

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Evangelical Quarterly* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_evangelical\\_quarterly.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_evangelical_quarterly.php)

## A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SURVEY OF THE BRITISH STUDY OF CALVIN, 1900-1940

### I. BIBLIOGRAPHY

THIS bibliography deals solely with work by British scholars, and does not include the translation of foreign works (e.g. E. Troeltsch's *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*) or foreign studies which have appeared in British periodicals. Because it is confined strictly to the present century, reprints of earlier works have not been included, and also such an important book as W. Hastie's *The Theology of the Reformed Church* has been left out, because, although it was not published until 1904, it consists of lectures originally delivered in 1892. Not all the studies presented here are of equal value, of course; but for the sake of completeness I have included everything on Calvin I could discover<sup>1</sup> (with the exception of a novel by Deborah Alcock called *Under Calvin's Spell* [1927], which did not seem to me to add anything to our understanding of Calvin and life under his regime). There is a further limitation: it would have been impossible to have given every book (in theology, philosophy, law, history, etc.) containing a section on Calvin. I have attempted, however, to suggest some representative books on certain subjects.

#### A. *Biography*

1. H. F. HENDERSON: CALVIN IN HIS LETTERS. 1909. Interesting and readable. Presents a good picture.
2. H. Y. REYBURN: JOHN CALVIN. 1914. Largely superseded, but should not be neglected.
3. A. MENZIES: A STUDY OF CALVIN. 1918. Fairly full notes for a book which was never written.
4. R. N. CAREW HUNT: CALVIN. 1933. The best life of Calvin in English. Contains a most valuable bibliography.
5. J. MACKINNON: CALVIN AND THE REFORMATION. 1936. Disappointing. Has little or no sympathy with his subject.

<sup>1</sup> If readers detect any omissions—particularly in periodicals—I should be grateful to learn of them.

*See also :*

6. A. M. FAIRBAIRN: CALVIN AND THE REFORMED CHURCH. Chapter xi of *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, II. 1903. Excellent. Bibliography comprehensive, but now out-of-date.
7. T. M. LINDSAY: A HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION, II, chapter iii, and chapter iv, §4. 1907. Very useful.
8. J. P. WHITNEY: HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION, pp. 114-122. 1907 and 1940. Bias against Calvin.
9. J. ORR: CALVINISM; in Hastings' *Encycl. Rel. and Ethics*. 1910.
10. A. SMELLIE: THE REFORMATION IN ITS LITERATURE, Lectures vii and viii. 1925.
11. Article CALVIN, in *Encycl. Brit.*, 14th Ed. 1929. Good general survey. Little altered from earlier editions.
12. H. A. L. FISHER: HISTORY OF EUROPE, II, chapter xi. 1935. Very good indeed.

*In periodicals, see :*

13. A. T. S. GOODRICK: JOHN CALVIN: AN HISTORICAL ESTIMATE; in *Church Quarterly Review*, lxxviii, pp. 275 ff. 1909.
14. A. MITCHELL HUNTER: CALVIN AS A PREACHER; in *The Expository Times*, xxx, pp. 562 ff. 1919.
15. W. G. JOHNSON: JOHN CALVIN; in *The Churchman*, N.S. i, pp. 30 ff. 1936.
16. A. MITCHELL HUNTER: THE EDUCATION OF CALVIN; in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, ix, pp. 20 ff. 1937.
17. A. MITCHELL HUNTER: CALVIN: A CHARACTER SKETCH; in *The Expository Times*, xlix, pp. 509 ff. 1938.

## B. *Theology*

Most of the biographies contain a section on theology, though not always happily.

1. A. MITCHELL HUNTER: THE TEACHING OF CALVIN: A MODERN INTERPRETATION. 1920. A very useful study.
2. A. DAKIN: CALVINISM. 1940. Excellent introduction to the subject.

*See also, e.g. :*

3. A. BARCLAY: THE PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER. A STUDY IN THE EUCHARISTIC TEACHING OF LUTHER, ZWINGLI AND CALVIN. 1927. An indispensable comparative study.

4. N. P. WILLIAMS: IDEAS OF THE FALL AND OF ORIGINAL SIN, pp. 423 ff. 1927. No sympathy with Calvin.
5. A. L. LILLEY: RELIGION AND REVELATION, pp. 79 ff. 1932. Valuable both constructively and critically.
6. J. S. WHALE: CALVIN; in *Christian Worship* (ed. N. Micklem). 1936. Particularly good as showing Calvin's strong churchmanship.
7. W. D. MAXWELL: AN OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP, ITS DEVELOPMENT AND FORMS, chapter iv, §4. 1936. Brief, but very good.
8. J. L. AINSLIE: THE DOCTRINES OF MINISTERIAL ORDER IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES. 1940. Useful. Good bibliography.

*In periodicals, see :*

9. H. WACE: JOHN CALVIN; in *The Churchman*, xxiii, pp. 489 ff. 1909.
10. R. M. WILSON: CALVINISM; in *The Churchman*, xxvii, pp. 112 ff. 1913.
11. G. D. HENDERSON: ESSENTIALS OF THE REFORMED FAITH; in *Proceedings of the 13th General Council of Alliance of Reformed Churches*, pp. 271 ff. 1929.
12. E. A. KNOX: THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LUTHER'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AND CALVIN'S; in *The Churchman*, xlv, pp. 274 ff. 1930.
13. E. C. UNMACK: THE PHILOSOPHY OF CALVINISM; in *The Reformed Faith, Proceedings of the 1st International Calvinist Conference*, pp. 54 ff. 1932.
14. D. MACLEAN: PREDESTINATION IN HISTORY; in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, viii, pp. 263 ff. 1936.
15. S. LEIGH HUNT: PREDESTINATION IN THE "INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION"; in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, ix, pp. 38 ff. 1937.

C. *Social Teaching, etc.*

1. W. R. MATTHEWS: JOHN CALVIN; in *Social and Political Ideas of some Great Thinkers of the Renaissance and the Reformation*, ed. F. J. C. Hearnshaw. 1925.

*In periodicals, see :*

2. R. N. CAREW HUNT: CALVIN'S THEORY OF CHURCH AND STATE; in *Church Quarterly Review*, cviii, pp. 56 ff. 1929.
3. B. W. DEMPSEY: CALVIN AND "BIG BUSINESS"; in *The Month*, pp. 321 ff. 1932.
4. J. WHARTON: CALVINISM: ITS STATESMANSHIP; in *The Reformed Faith* (see B.13), pp. 108 ff. 1932.
5. J. H. S. BURLEIGH: THE REFORMED FAITH IN ITS ETHICAL CONSEQUENCES IN ECONOMICS; in *The Proceedings of the 4th Calvinist Congress*, pp. 133 ff. 1938.
6. J. MACLEOD: THE REFORMED FAITH IN ITS ETHICAL CONSEQUENCES IN THE FAMILY; *as above*, pp. 58 ff. 1938.
7. M. P. RAMSAY: THE REFORMED FAITH IN ITS ETHICAL CONSEQUENCES IN SCOTTISH HISTORY; *as above*, pp. 99 ff. 1938.
8. G. T. THOMSON: THE REFORMED FAITH IN ITS ETHICAL CONSEQUENCES IN THE CHURCH; *as above*, pp. 73 ff. 1938.

#### D. *Art*

1. A. TILLEY: THE LITERATURE OF THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE, I, chapter xi. 1904. A fine literary appreciation.
2. R. R. TERRY: CALVIN'S FIRST PSALTER, 1539. 1932.
3. P. A. SCHOLES: THE PURITANS AND MUSIC IN ENGLAND AND NEW ENGLAND; CALVIN AND MUSIC, pp. 332 ff. 1934. Both these books, by expert musicians, dispel the old legends of Calvin's abhorrence of all art.
4. M. P. RAMSAY: CALVIN AND ART. 1938. Brilliant little study.

#### E. *Miscellaneous*

1. J. EVANS: BYWYD AC ATHRAWIAETH J. CALFIN; GYDA DETHOLION LAWER O'I WAITH. 1909.
2. F. J. SMITHEN: CONTINENTAL PROTESTANTISM AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION. 1927.
3. W. T. WHITLEY: CALVINISM AND EVANGELISM IN ENGLAND, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE BAPTISTS. 1933.
4. C. BURBRIDGE: CALVIN; and J. W. ROWLANDS: CALVINISM; in *Sovereign Grace Union Publications*, 272. 1940.

*In periodicals, see :*

5. F. PLATT: THE RENAISSANCE OF CALVINISM; in *London Quarterly Review*, xcvi, pp. 219 ff. 1901.
6. J. A. BEET: THE RENAISSANCE OF CALVINISM: A REPLY TO F. PLATT; in *London Quarterly Review*, xcvi, pp. 261 ff. 1902.
7. F. PLATT: A REJOINDER TO J. A. BEET; in *London Quarterly Review*, xcvi, pp. 273 ff. 1902.
8. F. PLATT: CALVINISM AND CRITICISM; in *London Quarterly Review*, cxii, pp. 67 ff. 1909.
9. F. T. LORD: A MODERN ESTIMATE OF CALVINISM; in *The Baptist Quarterly*, N.S. iv, pp. 82 ff. 1928-9.
10. J. C. WHITEBROOK: CALVIN'S INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN THE IMPRINTS OF THOMAS VAUTROLIER; in *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, xii, pp. 197 ff. 1935.
11. A. E. GARVIE: DO WE INHERIT FROM CALVIN? A REPLY TO DR. MICKLEM; in *Hibbert Journal*, xxxvi, pp. 356 ff. 1937.
12. G. D. HENDERSON: THE SCOTTISH REFORMATION; in *Proceedings of the 4th Calvinist Congress*, pp. 91 ff. 1938.

## II. SURVEY

An examination of the bibliography reveals the interesting fact that (apart from sections in more general works, which are an inaccurate guide) the decade 1931-1940 produced more work on Calvin than the previous thirty years. The exact statistics are as follows:

- 1900-'20. Five books; and eight essays in periodicals.
- 1921-'30. No books; but four essays in periodicals.
- 1931-'40. Eight books; and fifteen essays in periodicals.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear from this that there has been at the least a revival of interest in the Reformer. The numbers would seem to indicate a definite revival of Calvinism, but numbers are poor witnesses, and we must proceed to ask the reason for the resurgence, and to examine the bibliography more closely.

There can be no doubt that the chief cause of the new widespread interest in Calvin which has produced or caused to

<sup>1</sup> This figure includes papers at the Calvinist Congresses.

be produced a large number of books is the theology of Karl Barth. He showed in a most decisive fashion that the message of the Reformers was valid, in a new form, for our own day. By the thirties his influence began to grow in England and Scotland, with the result that some British theologians began also to take notice of what Luther and Calvin had said. For the past fifteen years we have been learning that, with all the differences between our age and the sixteenth century, the problems that the Reformation raised are still with us, and that the answers given then cannot be lightly passed by. This renewed study of the Reformers was not confined to classical Calvinists, nor to Scotland, the traditional fortress of British Calvinism; but it is discernible even, for example, among High Anglicans. We notice, in this regard, Mr. A. G. Hebert translating Swedish Lutheran theologians, and Dr. Leonard Hodgson treating Calvin as a serious subject alongside Augustine and Aquinas in his book on the Trinity.

Before this great upheaval, however, classical Calvinism was quietly going about its work, forced to defend itself in apologies, but holding grimly on to sixteenth-century truths, usually in sixteenth-century forms. On the Continent—in France and Holland, for example—"High" Calvinism was not greatly influenced by Barth, and even showed itself hostile to his theology. But British Calvinists, even those who had bowed down in the house of Rimmon, were driven back, either in joyful acquiescence or wrathful opposition, to their sources. Moreover, they found themselves in the happy position of no longer needing to apologise so desperately for their existence. Classical Calvinism, in fact, came to life again.

Studying the bibliography more closely, we see the weakness and the strength of British Calvin study.<sup>1</sup> The weaknesses are obvious. In the first place, no edition or translation of any of Calvin's works has appeared here during this century.<sup>2</sup> We expended all our energy on the labour of the Calvin Society a hundred years ago, and have since lain back, exhausted, but happy in our achievement. The *Institutes* is out of print in Great Britain. Nor can we call any of the translations satisfactory

<sup>1</sup> A comparison of this bibliography with that given by P. Barth in *Fünfundzwanzig Jahre Calvinforschung, 1909-1934* (in *Theologische Rundschau*, 1934), will prove instructive.

<sup>2</sup> A few reprints have appeared: e.g. the *Institutes* published in America is Allen's translation; and the Sovereign Grace Union has issued the *Epistle to King Francis* (S.G.U. Publ., 252. 1936) and H. Cole's translation of the *Treatise on Predestination*.

for our present needs. Thomas Norton is the best, but he is nearly four hundred years old. Allen's translation is not always successful in conveying Calvin's thought. And Beveridge, although he is accurate enough, is dull and pretentious. A Latin or French edition has never, I think, been published over here.

With regard to theology, the situation is also grave. Only two books devoted entirely to the subject have appeared, although they are both good, and Dr. Dakin's book, in particular, provides a good introduction. Of the other work that has been done, much is far above the mediocre; Dr. Barclay's book on the Eucharist, for example, is worthy to stand with the best studies of Calvin's thought. The trouble is that so little work has been done. We have only to consider some of the great names in Continental Calvin scholarship—Doumergue, Pannier, Lefranc, P. Barth, Wernle, R. Seeberg, O. Ritschl, Niesel—to see how little we have attempted, let alone performed. It is certainly no wonder that even reputable theologians hold (and express!) the strangest and most outdated ideas of Calvin's theology.

It is in these two respects particularly that British study of Calvin shows its weakness. When we pass to practical matters there is little to be ashamed of. The best work has been done in the historical and aesthetic studies. Fairbairn and Lindsay are both brilliant; and Mr. Carew Hunt has written easily the best English life of Calvin, even though his review of the theology leaves something to be desired. In aesthetics, while nothing has been written of the stature of Wencélius' *L'Esthétique de Calvin*, the work is no way inferior in quality to what the Continent has produced. Dr. Mary Ramsay and Mr. Scholes both show up the folly of the old idea of Calvin as an enemy to beauty and the arts. Sir Richard Terry's book is in four parts: first, in a preface, he corrects errors concerning Calvin's appreciation and use of music, and examines the sources of words and music; the second section consists of a facsimile of the Psalter; the third has the Psalter transcribed into modern notation; and in the last the editor adds modern modal harmonies to the Psalms, with a translation of the verses into good English verse.<sup>1</sup> This book is invaluable for the study of Calvin's aesthetics, and thus of the whole man also.

The most important work for British Calvin study in the

<sup>1</sup> Many of these hymns are as worthy as many of Luther's or of the German pietists' to have a place in our hymn books.

future does not lie in history. Enough has been done to give us a good picture of the Reformer and as accurate a reconstruction of the facts as the documents allow. It will need to be done again for another generation, but it has been done enough in our own day. The same might be said, though to a lesser degree, about aesthetics. Whereas biography has a long tradition behind it, the scientific investigation of Calvin's views on art and beauty is in its childhood. His literary style has been a frequent study, his relationship to music has been well treated, and Dr. Ramsay's book gives a short study of his views on art. But a larger and more comprehensive work is needed, containing his aesthetics (which, according to Wencélius' account, is startling to our modern minds, bred on romanticism and humanism), his place as a writer, and his influence on literature, painting, music and the plastic arts, as well also as the "useful" arts—book-binding, embroidery, etc.

The first need, however, is for some new translations, particularly of the *Institutio*. The ideal would be a complete edition running to several volumes, containing the first edition, the 1539-41 edition and the 1559 definitive edition, complete with critical apparatus. There should also be selections from the commentaries, sermons, letters and tracts.

In theology, the need is not now for a straightforward, generally uncritical exposition of the *Institutio*, since that has already been done, and well done. Calvin study in Great Britain should concern itself with a serious investigation and criticism of his theology. In this regard, many questions leap to the mind at once. For example, can we find natural theology in Book I of the *Institutio*? What is Calvin's doctrine of the atonement, and wherein lies the significance of his Anselmian terminology? There is also the rich mine of comparative theology to be worked. Was Professor Lang right in ascribing so large a place to Bucer in Calvin's development? How did Calvin stand in relation to Melancthon, or Zwingli, or Bullinger, or the Englishmen? Perhaps as important as anything would be to discover, by comparison with, for example, the second generation of Calvinists in Geneva, Holland, and Britain, whether Calvin really was a Calvinist in the traditional sense. In the matter of churchmanship, too, there is work at hand to do. When Dr. J. S. Whale boldly asserted in *Christian Doctrine* that Luther and Calvin were great High Churchmen, he

astonished many readers. In fact, one even wrote to *Theology* about it and, with the use of Beveridge's translation and the noble army of witnesses, Warfield, Hodge and Kuyper, sought to show the folly of this new idea. A study of Calvin's churchmanship would treat his ecclesiology, doctrine of the Church, and his use of tradition.

The aim of Calvin study here must be to establish his thought both in its basic concepts and also in its various ramifications. When this is done, there is no doubt that few theologians will turn Calvinist, but at least there will be no excuse at all for them to betray innocence of his theology. To call it ignorance would perhaps be too harsh: it is the sweet and retiring modesty of a maiden confronted by forbidden things. Perhaps if the facts of Calvin are presented in their truth British theology may grow out of the charm of its innocence into maturity of knowledge and understanding of one of the four or five greatest theologians in the Church.

T. H. L. PARKER.

*Luddesdown,  
Kent.*