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Emidio Campi, Peter Opitz, Konrad Schmid. *Johannes Calvin und die kulturelle Prägekraft des Protestantismus.* Zürich: vdf, Verlag der Fachvereine der ETH, 2012. 248 S. ISBN 978-3-7281-3250-5; ISBN 978-3-290-17631-0.

Reviewed by Arnold Huijgen
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E. Campi u.a. (Hrsg.): Die kulturelle Prägekraft des Protestantismus

This collection of essays originates in a series of lectures, held in Zurich, organized by the Institute for Swiss Reformation History at the University of Zurich and the Centre for Religion, Economics and Politics. The occasion was the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth in 2009. The contributions aim at a historically balanced view on Calvin and the type of Protestantism influenced by him, that is particularly the Protestantism of parts of the European continent, above all Switzerland, France and Germany. The focal points of the contributions are law, state, education and economic ethics. Among these, education receives only little attention, whereas questions of (the history of) economic ethics pervade this volume. Though with different accents, all contributors discuss the famous Weber thesis that relates Calvinism to the spirit of capitalism. Unfortunately, this book does not offer an index, which would be helpful.

Some contributions focus mainly on Calvin and his historical context, whereas others are driven primarily by a concern for the present economic crisis. Particularly the essays by Wolfgang Huber, Micheline Calmy-Rey and Peter Seele make a broader and convincing connection between Calvin's thought and the present economic and social situation in continental Europe.

The opening essay of Emidio Campi gives an overview of Calvin's life, and highlights Calvin's ecclesiology and social ethics as formative powers. For Calvin, social injustice counted as an insult of God the Creator. Campi underlines the importance of the doctrine of providence for Calvin's views on society and church. Philip Benedict argues that aspects Max Weber highlighted in Calvinism can be traced back to Calvin's theology (church discipline, the use of the law, predestination), but that Weber's thesis actually fits only one sort of Calvinism, namely the English type that led to Methodism. Because there was no possibility for church discipline in the English context, theologians stressed the inner characteristics of true believers, which led to the uncertainty and anxiety addressed by Weber. Particularly in the Scottish context, this type of Calvinism led to a stress on feelings and marks of grace. However, Wolfgang Schluchter offers a precise analysis of Weber's famous thesis, which demonstrates that in Weber's view, not the doctrine of predestination was central, but the specific notion of the perseverance of the saints, which was not only found in Calvinist circles, but also among Anabaptists. Petra Bahr describes how Calvin's theoretical iconoclasm not only led to the removal of images from churches since these were formerly understood as magical representations, but also to the creation of new images, which were meant for reflection. Rembrandt's paintings, for instance, render the saints humane and thus profane. Thus, Calvin's criticism of images opens up possibilities for a contemporary ethics of images. The contribution by Michael Welker corrects common misunderstandings in the present debate: the demonization of money is rejected and naive glorifications of globalization are demythologized.

The second part of this volume discusses Calvin and law. Christoph Strohm rejects simplified accounts of Lutheran versus Calvinist jurists, though it is true that Calvinist jurists elaborated the right of resistance against government more. Exactly the allowance of a *Tyrannenmord* (tyrannicide) is what Esther Maurer notes as the important part of Protestantism for her function in politics. Michael Stolleis argues that new thinking on the state emerged not from Catholicism or Lutheranism, but from humanist and reformed circles. Wolfgang Huber elaborates Calvin's idea of equity, which transcends a merely formal approach to law. He notes that Calvin did allow interest as an economic necessity, but that he stresses the love for the neighbour, based on the Old Testament prohibition of interest. Taking interest should not degenerate into usury, and the poor should be able to loan without interest, so that they have a chance to overcome their conditions. Micheline Calmy-Rey also

highlights Calvin's reluctance to allow interest, and his labours to surround it with caveats. For Calvin, the solidarity with the poor has priority over striving for profit. The Calvinist entrepreneur is not an individualist, but a member of civil society. He uses his profit to serve the community. This may suggest that Calvin and his heirs are not so much guilty of laying the foundations for the present economic crisis, but that they may have indicated possibly helpful notes for overcoming the present problems. Calmy-Rey also invalidates the thought that Calvin's Geneva was a theocracy under his tyrannical rule. Rather, Calvin consistently tried to free the church from control by political authorities. Still, when Calmy-Rey notes that Calvin's *Institutio* is in fact very close to Castellio's position on tolerance, she overstates her case, since the historical data cannot prove this thesis.

The third part, on education, only counts one contribution: Anton A. Bucher discusses the educational potential of Protestantism vis-à-vis Catholicism, which stressed obedience and mistrusted the ultimate goal of all education: freedom. Protestantism exactly stressed this freedom and thus boosted education of ordinary people.

The fourth part, already preluded in the first part, discusses the influence of Protestantism on economics. Peter Seele turns the Weber thesis around, by demonstrating that economic circumstances were crucial for the position Calvin chose, rather than the reverse. Seele, like Huber and Calmy-Rey, stresses both the economic necessity of Calvin accepting interest and his strict ethical criteria for it, taking care for the poor. Ultimately, macroeconomic developments had the priority over Calvin's teachings. Wolfgang Schluchter's careful analysis of Weber's thesis shows, once more, that it originated in the lecture of later Protestants, such as Baxter or Spener. Schluchter does not, however, delve into the question whether Baxter and others really saw success in one's daily work as a mark of one's being elected. In a final article, Michael Beintker notes characteristics of reformed theology, in the context of various theologies.

All in all, this volume corrects caricatures of Calvin and Calvinism that still exist: Calvin was not a tyrant, nor the founder of capitalist ethics. Rather, in Calvin's economic thought, there are rudiments that could have offered viable other ways than the road capitalism has taken in the Western world. Meanwhile, discussions and criticism of the Weber thesis will continue. But this volume demonstrates that it does not neatly fit Calvin, his theology, and his direct influence.

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