



Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation, and the Future of Protestant Theology

Matthew Myer Boulton

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Contemplates Calvin's Institutes as practical spiritual theology

For many today, John Calvin is best known as an austere, strictly intellectual teacher of Protestant doctrine. But Matthew Myer Boulton reads him very differently, arguing that for Calvin, Christian theology is properly conceived and articulated primarily for the sake of everyday, practical formation through the church's treasury of spiritual disciplines.

Although Calvin famously opposed the cloister, Boulton shows that his purpose was not the eradication but rather the democratization of spiritual disciplines often associated with monasticism. Ordinary disciples, too, Calvin insisted, should embrace such formative practices as close scriptural study, daily prayer and worship, regular Psalm singing, and frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper. This deeply formational approach to Christian doctrine provides a fruitful template for Protestant theology today -- and tomorrow.

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