
ZAHND, Ueli
A la fin du livre se trouvent deux appendices précieux ; l’un est un tableau des noms des fellows qui quittèrent de gré ou de force l’Université durant la période allant de 1546 à 1575, et de la destination qu’ils prirent. L’autre est fait de deux tableaux : le premier, du nombre de ces mêmes pour les collèges de Christ Church, King’s College, Queen’s et Trinity, le second, des membres des deux universités (Oxford et Cambridge) qui devinrent (ou restèrent) séminaristes et prêtres catholiques après être allés se former en Europe continentale.

La bibliographie (p. 212-225) confirme l’impression du lecteur, d’une étude minutieuse des documents accessibles pour cette étude riche en faits, en événements : elle comprend des sources premières inédites (1) et éditées (2) et des sources secondaires (3). Nous souhaitons une large diffusion à ce livre.


With this meticulously documented study, E.A. McK. presents the results of almost two decades of research on “Calvin the pastor of Geneva” (p. 10). Proposing a bridge between the theologians’ usual interest in doctrinal questions and the social historians’ focus on lay piety, her objective is “to bring to the fore what pastors and people were saying and doing together as they re-formed the religious life” (p. 13). It is thus the worship and pastoral ministry as they were actually practiced that she centers upon, and the main focus lies on Geneva and Calvin in the years between 1536 and 1564. The study begins, however, with a largely theological outline of Calvin’s ecclesiology as he developed it since his first Institutes. This presentation of “Calvin’s most creative contribution to historical theology” (p. 17) serves as contextualization of the following four parts dealing more closely with actual church practice. Part one, the Structures: Time, Space, and People examines the setting of Genevan worship with its ambitious schedule of several daily services and an elaborate rotation system of the ministers among the churches. Part two, Worship Services, Sacraments, and Other Liturgies in Time and Space centers on the new liturgical rhythm established in Geneva, starting with an outline of Calvin’s view of “holy time”. This is followed by a presentation of the weekly and annual liturgical cycles with special attention to the sacraments and the day of prayer. The third part, Preaching in Geneva and Calvin’s Sermons contextualizes Calvin’s homiletical work in order to relate his sermons to his actual pastoral ministry. Part four, finally, Worship and Pastoral Care in Daily Life, addresses the forms of worship and services outside the churches. A short conclusion offers reflection on pastoral ministry and worship in Calvin’s
theology and practice, mainly aimed at the theologians amongst the readers. The 300 pages of appendices on the other hand are intended to “make the social historians happy” (p. 41): they bring together multifarious data, tables and statistics on baptisms and marriages, a tabular compilation of sermons given by Calvin, and some texts that were intended for the piety at home. As these appendices underscore, the whole study is based on an extensive analysis of manifold sources, from public records and registers to liturgical texts, sermons and theological treatises. This impressive amount of material is presented in a clearly structured and well-organized way, and the detailed analyses are offered in a most readable language. The chapters always provide a profound historical contextualization and often take the late medieval background into account, so that a pertinent picture of Calvin the preacher of Geneva arises. If there is anything to criticize, it is the fact that these sources reveal, among others, an impressive number of different players involved in Genevan worship and ministry, and thus in the actual shaping of this practice. In this regard, and given the study’s explicit interest in Genevan practice in general, its overall focus on Calvin could appear as a constraint to the Genevan picture, for it encumbers the view on other persons involved. In several places, differences between the actual Genevan practice and Calvin’s ideal are named (see, e.g. p. 267), but it would have been interesting to learn more about the motifs and views of the persons responsible for this discrepancy. Even so, of course, the study is of great value, offering new perspectives and novel insights for everyone interested in Genevan liturgical practice, its historical context, and the sermons and preaching of Calvin. Among many other things, it provides most notably a reassessment of the Genevan establishment of the day of prayer, and in doing so it does away with several stereotypes: with regards to Calvin, it valorizes the reformer’s interest in rituals and liturgy, and it revives the re-formed, but ongoing and thoroughly reflected annual rhythm in the Genevan church.

Ueli Zahnd


Facendo tesoro di un’intuizione di Bernard Dompnier, che, trattando della spettacolarizzazione della pratica religiosa di antico regime, nel 1985 parlava di «pastorale della seduzione» con finalità anti-protestante, i curatori di questo volume hanno raccolto insieme nove saggi su temi un po’ disparati, ma accomunati dall’intenzione di documentare la tensione rappresentativa propria dei fenomeni religiosi dal Cinquecento a oggi.