Renaissance and Reformation
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Essary, Kirk. Erasmus and Calvin on the Foolishness of God: Reason and Emotion in the Christian Philosophy

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faith. In this article, Fromont also talks about how, in Castellion's mind, the scriptures are both interpreted and discovered by reason. Fromont concludes by noting that Castellion's epistemology had the advantage of promoting peace between religious adversaries and of making knowledge an object of individual research.

This collaboration is marked by analytical depth, careful logic, and prudent research. Not only that, but certain authors, like Engammare, show a real eloquence in their writing styles. One might wonder, however, why a book written by four of the best specialists on Castellion has no bibliography—a feature that might have been useful to a student of this Renaissance humanist. Nevertheless, this book is very well thought out and clearly deserves to be read by anyone interested in Castellion.

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Essary, Kirk.
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For many, some of whom ought to know better, "Calvinism" conjurers up the sinners of Jonathan Edwards, the stark walls of churches in Holland stripped of all their ornamentation by rioters in the 1560s, and the burning of Servetus. Likewise, "Erasmianism"—difficult as it is to define—calls up erudition, tolerance, and the humour of *Praise of Folly*. Kirk Essary begins his book by pointing out that such terms are of no real use, particularly when the two are seen as polar opposites, and by proposing that Calvin's vigorous and forceful judgments against Erasmus should not obscure the deeper agreements between them to be seen in Calvin's reception of Erasmus. A close look at that reception, by way of a side-by-side reading of their interpretations of 1 Corinthians 1:17b–27, suggests that other polar oppositions, chiefly "philosophy vs. rhetoric" and "reason vs. emotion," are equally useless and misleading. Readers of today need to realize that both Calvin and Erasmus shared a humanist conviction

that affective appeal to emotion does not automatically diminish truthfulness. Such a notion does not sit well with readers who see all that is "rhetorical" as *mere* rhetoric. The rhetoric that flourished in classical and Renaissance culture, however, was not conceived of as mere stylistic ornamentation, or as raw emotional appeal, or indeed as a catalogue of devices meant to change the minds of those whose ideas differ from those of the speaker or writer. As both Erasmus and Calvin recognized, a *theologia rhetorica*'s primary purpose is to teach by way of appealing to both the affective and the cognitive sides of the learner.

Essary's concern to bridge apparent oppositions mirrors the apparent opposition every commentator on the Corinthians passage since Jerome—even until the present day—has had to wrestle with: Paul's apparent insistence that the true wisdom of Christian philosophy is to be found in the "foolishness" (μωρία) of God, as Paul asserts at 1 Cor 25, whence "the foolishness (τὸ μωρὸν) of God is wiser (σοφώτερον) than men." Essary presents a series of careful considerations of Erasmus's paraphrase and annotations on the passage, comparisons with Calvin and other contemporary reformed interpretations (Bullinger and Pellikan, for example), and further considerations of a broader characterization of Pauline eloquence as exemplifying a peculiarly Christian form of discourse (contrasting humanist rhetoric with Scholastic insistence on logical rigour and clarity); he then shows how Erasmus and Calvin, along with Bullinger and Pellikan, appear to agree that Paul is telling us to eschew embellished rhetorical teaching and model our preaching on the humility of Christ. In the course of this development, Essary has a number of enlightening asides on comparable passages in Paul (Colossians 2:2–3, for instance) and the diversity of translations of "πιθανολογία" one finds in the respective exegetes. The arguments throughout are amply supported by citations and translations (with the Latin supplied in Essary's notes, which fill ninety pages). Essary, in short, shows *inter alia* a Calvin constantly engaged with the work of Erasmus, and an unappreciated influence on Calvin's thought: an influence revealed by close reading of their respective exegetical proposals and their shared interest in articulating the proper Christian teaching, including a shared recognition of the broadly affective aspects of biblical-humanist rhetorical theology.

Such conclusions will provide additional support to scholars who have argued for decades that Calvin fully participated in the humanist culture of his time. But that claim, like Essary's, it should be noted, applies far more

convincingly to the early Calvin than to the Genevan Calvin of the *Institutes*. Essary gives us only a peek at sixteenth-century handling of the *ratio/affectus* question (one that extends far beyond biblical exegesis), a question addressed also by Melanchthon, for instance, who is mentioned only incidentally. Until more investigation has been done along the lines suggested by Essary, the comparisons he finds between Erasmus and Calvin on the matter of Pauline eloquence may justly be considered a curiosity, not a genuine comparison. At the same time, we must keep in mind that Essary's main purpose in this excellent book is not to set Calvin or Erasmus scholars straight, but to contribute to a larger interdisciplinary project devoted to the history of thinking about emotion. In that context, this book may be seen as helping to free us from the constraints of bad seventeenth-century psychology and rhetorical theory (Hobbes, Lamy) that involve us in the very polarities that continue to bedevil not only recent treatments of exegetical and theological discussions, but an unfortunate amount of intellectual history more broadly, as well.

I note, finally, a number of typographical slips: words left out on pp. 12 and 13; a missing acute accent in the Greek on p. 118; the Latin for note 122 on p. 126. Also, misprints at 224n137; 225n146; 225n1; 231n46; 233n118; and 233n65; the last five lines of Erasmus are not in the translation on p. 114. The large number of Latin texts supplied in the notes makes for a copy editor's nightmare.

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Este, Isabella d'.
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Providing the first translation into any language of a writer's epistolary correspondence is no small feat, especially when that writer is the remarkably prolific Isabella d'Este (1474–1539), by whom we have more than sixteen thousand manuscript letters remaining. In her thoughtfully compiled volume