

Eine der Schlussfolgerungen des Autors lautet (533): »Das bernische 18. Jahrhundert der ›Provinzialität‹ zu bezichtigen, wie dies zeitgenössische Beobachter gern taten, scheint angesichts der breiten Streuung der Verleger und Verfasser, deren Bücher ihren Weg in die privaten Bibliotheken der Stadt Bern fanden, kaum gerechtfertigt. Man darf wohl eher von einem soliden (westeuropäischen) ›Kosmopolitismus‹ sprechen.« Der in mancherlei Hinsicht materialreiche Band, der auf rund 200 Seiten zusätzliche Quellen zum Thema bietet und den der Autor selber als »Handbuch« beziehungsweise als »Materialsammlung« bezeichnet (9), lässt mannigfaltige weitere Aussagen zum bürgerlichen Geistesleben Berns im 18. Jahrhundert zu. Es ist sehr zu wünschen, dass auch für andere Schweizer Städte derartige Untersuchungen angestellt werden.

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*Calvin and His Influence, 1509–2009, ed. Irena Backus and Philip Benedict, Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, 2011, XVI & 336 p. – ISBN 978-0-19-975185-3.*

Only John Calvin's writings themselves say more about the master than the work of the Calvin specialists in this volume. The contemporary research presented here on Calvin and the influence that his work has had in the Western world and beyond for the past 500 years treats us to a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary approaches that provide contrasting, complimentary, and colliding views of Calvin, his world, and the influence he had on our world, religion, politics, and the social developments within culture as we know it. The chapters in this book were presented by plenary speakers at the Geneva Calvin Conference from May 24 to 27, 2009. The celebration was organized and sponsored by the University of Geneva, the Association Calvin 2009, and the Musée Historique de la Réformation et Bibliothèque Calvinienne.

*Calvin and His Influence* is introduced with an expert essay in its own right. The first thirty-two pages are an overview of the state of Calvin research in 2009, whereby Irena Backus and Philip Benedict lament that intellectual, cultural, and religious dimensions of Calvin's influence have been badly neglected. The volume

that is organized in two complimentary sections sets out to bring Calvin research up to date and fill the gaps that have been identified over the years. The first half of the book contains a group of essays that probe Calvin the man and his writings – noteworthy and challenging in these contributions is that each essay defines unique traits of John Calvin’s character and accomplishments, indeed each of our experts has a different take on Calvin’s predominant traits and a unique interpretation for what the Genevan Reformer did and why he wrote it down. The second half of the book contains abbreviated narratives of Calvin reception in different times and places throughout the history of modernity.

The following are brief impressions of each article for the purpose of denoting the various themes contained in the volume. In chapter 1, Diarmaid MacCulloch asks about »The Fifth Latin Doctor of the Church?« by looking to locate Calvin in relation to Augustine and the Council of Chalcedon. In addition to his ability to delimit 1500 years of tradition by employing his knack for both Scripture and law, the Doctor (Calvin) in this portrait was both visionary and bound to his own era. The Anabaptist themes of discipline and suffering embedded the man in his own culture; however, Calvin remained unique in his understanding of the Eucharist: more than Zwingli’s sign, the Lord’s Supper is both a sign and reality. Whether or not Calvin was the Fifth Latin Doctor of the church is as relative as the circumstantial nature of his fame. Chapter 2 discusses the evolution of politics in light of Calvin’s thought as a sort of *mutatis mutandis*, as Harro M. Höpfl argues in »The Ideal of *Aristocratia Politiae Vicina* in the Calvinist Political Tradition.« The apostolic form of church that Calvin envisioned was an aristocracy of magistrates and ministers melted into constitutionalism by 1580. Calvin attempted to eradicate the abuses of the church, with discipline as an intrinsic part of the new model. »With the things changed that needed to be changed in mind,« Calvin’s politics were a series of affirmations, qualifications, and denials, all attributed finally to him or what came to be coined as Calvinism. So was »Calvin the Workaholic« as Max Engammare would claim in chapter 3? The contemporary question placed in hindsight over Calvin’s life, has its justification as Engammare knowledgeably argues with humorous narratives of Cal-

vin's pacing, his late nights working, constant demands for his preaching and publications, as well as reference to Calvin's weak body. The chapter could bring comic relief to the more serious topics of this book, but for the dead seriousness of Calvin's practice of *recapitulatio* and his eschatological concern that after life he might not be able to complete his work, both of which raise some concerns about Calvin's neurosis and lend insight into the social history of a lesser known Calvin. Chapter 4 by Olivier Millet, provides a linguistic angle in »Calvin's Self-Awareness as Author.« Calvin the humanist author quickly deteriorated or perhaps grew in awareness of his prophetic and apostolic prowess as he worked. Through the lens of a linguist like Millet, Calvin appears to be quite reckless by 1551, pressing on to proclaim the prophetic word rather than limiting himself to the restrictions of literary form. »Calvin's Church in Geneva: Constructed or Gathered? Local or Foreign? French or Swiss?« in chapter 5 by William Naphy investigates the history of Calvin from the perspective of the two tasks that are historically attributed to the Genevan. First, Calvin was to create ecclesial ordinances and then Geneva's post-revolutionary constitutions with a system of checks and balances. Of course, the consistory was created to deal with spiritual affairs. In the end, politics and the church overlapped, which should come to no one anywhere as a surprise. It is hard not to have the image of religion and faith appear to be a deterrence to a sober historical narrative in the legal context portrayed here. Emidio Campi joins the discussion with his chapter 6 and a research up-date that provides an overview of the larger Swiss context and the relationships that influenced Calvin's thought and works. Bern, Basel, and above all, Zurich weathered the Roman Counter-reform, the Radical Reformation, and together they hammered out a form of unity between the Protestant others. Campi knows the players intimately and places them on the game board when he finally asks the questions that continue to weave the threads of the original Calvin conference together: »But what exactly was Calvinism?« and »How much of what has been peddled under the label of ›Calvinism‹ should really be attributed to the thought of Bucer, Zwingli, Oekolampadius, Farel, Viret, Musculus, à Lasco, or Vermigli?« In chapter 7, Herman Selderhuis explores the Christian categories of »Calvin,

1509–2009« from Calvin's own self-identity as a humble servant of God in this world. Calvin and Calvinism are like a father and son, there is something mutual, but actually great differences as well. Selderhuis sums up the perspectives of Calvin the man through a theological lens.

With »Calvin as an Actor in the Early Modern State System around 1600: Struggle for Alliances, Patterns of Eschatological Interpretations, Symbolic Representation,« Heinz Schilling's contribution in chapter 8 forms a bridge between the first section of this book on Calvin the man and the second part on Calvin reception in the last five centuries. How Calvin was received during the so-called era of confessionalization is appraised to determine Calvin's influence from a political perspective. Granted that Calvinism was authoritative in creating the first international state system; yet, Schilling concludes that the balance sheet of Calvinism from a secular perspective remained negative, if military or political success are considered the plum-line to judge this. Richard Muller's addition to the volume aptly follows the era of confessionalization with the era of orthodoxy in the seventeenth century in chapter 9. By this time, Calvinism had morphed into a code-word for Reformed teachings and worship. Following the trail of the historical theological reception of Calvin's works, Muller demonstrates how Calvin became the figurehead representing all of the reformers – even Bullinger's Covenant Theology was attributed to Calvin during this century. In the end, Calvin grew together with the others in the minds of men and became a building block for later thought. In »The Dutch Enlightenment and the Distant Calvin,« chapter 10, by Ernestine van der Wall, a very detailed account of the secularization of the Dutch church during the eighteenth century is spotlighted. The struggle between traditional and liberal Protestantism, the key players, as well as many of the works that evolved eighteenth century thinking in the Netherlands after the Enlightenment provide substantial evidence to the metamorphosis of Calvinism in the Dutch church. André Encrevé, the foremost expert on modern French Protestantism tells of »Lost, Then Found: Calvinism in French Protestantism, 1830–1940,« in chapter 11. The winding path that the French Protestant Church took in which politics and theology were inseparably entwined reminds of the larger Euro-

pean struggle between freedom and monarchy, faith and politics that highlight this second section of the volume. Chapter 12 is written by Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, who presents a social historical analysis of »Calvin in the Plural: The Diversity of Modern Interpretations of Calvinism, Especially in the German and English-Speaking World.« Graf is interested in a contemporary »account of the varied and problematic interpretations of Calvinism.« His essay applies social historical methodology concluding with a confirmation of a »practice of history and memory politics« that plows straight through the garden of Protestant denominations, lending agony to any hope of gaining a concrete definition of Calvinism. Graf concludes that an »inner unity of diverse Calvinisms« is to be defined as »opposition to Rome.« Cornelis van der Kooi returns us to the Netherlands in chapter 13 with a piece on »Calvin, Modern Calvinism, and Civil Society: The Appropriation of a Heritage, with Particular Reference to the Low Countries.« The discussion of neo-Calvinism in the last third of the nineteenth century and Abraham Kuyper integrates the essays relating to the past with the present. Kooi develops the concept of appropriation and the role of »receiving, selecting, and forming an image of the past« now. Notions such as public theology, spirituality interwoven with Reformed theology, and the concept of community in our present pluralism boom forth here for the twenty-first century church to hear. If any culturally interested reader questioned the usefulness of a conference on Calvin and the essays that proceed therefrom, how they are tied together in post-modern vocabulary, theory, and our present context in this essay will convince them of the necessity. David Bebbington's »Calvin and British Evangelicalism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries« in chapter 14 is the other end of the euphoria. Bebbington describes the power of Calvinism in the British church and politics during the twentieth century. He describes two movements that influenced the church before the Second World War; the first was propelled by none other than Karl Barth and the Oxford Movement, but also the conservative Evangelical Bible Movement. The manner in which Calvin has lost relevance to the English Church and England today appears to be a phenomenon that characterizes international Calvin history. »Calvin(ism) and Apartheid in South Africa in the Twentieth Century:

The Making and Unmaking of a Racial Ideology« by John W. de Gruchy, chapter 15, transfers us from the last 500 years of Western culture to Calvin reception in South Africa. Calvinism and Colonialism arrived hand in hand in South Africa around 1652. Despite Calvin's understanding of unity in the church, in 1857, the Lord's Supper was deemed untenable between black and white people, and this decision of the church gave birth to apartheid. The centuries of struggle in South Africa changed the church, according to De Gruchy. A decline and later revival of Calvin in Kuyper's work, has led to a hopeful new interpretation of Scripture as Calvin would have it.

Academic Calvin studies have conquered new land in this volume; the work presents plenty of shoulders for junior scholars to stand on in order to continue the historical quest for understanding all of the Reformations. Two achievements deserve particular note here. First, the editor's and author's conscious efforts to make reference to each other's work gives this volume a continuity that is not often found in collections of conference essays. The other highly praiseworthy aspect of this book is well defined in the introductory essay itself, »Curiously, the nonpartisan and nonhostile study of Calvin is a recent development, and the problems of bridging the gap between theologically oriented Calvin specialists on the one hand and political, social, intellectual, legal, and literary historians on the other hand still haunt much of Calvin research nowadays. Why that should be is yet another interesting chapter of the larger story that merits more attention than we have been able to offer here«(2).

I recommend this book to all of those who are interested in understanding Calvin and his influence for the future.

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*Uwe Wolff, »Das Geheimnis ist mein«: Walter Nigg. Eine Biographie, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2009, 516 S. – ISBN 978-3-290-17509-2.*

Der Leser ist hin und hergerissen. Der Wälzer macht es einem nicht leicht. Vom Stil, der Konzeption und der fehlenden analytischen