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THE BIBLE A LITERARY NECESSITY.

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This article can lay no claim to originality. It is made up largely of tributes to the literary excellence of the Bible which have been gathered from various sources. The printing of it at this time is suggested by statements in the daily papers concerning the success of Roman Catholic priests in their efforts to exclude the Bible from the public schools in certain communities of our country. It seems worth while to show that this book is necessary to our best intellectual culture and that it cannot be excluded from the schools in which the children of America are educated without subjecting them to an intellectual impoverishment to which our citizens should not consent. There are, of course, other and graver aspects of this subject, but with them the present paper is not directly concerned.

DeQuincey has drawn a suggestive distinction between the Literature of Knowledge and the Literature of Power. He says the function of the first is to *teach*, the function of the second is to *move*. The first is a rudder, the second is an oar or a sail. A cook book, in so far as it is literature at all, belongs to the literature of Knowledge. Milton's "Paradise Lost" belongs to the literature of Power. What do you learn from "Paradise Lost"? Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cook book? Something new, something you did not know before in every paragraph. But you would not for that

JOHN CALVIN: WHO WAS HE? OF WHAT SORT WAS HE? WHAT DID HE DO FOR THE WORLD?*

BY THOS. CARY JOHNSON.

Fathers and Brethren of the Presbytery of Roanoke, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The chairman of the Presbytery's committee on this Calvin celebration, in asking me to make one of the addresses to-day, wrote: "We want you to tell . . . who Calvin was, [give] a delineation of his character and a summary of his great labors." I have chosen "not to ask the reason why," but to attempt to do briefly, and in the rough, what your committee asks; and to do it in the order asked. Accordingly we begin with the question,

Who was John Calvin? and we answer:

1st. *He was a Picard child, of the higher middle classes, and of uncommon parts.*

He was a Picard child—a child of that country in northern France which had long been famous as "fertile in warriors and in servants of God"—a child of the country that produced Peter the Hermit, and LeFevre, and Olivetan, and Roussel, and Vatable—of a country whose people were enthusiastic, dogmatic, persistent, ready to follow their principles to their logical consequences.

He was born of a family which was rising in worldly fortune and in social standing in the later years of the sixteenth century. His father's people had been boatmen, but his grandfather had become a cooper; and his father had entered the legal profession and won such esteem for his abilities and character that he was entrusted with the more important legal

* An address delivered October 7, 1909, before the Presbytery of Roanoke, meeting at Hat Creek; and published by request of the Presbytery.

business of the greater families and churchmen in the city of Noyon and its vicinity; he made his way into the somewhat exclusive bourgeoisie of Noyon; and must be regarded as a man of austere morals, sound judgment and forceful as well as ambitious personality. John Calvin's mother was the daughter of Jean LeFranc, a well-to-do retired inn keeper, who, having prospered in business in Cambrai, had settled in Noyon, been admitted into the Bourgeoisie, and elevated to a post in the city council. His daughter, Jeanne LeFranc, who was to become the mother of John Calvin, was a woman of uncommon beauty of person, and of devoted piety according to Roman Catholic ideals.

In a country then which produced great men, of the higher middle class of the people, but of a family that had risen from the plainer middle ranks, John Calvin was born.

He was to grow up a man of medium height, frail and slender, of clear-cut features, with a noble forehead, flashing eyes, and a gracious if somewhat aristocratic bearing, a clear, logical, systematic, subtle, profound, powerful and constructive mind, a mettlesome temper that flashed like the blade of Damascene emir to the end of his life, notwithstanding steady and strong efforts to control it; capacity for warm affection and for stern condemnation, for unlimited devotion to that deemed worthy, and unlimited antagonism to that deemed worthy of such opposition; a man of vast energy and persistence of will.

Your committee wrote, "Tell the people who John Calvin was." The answer, so far, has been: He was a Picard, of the middle classes, of good strong blood, and born into the world with very uncommon parts.

Who was John Calvin?

2d. *He was a man who received an uncommonly good education for a man of his epoch.*

His aspiring father was determined that his sons should have the best education he could obtain for them. He placed them in the ancient and endowed school of Capettes in Noyon, where,

tradition says, John manifested "so eager a spirit and so retentive a memory as to give him an easy superiority over his youthful school fellows." Because of the high esteem in which the father was held by Louis de Hangest, Lord of Montmor, and by Adrien de Hangest, Lord of Genlis, and because of John's own attractiveness and promise, the boy was early received into the illustrious family of Genlis and taught along with the son Claude. At another period of his youth he is found studying in company with the children of the house of Montmor, the most honorable in the neighborhood, but at his father's charges. Thus he gained an "acquaintance with the ways of polite society such as few of the reformers enjoyed, in an age when the gulf between the manners of those in high stations and of the mass of the people was far greater than at present."

This connection with the Montmors probably determined his father to send John to the University of Paris; whither, with these young nobles, under the care of a private tutor whose oversight he was to share, he set out in August, 1523, when he had just entered upon his fifteenth year. The first few months in the great university were spent in the rather inconspicuous College de la Marche, but under Corderius, the most inspiring and effective teacher of Latin in the university at that time, perhaps. After a few months in the College de la Marche, Calvin and his friends, still under the tutor, were carried to the College de Montaigu,—a college famous for its ascetic and scholastic strictness. Here Calvin made such rapid progress in grammar and rhetoric that he was speedily promoted to the disciplines of philosophy and dialectics. Here, at the College de Montaigu, he continued till the close of 1527, or the beginning of 1528, when he would seem to have attained the rank of licentiate of letters.

While here he had made some choice friends, notably the household of Gillaume Cop, first physician to the king and an eminent member of the Faculty of Medicine, and Pierre Robert Olivetan, and Maturinus Corderius,—high and worthy men

who exerted a helpful influence on the gifted young student.

His father having decided that he should study law, he is next sent to Orleans, to sit at the feet of the leading French lawyer, Petrus Stella. Here Calvin found an atmosphere in sharp contrast to the clerical and ascetic air of the College de Montaigu of the University of Paris. Orleans was known as a delightful and rather easy-going place of study. But Calvin was not to fall in with the easy-going ways of the place. It was his habit, after a light supper, to study till midnight, and then, waking early in the morning, to lie abed recalling and thinking over what he had learned the evening before. He thus strengthened his memory, enlarged his learning, cultivated his powers of analysis, ennobled his diction, and made himself of such repute speedily that on several occasions he took the place of one or other of his instructors who were unable to meet their classes. At the same time Calvin found the opportunity to develop his knowledge of the classics, the taste for which had been stimulated in him by Corderius and the Cops at Paris. His interest in the classics attracted to him the friendship of Melchier Wolmar, who was subsequently to initiate him into Greek. Busy as Calvin was, he found time while at Orleans to form and cultivate friendship with several fellow-students and a family or two of culture and refinement.

Though admiring Petrus Stella greatly, Calvin became aroused by the reports brought by students of the world-renowned Italian professor of law, Audrea Alciat, who had begun his work at the University of Bourges in April, 1529. Accordingly Calvin went to Bourges, probably in the fall of 1529. Alciat was turning law into a science instead of a mere mass of facts. Calvin's work proceeded at Bourges along the same lines as at Orleans, save that here he began the study of Greek under Wolmar, who removed to Bourges in 1530. In the spring of 1531 his father died. His course of law was almost, if not altogether completed; within a month he had gone to Paris and was devoting himself to the study of the classics with all the zeal of an eager disciple of the new learning.

There, moved by Gillaume Budé and Guillaume Cop, both zealous humanists, Francis I. had, in March, 1530, appointed a group of royal lecturers "to give instruction in Greek, Hebrew and mathematics." There, in the College Fortet, Calvin studied Greek with Danes and Hebrew with Vatable. There, in the latter half of 1531 and the early portion of 1532, Calvin not only studied Greek and Hebrew, but labored on his first book,—his *Commentary on Seneca's Treatise on Clemency*,—a work which came from the press in April, 1532, when the author was only twenty-three years old,—a work written in Latin of singular clearness and brilliancy and cogency, showing a wonderful range of reading, containing citations from fifty-six Latin and twenty-two Greek classical writers, seven fathers of the Church and the humanists of his own age, and "remarkable for its maturity and poise of judgment," and for its high moral tone.

The latter part of 1532 and the first seven months of 1533, Calvin seems to have been in Orleans, probably pursuing the law still further, perhaps with a view to taking the doctorate. In August, 1533, he is back in Paris, and more interested in the great reform movements then in process than anything else. His education was to go on indefinitely; but his days of formal student life in universities were about over. He had sharpened and developed his powers, a great change had come over his life, he did not know yet exactly what he was to do; but he was already preoccupied with questions which he was soon to help the world to settle.

You have said, "Tell the people who Calvin was." Answer has been made that he was by birth a Picard of the middle class, of good strong blood, of rare natural endowments, and exceptionally trained in school, and college and university for a man of his age.

Who was John Calvin?

3d. Calvin was a man born into "an age on ages telling."

The opening of the sixteenth century was a period of transi-

tion from the Middle Ages to modern civilization. The literary and artistic products of classic Greek and Roman civilization were being brought forth from their tombs and sent on the mission of civilization amongst all the peoples of Europe. The newly invented printing press was being used to spread the ancient writings and to voice the thoughts of thinking men of the time. Masterful men had arisen, masters in literature like Erasmus, masters in painting and sculpture like Raphael and Michael Angelo; and they were stirring the world with new hope. It was an age of brilliant discoveries. Columbus, with the aid of the magnetic compass, lately brought into use, had lifted the veil of the Atlantic and disclosed the New World less than twenty years before Calvin was born. Vasco da Gamma, less than ten years before Calvin's birth, had sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, opened a new way for trade to the East Indies, and laid the foundations of the sea-power of the nations of western Europe. Before Calvin was thirteen years old, Magellan had circumnavigated the globe. Such achievements called forth the choicest spirits to the noblest endeavor. Men were learning to take a new view of the heavens. Copernicus was about thirty-six years old when Calvin was born. The relatively recent invention of gunpowder had revolutionized the art of war, made the peasant the equal of the lord in combat; enabled the monarchs, by means of peasant armies, to destroy the power of the feudal nobles, and placed in the hands of the people an instrument with which to restrain the tyranny of kings. The nations of the West had become solidified, a State system had grown up; and resident embassies had been established at the different courts. The environment was being fitted to condition noble endeavor. More than all, a great religious movement had begun, a revolt against papal and hierarchical misrule, against corruption and nastiness, and a return toward the New Testament religion. LeFevre, in France, taught the doctrine of justification by faith as early as 1509, the year in which Calvin was born, and more clearly as early as 1512. Zwingli taught the same doctrine as early as 1519, perhaps as

early as 1516; and Martin Luther, a man in whom a score of historic forces, long working toward the Reformation, converged, began, as early as 1517, to break down mediæval idols, and to push with titanic power the great principles of the Reformation,—the sole authority of the word of God, and justification by faith alone. Before Calvin had reached the age of twelve, Luther had stood before the Diet of Worms, in

such wise as to turn the great currents of European, yea, and world-wide, history.

Calvin was born on the 10th of July, 1509. He was born in a great epoch,—verily in an age on ages telling. He was educated under the influence of the most quickening movements, A product in part of his age, he was to add to the power of his age over all subsequent ages, in the departments of religion, civil life, education and morals. The religious movement was masterfully appropriated and furthered by him.

You wrote to “tell the people who Calvin was.” Answer has been made, that he was a Picard, of strong blood, and splendid endowments, nobly trained, born into a great age, an age fitted to call forth and develop his utmost powers.

Who was John Calvin?

4th. *He was a man thoroughly converted from Roman Catholicism to a simple faith in Jesus Christ, when he was about twenty-three years old.*

Young Calvin grew up a devout Roman Catholic. He was destined by his father to the clerical life. Before he had reached the age of twenty, the father, after the manner of the times, had secured John's appointment to a chaplaincy in the Cathedral of Noyon. To the benefice in Noyon he added, on September 27, 1527, the pastorate of Saint Martin de Martheville,—a curacy which, on June 5, 1529, he exchanged for that of Pont-L'Eveque. From these sources he derived sufficient income, after having hired a substitute to perform the ecclesiastical functions connected with the benefices, to carry on his

studies. The father had designed not only that John should enter the clerical life, but that he should specialize in theology. So far as is known the son had fallen, easily and naturally, in with the paternal plans, and worked without thought of change up to the close of his undergraduate course in the University of Paris, about the end of 1527. During all these years he had been as distinguished for severe morals as for brilliant mental achievements; and seemed to have the makings of a Roman Catholic churchman of a severe and morally lofty type.

Suddenly his father changed his plans with reference to him. He now insisted that he should study law, regarding the law as the surest road to wealth and honors, and apparently having conceived less of respect also for the clerical life which he had come to understand more fully. Calvin's earliest biographers affirm that *his* mind had, at this date, been turned from scholastic theology, and that he had begun to read the Scriptures and to feel that the Roman worship was superstitious; but his own statement regarding the study of law implies that he began it in obedience to his father's will rather than from any desire of his own.

It has already been seen that in order to study law, Calvin left Paris about the beginning of 1528 and went to the University of Orleans; that while there the humanistic spirit grew upon him, and attracted to him the friendship of Melchior Wolmar, the brilliant language teacher and sympathizer with Lutheranism; that, in the spring of 1529, he went to Bourges to sit at the feet of the great Alciat; that there he had given still more time to the classics, being inducted into the study of Greek by his friend Melchior Wolmar, who had himself come to Bourges in 1530; and that, in the spring of 1531, he lost his father, and thenceforth spent still more of his time in the study of the classics and the New Testament. He was also becoming more fully acquainted with the views of the German reformers. He was coming to know and love too much truth for one who was to abide content in the bosom of Rome. No

man knows the day when the great change came; but some time between April, 1532, when his first published book, in which he shows no signs of being a Christian, came from the press, and November, 1533, when his friend, Nicholas Cop, and he were driven from Paris because of the evangelical sentiments expressed in Cop's inaugural address as rector of the university, he had undergone the wonderful experience which, in the preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms*, published in 1557, he recounts as follows:

"From the time that I was a young child, my father intended me for theology; but afterwards, because he perceived that the science of laws commonly enriches those who follow it, this hope caused him promptly to change his plan. This was the reason why I was withdrawn from the study of philosophy and why I was set to learning law. Though I forced myself to engage faithfully in it in order to obey my father, God finally made me turn about in another direction by his secret providence.

"And in the first place, because I was so obstinately addicted to the superstitions of the papacy that it was very hard to draw me out from that deep slough, by a sudden conversion He subdued and reduced my heart to docility, which, for my age, was overmuch hardened in such matters. Having consequently received some taste and knowledge of true piety, I was forthwith inflamed with so great a desire to reap benefit from it, that although I did not abandon other studies, I yet devoted myself to them more indifferently."

Little more can be learned of the circumstances of his conversion than he teaches us in the words just quoted. He does not mention the year in which it occurred: The students of his life differ greatly amongst themselves as to the date. 1528, 1532, 1533, 1534, 1535 have all been fixed upon by worthy historians as the year; but it seems tolerably clear that his sudden conversion took place between April, 1532, and November, 1533. The date is not important.

The sovereign God had been calling Calvin by His word. He had moved upon him by His Spirit. The fundamental habitudes of Calvin's soul had been suddenly changed. Henceforth there was to be no authority for him in matters of faith but God who has spoken in His word—the Holy Scriptures—to the world; and it was to be his steadfast purpose and effort to serve God according to scriptural teaching. He was one soundly converted.

Who was John Calvin?

5th. *He was one of such competence to teach that men would make him a teacher; and was one with an itch for teaching.*

He tells us in that same preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms*, from which we quoted a little while ago:

“Now I was greatly astonished that, before a year passed [*i. e.*, after his conversion], all those who had some desire for pure doctrine betook themselves to me in order to learn, although I myself had done little more than begin. For my part I commenced to seek some hiding place and means of withdrawing from the people, since I have always loved quiet and tranquility, being by nature somewhat shy and timid; but so far was I from succeeding in my wish that, on the contrary, all retreats and places of retirement were as public schools for me. In short, while I have always had this aim of living privately without being known, God has so led me and guided me by various vicissitudes that he has never let me rest in any place whatever, but, in spite of my natural disposition, He has brought me forth into the light, and, as the saying is, has thrust me onto the stage. And, in fact, when I left the land of France I came to Germany of set purpose to the end that there I might live in ‘some inconspicuous nook as I have always wished.’”

However much, or little, Calvin had to do with the preparation of Cop's inaugural address, delivered in November, 1533, that he, as well as his friend Cop, the bold university rector, had to flee in consequence of the address, shows that

he was regarded as a man holding like views and as a dangerous center of influence. Even as early as this he stands out, somewhat vaguely indeed, but really nevertheless, as a man from whom men would learn.

Early in the year 1534 we find him in an agreeable place of safety, at Angouleme, two hundred and fifty miles southwest of Paris, in the home of his young friend du Tillet. He is teaching du Tillet and a considerable coterie of friends; and he is beginning the studies which were to result in the first edition of his *Institutes*. The purpose of this work he himself states in the preface in the following noble words, addressed to Francis I, of France:

“Most mighty and renowned monarch! When I began the composition of this treatise, I entertained no thought of laying it before your Majesty. My object was to exhibit the simplest elements of Christianity, and thus to lead those who had already some love of the gospel to the knowledge of its principles. I labored especially for my fellow-countrymen, the French, knowing that many among them hunger and thirst after righteousness, while few only have attained to even a moderate degree of knowledge. Hence the unpretending character of the book. When, however, I saw that certain cruel persecutors possessed such power in your kingdom, that no place of refuge for true doctrine existed any longer, it seemed to me that I should be accomplishing a useful design could I at the same time and by the same means both instruct them and make you acquainted with the nature of our belief; that you might thence learn the real character of that doctrine against which these madmen rage with such fury and carry fire and sword through your kingdom.”

This passage makes it appear that, if Calvin had such capacity to teach that men *would* have him teach, he also had the teacher's impulse. From his asylum in Angouleme he made excursions to Noyon, to Paris, to Orleans, to Nerac, to Poitiers, everywhere agitating with scholarly groups of men the truths of which he had become possessed. At Orleans, in the year

1534, he wrote his first published Protestant book, entitled "*The Sleep of the Soul*," a polemic against wild Anabaptist beliefs,—a book in which Calvin appears as defender of evangelical doctrine. At Orleans he gathered the friends of evangelical truth together, and as a minister dispensed to them the Lord's Supper in its New Testament significance, and, without doubt, at their suggestion or insistence.

When driven out of France by the bitter outbreak of persecution in the fall of 1534, he established himself in Basle, and completed, within a year and a few months, the first copy of his immortal *Institutes*. The persecution had kindled his energies, and had rendered him ready, and even desirous, to set forth the theology of Protestantism in a less elaborate way than he had planned. Writing twenty years later of his motives at this time, he says:

"Leaving my native country, I removed to Germany, planning that, concealed in some obscure corner, I might enjoy long denied peace. But while I was in retirement at Basle, evil and lying pamphlets were spread abroad to suppress the indignation that the fires, in which many pious men had been burned in France, excited here and there among the Germans, to the effect that those so cruelly treated were no other than Anabaptists and turbulent men who would overturn by their perverse insanities not religion only, but all political order. Seeing this done by the tricksters of the Court, I felt that my silence would be treachery, and that I should oppose with all my might not only lest the undeserved shedding of the innocent blood of holy martyrs should be concealed by false reports, but also lest they should go on in future to whatever slaughter they pleased without arousing the pity of any. These were my reasons for publishing the *Institutes*: first, that I might vindicate from unworthy affront my brethren, whose death was precious in the sight of the Lord; and, next, that some sorrow and anxiety should move foreign peoples, since the same sufferings threatened many. Neither was it the thick and elaborate work it now is, but only a little hand-book that

then appeared, nor had it any other aim than to witness to the faith of those whom I saw evilly reviled by impious and faithless flatterers."

The letter to King Francis with which the *Institutes* was prefaced, was a noble plea for a righteous cause, a masterpiece of apologetic literature. The *Institutes*, in the six chapters of which it was composed, treated, first of the law as set forth in the Ten Commandments; second, of faith as embodied in the Apostles' Creed; third, of prayer as illustrated in that of our Lord; fourth, of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; fifth, of the false sacraments; and, sixth, of Christian liberty, ecclesiastical power and civil administration. This order of discussion gave "to Calvin's legally trained mind the advantage of basing much of his exposition on definite documents, generally believed to be of absolute authority"; but he by no means confined himself to the exposition of these documents. His discussion of the subjects is broad; and the *Institutes* was justly described as "containing well-nigh the whole sum of piety."

The first three chapters were written in a simple and calm style; the last three in a more lively and polemical tone, having been composed perhaps after Calvin's indignation had been stirred anew by the misrepresentations of his fellow-believers.

This very remarkable book, to which we shall revert again, was another proof of both his capacity to teach and his desire to teach. The way in which the edition was taken up was further proof that the people desired him as teacher.

Soon after finishing his final revision of this first edition of the *Institutes*, in the spring of 1536, he is found in Italy, in the Court of Renee, Duchess of Ferrara, where he hoped to plant the seeds of reform, and whither he had perhaps been invited. But he soon left that field, went to Paris; and thence, after having been joined by his brother Antoine and his sister Marie, started for Strasburg, Germany. Charles V and Francis I were at war. The direct way to Strasburg was blocked. The party had to make a detour by the city of Geneva.

You said to tell the people who John Calvin was." Answer has been made that Calvin was of Picard birth, of strong blood, of extraordinary endowments, of extraordinary training, born into an extraordinary age, soundly converted from Romanism to a simple faith in Jesus, of such competence to teach that men would have him teach, and with a strong itch for teaching.

Who was John Calvin?

6th. *He was the man who, in the summer of 1536, was called to be the head of the Reformed movement in Geneva; and heeded the call.*

At the end of the fifteenth century the functions of civil government in Geneva were shared by three powers, viz.: The bishop of Geneva, the deputy for temporal administration appointed by the Duke of Savoy, and the citizens of the town. In the third decade of the sixteenth century, Duke Charles III, of Savoy, with the aid of a venal bishop, began a struggle to deprive the citizens of their rights and to incorporate Geneva into his duchy. In the struggle the citizens broke the power of Savoy over their city, repudiated the civil rule of the bishop of Geneva, and established their own independence under the forms of a republic, as early as 1528. They had been aided by Berne.

William Farel, driven out of France as early as 1523, instrumental in introducing the Reformation into various portions of Switzerland, secured the formal establishment of the Reformation in Geneva by municipal action on the 27th of August, 1535, and again on May 21, 1536. The council of the two hundred had assembled the citizens *en masse* in St. Peter's, to learn whether they would live in accord with the word of God and the doctrine preached by the reformers. "Upon which," says the register, "without one single opposing voice, it was unanimously agreed to, and carried by the holding up of hands, and a promise and an oath taken to God that all the people would live according to this holy evangelical law and the word of God which has been made known to them, forsaking all masses and other papal ceremonies and frauds, images

and idols, and living together in unity and in obedience to the law."

The Genevan Reformation thus ushered in, was brought into a most untoward environment. Geneva was one of the most turbulent, dissolute and immoral cities in Christendom. Farel had done much, but felt incompetent to lead the movement amongst these wayward and licentious people to a successful issue. Geneva was now in need of a great constructive leader, a thoroughly competent, systematic teacher, organizer and moral exemplar. Farel had a singular degree of humanity and sincere devotion to the progress of the gospel. He had led in the overthrow of Romanism, he now sought a man whom he and the Genevese might follow in making the city positively what it ought to be.

Just at this time he learned that John Calvin, on his way to Strasburg, had stopped over night in Geneva. He was already acquainted with Calvin. He had read the *Institutes*. He goes to Calvin and endeavors to persuade him that he shall take charge of the Genevan movement. Calvin desired leisure for further study and shrank from the responsibilities involved in such an undertaking. As Calvin hesitated Farel became insistent. "When he saw," says Calvin, "that he could gain nothing by prayer, he tried imprecation, demanding that it might please God to curse my retirement and the tranquility which I was seeking for my studies, if I held back and refused to give succor and aid at such a time of need. And these words terrified and shook me as if God from on high had stretched out his hand upon me to stop me, so that I renounced the journey which I had undertaken; but conscious of my diffidence and timidity, I refused to bind myself to undertake any definite office."

You wrote, "Tell the people who John Calvin was." Answer has been that he was of strong and rising Picard blood, of uncommon parts, uncommon training and born into an uncom-

mon age, thoroughly converted from Romanism to a simple biblical faith in Christ, of vast competence to teach, of a vast itch to teach, and summoned by Farel, in the summer of 1536, to organize and lead the Reform movement in Geneva.

Who was John Calvin?

7th. *He became a drastic head of the Reform movement in Geneva—too drastic to suit the wayward people of that sink of corruption.*

Calvin did not become a preacher till about a year later. His first work was that of teacher. Under the auspices of Farel he began the exposition of the Pauline epistles in the church of St. Peter. He has, perhaps, never been excelled as an expositor of the word of God. He combined clearness and brevity; kept the aim of the writer steadily before him, unfolded and enforced it with marvellous success. In a debate between Romish priests and Reforming preachers at Lausanne, about the first of October, he made a couple of short speeches which revealed his knowledge both of the Scriptures and the fathers, and the Romish misunderstanding of each of these sources. They enhanced his reputation in Geneva not a little.

Farel had called Calvin with the view of his taking a chief hand in the organization of the Genevan Church. In this work, though the people still looked on Farel for a time as chief ecclesiastical guide, Calvin at once took the leadership. Very soon he had prepared "*Articles of Church Government*," a catechism for Christian instruction, and a Confession of Faith for the Genevan community.

The *Articles of Church Government* provided for the exercise of ecclesiastical government by a consistory, or Presbytery, made up of ministerial and non-ministerial members chosen thereto. This consistory was to overlook, and exercise discipline over, all the members; and to impose the penalty of excommunication on the abandoned. These articles also provided that the inhabitants of the city should individually give an account of their faith; and that all the children of the church should be taught a brief and easy outline of the Chris-

tian faith. This was a significant program. The inhabitants of Geneva were to be sifted by a creed test. "The church thus established" was to be maintained in its purity by education and discipline; its own officers were to teach and to exercise the discipline; and until the church had done its utmost, the State was not to interfere with the discipline. The Little Council of Geneva and that of the Two Hundred, adopted the Articles with only slight reservations. Calvin's plan had become the law of Geneva in all its essential features.

The Catechism is a transparently expressed statement of the Calvinistic system of Christian teaching, but not particularly adapted to the childish mind.

The Confession of Faith consists of twenty-one Articles, in which the chief doctrines of the Reformed faith are briefly and simply stated, and distinguished from the tenets of Rome; and in which the principles of ecclesiastical organization and the duty of obeying civil statutes and decrees which are not in opposition to the will of God, are set forth.

A considerable portion of the Genevese people refused to receive the Confession, notwithstanding the efforts of the Councils. The party of opposition grew. It grew large. The opposition party got control of the civil government. The party, as grown great, opposed the endeavor to impose the Confession of Faith on the citizens. It opposed the exercise of the power to excommunicate by the session. It fell under the influence of the Bernese government; and insisted on the introduction into the worship of the Genevese Church of certain customs of the Bernese Church. Easter Sunday, April 23, 1538, matters came to a crisis. The civil powers had ordered Calvin and his fellow-pastors to administer the Lord's Supper on that day, after the Bernese fashion, and to all comers, whether under the sentence of excommunication at the hands of the consistory or not. The pastors refused, because compliance was subordination of the church to civil power; because it broke the back of discipline, and because it involved sacrilege in giving the sacred elements to those known to be unworthy.

The next day the preachers, Calvin and Farel, were deposed and ordered to leave the city within three days. Calvin left with the words: "Very well; it is better to serve God than men."

You wrote: "Tell the people who John Calvin was." Answer has been made. He was that wonderfully endowed and highly trained Picard, born at an epochal time, converted to a living faith in Jesus Christ, whom men would have break the word of the Lord unto them, who was pressed into the leadership of the Genevan Reformation in 1536, and who led it thence until 1538.

Who was John Calvin?

8th. *He was the efficient and strenuous pastor of the Church of French Refugees in Strasburg, 1538 to 1541; and at the same time professor of theology and writer of books of great worth.*

Calvin spent the summer of 1538 in Basle, wounded in spirit, but broadening his scholarship. Repeated calls and, at length, a vehement one, somewhat like Farel's to him at Geneva, carried him to Strasburg, September, 1538; where he was to spend three of the happiest years of life.

The council appointed him assistant professor of theology, in which capacity he lectured on the Gospel of John and Paul's letter to the Romans. He became pastor of the Church of the French Refugees. He at once introduced his system of church government and discipline, on account of which he had been driven out of Geneva. He regarded it as a part of God's system; and himself as under obligation to institute and apply it. Here his effort was successful. These French refugees were men of conscience. They had left their country on account of their convictions. Those convictions were largely like Calvin's own, and daily became more so. He introduced among them also, a simple spiritual type of worship, magnifying the pulpit, opening the fountain of free prayer, introducing congregational

singing, reducing the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper to New Testament dimensions and character.

In 1539 he gave to the world his matured theological views in a carefully revised edition of the *Institutes*, and a valuable commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. He also wrote, and published in the fall of the same year, his overwhelming answer to the letter of Bishop Sadolet to the Genevese. On the exile of Calvin and Farel, Sadolet, the learned, polished and amiable Bishop of Carpentras, had been deputed of Rome to write this letter to the Genevese with a view to leading them back into the Roman fold. He had written plausibly, but sophistically. The Bernese authorities asked Calvin to reply to it. His Strasburg friends urged him to reply to it. His own heart moved him to reply to it. He wrote the reply quickly; but with courtesy, with profound feeling, with a wide grasp of the doctrinal questions involved, speaking for the whole movement in which he was a leader. It was the most brilliant, popular defense of the Protestant cause produced in the whole Reformation period.

During this period Calvin attended several German conferences and became acquainted with most of the leading reformers and Protestant princes; and thus increased his influence, widened his horizon and broadened his sympathies.

While at Strasburg, Calvin, after considerable looking about for a suitable wife, married Idelette de Bure, the widow of John Storder, whom he had converted from the Anabaptist faith. She was a woman of fine character and, notwithstanding her poor health, was of great service to Master Calvin during the whole term of their married life, which ended with her death in 1549. She softened and sweetened him.

Thus was Calvin prepared, by natural endowments, by extraordinary training, by the most strenuous endeavor, by the bearing of vast responsibilities, by attempts at huge tasks to which he had been called, by prosperity and by adversity,—by nature and by grace for his last, long, hazardous but finally victorious struggle. He was a man fitted for a huge task.

Who was John Calvin?

9th. *He was the head of the Reform movement in Geneva, 1541-1564; and leader of the civil progress of the city; and head of all Reformed Christendom, under Christ.*

Upon Calvin's exile from Geneva in 1538, there had ensued increasing disorder. There was no discipline. Immorality ran riot. The political freedom of the country fell into grave danger. Berne, outwitting the Genevese commission sent to treat with her, acquired treaty-sovereignty over Geneva, which the Great Council of Geneva would not acknowledge. The party which had ousted Calvin, and whose leaders had subsequently made the ignoble treaty with Berne, lost control. The friends of the Reformer had grown strong. Calvin's answer to Sadolet and his letters to the Genevese Protestants, written with the hope of allaying partisan feeling, had increased the number of his friends. The way was thus prepared for his recall. In September, 1540, the Little Council voted his recall. Thenceforth a growing effort was made to secure his return. Leaders of the Reformed movement from all sides added their pleas and arguments. Calvin at first felt that he would rather endure a hundred deaths than return. But the conviction grew upon him that he must go. To Farel, who a second time was demanding that he should take up the work in Geneva, he said: "If I were given the choice, I would do anything rather than yield to you in this matter; but since I remember that I am not my own, I offer my heart as if slain in sacrifice to my Lord." September 13, 1541, he re-entered the city which was henceforth to be his place of residence and to have his character stamped wonderfully upon it. On the day of his arrival he presented himself before the Little Council, explained his reluctance to return, and asked the Council to appoint a commission to aid in the preparation of a written constitution for the government of the Church of Geneva, and declared his wish to serve the city.

Thirteen days later the appointed commission presented a proposed constitution in one hundred and sixty-eight articles.

It suffered modifications prior to its adoption by the civil government. Finally, January 2, 1542, these ecclesiastical ordinances, as amended, were accepted by the General Assembly, consisting of two thousand citizens. Calvin was not satisfied, but accepted the result as the best to be had and as essentially biblical.

The type of government was substantially that that he had endeavored to set up and apply in Geneva before, and which he had put into application in Strasburg; but elaborated and improved.

The distinctive principles of this system of government were:

1. The self-government of the church under the headship of Christ.

2. Government and discipline over all the members of the church from the smallest to the greatest to be exercised by courts of chosen representative elders.

3. The elders composing the courts to be of two classes—ministers of the gospel and ruling elders.

4. The recognition and reinstatement of the office of the ruling elder according to New Testament teaching.

5. The resurrection of the New Testament office of the deacon.

These principles set Calvin's polity far above every other Protestant polity. His *first* vindicates to the church right to govern itself, whereas every other Protestant Church of the period, in need of protection, subordinated itself to a friendly Protestant civil power. No adequate discipline was provided in any other Protestant scheme. Each of his principles was easily deducible from New Testament teaching. The scheme in its essentials was *jure divino*.

This scheme of government was difficult to apply in such a sphere. In Geneva, as in every other Christian state in Europe at the time, every member of the civil commonwealth was considered to be a member of the church. Geneva was one of the most godless of States. Many of those who had in name espoused the Reformation, had done so because that movement was in the direction of civil liberty. To attempt to secure

from such a body of people a life in conformity with the ethical principles of Christianity, was to attempt the gigantic. The godless looked on the attempt as an unwarrantable interference with their personal liberties. They met it with prolonged and bitter hostility. But Calvin believed that the application of the power of God through discipline was, next to teaching the truth, vital to the progress of true religion. The consistory began its work promptly. No age, no distinction was exempted from its censures. Men and women were examined as to their religious knowledge, criticism of ministers, absence from sermons, use of charms, and family quarrels, as well as more serious offences.

The power of excommunication in the hands of the consistory excited grave organized opposition at an early date. In March, 1543, the Council of the Sixty voted "that the consistory has no jurisdiction or power to refuse [the Supper], but only to admonish and then report to the Council, so that the government may judge the delinquents according to their demerits." Calvin protested that he would see exile or death rather than see the consistory yield the right. He won the day; but, through years, the struggle was to go on over "whether the church should have the right of excommunication, or the State have it;" that is, whether the church should really be self-governing or not. On occasion of every crisis, Calvin showed the greatest determination and courage. Several times he seemed on the brink of another exile. At length, in the year 1555, the Council agreed that the power of excommunication belonged to the consistory. Thenceforward that body exercised the right unchallenged by organized opposition of any sort.

Calvin had stood valiantly for the self-government of the church; but, while distinguishing clearly between the church and State, he had, along with the whole rest of the world, believed that the two powers should be in union with one another, or that the State should profess, hold and support the true religion. The two powers were united in Geneva, and to the State was given entirely too large a part in the choice of the

officers of the church. This prevented the realization of perfect church autonomy. Moreover, the logic of such connection of church and State is persecution at the hands of the State, on the ground of heretical departure from the religion of the State. The logic of this relationship was given practical historical realization in Geneva. A most deplorable instance was the case of Servetus.

Michael Servetus was a Spaniard, born in the same year with John Calvin. He belonged at one time to the household of Quintanna, father confessor of Charles I. He revolted from the Romish Church early in his life, but precipitated himself into numerous and grave errors at the same time, of an anti-trinitarian and pantheistical sort. He was a man of genius. acute perception, vivid imagination, great powers of acquisition, exuberant in theories, some ingenious and worthy, others absurd. He conjectured the mode of the blood's circulation. As a man of twenty-five, he lectured in Paris; his lectures drew crowds of students, but his character repelled them. He was exacting, arrogant and self-complacent. He professed to teach astrology and to predict from the stars. The Parliament of Paris forbade and banished him from the city. He is found afterwards living for periods at various places in France. In 1542 he settled at Vienne, in Dauphine. Here for twelve years he lived under the name of Villanueva, conformed to the Roman Catholic Church, was in high repute as a physician, but was setting forth his fancies in a work called "*The Restoration of Christianity.*" He taught that "all beings are contained in ideas, all ideas in God: God is all things, and all things are God." His mouthings contain such passages as this:

"As the word of God is essentially man, so the Spirit of God is essentially the spirit of man. By the 'power of the resurrection' all the primitive elements of the body and spirit have been renewed, glorified, and immortalized, and all these are communicated to us by Christ in baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Holy Spirit is the breath from the mouth of Christ (John 20: 22). As God breathes into man the soul with the

air, so Christ breathes into his disciples the Holy Spirit with the air. . . . The deity in the stone is the stone, in gold it is gold, in the wood it is wood, according to the proper idea of things. In a more excellent way the deity in man is man."

In the fall of 1552 he published his "*Restitution of Christianity*," without name of author or publisher, but with his initials at the end. The book occasioned a storm. DeTrie, a refugee at Geneva, twitted a relative of his with the indifference of the Roman Catholic powers at Lyons to such teaching, whereas they were driving inoffensive Protestants out of the country, or hounding them to death. The Roman Catholics took the case up, called upon Geneva for any evidence they had that Servetus had written the book. Upon a personal appeal Calvin furnished incriminating evidence against Servetus, though not without some reluctance, feeling that it was his duty to confute heresy by sound doctrine rather than to seek to extirpate it by any other method. Servetus was condemned and sentenced, June 17, 1553, by his Roman Catholic judges to be burnt alive "over a slow fire at the place of public execution, so that his body should be reduced to cinders as well as his books."

Meanwhile, Servetus had made his escape from his Lyonese jailer. July 17th he appeared in Geneva. Calvin was at the time in one of the biggest of all his conflicts with the party of opposition to his system of ecclesiastical government. There was danger of another exile for him. The presence of Servetus was an addition to the danger. Calvin had him arrested and brought to trial. After three days of the trial, Calvin appeared as the prosecutor. The trial was conducted by the Little Council, which was the chief legislative and judicial organ of the city. The majority in it at the time was of Calvin's opponents; and some of them did what they could to delay the progress of the cause. The Council was soon convinced of the correctness of Calvin's charges. On the 19th of September it determined to apply officially to the pastors and magistrates of the four cantons of Bern, Zurich, Schoffhausen and Basel to learn how Servetus should be treated. On the 18th of October the

messengers returned. While cautious, guarded and sorrowful in tone, the worthies appealed to were unanimous in recommending severity in dealing with the accused. At length, October 26th, the Council condemned Servetus to be burned alive for his great errors and blasphemies.

Calvin had never concealed his feelings that the penalty should be capital, but he used all his endeavors to change the manner of the death from burning to some milder form. Servetus was put to death; the leading Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed theologians of the time, without exception, approved. Calvin had done much to secure his condemnation.

Wherein was Calvin wrong? He had a creed false in one particular: He thought the State should profess Christianity; and should support and protect Christianity by the use of force. The Genevese State had embraced the Reformed religion. The essentials of that religion were virtually elements in the constitution of the Genevan republic. Servetus had done his utmost to overthrow not only Reformed Christianity, but that which is common to it and Roman Catholic Christianity. He was endeavoring to destroy belief in the one, personal, God. Calvin believed that the Christian State of Geneva ought to put down the enemy of its religion and of God. He lived in accord with his belief. He led the Genevese court of law to do what he and men generally in that age thought was the right thing to do. Calvin had a creed wrong in that it taught that States should profess, maintain and protect the true religion. He had not shaken off this error. He is to be blamed for that; but certainly not more so than Lutherans and Anglicans and Roman Catholics, who a hundred years later were guilty of persecutions unto death against dissenting Protestant brethren. Calvin is frequently visited with indiscriminating condemnation for his behavior in regard to Servetus by men of our day. Miserable pigmies! They survey the life of Calvin in the light of the torch which he held aloft. They see by that light this considerable error on his part and decry him. But for the clear shining of his light, however, they had perhaps not seen the error to-day. Calvin erred here as all Christendom of his day

was erring; but after all he was the greatest and best man in Christendom the day he did it.

Let us not fail to note that Servetus died at the hands of the Genevan State; that he was never tried by the church court in Geneva; but was tried and condemned by the Little Council of the State, against whose religion he had offended grievously.

Returning from this mournful Servetus incident to Calvin's struggle in behalf of church discipline: His system of discipline did the greatest things for Geneva; his teaching, his example and his disciples were blessed of God to the turning over of the most ungodly and dissolute cities of all Europe to one of the godliest and noblest on earth; they made it a model for other communities throughout the world.

During this last term at Geneva Calvin carried his *Institutes* through edition after edition, until in 1559 it received a form that satisfied him. He wrote commentaries of extraordinary excellence on almost the whole Bible. He wrote volumes of defences of threatened portions of truth, and of polemics against error. He corresponded with the leaders of the Reformed movement in France, the Netherlands, South Germany, Poland, the Swiss cantons, and England and Scotland, for he had become the head of the Protestant movement by the time Luther was taken away. Beza says of the ordinary labors of Calvin during a portion of this period:

"During the week he preached every alternate and lectured every third day; on Thursday he presided at the meetings of the presbytery, and on Friday he attended the ordinary Scripture meeting called the congregation, where he had his full share of duty. He also wrote most learned commentaries on several books of Scripture, besides answering the enemies of religion, and maintaining an extensive correspondence on matters of very great importance. Any one who reads these attentively will be astonished how one man could be fit for labors so numerous and great."

Though never a citizen of Geneva until 1559, he was appointed to help draw up the civil code in 1541; and went into

the work with his usual energy and faithfulness. His advice was sought on all important affairs of State. He did more than any other one man to redeem Geneva from subordination to Berne. His advice was sought on all important matters of the arts and of business. When a new surgeon applied for license to practice in Geneva his art, the Council invited Mr. Calvin to be present at his examination. A dentist, with the new art of repairing teeth, desired to ply his work in Geneva. He was sent to Mr. Calvin. Mr. Calvin put himself into his hands, was pleased with his work, and commended it to the magistrates.

But time fails us to tell further who Calvin was to his contemporaries. We have seen that he was that Picard of strong and rising stock, born with noble endowments, schooled in long and arduous college and university courses, born into an age of vast achievements and singular potencies over the future, thoroughly converted to God, called to Geneva in 1536 to head the Reform movement in progress there, exiled thence in 1538, called to Strasburg 1538 where he served nobly till 1541, recalled to Geneva in 1540, and more and more loudly until he returned in 1541. We have seen that in Geneva, from 1541 to the end of his life, he wrought, amidst many hazards, to victory,—wrought for the God eternal, immortal, invisible to whom be glory for ever and for ever; that for God he lifted up the city and made it “a city set on a hill.”

II. *Of what sort was John Calvin? What was his character? What his traits?*

This question has been answered in terms or by implications already. Accordingly, under this head we shall content ourselves with summarizing what has been taught directly or by implication, as follows:

1st. That Calvin was a man of extraordinary intellectual powers. He possessed wonderful powers of acquisition, retentive memory, great elaborative abilities, the logical faculty of an Aristotle, and a great constructive imagination. He has been called “The Aristotle of the Reformation,” “*The Theolo-*

gian," and "The Thomas Aquinas of the Reformed Church." He combines in an amazing way clearness and profundity and grasp.

2d. That he is not at all wanting in the esthetic faculty. He delights in the beauty and order of the created universe. He loves poetry and music and gave to each its appropriate place in the worship of God.

3d. That he was a man of intense affections, though reserved. Frequently misjudged as cold and unemotional, an intellectual machine, he was quite the contrary, drawing to him the friendship of noble spirits in every stage of his life, and winning from the whole body of the Genevise in his later life a vast and loving admiration.

4th. A man of the greatest courage, moral and physical. Conscious always of danger where danger lay, he bore himself with a courage "which not a few times annihilated the danger."

5th. A man of iron will.

6th. A man of such zeal for the glory of God that it overshadowed and determined the development of every other trait of his character.

7th. A man intolerant of error,—as opposed to the truth and to God.

8th. A man of Catholic spirit—reaching out the hand of Christian fellowship to Lutherans, Anglicans, and Reformed, distinguishing between essential and non-essential truths.

9th. The most father-like man produced in the Reformation period, carrying every part of Reformed Christendom in his heart,—thinking for it, toiling for it, comforting it, carrying it through dangers. He was the Paul of the Reformation,—the most Christ-like man of the age.

III. *What did he do for the world?*

It may be said and successfully maintained:

1st. That he gave commentaries on most of the books of the Bible unexcelled and unequalled down to his day. He still ranks as a prince royal of commentators.

2d. That he gave the best systematic presentation of the doctrines of sacred Scripture which the world possessed prior to 1648.

3d. That he gave the noblest and truest expositions of the biblical form of church government which this earth possessed prior to 1648.

4th. That he gave the best model Christian community which the world had during the Reformation period.

5th *That through the Institutes and Commentaries* he gave essential doctrinal unity and a common type of religious life to all non-German Protestantism, and so made of it a wall against Rome which otherwise it could not have been. In these works alone was the Reformed movement adequately presented.

6th. That through them he made of the Reformed peoples the bulwark of the Protestant world against Rome.

7th. That he gave the most effective stimuli to civil and religious liberty given by any one man since the Apostolic Age. Through the representative form of government which he re-established in the church, which was thenceforth a constant excitant of a like kind of civil government; and through his doctrine of the sovereignty of God and man's responsibility to Him,—the doctrine that we are subject to men who rule over us *only in the Lord*; that if they command anything against Him, we are not to pay the slightest regard to it, nor to be moved by all the dignity which they possess as magistrates,—teaching whence flowed the liberties of the Netherlands, of constitutional England, of America, and of other lands.

8th. That he gave the most exalted and unyielding ideal of the necessity for an educated ministry; and the most effective incitement to general education,—through his insistence on an educated ministry as essential, and the constant stimulus to general education given through that ministry and through the model school which he established in Geneva.*

*The quotations in this paper are from Williston Walker's "John Calvin," translations of Calvin's own works, or my own "John Calvin and the Genevan Reformation."