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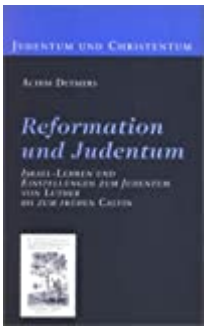

Achim Detmers. *Reformation und Judentum: Israel-Lehren und Einstellungen zum Judentum von Luther bis zum frÖ¼hen Calvin.* Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2001. 392 pp. EUR 35.30 (paper), ISBN 978-3-17-016968-5.

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Originally completed as a dissertation at the Justus-Liebig-Universitaet Giessen, this broad and penetrating work is an important contribution to Reformation and Jewish history. It is a finely executed and much needed study that begins to fill a significant gap in the treatment of the Jews and the Reformation. It should be required reading for anyone interested in a serious study of the role of Jews and Judaism in the thinking of the Reformation.

The structure of the book is well planned, and expertly and consistently carried through. Drawing on the tension within Pauline and New Testament writings in general that allowed for many possible meanings regarding relations with and understandings of Judaism, Detmers notes that the Reformation, with its return to the normative function of the biblical text, allowed a great deal of breadth regarding discussions of biblical Israel and contemporary Jews.

In general, the reformers distinguished between biblical Israel and the Judaism after the advent of Christ. The first category Detmers labels primary teachings on Israel (or Israel doctrine) corresponding to Calvin's *Israel dei*; the latter, secondary Israel doctrine–corresponded to Calvin's *Israel carnis*, which had particular resonance with the reformers' own positions regarding contemporary Jewry. For Detmers, teachings on Israel represent implicit and explicit expression of Christian theology regarding the belief and religion of Israel, especially as Christians organized and evaluated their own relationship to the biblical people of God. As such, teachings on Israel have central and fundamental meaning for Christian thought, particularly that of the Reformation period.

At the center of the book is an exploration into the origins and development of the early Israel doctrine of Calvin. But the book is about a good deal more than that, since Detmers argues persuasively that biblical arguments and contemporary factors both impacted the understanding of Judaism. Indeed, Detmers maintains that theological thought is not only the expression of the intention of an individual author, but rather also the property and product of a collective group. As such, biblical passages might be utilized to strengthen or legitimate more general existing (or acquired) views and conduct. The primary Israel doctrine, therefore, is a part of the central theological categories of Christianity, with extremely important consequences for internal Christian profiles and distinctions and, eventually, for various Christian relationships with Judaism and Jews as well.

After a thorough review of the most important research and publications treating Calvin and his attitude toward both biblical and contemporary Israel, Detmers draws a number of preliminary conclusions, notably that:

most scholars have seen Calvin's position regarding Judaism to be independent from his Israel doctrine; with one exception, no scholars have found contact with Jews; there have been no comparisons with other traditions of the Reformation period, and the multi-faceted influences on Calvin have remained unconsidered; Calvin's Israel doctrine has not been assessed independent of his hermeneutical writing; and, the early phase of Calvin's career, especially the periods he spent in Basle and Strasbourg, have received little attention.

Detmers maintains that during the first half of the sixteenth century there were still very few Jews in the direct area of influence of the Reformation, and he concludes, therefore, that daily interaction between Jews and Christians remained the exception. Most images of Jews, according to this argument, were based upon sociological and social-psychological stereotypes and prejudices rather than social experience, even among the learned. What is more, Detmers traces the continuing influence of the *Adversus-Judaeos* literature in the polemical writings of converted Jews and the various perceptions of Jews in the early modern period as foreign, magical, and "other." He argues that Judaism, therefore, served as a counter image or antithesis of an ideal that could be utilized in the process of Christian self-understanding.

The book accordingly next moves to a broad overview of the legal and social position of west European Jews in the periods before, during and in response to the Reformation. Here the presentation is deliberately a summary of topics that are by now very well-trodden. For the long period of 1090-1520, Detmers focuses on the crusades, demonic imagery, financial considerations, and expulsions. For the period from 1475 to 1520 in particular, he concentrates on accusations of blood thirstiness, image desecration, deicide, obstinacy, blasphemy of the Talmud, hypocritical converts, host desecration, usury, corruption, and the supposedly seductive arts of the Jewish doctor.

The final period under consideration, approximately 1520-1546, is subdivided into a number of themes, primarily accusations of Judaizing and the development of the concept of the mission to the Jews (especially for the period 1520-1529); Sabbatarianism and the "new Jerusalem" (1531-1535), focusing particular attention on the messianic speculation tied to the advance of the Turks; the development of territorial Jewry policies (1536-1539); host desecration and ritual murder accusations (1539-1542), in which Detmers takes issue with a central work on the ritual murder legend, that of R. Pochia Hsia, arguing that the fact that the host desecration and ritual murder lost meaning had more to do with developments from before the Reformation; and, a discussion of the publication of Luther's later writings about Judaism and Josel of Rosheim's response (1543-1546).

In what might be considered the core of the book, Detmers next provides an overview of the Israel doctrines and attitudes toward Judaism of selected reformers, who had important impact on the early Calvin. Singled out for treatment are Melanchthon, Zwingli, Bullinger, Bucer, and Servet. While experts in the thought of each of these figures may find criticism in Detmers' individual overviews, taken as a group, and with a very consistently applied approach and set of questions, this section is very useful in allowing Detmers to draw a number of broad conclusions.

Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560), with whom Calvin had important contact during his years in Strasbourg and again at the 1539 Frankfurt assembly, had, according to Detmers, no unified principle regarding the Israel doctrine, though his position was related to his view on the soteriological unity of the Old and New Testaments. For Melanchthon, the Old and New Testaments were opposed in the sense that the former represented dead law and the latter life-giving Gospel, and the Old Testament maintained meaning for the Christian Church only as an expression of natural law. The election of Israel and covenantal thought hardly played a role in Melanchthon's teachings on Israel, though Detmers notes that Melanchthon maintained a stronger connection to the Law than Luther did.

By contrast, Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), with whose writings Calvin was familiar, was the first Reformation theologian to make the covenantal teaching of the Old Testament an important principle of his theological reflection. For Zwingli, godly Law (Torah) had a positive and central value. The Old Testament was interpreted in light of the New; on the other hand, the Old increasingly served to illuminate the New. Nonetheless, Zwingli clung to important distinctions between the two–that between promise and fulfillment–and his position was never formulated into a substantial unity as in Bullinger and Bucer.

Cutting through the writings of Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), who together with Zwingli was the father of the reformed covenant theology, was the theological principle of the unity of the history of the covenant. The difference between the two Testaments, Bullinger saw in their accidents. Still, the Old Testament only promises what is fulfilled in the New and the New Testament sacra-

ments are not given for a limited period but forever. Bullinger viewed the Decalogue as the sum of the godly will, and for him, covenantal theology afforded the opportunity to stress the continuity of the German-Swiss Reformation with biblical belief. Bullinger believed that there could be several covenant people, leading to the idea of substitution.

According to Detmers, Martin Bucer (1491-1551) was the most important theologian for the early Calvin. Bucer subscribed to the substantial unity of the Old and New Testaments through Christology, and saw the Old Testament as *doctrina pietatis*, instruction to correct life according to the will of God. Several times, Bucer made it clear that the Law of the Old Testament is not abrogated. Nevertheless, for Bucer, there were important differences between the Old and New Testaments. The spirit (of freedom) was seen to give much more richly in the New Testament and, whereas the Law leads man to the devastating judgment of God, the Gospel promises the saving grace.

Michael Servet (1509/11-1553) is important for this investigation because of Calvin's early contact with him and Calvin's role in Servet's trial. Servet's teachings on Israel were used in service of his primary concern, the "restoration of Christendom." The goal for Servet's radical reformation was to return to apostolic roots. Detmers doubts that Servet was of marrano-Jewish lineage, though he concedes that he may have been influenced by the polemic-apologetic arguments of the Spanish discussion around *conversos*. Detmers further argues that Servet did not develop a "Jewish Christology," and in fact that he had no extraordinary interest in Judaica; even in his Ghent trial, Detmers notes, direct accusations of Judaizing played hardly any role. What is more, Servet used Jewish arguments only sporadically and in specifically apologetic connections that were foreign to the Jewish texts themselves. Indeed, Servet believed that no true knowledge of God was possible extra Christum. Servet argued for the abolition of the Old covenant, in which the entire Law–not only the ceremonial and judicial law, but also the customary law and Decalogue–were discarded. For Servet, man was saved from eternal death alone by faith in Christ. Thus, while Calvin's Israel doctrine developed a "unity theology," Servet's, on the other hand, developed as "separation theology."

After this overview of key theologians, Detmers concludes that the primary difference between the reformers was related to whether they stressed the difference or unity of the Old and New Testaments. Throughout, Detmers maintains that these differing directions were the result of late inner Protestant arguments and attempts at differentiation. The primary functions of Melanchthon's Israel doctrine, for example, were related to: protecting against Judaizing tendencies (particularly those of the peasants rebelling and co-opting Mosaic law); countering libertine, antinomian misunderstanding of justification by faith alone; and disputing the continuity of the Roman Church back to the true church of the Old and New Testaments. To give another example, in the case of Zwingli, teachings on Israel served to: critique Roman piety; fashion a new order of the Zurich community; and support his position in his debates with both the Baptist groups and in his conflict with Luther. Almost all of the theologians selected had a pejorative view of Jewish belief, corresponding to negative views of contemporary Judaism. Only Zwingli, and Melanchthon to some extent, took the Jews under their protection, but even they continued to endow the term Jew with negative connotations.

In Bullinger's covenantal theology, although Israel was not fully rejected–there would be a very small remainder of Christ-believing Jews–Bullinger found no real interest in contemporary Judaism, which he subsumed under the broad heading of enemies of the Christian religion. Similarly, while Melanchthon conceded that conversion of the Jews to Christian belief was necessary, he believed, however, that only a few would be converted. Although he was critical of the 1510 Brandenburg host desecration accusations, Melanchthon offered no real criticism of Luther's later anti-Jewish writings and cannot be considered as positively disposed toward toleration of Judaism as was Reuchlin. In the same way, Bucer's stress on the covenantal unity did not reach into practical Jewish matters, since Bucer saw contemporary Judaism as a religious and economic danger and, influenced by Margaritha's diatribes (among other writings), advocated harsh anti-Jewish measures in his *Judenratschlag* of 1538.

With these two substantial investigations behind him–the contemporary historical and theological contexts–Detmers turns to the real topic of the book. According to Detmers, teachings on Israel played an important role in Calvin's reforming expression, though several aspects of the Israel doctrine remained inconsistent and unbundled. While Calvin noted central figures of the Old Testament–typologically–and held a certain admiration for the Old Testament narratives of the bond with Israel, he also pointed out that Israel had broken its covenant and that final salvation was not to come

through the Law. The Old Testament people had their salvation in the anticipation of Christ; those of the New on the basis of their looking back on Christ. The Old Testament applied only to the specific situation of the Jewish people, though the promise of the Old Testament is bound with the complete fulfillment of the Law. When dealing with the Roman Church and the radicals, Calvin tended to focus on the differences between the Testaments. He emphasized their unity when he sought to stress the continuity of the Reformation movement with the biblical people of God. Inner Christian conflicts and interests formed the background of Calvin's secondary Israel doctrine as well, and true Israelites and the seed of Israel remained identified with the faithful of the church. Indeed, for Calvin there was no salvation outside the church. It is clear that Calvin had only indirect knowledge of Judaism and still no adequate familiarity with Hebrew during his early stage. He continued in the tradition of lumping Jews stereotypically with Pagans and Turks, for example.

Calvin later stressed the substantial (and Christological) unity of the Testaments, and there was a notable increase in the frequency of citations from Scripture, over the Church Fathers, in the Institutes, coinciding with his intensive study of the New Testament in 1534-1536 and the influence and importance of the Olivetan Bible translation. Calvin's change also reflected conflict over the Trinitarian confession and the attempt to impose upon the Ghent burghers the reforming confession of faith. The Strasbourg exile of 1538-1541 was of great meaning for Calvin's further theological development, both for the theological environment and the long and unbroken continuity of Jewish life in the region. It was at this time that Calvin began to refer to Jewish interpretation of Scripture, though it is unclear where he picked up such arguments–probably from Christian literature. In response, Calvin's Israel doctrine became systematic for the first time, though he never followed the Upper German-Swiss thesis of substantial unity to its fullest. Calvin came to a theory of the drastic substitution of the Jewish People and he came to differentiate the total Jewish people (*tota Iudaeorum natione*) from individual Jews. Calvin did not confront the toleration of Jews publicly. He could, for example, criticize the error he saw in stories of the bleeding host, without thereby critically assessing accusations of Jewish host desecration. In the end, Calvin did not necessarily reject the harsh measures recommended by Bucer (though he was generally opposed to coercive measures because of his experiences in France) or subscribe to the toleration of Capito.

Detmers catalogs some of the basic sources that Calvin employed, but notes that non-written sources were important and that there is some uncertainty about which sources he received completely or only in part. Calvin's unique Israel doctrine was formed within the specific context of the situation of the French Protestants–especially his experience with the harsh repression and persecution of heretics in France–rather than through the specific Wittenberg or Upper-German and Swiss contexts.

Reformation und Judentum also includes a precise English summary (pp. 322-327), an appendix with Bullinger's opinion on the toleration of the Jews prepared for Georg von Stetten on June 10, 1572 (pp. 328-331, in Latin with a German translation), an extensive and very handy bibliography and a host of illustrations, particularly peppering the overview of the social and legal position of the Jews.

A work of such broad scope is likely to encounter criticism from specialists in topics covered. Detmer's treatment of the social and legal position of the Jews, for example, while it does catalog the most commonly referenced issues, does little to describe internal Jewish society and religion, which may have influenced contemporary reactions, and certainly played a crucial role in Jewish reception of and reaction to the reformers. While his dismissal of the real Jews of the period as numerically insignificant, particularly in strong reforming areas, may have some truth behind it, small demographic numbers should not automatically lead to quick conclusions about the impact that Jewish life–particularly as we learn more and more about the complexity of Jewish and Christian interactions–might have had on (and in turn itself been affected by) the social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments of the period.

While scholars would likely agree that late medieval theology in general was of less direct significance for Calvin than the influential individuals selected here, it would certainly have been worth pushing the envelope back just a bit to set some of the developments of these central figures into a broader and deeper context. To what extent, for example, were the Upper-German and Swiss discussions of covenantal unity related to late medieval theology and, some might argue, political realities? Were there other late medieval theological developments that worked against the reformers, and, can one find commonalities with Catholic Reformation theology or the thinking of humanists in the same period?

In the end, of course, no book can cover everything,

and I must conclude where I began: namely, this is an outstanding work of scholarship that will have real and lasting impact for students and scholars in a host of fields. Detmers deserves our gratitude for his efforts, and his ongoing work will surely continue to redound to scholarly benefit for some time to come.

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