

Heiko A. Oberman, *John Calvin and the Reformation of the Refugees*, Geneva: Droz, 2009 (*Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 464), 226 p. – ISBN 978-2-600-00687-3.

For the present reviewer, Heiko Oberman was singularly helpful; even awe-inspiring. His »Dawn of the Reformation« was in large measure, the catalyst which sparked interests in the academic study of the medieval and Reformation eras and directed an already-existing fascination with John Calvin towards scholarly study of the man and his thought. For this reason, we feel particularly delighted to see Droz's handsomely-produced collection of some of the best of Oberman's essays on Calvin finally come into print. Indeed, it will surely be welcomed by anyone researching the late medieval or Early Modern eras and especially those who research Calvin. While all of the chapters appearing in it have been published elsewhere, it is, nevertheless, extremely helpful to have them together in a single volume.

The eight chapters found in this collection are: »Via Calvin: Unlocking the Enigma of John Calvin's Impact«, »John Calvin: The Mystery of His Impact«, »Toward the Recovery of the Historical Calvin: Redrawing the Map of Reformation Europe«, »Initia Calvin: The Matrix of Calvin's Reformation«, »Subita conversio: The Conversion of John Calvin«, »The Pursuit of Happiness: Calvin between Humanism and Reformation«, »Europa afflicta: The Reformation of the Refugees«, and »Calvin and Farel: The Dynamics of Legitimation in Early Calvinism«. These chapters represent work by Oberman on Calvin which was produced and published in the 1990s. The chapter entitled, »Toward the Recovery of the Historical Calvin«, is the only piece that breaks this rule. It was first published in 2003 in Oberman's book, »The Two Reformations«.

As anyone perusing this collection may see, Oberman was fascinated by the impact Calvin had upon Europe and European Christianity. He was also keenly interested in the question of Calvin's beginnings, both in relation to the character of his thought and also of his conversion from Roman Catholicism to evangelicalism. These ideas dominate the pages of this work. The last two essays, »Europa afflicta« and »Calvin and Farel« represent vignettes

tes into aspects of Calvin's reforming programme, with the former being the piece in which Oberman most explicitly sets out his notion of the »reformation of the refugees«.

Oberman's scholarship is extremely thought-provoking. He is able to bring strands of history and various (sometimes seemingly unrelated) ideas together to draw conclusions which offer the reader penetrating thoughts upon which to reflect. Oberman's scholarship is invariably well-informed. His knowledge of both primary and secondary literature is thorough and sometimes staggeringly so. His capacity to reveal and expand upon a particular line of thought, to marshal evidence for a specific conclusion, or to see a well-worn idea from a new perspective is exemplary.

Not all, it must be said, will agree with the Calvin set forth in these pages. Oberman sees Calvin as more Scotistic than some will feel comfortable with (p. 100–102). He plainly appreciates some of the insights into Calvin's psychology set out by William Bouwsma in his »John Calvin: a Sixteenth-Century Portrait«, particularly the significance of »the abyss« to Calvin (105–108). Oberman argues in »Via Calvini« that Calvin distanced himself from Zwingli, and hence Zürich, for the whole of his life (25). Oberman insists that Calvin's work should not be thought of »in terms of the City Reformation« (189) and speaks about Calvin »turning French« (181–184). These and other observations will provoke disagreement from many. Indeed, the present reviewer disagrees with several of them. But whether agreeing or disagreeing, we find Oberman a compelling writer and thinker, and his portrait of Calvin an intelligent, believable, and occasionally-provocative one.

The volume – though a wonderful addition to scholarship on Calvin and worthy of praise for so many reasons – does possess some shortcomings. In our judgment, any collection of Oberman's writings on Calvin really ought to include his »The ›Extra‹ Dimension in the Theology of Calvin« The present collection does not. The absence may be due to oversight or perhaps to conflicts with a publisher or to some other reason. But, whatever the reason may be, the absence is a disappointment. That absence also inadvertently raises a second shortcoming of the collection, in that it highlights the question of purpose. What does this collection represent? It would be impossible to call this collection of essays an intellec-

tual biography. Nor could one legitimately label it a study of some particular aspect of Calvin's thought. Nor (obviously) can one label it a collection of all of Oberman's writings on Calvin. So, what is it? No suitable answer comes immediately to mind.

These thoughts raise the further observation that it is one of the disappointments laid upon us by providence that Oberman did not live long enough to do for Calvin what he did so well for Luther; to write a biography for him of the stature of Oberman's »Luther: Man between God and the Devil«. Some of this sadness is alluded to by Peter Dykema in his thoughtful introduction to the volume. It is, we may all agree, a disappointment. But, in providing us with the present collection, Droz may well have given us the closest thing we are going to get to such a biography – and for that they are deserving of our deep thanks and appreciation. Oberman can be an annoying writer at times. His footnotes can take on such gargantuan proportions as to be unbelievable. But for insight, penetration and innovation, he is exceedingly hard to beat. All of these qualities are present in abundance in the collection which Droz have given us.

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*Girolamo Zanchi: De religione christiana fides – Confession of Christian Religion, hg. von Luca Baschera und Christian Moser, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007 (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 135), 2 Bde., X & 837 S. – ISBN 978-90-04-16118-4.*

Trotz vieler wichtigen Arbeiten zur reformierten Orthodoxie in den letzten fünfundzwanzig Jahren ist Wilhelm Neusers Einschätzung im 1984 erschienenen zweiten Band des Handbuchs der Dogmen- und Theologiegeschichte, dass die Erforschung der reformierten Orthodoxie einer Landkarte »mit vielen weißen Flecken« (S. 307) gleiche, noch immer zutreffend. Dies gilt auch für Girolamo Zanchi (1516–1590), der als Theologe der Generation nach Calvin und bedeutender Theologieprofessor in Straßburg, Heidelberg und Neustadt an der Haardt maßgeblich die reformierte Frühorthodoxie geprägt und in der frühen Neuzeit großen Einfluss auf die reformierte Theologie ausgeübt hat. Die Herausgeber der vorlie-