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Calvin Scholar Lectures

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strange word of dubious ancestry.

The question raised is whether Pro Rege is speaking of dancing? The answer is, "No." Dancing refers to social dance which can be innocent (perhaps), but also quite sensually provocative and self-seeking. "The dance," on the other hand, is an art form which explores the world of space, movement, time, and kinetics. While exploring in this world of "the dance," a dance artist-choreographer is also serious about his or her meaning exploration and expression, while in movement, or while moving from one stationary pose to another, as the sculpture is when molding a figure in stone which seems to be in motion.

There are, no doubt, two ways to perform "the dance," just as there are two ways to write a story, two ways to bake a pie, and two ways to be a farmer. Either, one does what he does with a heart that wishes to praise God, or with a heart

that is indifferent or opposed to praising God. Yes, in that sense, "the dance" can also be self-seeking, God-denying, and degenerate. The problem, however, facing the Christian community, is that there is little (if any) real Christian leadership in this art form. In short, we find ourselves embarrassingly ignorant (before God and our fellow man) and incapable of making sound judgments in this art form.

For the time being, we are only able to learn the rudiments of the art of dance, to make some generalizations about the different kinds of dance, to say emphatically that there must be two ways to do this art (for or against God), and to accept (cautiously) the expertise of our humanist neighbors to get us started.

For now, let us get clear this much: social dance is not the same as "the dance." The Lord can bless even such a simple beginning in clarification.

Calvin Scholar Lectures

Dr. Ford Lewis Battles, Professor of Church History at Pittsburg Theological Seminary, lectured to the Dordt College community and to the public on September 22 and 23. Dr. Battles, a noted scholar in Calvin studies, presented three public lectures: "Calvin's Humanist Education," "The Writings of John Calvin," and "Calvin as Exegete."

In the first lecture, "Calvin's Humanist Education," Dr. Battles traced the in-

fluence of six of Calvin's teachers on his work. The influence of Mathurin Cordier, Pierre de l'Etoiles, Andrea Alciati, Melchior Wolmar, Guillaume Budé, and Pierre Danès was significant in grounding Calvin in the best of the classical studies of his day. Battles maintains that in establishing the Academy at Geneva, Calvin attempted to infuse Reformed thought into a classical humanist curriculum. Dr. Battles attributed Calvin's orderliness of thought and

clarity of style to this humanist education.

The audience was presented with a fascinating survey of John Calvin's writings in the second public lecture. Especially interesting was Dr. Battles' tracing of the development in the numerous editions of Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion. Beginning with the first edition of 1536, Battles demonstrated that Calvin must not be viewed as holding a static position but as growing through the developments and problems that he encountered. The final edition of 1559 is a greatly expanded edition, although the heart of Calvin's thought remained the same.

In addition to his analysis of Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion, Dr. Battles surveyed Calvin's commentaries, sermons, polemical treatises, letters, and published prayers. All these provide a rich insight into Calvin's teachings, but too often they have remained untranslated into the English language. As a result, they remain inaccessible to many students. Dr. Battles has devoted himself to this enormous task of translating Calvin's writings.

The final public lecture explored "Calvin as Exegete." Dr. Battles noted that an accurate translation of Calvin's commentaries is not available in any modern language. According to Battles, Calvin as exegete was influenced greatly

by John Chrysostom and Augustine. Learning from the preaching and exegetical skills of Chrysostom and from Augustine's excellence in dogmatics, Calvin reflects the strengths of both in his commentaries. Dr. Battles focused on Calvin's understanding of God's accommodating himself to human capacity in the Scriptures. According to Calvin, Battles maintained, this accommodating is necessary not only because of sin, but also because of a gulf which necessarily exists between the Creator and His creation. In the discussion which followed, several questions were raised concerning the existence, nature, and source of this approach in Calvin's thought.

For those who stand in the line of John Calvin, Dr. Battles' lectures were especially interesting and relevant. Those of us who had come to know Dr. Battles through his many translations and commentaries on Calvin's writings were given the opportunity to know him in a more personal way. The knowledge of John Calvin and of Calvin's writings which was gained from Dr. Battles' lectures was of immediate value. Yet even greater benefits may result from his willingness to share certain of his private translations and studies of Calvin with the Dordt community.

Rev. Wayne Kobes