method of interpretation while admitting that portions of the text are allegorical. Typology provides a means for taking history seriously while also looking to a future reference of meaning. Similarly, Calvin looks first for historical fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, then if these are not found, he applies them spiritually to the Kingdom of God. The book includes ample notes, an eighteen page bibliography, and helpful indices.

This volume is in the Columbia Series in Reformed Theology, a project of Columbia Theological Seminary and Westminster John Knox Press to provide resources from the Reformed tradition for the church today. Puckett's thoroughly researched, carefully documented, and clearly written study provides a good guide to Calvin's thinking and method. It also demonstrates that Calvin continues to provide a good guide to the scriptures. This book should be of interest and help to all students of the Bible as well as of Calvin.

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