

der geltenden Rechtstradition.« Gewiss wird es zu den Aufgaben der künftigen Forschung gehören, anhand der fortschreitenden Erschließung der Konsistorialakten sich mit dem Genfer Konsistorium zur Zeit Calvins zu beschäftigen.

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*Jon Balserak, Establishing the Remnant Church in France: Calvin's Lectures on the Minor Prophets, 1556–1559, Leiden: Brill, 2011 (Brill's Series in Church History 50), 224 p. – ISBN 978-90-04-19144-0.*

John Calvin's lectures on the minor prophets between 1556–1559 are here shown, persuasively, to be much more than mere exegesis. In this volume Balserak makes a powerful case for seeing Calvin as – in his own estimation – a prophet.

More specifically, in the chapters which follow the introduction, Balserak unpacks Calvin's lectures on the minor prophets by first spelling out Calvin's audience and the context of the lectures (chapter 2); then he turns to an evaluation of Calvin's self-understanding as authoritative interpreter and Reformer (chapter 3). From that point B. shows from Calvin's lectures precisely how he exegeted those writings (chapter 4) and how those texts lead Calvin to the conclusion that it is his »prophetic« task to overthrow the Roman Catholic church and establish a new Remnant church (chapter 5).

Balserak brings the book to a close with a brief »Concluding Thoughts: Calvin's Vision of the Church in This Age« (chapter 6). He offers as well a bibliography and the requisite index.

Balsarek states his thesis clearly and concisely, writing: »...Calvin reads the Minor Prophets as a mirror of his own day. Accordingly, he sees the French evangelicals as the faithful remnant and himself as the prophet who, like Hosea, Micah and Zechariah before him, condemns the idolatrous church and seeks to call out from it, and to comfort, the tiny remnant of the faithful, whose lives are so difficult given their present circumstances« (p. 2–3).

The entire book's purpose and goal is to prove this thesis correct. Once more, Balsarek is, in this reviewer's estimation, com-

pletely successful in so doing. Alongside, though, providing proof for his case, Balserak also opens a window on Calvin's life and thought unavailable to those less familiar with his lectures and lesser known tractates and books. For instance: »When in 1544 the pope rebuked the emperor for daring to presume that he was able, or possessed the authority, to call a general council ... without consulting his holiness, Calvin wrote this reply *Admonitio paterna Pauli III. Romani pontificis ad invictissimum*. It is full of sharp criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm« (p. 43).

Balserak is so familiar with the whole range of Calvin's works that he draws from every genre (from the Institutes to the Commentaries to the Lectures to the Tractates to the Polemical Works and everything else) in bolstering his case. And he does it by citing the Latin or French originals. If ever a historian/theologian truly appreciated the Reformation cry *Ad fontes*, it is Balserak as demonstrated by his reliance not on translations but originals.

Balserak includes, therefore, a great number of direct quotations as evidence for his thesis. Indeed, page after page and paragraph following paragraph include citations such as: »There are some today who say: 'There's Calvin who makes himself a prophet, when he says that one will know that there is a prophet among us. He's talking about himself.' Is he a prophet? Well, since it is the doctrine of God that I am announcing, I have to use this language« (p. 90).

But the volume is not just a series of quotations strung together »like pearls on a string«. Our author combines these citations with incisive observations concerning their significance and meaning for Calvin's program of establishing the »true church« in the French speaking world. To wit: »... Calvin must have seen himself as possessing a remarkable, God given authority; indeed the authority of a prophet and the authority which moved him to take radical steps to endeavor to preserve the church throughout Europe, and additionally and especially, in his beloved France« (p. 107). And again: »... Calvin was under the conviction that the age in which he lived was like that of the prophets and that he and his small band were the modern day equivalent of the remnant of the faithful – those who worship God in truth but who dwelled amongst a corrupt body whose worship was characterized by blatant idolatry. Of this

identity between his own and the prophets's age, Calvin was absolutely convinced as were other of the Swiss (like Zwingli, for instance)« (p. 211).

However, a careful reading of Balserak's contribution does reveal a number of typographical errors which need to be addressed in future editions.

Balserak is to be congratulated for his incredible work and his important contribution to our understanding of the great Reformer of Geneva. All those engaged in Calvin research will benefit from a reading of it.

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*Epistolae Petri Vireti: The Previously Unedited Letters and a Register of Pierre Viret's Correspondence*, ed. Michael W. Bruening, Geneva: Droz, 2012 (*Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 494), 654 p. – ISBN 978-2-600-01553-0.

The larger part of Pierre Viret's correspondence had already been published either in the *Calvini opera*, Herminjard's *Correspondance des réformateurs*, or in Barnaud's *Quelques lettres inédits de Pierre Viret*. Now the remaining twenty percent have found their capable editor in Michael Bruening. The chronological register in the back of this book gives an overview of all of Viret's correspondence providing for each of the 759 letters archival locations, publication details for the original text or translation, the incipit, and – if necessary – corrections and additions.

The 155 letters edited here date from 1541 to 1565, fifty of them are addressed to Viret, the rest is authored by him. They expand our knowledge of his life, family, and work. We can follow him from Lausanne, via Geneva to Nîmes and Lyon. The letters inform about the progress, difficulties, and conflicts in the city and classe of Lausanne, and during the last few years, about developments in France. Apparently, Viret is glad to report the steadily growing number of participants in the Lord's Supper and the growth of the Lausanne Academy.

More than half of these letters were exchanged between Viret and Guillaume Farel. This will make it possible now to value the