



Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ (Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology)

J. Todd Billings

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Is the God of Calvin a fountain of blessing, or a forceful tyrant? Is Calvin's view of God coercive, leaving no place for the human *qua* human in redemption? These are perennial questions about Calvin's theology which have been given new life by Gift theologians such as John Milbank, Graham Ward, and Stephen Webb.

J. Todd Billings addresses these questions by exploring Calvin's theology of "participation in Christ." He argues that Calvin's theology of "participation" gives a positive place to the human, such that grace fulfills rather than destroys nature, affirming a differentiated union of God and humanity in creation and redemption. Calvin's trinitarian theology extends to his view of prayer, sacraments, the law, and the ecclesial and civil orders. In light of Calvin's doctrine of participation, Billings reframes the critiques of Calvin in the Gift discussion and opens up new possibilities for contemporary theology, ecumenical theology, and Calvin scholarship as well.

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