

The Cruelty of Popery and Calvin

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A Tragedy of the Reformation

“Few examples of persecution have made more noise than that of Servetus at Geneva in the year 1553. Had he not accidentally escaped from prison in Vienne, he would have suffered the same cruel death in a popish country, which was unhappily reserved for him when he fell into the hands of Protestant magistrates. Had he been executed in Vienne, he would only have made one of an endless list of victims which have been made to the cruelty of Popery, but to be sent to the flames for heresy, by those who were but lately delivered from the devouring jaws of an intolerant religion, against which they so keenly and so justly remonstrated, has drawn the attention and given full scope to the censure of mankind upon it, which in the course of two ages has been thrown entirely upon Calvin. While the judges are forgot, or overlooked, the whole load of reproach has fallen upon that famous divine—how justly, or how unjustly, must be left to an impartial inquiry into, and a fair construction upon, the whole.”

With this end in view, we will, first of all, seek the sources for his persecution.

In the Edinburgh University Library there is to be found a small volume which claims, from its title-page, to be the first edition of a theological work which, when published, created a considerable stir and commotion in the ecclesiastical arena.

The work in question is entitled: “De Trinitatis Erroribus | Libri Septem | Per Michael Serueto, alias | Reues ab Aragonia | Hispanum | Anno mdxxxi.”

Bound up with this volume is the companion treatise bearing the title: “Dialogo | rum de Trinitate | libri duo | De Iusticia Regni Christi | Capitulo Quatuor | Per Michaelem Serveto, alias Reues, ab Aragona, Hispanum | Anno mdxxxii.”

Neither the name of the publisher, nor the place of publication, is mentioned on either of the volumes thus bound together. It was only some twenty years later that the latter became known, when the author was tried and condemned at Geneva in 1553.

(A Tragedy of the Reformation: Being the Authentic Narrative of the History and Burning of the “Christianismi Restitutio,” 1553... by David Cuthbertson, Edinburgh & London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1912, Kindle, CrossReach Publications, 2017, Location 66 & 79 of 959)