THREE NEW BIOGRAPHIES OF CALVIN[1]

I

[2]ASSUREDLY, the branch of investigation devoted to Calvin has no reason to complain! Besides a number of monographs,[3] which may be said to multiply year by year, three new biographies since 1933 occupy the field,—attempts, that is to say, to comprise within comparatively slender compass the most salient elements of the Reformer's life and his theological and ecclesiastical labours. Imbart de la Tour's volume is in many respects a production *sui generis*, only to be judged by its own scale of measurement. The two others, hailing from Britain, we welcome more especially, because the Anglo-Saxon world, profoundly as it has been influenced by our Reformer, has hitherto contributed relatively little to the research occupied with his memory; and therefore a gap remained to be filled in that quarter. If we enquire the cause of the augmenting interest in Calvin, Mackinnon points us (p. 7) by way of explanation to Karl Barth and his School. Probably, however, we should regard the current religious situation as its deeper ground. The heritage of the Reformation having been forced in several countries, nay, throughout the entire world, into grave conflict with sceptical tendencies, men's thoughts have turned, as it were instinctively, to the hero whose genius unquestionably saved Protestantism in its grapple with the Counter-Reformation.

The books of the British historians supplement one another in many respects. Both of them reveal a good acquaintance with original sources and the literature of the subject, albeit some omissions are noticeable; for both writers alike pass by

[1] (1) R. N. Carew Hunt: *Calvin*. London, Centenary Press, 1933. (2) Imbart de la Tour, Member of the Institute: *Les Origines de la Réforme*. IV. Calvin et l'Institution chrétienne. Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1935. (3) Mackinnon, Prof. Jas.: *Calvin and the Reformation*. London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1936.

[2] Translated from the German original by Mr. E. K. Simpson, M.A.

[3] Vd. my article, *Calviniana; Gött. Anzeigen*, 1934, 7, and the *Evangelical Quarterly*, VI. 1, 1934, for publications since the War in Germany alone; several more have appeared since then.

not only the Hungarian sources of information, as may readily be understood, but also the Dutch writers (Kuyper, Rutgers) on Calvin. If they bear a resemblance in that respect, the task they respectively set before them exhibits characteristic divergences. Hunt says: "The present volume is a biography of Calvin, not a history of Calvinism" (p. 11). A very intelligible limitation! But in view of its execution the German reader cannot avoid the impression that the sequence of events at Geneva, in France, and to some extent also in England, lies specially near the author's heart. On the other hand, the Reformer's activities on German soil, in fact his entire stay at Strassburg and his participation in the great religious conferences of his time, to say nothing of his relations with the Netherlands or Poland, are obviously too much curtailed. In contrast with Hunt, Mackinnon entitles his book: *Calvin and the Reformation.* He has written a meritorious work in four volumes on *Luther and the Reformation* (1925–30), and the book before us on Calvin is meant to form its counterpart. He signalizes the object floating before his mind in the words: the volume is meant "to be not a biography, but primarily a critical survey of the Reformer's work and influence; the biographical element occupies only so much space therein as contributes to this survey" (p. 9). In harmony with this design we are given by way of introduction (pp. 1–38) a fairly lengthy and commendable estimate of Zwingli and the Zurich Reformation. Nevertheless it appears to me questionable whether the far-reaching compass of the theme is completely covered, notwithstanding excellent details, particularly in chapters xii–xv, (pp. 178–213) regarding Calvin's place as a Reformation leader, as a mediator between the Protestant Churches, concerning his efforts for the progress of the Reformation and his interventions in international politics, and lastly the concluding observations (p. 288 sq.) touching Calvin's epoch-making significance. It is true, some points left out of consideration by Hunt obtain notice; but in return other *lacunae*, to which we shall advert later on, seem to us to present themselves to view.

However, Mackinnon construes the title of his book principally in the sense that he proposes to furnish a *critical* survey of what the Reformer was, taught, and achieved, and in so doing, provided that the critic does not lose sight of his

limits, exercises an undoubted right of the historical student. Hunt likewise by no means abjures an independent judgment and occasional tone of condemnation. Grateful as he is for Doumergue's *magnum opus*, which he appraises as a "vast storehouse of information", he blames his too diligent endeavours to "wash Calvin white" (p. 11). On the other hand Hunt (p. 72) regards as unwise (e.g.) Calvin's refusal in his controversy with Caroli to subscribe the three old creeds, in spite of the memorable reason assigned by the Reformer: "we have sworn our belief in one God, but not in Athanasius." The critical instinct with him now and then produces really challengeable expressions. Thus a note is appended to the order for the removal of all crosses from the Genevan churches: "the triumph of the Old Testament was complete" (p. 245). As a rule, however, whilst noticing a number of criticisms, Hunt yet knows how, by some means, to vindicate the Reformer. Compare, for instance, the attitude he takes up (pp. 123 ff.) to predestination.

Mackinnon behaves otherwise. It is true, he can appreciate Calvin in his character of Reformer. His intellectual acumen, gift of organization, confidence in God, and indestructible optimism rooted in that confidence; his moral strength and active energy springing from his unqualified persuasion of the Divine Sovereignty,—all these traits rendered Calvin an antagonist whom Rome feared no less than Luther (p. 288 sq.). But his actual estimate is modified throughout in a way contrasting with Hunt's by strongly critical assumptions. Mackinnon has many and serious censures to make in regard to Calvin's personality as well as his work and teaching. In the matter of Servetus he terms him "the mediæval inquisitor under the mask of the Evangelical reformer" (p. 146). He speaks of his vindictive temperament (p. 93), and thinks, in view of such occurrences as the repression of his Genevan opponents in 1555, that his God was not entirely the God of the Gospel, as he preached Him with so great a pretension to truth (p. 109). He goes the length of maintaining that in his last years Calvin preserved his sway in Geneva by "something like an ecclesiastical reign of terror, backed up by a system of espionage" (p. 171). As to Calvin's doctrine, Mackinnon regards the story of the Fall and Original Sin, not as reliable information, but myth; and the reformation-creed touching the incapacity of the natural

man to perform what is good he views as an one-sided, extravagant, indeed morbid conception, not correspondent with reality, but the outcome of dogmatical preconceptions (pp. 231 sq., 235).

The utterances we have just quoted betray distinctly the fact that Mackinnon's critical bearing towards Calvin originates in a theology similar to that championed in Germany by Harnack and Troeltsch. Hereby it loses a good part of its credibility for all who thought and think otherwise; and that means the majority of theologians to-day, at least in the Fatherland. We can understand now why Mackinnon breaks a lance on behalf of the "solid and fairly objective" work of Kampfschulte (pp. viii, 61), in spite of all the proofs furnished by Doumergue and others how little, with all its research and show of impartiality, it accords with the real Calvin. Yet Mackinnon might just as well have drawn attention, in place of the now somewhat discredited Kampfschulte, to the new French volume we have specified above, which manifestly exhibits no slight affinity with it.

Pierre Imbart de la Tour, professor in the University of Bordeaux and more recently a member of the Institute, laboured at a large work treating of the sources of the French Reformation. He is of opinion (Pref. to Vol. I, p. 7) that relations subsisted between the Revolution of 1789 and the Reformation of the sixteenth century, so that their influence continues to operate in present-day France. To place these links of connexion in a clear light is clearly the aim of his work, one executed with much learning and penetration. The first volume, which appeared in 1905, depicts the ascent of French royalty to a status of absolute sovereignty. The unity of the kingdom was thus so far secured that at the opening of the sixteenth century it could practically be said: "one God, one king, one faith, one law" (p. 208.) Furthermore, the domestic and social relations of the age are scrutinized in excellent disquisitions. They are marked at the close of the Middle Ages principally by the uprising of the higher *bourgeoisie* and the first inroad of humanism.

The second volume (1909) proceeds to deal in due sequence with the Church and the Renaissance. As a fruit of careful study Imbart here, along with single parties of a general ecclesiastical pattern, delineates Gallicanism, which flourished in France during the century subsequent to the great Councils

of Reform, but in process of time faded away more and more; and he sketches likewise the wretched abuses in the church-life of France, the anarchy rampant in the institutions as well as the morals of the Church. Over against that he sets the new culture of the Renaissance, which gendered a new type of humanity in France as elsewhere. Specially important in Imbart's eyes is Christian humanism, as represented by Reuchlin, Erasmus and above all Lefèvre of Étaples. The volume concludes with the *Concordat* of 1516 and various schemes of reform prior to 1520, which, however, altogether foundered.

The third volume (1914), which Imbart entitles *L'évangélisme*, 1521–38, introduces the reader to the battles of the Reformation. First of all, the men and their teachings are contrasted, who were, in a sense, suitors for the soul of the French people: Luther on the one hand, Erasmus and Lefèvre on the other. In the " twenties " the earliest Lutherans loom in sight here and there; but, at the same time, in the Parisian theological faculty and the parliament, tokens of the sharpest reaction. The crown, on whom everything hinged, took up an indecisive attitude, permitting the Reformation movement in Meaux to go on for a time, but the execution even of Berguin (1529) evinced that the idea of a real Reformation was not even remotely entertained. Nevertheless Imbart believes it can be shewn that a reformatory party had formed even among the bishops, firmly distinguishable, however, from the ever-spreading " Lutherian contagion " and the groups under William Farel controlled by outside influences. Yet in the " thirties " an attempt was once more made to guide projects of reform and reformation in the same track. Melanchthon and Bucer were asked to an arbitration that the former reported on 1 August, 1537,[1] and both the Reformers were in fact invited personally to negotiations in France. The effort came to grief owing to the fresh outbreak of hostilities between Francis and Charles V, and in a deeper sense because the time for a real compromise to be effected was already past. At this moment Calvin is assuming the lead of the French Reformation; but, in Imbart's judgment, it was already virtually decided that France in the upshot should remain catholic.

A work of such significance for historical research peremptorily demanded a continuation. It was Imbart's inten-

[1] *Corp. Ref.*, II, 740.

tion to have crowned the whole by writing a volume on Calvin and the Protestant party in France. At this task he laboured whole-heartedly; but the War and the subsequent period, which brought him many other occupations, prevented him from attaining his end before his death in December, 1925. A friend of his, Jacques Chevalier, published in 1935 all that he left behind in any way ready for the printer. This volume, the title of which, *Calvin and the Institutes*, does not exactly answer to its contents, subdivides into three books. The first, the Man and his Work, contains four chapters, dealing with his training, teaching, rule and personality (pp. 3–216). In the section on rule (pp. 116–62) not only the conflicts and ordinances in Geneva itself, but the Reformer's international activities, especially in promotion of the unity of the new church, are portrayed. Volume II depicts the evangelical propaganda in France and the methods employed for its extension and their suppression by the State, parliament and church (pp. 217–364). Volume III bears the title, "The Organized Reformation Movement" (1549–59), and, after a chapter on France under Henri II (pp. 367–422), treats more sketchily in chapter 2 of "the Enterprise of Geneva" (pp. 423–61), "the Rise of the Reformed Party" (pp. 462–96) being dealt with in chapter 3. The last page of the book supplies only a couple of lines epitomizing the contents of a fourth chapter entitled "The First Collisions".

This synopsis of contents suffices to shew that we have to do with an unfinished work. What shape it would have assumed as a whole or in detail, had the author been able to prepare it for the press, we cannot say. Actually, there are gaps in it, occasionally remarked by the editor, for instance, in reference to Bucer's influence on Calvin (p. 48), or errors which would probably have undergone correction upon a revision, such as the description of Bolsec as a preacher instead of a doctor (p. 128); or inequalities in the treatment of the material, as e.g. only a pair of passing observations touching Calvin's recall to Geneva in 1541 (p. 118); or the circumstance that the "Process-Gruet" (p. 136), and Calvin's share in the great religious conferences of 1540–1 (p. 144) are related or barely alluded to at quite unsuitable places. We have also, properly speaking, no biography of the Reformer before us. The author has kept the outline of his projected work

constantly before his eyes in all that he has compiled; otherwise a chapter on France under Henri II would have been meaningless. Moreover, notes and quotations are attached to certain sections, perhaps a quarter of the book, which are missing elsewhere.

It is the more surprising then that this fourth volume has appeared by itself in a German translation under the title: Imbart de la Tour: *Calvin : Der Mensch, die Kirche, die Zeit.*[1] In this version all notes are cancelled, and no mention is made of the fact that the work is incomplete and breaks off suddenly. The prospectus of the bustling publisher, amid notable eulogies of Calvin, which yet are oddly suggestive, declares:—" In fact, Imbart's book is the first objective, unbiassed representation, inspired by attachment to truth, and yet instinct with animation and warm human sympathy."

This cordial adoption of a posthumous, not fully matured, work must have its special explanation. Certainly we are glad to possess Imbart's fourth volume. The entire enquiry into the causes of the French Reformation is thus rendered more definite and impressive. On this ground undoubtedly have such men as Pannier and Lefranc favoured and promoted its publication (Pref. x). In spite of undeniable defects we are presented, in this fourth volume as well as its predecessors, with a classical production of the French historical school. From solid researches of such a comprehensive sweep as lay peculiarly at Imbart's command a representation is built up, in many of its details, of a fascinating strain, and one which is studded throughout with striking, often admirable, aphoristic *aperçus*. For example: " Calvin first of all created a book, the *Institutes ;* next a city, Geneva." . . . " He did not love the city, nor did it greatly love him. Their union reminds us of prudential matches, which pursue their course with many a wrangle, yet never result in a complete breach " (p. 117).

In presence of such decided and manifold excellences, everything turns on the fundamental standpoint in agreement with which Imbart writes, recounts and judges. We light upon it as early as the third volume (pp. 3–57) plainly enough, in his estimate of Luther. He extols the prodigious potency of that Reformer as of a master and leader of souls who carries high and low resistlessly with him. His glow of passion and

[1] Munich, Callway, 1936.

other qualities are stamped in him racially, in sharp contrast with the Romanic type. Imbart will hear nothing of any single event that transformed Luther into a Reformer; he makes him rather develop his teaching by slow degrees. To him what is most unintelligible therein is Luther's deep conviction of sin, of the total depravity of the natural man and his moral inability. He holds that the interlacement of grace and freedom that had dominated Christian theology since Augustine was torn to tatters by Luther, and nothing was left over save *fideisme pur*, a salvation by faith alone. Doctrinal tradition and hierarchy, nay the Church itself, was thus demolished, and even the Reformation appeal to Scripture furnished the remedy. For Luther the Sacraments are no longer channels of grace, but merely tokens of our justification (p. 41);—the very thing the Reformer censured so severely in Zwingli! Imbart concludes that if so many followed Luther, it was because, side by side with his errors, so many elements of the teaching of "mother Church" were retained (p. 57). Concerning Farel Imbart expresses himself in a curiously charitable tone, although broadly recognizing his dependence on Zwingli. He makes him Luther's peer as a preacher in point of dialectics, irony and power of attack, and Calvin's forerunner in his efforts to promote the French Reformation (III. 456–94).

The French man of letters then takes up a Catholic attitude towards the Reformation, an enlightened Catholic, to be sure, who cherishes admiration for Erasmus or Lefèvre, but one to whom the kernel of reformed feeling and thought remains alien. He admits that Calvin infused his "moral greatness" (Pref. xi) into the Huguenot party and was the first to raise Protestantism to the rank of a Church, capable of competing with Catholicism for the prize of the world. But he succeeded in doing that only (listen, reader, and wonder!) by reinstating in the bosom of the Reformation, somewhat against its instincts, the Catholic ideas of universality and authority (p. 53). From this basic conception of course a quantity of remarkable judgments spring. In his exposition of Scripture Calvin grounded himself on the footing of "common assent"; for so Imbart misinterprets what the Reformer intended by the analogy of faith (p. 65). But elsewhere we are told that his exegesis confines itself to a crass literalism, a sort of Talmud (p. 216). Calvin raises the Sacraments once more into channels of grace (p. 90).

Professedly he rejects the confessional, but reintroduces it by clandestine devices of pastoral visitation and discipline (p. 102). Luther had held in the main to the Church invisible. Calvin dwells more on the visible Church under Christ its Head, and once more constitutes it the mediatrix between God and men (p. 98). The chief battle of the Reformation hitherto had been concerned with personal freedom of conscience; but Calvin, as we learn, gave the new Church an orthodox creed, a stern, semi-ascetic morality, and a system of rule (p. 110); and thus, as Imbart frankly confesses in one passage, fabricated a much freer and simpler catholicism than the old (p. 214).

All these assertions, in which there is a rare combination of some truth and a deal of misconception, will hardly oust the established view, according to which Calvin's Church, in contrast with Lutheranism and Anglicanism, presents the sharpest antithesis to Roman Catholicism; and that for the very reason that Calvin consolidated and carried out the fundamental principles of Evangelical Christianity, adopted with sound intelligence by Luther and others, in the most comprehensive and logical fashion, particularly in ethics, the constitution of the community and the Church and in questions of state-relationship.

In his estimate of Calvin's personality Imbart finds much that he can warmly appreciate. Most of all he praises his intellectual endowments, which, corroborated by a solitary reference to the brevity, precision and pregnancy of his style, lent a yet more marvellous clarity and order to his system (p. 176 sq.). He was the first (in the French tongue) to succeed in making the sum of theology intelligible to the common mind (p. 180). He was the greatest polemic of his age, though not without traits of the special pleader (p. 183). Among his characteristics Imbart signalizes his amazing industry, his integrity and moderation (p. 174). He asks: had Calvin a heart? That query he would answer affirmatively; but he thinks the chord of joy was too largely missing in his life, and therefore there was such a prevalence of hardness and gloom in him (p. 194). The Reformer "walked before God"; but his God was a Despot, who is ever thinking of His honour, but is not John's God of love (p. 205 sq.). And that is why, along with so many excellences, his character has its darker side. Calvin was proud (p. 202), and amenable to flattery; and Imbart charges

him in particular, like Mackinnon, with love of dominion and revengefulness (p. 188). He even recalls the saying of Rabelais: *démoniacles Calvins, imposteurs de Genève*, which, however, he pronounces a freethinker's sally (*boutade*), and then asks: was Calvin sincere and straightforward? With this attitude to the person of the Reformer tallies Imbart's notion that the conflict in Geneva was a personal battle for ascendency on the part of the man who bowed the whole city, State and burghership beneath his control. All that reminds us only too vividly of Kampfschulte. We observe how closely similar modes of treatment spring from similar preconceptions. But we are convinced that there will not be wanting among students of Calvin's career a faculty of discernment which, while readily appreciating the favourable elements of Imbart's book, yet, as in Kampfschulte's case, rejects and modifies his unwarranted criticisms, and the many half-truths or wholly perverse judgments he enunciates.

II

Having sought in the foregoing section to assess the general features of the three biographies, I propose to touch on certain special problems of the history of Calvin, in order to mark how these three fresh surveys of the ground deal with them. First of all I select the Reformer's *Conversion*. As regards Imbart, it is of tell-tale significance that as early as his third volume he proves by a thorough examination of Lefèvre's circle of ideas (pp. 109–53) that the thesis of a "Fabrician Protestantism" is untenable. The veteran humanist was a Bible-student, but he construed the Bible and Paul's Epistles as a mystic somewhat after the model of Hugo of St. Victor, one of whose treatises he edited in 1513 (III. 139). Imbart's utterances, moreover, respecting conversion are not quite consistent. After a searching valuation of the *Commentary on Seneca* he remarks that the earliest testimony of Calvin's tendency towards the Reformation occurs in his letter to Daniel dated 27 October, 1533. The conversion itself, however, he holds to have ensued in du Tillet's company at Claix in Saintonge in 1534. In spite of Calvin's own distinct statement he makes it out to have been a gradual process. Neither the sole personal record in his *Commentary on the Psalms* nor the address given for Rector Cop are scrutinized by Imbart with adequate care. The influence of Karl Müller seems to have deterred him from

that (IV. 26–30). Hunt likewise places the date of Conversion later; he considers his resignation of his ecclesiastical benefice at Noyon as the correct season, or the month which Calvin spent with du Tillet at Angoulême. But if he intends by this assumption to obviate the difficulty that Calvin for some months after his breach with Rome should have consented to retain Catholic emoluments (p. 46), another and graver difficulty looms in sight, namely that the interval between his conversion and the composition of the *Institutes* becomes intolerably narrow. Mackinnon therefore (p. 43) has, with myself, Pannier and others, rightly fixed on the autumn of 1533; only, in common with Imbart and Hunt, he appraises the reply to Sadolet's letter as a personal testimony, which, in my opinion, on strictly historical grounds is inadmissible.

If, nevertheless, the attitude of the three biographies to the subject of his conversion may be pronounced, on the whole, satisfactory, that cannot be affirmed of their declarations regarding the relations of the rising theologian and Church leaders to Bucer. Hunt, indeed, deals very scantily with Calvin's residence at Strassburg and falls into serious errors in this connexion. He asserts (p. 88), for example, that the Romish service had not been abolished there, whereas that undoubtedly happened in 1529; and that only in 1530 had Bucer given up his earlier attachment to Luther's teaching for a modification of Zwinglianism (p. 89). Mackinnon cites with approval a statement from Loof's *Dogmengeschichte*[1] that Bucer's theology was prelusive to Calvin's (pp. 80, 216): but why from that source, we ask. However, he makes little use of his discernment; his book should have indicated with more accuracy wherein this prelude consisted. Imbart sets out with great zeal to assign Calvin his place in the world of the Reformation (pp. 39 sq.). He shews his dependence on Luther and, with some exaggeration, on Melanchthon; last of all, on Zwingli, who probably influenced him through the medium of Bucer. When on the point, however, of defining that influence more nearly, Imbart leaves a hiatus in his book; so that there is not much to be learnt on this head either from him or the two others.

Of course, all three volumes contain a section relating to the Reformer's *Theology*, which in the case of Imbart (pp. 54–

[1] p. 879 (4th edition).

115) and Mackinnon (pp. 214–70), in keeping with the object of their writings, is fairly extensive. Both base their delineation of it predominantly on the *Institutes* in their final shape. That is by no means unjustifiable; but on this plan the development of Calvin's theology is insufficiently canvassed; for it had a development, albeit one very diverse from that of Augustine or Luther. That, however, is of slight consequence compared with the causes which, unhappily for both writers, preclude a real understanding of the chief system of Protestant doctrine. Imbart gives us many admirable single observations. For instance, he recognizes that Calvin's theology is not exhausted by the tenet of predestination (p. 85). But we have already heard how he takes pains to prove that he reintroduced important Catholic conceptions into the circle of evangelical beliefs. This endeavour is not only unsuccessful, but prevents Imbart from grasping central articles of Calvinistic belief, such as justification. His remarks on that score (pp. 74 sq.) refer at bottom not to the topic of sin and grace, but of determinism or indeterminism. Mackinnon, to be sure, here introduces something further; but his reader has frequently the feeling that he is more concerned about a criticism of the Reformer's thoughts, in sooth, a criticism from the standpoint of his own modernistic creed, than about a lucid, penetrating, congenial representation of it. Thus he writes (p. 246): " Calvin followed Paul in his doctrine of justification, but emphasized too strongly its forensic character; whereas the apostle saw in it a means for overcoming the power as well as the guilt of sin." As if Mackinnon himself had not, some pages earlier (pp. 241 sq.), regarded repentance and regeneration as the firstfruits of Calvin's faith! Investigation should have been made of the remarkable fact that, in the first chapters of the Third Book of his *Institutes*, Calvin treats of the transformation of our whole life, that is to say, of the conquest of the power of sin, through justification by faith, and only subsequently of the forgiveness of sins wrought thereby. Instead of that Mackinnon does not fail, in the passage quoted from page 247, to set in relief the fact that Calvin did not share the view of modern theology as to the opposition between the historical Jesus and Paul. Was that really germane to the matter in hand? We have here one sample of many in Mackinnon's book, how critical views, with which one is not seeking acquaintance in

a biography of Calvin, obstruct thoroughness of insight into the Reformer's doctrine. Hunt's elucidations on the other hand, in his sixth chapter on Calvin's Theology and Ethics (pp. 114–40), are far more to the point, notwithstanding their brevity. He dwells with particular care on the questions raised by Weber and Troeltsch concerning the economic and social effects of Calvinism and his conception of the State, saying much else that is good as well. One feature in Hunt we cannot commend, that he sticks too exclusively to the topic of predestination in scanning Calvin's dogmatic system. Even the Westminster Confession gives justification its due place, although only as a stage beside vocation and glorification in the realization of election. But an entire omission of the article of justification, even in the most restricted survey of the Genevan reformer's theology, is surely inadmissible. One thing is certain: Calvin's system has two centres, predestination and Divine sovereignty on the one hand, and justification on the other. With Hunt we learn as good as nothing of that, despite the remark he volunteers on page 125.

The attitude lastly of all three volumes to *the matter of Servetus* is characteristic. All of them recognize its important bearing on the repute of Protestantism generally, and in particular on the revolution in Geneva and the decisive discomfiture of the so-called Libertines. Nevertheless Imbart does not discuss the entire case (so important in its bearing on the Reformer's fame) in the slightest, nor the teaching or character of the Spaniard, nor the process against him in Vienne and Geneva (p. 130); one additional proof how totally his book lacks its author's final revision. Hunt, in the chapter he devotes to Servetus (ch.ix, pp.197–223), says what every calm-minded and just theologian must say concerning that in itself most lamentable event, yet one in accord with the collective opinion and sentiment of the age, excepting certain prophets, if you will, or "vapourers". The trouble that he takes to elucidate the problem of the denunciation of Servetus at Vienne is praiseworthy (p. 208). When, however, he expressly affirms that "Luther put no one to death for his opinions" (p. 223), his statement is not absolutely correct.[1] Mackinnon deals with this point at much the greatest length, in three chapters

[1] Cf. the writings of Wappler, especially: *Die Stellung des Kurfürsten Joh. Friedr. und des Landgrafen Philipp zür Täuferbewegung*, 1910.

(pp. 122–60). He carefully adduces all the circumstances. Perhaps he might have specified more thoroughly the peculiar shape which the Spaniard's doctrine took in his *Restitutio Christianismi* (pp. 135 sq.). Mackinnon's verdict regarding the alleged denunciation through the medium of de Trie is moderate, though he does not approve of the conduct of the Reformer (p. 140). On the other hand, the whole policy of Calvin anent Servetus is measured wholly and solely by our present-day conviction of the right of absolute freedom of conscience, and therefore most severely condemned. In reference to the earlier letters transmitted by Servetus to Calvin (1545–7), the remark already occurs: "a free theological discussion of this kind he could neither understand nor endure, and thirsted thenceforward for the heretic's blood" (p. 134). In another passage Mackinnon terms the Reformer a "religious zealot who pursued his victim" (p. 150), and speaks of his "theological intolerance and human perversity" (p. 153). Our author repeatedly employs the argument that Calvin legitimated the persecution of his fellow-believers in France by the process against Servetus (pp. 152–9). Must not precisely the opposite have been really the case? If Servetus had been spared at Geneva, would not the wrath of the whole Catholic world forthwith have broken loose? One has only to recall the terms in which Francis I justified his measures against the Lutherans in 1535: they were nothing but Anabaptists and rebels. How would the other party have gone to work against the French Protestants, if they could have charged them with blasphemy against the Holy Trinity? Here we discern distinctly that Mackinnon's accusations against Calvin are not inspired by genuine historical criticism. From our present-day point of view we shall undoubtedly deplore the execution of Servetus mournfully enough; but one has no title to assail Calvin's personal character because, in common with nearly all his contemporaries, he shared the theocratic conception of the State inherited from the Middle Ages.

I break off, though there is still much in these three books to provoke analysis. Whilst on many of the points reviewed I have had to avow an opinion divergent from their authors, I yet rejoice that their respective studies, each after their kind, contribute to keep Calvin a living force in the world of mind. The interest in his person and work will probably wax greater

amid the acute conflicts of our day respecting the form and essence of the Evangelical Church. Our prayer is only that no false views of the Reformer's example and doctrine may disseminate themselves abroad. It is the task of scientific examination into his history to perform its part in securing this result; and the foregoing pages are designed to subserve that very end.

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