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I.

CALVIN AND SERVETUS.

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THE burning of Servetus and the *decretum horribile* are sufficient in the judgment of a large part of the Christian world to condemn Calvin and his theology, but cannot destroy the rocky foundation of his rare virtues and lasting merits. History knows only of one sinless being,—the Saviour of sinners. Human greatness and purity are spotted by marks of infirmity, which forbid idolatry. Large bodies cast large shadows, and great virtues are often coupled with great vices.

Calvin and Servetus,—what a contrast! The best abused men of the sixteenth century, and yet direct antipodes of each other in spirit, doctrine and aim: the reformer and the deformer; the champion of orthodoxy and the archheretic; the master architect of construction and the master architect of ruin, brought together in deadly conflict for rule or ruin. Both were men of brilliant genius and learning; both deadly foes of the Roman Antichrist; both enthusiasts for a restoration of primitive Christianity, but with opposite views of what Christianity is.

They were of the same age, equally precocious, equally bold and independent, and relied on purely intellectual and spiritual forces. The one, while a youth of twenty-seven, wrote one of the best systems of theology and vindications of the Christian faith; the other, when scarcely above the age of twenty, ventured on the attempt to uproot the fundamental doctrine of orthodox Christendom. Both died in the prime of manhood,—the one a natural, the other a violent death.

Calvin's works are in every theological library; the books of Servetus are among the greatest rarities. Calvin left behind him flourishing churches, and his influence is felt to this day in the whole Protestant world; Servetus passed away like a meteor, without a sect, without a pupil; yet he still eloquently denounces from his funeral pile the crime and folly of religious persecution, and has recently been idealized by an orthodox Protestant divine as a prophetic forerunner of modern christo-centric theology.

Calvin felt himself called by Divine Providence to purify the Church of all corruptions, and to bring her back to the Christianity of Christ, and regarded Servetus as a servant of Antichrist, who aimed at the destruction of Christianity. Servetus was equally confident of a divine call, and even identified himself with the archangel Michael in his apocalyptic fight against the dragon of Rome and "the Simon Magus of Geneva."

A mysterious force of attraction and repulsion brought these intellectual giants together in the drama of the Reformation. Servetus, as if inspired by a demoniac force, urged himself upon the attention of Calvin, regarding him as the pope of orthodox Protestantism, whom he was determined to convert or to dethrone. He challenged Calvin in Paris to a disputation on the Trinity when the latter had scarcely left the Roman Church, but failed to appear at the appointed place and hour. He bombarded him with letters from Vienne; and at last he heedlessly rushed into his power at Geneva; and into the flames which have immortalized his name.

The judgment of historians on these remarkable men has

undergone a great change. Calvin's course in the tragedy of Servetus was fully approved by the best men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is as fully condemned in the nineteenth century. Bishop Bossuet was able to affirm that all Christians were happily agreed in maintaining the rightfulness of the death penalty for obstinate heretics, as murderers of souls. A hundred years later the great historian Gibbon echoed the opposite public sentiment when he said: "I am more deeply scandalized at the single execution of Servetus than at the hecatombs which have blazed at auto-da-fés of Spain and Portugal."

It would be preposterous to compare Calvin with Torquemada. But it must be admitted that the burning of Servetus is a typical case of Protestant persecution, and makes Calvin responsible for a principle which may be made to justify an indefinite number of applications. Persecution deserves much severer condemnation in a Protestant than in a Roman Catholic, because it is inconsistent. Protestantism must stand or fall with freedom of conscience and freedom of worship.

From the standpoint of modern Christianity and civilization, the burning of Servetus admits of no justification. Even the most admiring biographers of Calvin lament and disapprove his conduct in this tragedy, which has spotted his fame and given to Servetus the glory of martyrdom.

But if we consider Calvin's course in the light of the sixteenth century, we must come to the conclusion that he acted his part from a strict sense of duty and in harmony with the public law and dominant sentiment of his age, which justified the death penalty for heresy and blasphemy, and abhorred toleration as involving indifference to truth. Even Servetus admitted the principle under which he suffered; for he said, that incorrigible obstinacy and malice deserved death before God and men.

Calvin's prominence for intolerance was his misfortune. It was an error of judgment, but not of the heart, and must be excused, though it cannot be justified, by the spirit of his age.

Calvin never changed his views or regretted his conduct towards Servetus. Nine years after his execution he justified it in self-defence against the reproaches of Baudouin (1562), saying: "Servetus suffered the penalty due to his heresies; but was it by my will? Certainly his arrogance destroyed him not less than his impiety. And what crime was it of mine if our Council, at my exhortation, indeed, but in conformity with the opinion of several churches, took vengeance on his execrable blasphemies? Let Baudouin abuse me as long as he will, provided that, by the judgment of Melanchthon, posterity owes me a debt of gratitude for having purged the Church of so pernicious a monster."

In one respect he was in advance of his times, by recommending to the Council of Geneva, though in vain, a mitigation of punishment and the substitution of the sword for the stake.

Let us give him credit for this comparative moderation in a semi-barbarous age when not only hosts of heretics, but even innocent women, as witches, were cruelly tortured and roasted to death. Let us remember also that it was not simply a case of fundamental heresy, but of horrid blasphemy, with which he had to deal. If he was mistaken, if he misunderstood the real opinions of Servetus, that was an error of judgment, and an error which all the Catholics and Protestants of that age shared. Nor should it be overlooked that Servetus was convicted of falsehood, that he overwhelmed Calvin with abuse, and that he made common cause with the Libertines, the bitter enemies of Calvin, who had a controlling influence in the Council of Geneva at that time, and hoped to overthrow him.

It is objected that there was no law in Geneva to justify the punishment of Servetus, since the canon law had been abolished by the Reformation in 1535; but the Mosaic law was not abolished, it was even more strictly enforced; and it is from the Mosaic law against blasphemy that Calvin drew his chief argument.

On the other hand, however, we must frankly admit that

there were some aggravating circumstances which make it difficult to reconcile Calvin's conduct with the principles of justice and humanity. Seven years before the death of Servetus he had expressed his determination not to spare his life if he should come to Geneva. He wrote to Farel (Feb. 13, 1546): "Servetus lately wrote to me, and coupled with his letter a long volume of his delirious fancies, with the Thrasonic boast, that I should see something astonishing and unheard of. He offers to come hither if it be agreeable to me. But I am unwilling to pledge my word for his safety; for if he does come, and my authority be of any avail, I shall never suffer him to depart alive." It is not inconsistent with this design if he aided, as it would seem, in bringing the book of Servetus to the notice of the Roman inquisition in Lyons. He procured his arrest on his arrival in Geneva. He showed personal bitterness towards him during the trial. Servetus was a stranger in Geneva, and had committed no offence in that city. Calvin should have permitted him quietly to depart, or simply caused his expulsion from the territory of Geneva, as in the case of Bolsec. This would have been sufficient punishment. If he had recommended expulsion instead of decapitation, he would have saved himself the reproaches of posterity, which will never forget and never forgive the burning of Servetus.

In the interest of impartial history we must condemn the intolerance of the victor as well as the error of the victim, and admire in both the loyalty to conscientious conviction. Heresy is an error; intolerance, a sin; persecution, a crime.

#### THE EARLY LIFE OF SERVETUS.

We shall now present a short history of the life, trial and death of Servetus. For our knowledge of the origin and youth of Servetus we have to depend on the statements which he made at his trials before the Roman Catholic court at Vienne in April, 1553, and before the Calvinistic court at Geneva in August of the same year. These depositions are meagre and inconsistent, either from defect of memory or want of honesty.

In Geneva he could not deceive the judges, as Calvin was well acquainted with his antecedents. I give, therefore, the preference to his later testimony.

Michael Serveto, better known in the Latinized form Servetus, also called Reves, was born at Villa-neuva or Villanova in Aragon (hence "Villanovanus"), in 1509, the year of the nativity of Calvin, his great antagonist. He informed the court of Geneva that he was of an ancient and noble Spanish race, and that his father was a lawyer and notary by profession.

The hypothesis that he was of Jewish or Moorish extraction is an unwarranted inference from his knowledge of Hebrew and the Koran.

He was slender and delicate in body, but precocious, inquisitive, imaginative, acute, independent and inclined to mysticism and fanaticism. He seems to have received his early education in a Dominican convent and in the University of Saragossa, with a view at first to the clerical vocation.

He was sent by his father to the celebrated law-school of Toulouse, where he studied jurisprudence for two or three years. The University of Toulouse was strictly orthodox, and kept a close watch against the Lutheran heresy. But it was there that he first saw a complete copy of the Bible, as Luther did after he entered the University of Erfurt.

The Bible now became his guide. He fully adopted the Protestant principle of the supremacy and sufficiency of the Bible, but subjected it to his speculative fancy, and carried opposition to Catholic tradition much farther than the Reformers did. He rejected the œcumenical orthodoxy, while they rejected only the mediæval scholastic orthodoxy. It is characteristic of his mystical turn of mind that he made the Apocalypse the basis of his speculations, while the sober and judicious Calvin never commented on this book, of which it has been said that it either finds one crazy or leaves one crazy.

Servetus declared, in his first work, that the Bible was the source of all his philosophy and science, to be read a thousand

times. He called it a gift of God descended from heaven. Next to the Bible he esteemed the ante-Nicene Fathers, because of their simpler and less definite teaching. He quotes them freely in his first book.

We do not know whether, and how far, he was influenced by the writings of the Reformers. He may have read some tracts of Luther, which were early translated into Spanish, but he does not quote from them.

We next find Servetus in the employ of Juan Quintana, a Franciscan friar and confessor to the Emperor Charles V. He seems to have attended his court at the coronation by Pope Clement VII. in Bologna (1529), and on the journey to the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, which forms an epoch in the history of the Lutheran Reformation. At Augsburg he may have seen Melancthon and other leading Lutherans; but he was too young and unknown to attract much attention.

In the autumn of 1530 he was dismissed from the service of Quintana; we do not know for what reason, probably on suspicion of heresy.

We have no account of a conversion or moral struggle in any period of his life, such as the Reformers passed through. He never was a Protestant, either Lutheran or Reformed, but a radical at war with all orthodoxy. A mere youth of twenty-one or two, he boldly or imprudently struck out an independent path as a Reformer of the Reformation. The Socinian society did not yet exist; and even there he would not have felt at home, nor would he have long been tolerated. Nominally, he remained in the Roman Church, and felt no scruple about conforming to its rites. As he stood alone, so he died alone, leaving an influence, but no school nor sect.

From Germany Servetus went to Switzerland, and spent some time at Basel. There he first ventilated his heresies on the Trinity and the divinity of Christ.

He importuned Œcolampadius with interviews and letters, hoping to convert him. But Œcolampadius was startled and horrified. He informed his friends, Bucer, Zwingli and Bul-

linger, who happened to be at Basel in October, 1530, that he had been troubled of late by a hot-headed Spaniard, who denied the divine trinity and the eternal divinity of our Saviour. Zwingli advised him to try to convince Servetus of his error, and by good and wholesome arguments to win him over to the truth. Œcolampadius said that he could make no impression upon the haughty, daring and contentious man. Zwingli replied: "This is indeed a thing insufferable in the Church of God. Therefore do everything possible to prevent the spread of such dreadful blasphemy." Zwingli never saw the objectionable book in print.

Servetus sought to satisfy Œcolampadius by a misleading confession of faith; but the latter was not deceived by the explanations, and exhorted him to "confess the Son of God to be co-equal and co-eternal with the Father;" otherwise he could not acknowledge him as a Christian.

#### THE BOOK AGAINST THE HOLY TRINITY.

Servetus was too vain and obstinate to take advice. In the beginning of 1531 he secured a publisher for his book on the "Errors of the Trinity," Conrad Kœnig, who had two shops at Basel and Strassburg; sent the manuscript to Secerius, a printer at Hagenau in Alsace. Servetus went to that place to read the proof. He also visited Bucer and Capito at Strassburg, who received him with courtesy and kindness, and tried to convert him, but in vain.

In July, 1531, the book appeared under the name of the author, and was furnished to the trade at Strassburg, Frankfurt and Basel, but nobody knew where and by whom it was published. Suspicion fell upon Basel.

This book is a very original and, for so young a man, very remarkable treatise on the Trinity and Incarnation in opposition to the traditional and œcumenical faith. The style is crude and obscure, and not to be compared with Calvin's, who at the same age and in his earliest writings, showed himself a master of lucid, methodical and convincing statement in ele-



gant and forcible Latin. Servetus was familiar with the Bible, the ante-Nicene Fathers (Tertullian and Irenæus), and scholastic theology, and teemed with new, but ill-digested ideas, which he threw out like a firebrand. He afterwards embodied his first work in his last, but in revised shape.

It is not surprising that this book gave great offence to Catholics and Protestants alike, and appeared to them blasphemous. Servetus calls the Trinitarians tritheists and atheists, and their God a deception of the devil and a three-headed monster.

Cochlæus directed the attention of Quintana, at the Diet of Regensburg, in 1532, to the book of Servetus which was sold there, and Quintana at once took measures to suppress it. The Emperor prohibited it, and the book soon disappeared.

#### SERVETUS IN FRANCE.

As Servetus was repulsed by the Reformers of Switzerland and Germany, he left for France, and assumed the name of Michel de Villeneuve. His real name and his obnoxious books disappeared from the sight of the world till they emerged twenty years later at Vienne and at Geneva. He devoted himself to the study of mathematics, geography, astrology and medicine.

In 1534 he was in Paris, and challenged the young Calvin to a disputation, but failed to appear at the appointed hour.

He spent some time at Lyons as proof-reader and publisher of the famous printers, Melchior and Caspar Trechsel. He issued through them, in 1535, under the name of "Villanovanus," a magnificent edition of Ptolemy's Geography, with a self-laudatory preface, which concludes with the hope that "no one will underestimate the labor, though pleasant in itself, that is implied in the collation of our text with that of earlier editions, unless it be some Zoilus of contracted brow, who cannot look without envy upon the zealous labors of others." A second and improved edition appeared in 1541.

From Lyons he returned to Paris in 1536, and acquired

fame as a physician and lecturer in the university. He discovered the circulation of the blood.

In 1540 he settled at Vienne, in the south of France, as physician, under the patronage of Archbishop Palmier, his former pupil and admirer. He was not suspected of heresy, but lived on good terms with the Catholic authorities, and regularly attended mass.

“THE RESTITUTION OF CHRISTIANITY.”

During his sojourn at Vienna, Servetus prepared his chief theological work under the title, “The Restitution of Christianity.” He must have finished the greater part of it in manuscript as early as 1546, seven years before its publication in print; for in that year he sent a copy to Calvin, which he tried to get back to make some corrections, but Calvin had sent it to Viret at Lausanne, where it was detained. It was afterwards used at the trial and ordered by the Council of Geneva to be burnt at the stake, together with the printed volume.

The proud title indicates the pretentious and radical character of the book. It was chosen, probably, with reference to Calvin’s “Institution of the Christian Religion.” In opposition to the great Reformer he claimed to be a Restorer. The Hebrew motto on the title-page was taken from Dan. 12: 1: “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince;” the Greek motto from Rev. 12: 7: “And there was war in heaven,” which is followed by the words, “Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.”

The identity of the Christian name of the author with the name of the archangel is significant. Servetus fancied that the great battle with Antichrist was near at hand or had already begun, and that he was one of Michael’s warriors, if not Michael himself.

His "Restitution of Christianity" was a manifesto of war. The woman in the twelfth chapter of Revelation he understood to be the true Church; her child, whom God saves, is the Christian faith; the great red dragon with seven heads and horns is the pope of Rome, the Antichrist predicted by Daniel, Paul and John. At the time of Constantine and the Council of Nicæa, which divided the one God into three parts, the Dragon began to drive the true Church into the wilderness, and retained his power for twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years; but now his reign is approaching to a close.

He was fully conscious of a divine mission to overthrow the tyranny of the papal and Protestant Antichrist, and to restore Christianity to its primitive purity. "The task we have undertaken," he says in the preface, "is sublime in majesty, easy in perspicuity, and certain in demonstration; for it is no less than to make God known in His substantial manifestation by the Word and His divine communication by the Spirit, both comprised in Christ alone, through whom alone do we plainly discern how the deity of the Word and the Spirit may be apprehended in man. . . . We shall now see God, unseen before, with His face revealed, and behold Him shining in ourselves, if we open the door and enter in. It is high time to open this door and this way of the light, without which no one can read the sacred Scriptures, or know God, or become a Christian."

He forwarded the manuscript to a publisher in Basel, Marinus, who declined it in a letter, dated April 9, 1552, because it could not be safely published in that city at that time. He then made an arrangement with Balthasar Arnoullet, bookseller and publisher at Vienne, and Guillaume Guérault, his brother-in-law and manager of his printing establishment, who had run away from Geneva for bad conduct. He assured them that there were no errors in the book, and that, on the contrary, it was directed against the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, Melancthon and other heretics. He agreed to withhold his and their names and the name of the place of publication from the title-page. He assumed the whole of the expense of publication, and

paid them in advance the sum of one hundred gold dollars. No one in France knew at that time that his real name was Servetus, and that he was the author of the work, "On the Errors of the Trinity."

The "Restitution" was secretly printed in a small house away from the known establishment, within three or four months, and finished on the third of January, 1553. He corrected the proofs himself, but there are several typographical errors in it. The whole impression of one thousand copies were made up into bales of one hundred copies each; five bales were sent as white paper to Pierre Martin, type-founder of Lyons, to be forwarded by sea to Genoa and Venice; another lot to Jacob Bestet, bookseller at Chatillon; and a third to Frankfort. Calvin obtained one or more copies, probably from his friend Frelon of Lyons.

The first part of the "Restitution" is a revised and enlarged edition of the seven books "On the Errors of the Trinity." The seven books are condensed into five; and these are followed by two dialogues on the Trinity between Michael and Peter, which take the place of the sixth and seventh books of the older work. The other part of the "Restitution," which covers nearly two-thirds of the volume (pp. 287-734), is new, and embraces three books on Faith and the Righteousness of the Kingdom of Christ (287-354), four books on Regeneration and the Reign of Antichrist (355-576), thirty letters to Calvin (577-664), Sixty Signs of Antichrist (-664-670), and the Apology to Melancthon on the Mystery of the Trinity and on Ancient Discipline (671-734).

#### THE TRIAL AND CONDEMNATION OF SERVETUS AT VIENNE.

Shortly after the publication of the "Restitution" the fact was made known to the Roman Catholic authorities at Lyons through Guillaume Trie, a native of Lyons and a convert from Romanism, residing at that time in Geneva. He corresponded with a cousin at Lyons, by the name of Arneys, a zealous Romanist, who tried to reconvert him to his religion, and reproached the Church of Geneva with the want of discipline.

On the 26th of February, 1553, he wrote to Arneys that in Geneva vice and blasphemy were punished, while in France a dangerous heretic was tolerated, who deserved to be burned by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, who blasphemed the holy Trinity, called Jesus Christ an idol, and the baptism of infants a diabolic invention. He gave his name as Michael Servetus, who called himself at present Villeneuve, a practicing physician at Vienne. In confirmation he sent the first leaf of the "Restitution," and named the printer Balthasar Arnoullet at Vienne.

This letter, and two others of Trie which followed, look very much as if they had been directed or inspired by Calvin. Servetus held him responsible. But Calvin denied the imputation as a calumny. At the same time he speaks rather lightly of it, and thinks that it would not have been dishonorable to denounce so dangerous a heretic to the proper authorities. He also frankly acknowledges that he caused his arrest at Geneva. He could see no material difference in principle between doing the same indirectly at Vienne and directly at Geneva. He simply denies that he was the originator of the papal trial and of the letter of Trie; but he does not deny that he furnished material for evidence, which was quite well known and publicly made use of in the trial where Servetus's letters to Calvin are mentioned as *pieces justificatives*. There can be no doubt that Trie, who describes himself as a comparatively unlettered man, got his information about Servetus and his book from Calvin, or his colleagues, either directly from conversation, or from pulpit denunciation. We must acquit Calvin of *direct* agency, but we cannot free him of *indirect* agency in this denunciation.

Calvin's indirect agency in the first, and his direct agency in the second arrest of Servetus admit of no proper justification, and are due to an excess of zeal for orthodoxy.

Arneys conveyed this information to the Roman Catholic authorities. The matter was brought to the knowledge of Cardinal Thurnon, at that time archbishop of Lyons, a cruel persecutor of the Protestants, and Matthias Ory, a regularly trained

inquisitor of the Roman see for the kingdom of France. They at once instituted judicial proceedings.

Villeneuve was summoned before the civil court of Vienne on the 16th of March. He kept the judges waiting two hours (during which he probably destroyed all suspicious papers), and appeared without any show of embarrassment. He affirmed that he had lived long at Vienne, in frequent company with ecclesiastics, without incurring any suspicion for heresy, and had always avoided all cause of offence. His apartments were searched, but nothing was found to incriminate him. On the following day the printing establishment of Arnoullet was searched with no better result. On the return of Arnoullet from a journey he was summoned before the tribunal, but he professed ignorance.

Inquisitor Ory now requested Arneys to secure additional proof from his cousin at Geneva. Trie forwarded on the 26th of March several autograph letters of Servetus which, he said, he had great difficulty in obtaining from Calvin (who ought to have absolutely refused). He added some pages from Calvin's *Institutes* with the marginal objections of Servetus to infant baptism in his handwriting. Ory, not yet satisfied, despatched a special messenger to Geneva to secure the manuscript of the *Restitutio*, and proof that Villeneuve was Servetus and Arnoullet his printer. Trie answered at once, on the last of March, that the manuscript of the *Restitutio* had been at Lausanne for a couple of years (with Viret), that Servetus had been banished from the churches of Germany (Basel and Strassburg) twenty-four years ago, and that Arnoullet and Guérout were his printers, as he knew from a good source which he would not mention (perhaps Frelon of Lyons).

The cardinal of Lyons and the archbishop of Vienne, after consultation with Inquisitor Ory and other ecclesiastics, now gave orders on the 4th of April for the arrest of Villeneuve and Arnoullet. They were confined in separate rooms in the Palais Delphinal. Villeneuve was allowed to keep a servant, and to see his friends. Ory was sent forth, hastened to Vienne, and arrived there the next morning.

After dinner Servetus, having been sworn on the Holy Gospels, was interrogated as to his name, age, and course of life. In his answers he told some palpable falsehoods to mislead the judges, and to prevent his being identified with Servetus, the heretic. He omitted to mention his residence in Toulouse, where he had been known under his real name, as the books of the University would show. He denied that he had written any other books than those on medicine and geography, although he had corrected many. On being shown some notes he had written on Calvin's *Institutes* about infant baptism, he acknowledged at last the authorship of the notes, but added that he must have written them inconsiderately for the purpose of discussion, and he submitted himself entirely to his holy Mother, the Church, from whose teachings he had never wished to differ.

At the second examination, on the sixth day of April, he was shown some of his epistles to Calvin. He declared, with tears in his eyes, that those letters were written when he was in Germany some twenty-five years ago, when there was printed in that country a book by a certain Servetus, a Spaniard, but from what part of Spain he did not know. At Paris he had heard Mons. Calvin spoken of as a learned man, and had entered into correspondence with him from curiosity, but begged him to keep his letters as confidential and as brotherly corrections. Calvin suspected, he continued, that I was Servetus, to which I replied, I was not Servetus, but would continue to personate Servetus in order to continue the discussion. Finally we fell out, got angry, abused each other, and broke off the correspondence about ten years ago. He protested before God and his judges that he had no intention to dogmatize or to teach anything against the Church or the Christian religion. He told similar lies when other letters were laid before him.

Servetus now resolved to escape, perhaps with the aid of some friends, after he had secured through his servant a debt of three hundred crowns from the Grand Prior of the monastery of St. Pierre. On the 7th of April, at four o'clock in the morning, he dressed himself, threw a night-gown over his clothes, and put

a velvet cap upon his head, and, pretending a call of nature, he secured from the unsuspecting jailer the key to the garden. He leaped from the roof of the outhouse and made his escape through the court and over the bridge across the Rhone. He carried with him his golden chain around his neck, valued at twenty crowns, six gold rings on his fingers, and plenty of money in his pockets.

Two hours elapsed before his escape became known. An alarm was given, the gates were closed, and the neighboring houses searched; but all in vain.

Nevertheless the prosecution went on. Sufficient evidence was found that the "Restitution" had been printed in Vienne; extracts were made from it to prove the heresies contained therein. The civil court, without waiting for the judgment of the spiritual tribunal (which was not given until six months afterwards), sentenced Sérvetus on the 17th of June, for heretical doctrines, for violation of the royal ordinances, and for escape from the royal prison, to pay a fine of one thousand *livres tournois* to the Dauphin, to be carried in a cart, together with his books, on a market-day through the principal streets to the place of execution, and to be burnt alive by a slow fire.

On the same day he was burnt in effigy, together with the five bales of his book, which had been consigned to Merrin at Lyons and brought back to Vienne.

The goods and chattels of the fugitive were seized and confiscated. The property he had acquired from his medical practice and literary labors amounted to four thousand crowns. The king bestowed them on the son of Monsieur d' Montgiron, lieutenant-general of Dauphiné and presiding judge of the court.

Arnoullet was discharged on proving that he had been deceived by Guérault, who seems to have escaped by flight. He took care that the remaining copies of the heretical book in France should be destroyed. Stephens, the famous publisher, who had come to Geneva in 1552, sacrificed the copies in his hands. Those that had been sent to Frankford were burnt at the instance of Calvin.



On the 23d of December, two months after the execution of Servetus, the ecclesiastical tribunal of Vienne pronounced a sentence of condemnation on him.

SERVETUS FLEES TO GENEVA AND IS ARRESTED.

Escaped from one danger of death, Servetus, as by "a fatal madness," as Calvin says, rushed into another. Did he aspire to the glory of martyrdom in Geneva, as he seemed to intimate in his letter to Poupin? But he had just escaped martyrdom in France. Or did he wish to have a personal interview with Calvin, which he had sought in Paris in 1534, and again in Vienne in 1546? But after publishing his abusive letters and suspecting him for denunciation, he could hardly entertain such a wish. Or did he merely intend to pass through the place on his way to Italy? But in this case he need not tarry there for weeks, and he might have taken another route through Savoy, or by the sea. Or did he hope to dethrone "the pope of Geneva" with the aid of his enemies, who had just then the political control of the Republic?

He lingered in France for about three months. He intended, first, as he declared at the trial, to proceed to Spain, but finding the journey unsafe, he turned his eye to Naples, where he hoped to make a living as physician among the numerous Spanish residents. This he could easily have done under a new name.

He took his way through Geneva. He arrived there after the middle of July, 1553, alone and on foot, having left his horse on the French border. He took up his lodging in the Auberge de la Rose, a small inn on the banks of the lake. His dress and manner, his gold chain and gold rings, excited attention. On being asked by his host whether he was married, he answered, like a light-hearted cavalier, that women enough could be found without marrying? This frivolous reply provoked suspicion of immorality, and was made use of at the trial, but unjustly, for a fracture disabled him for marriage and prevented libertinage.

He remained about a month, and then intended to leave for Zürich. He asked his host to hire a boat to convey him over the lake some distance eastward.

But before his departure he attended church, on Sunday, the 13th of August. He was recognized and arrested by an officer of the police in the name of the Council.

Calvin was responsible for his arrest, as he frankly and repeatedly acknowledged. It was a fatal mistake. Servetus was a stranger and had committed no offence in Geneva. Calvin ought to have allowed him quietly to proceed on his intended journey. Why then did he act otherwise? Certainly not from personal malice, nor other selfish reasons; for he only increased the difficulty of his critical situation, and run the risk of his defeat by the Libertine party then in power. It was an error of judgment. He was under the false impression that Servetus had just come from Venice, the headquarters of Italian humanists and skeptics, to propagate his errors in Geneva, and he considered it his duty to make so dangerous a man harmless, by bringing him either to conviction and recantation, or to deserved punishment. He was determined to stand or fall with the principle of purity of doctrine and discipline. Rilliet justifies the arrest as a necessary measure of self-defence. "Under pain of abdication," he says, "Calvin must do everything rather than suffer by his side in Geneva a man whom he considered the greatest enemy of the Reformation; and the critical position in which he saw it in the bosom of the Republic, was one motive more to remove, if it was possible, the new element of dissolution which the free sojourn of Servetus would have created. . . . To tolerate Servetus with impunity at Geneva would have been for Calvin to exile himself. . . . He had no alternative. The man whom a Calvinist accusation had caused to be arrested, tried, and condemned to the flames in France, could not find an asylum in the city from which that accusation had issued."

## STATE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AT GENEVA IN 1553.

Calvin's position in Geneva at that time was very critical. For in the year 1553 he was in the fever-heat of the struggle for church discipline with the Patriots and Libertines, who had gained a temporary ascendancy in the government. Amy Perrin, the leader of the patriotic party, was then captain-general and chief syndic, and several of his kinsmen and friends were members of the Little Council of Twenty-five. During the trial of Servetus the Council sustained Philibert Berthelier, against the act of excommunication by the Consistory, and took church discipline into its own hands. The foreign refugees were made harmless by being deprived of their arms. Violence was threatened to the Reformer. He was everywhere saluted as "a heretic," and insulted on the streets. Beza says: "In the year 1553, the wickedness of the seditious, hastening to a close, was so turbulent that both Church and State were brought into extreme danger. . . . Everything seemed to be in a state of preparation for accomplishing the plans of the seditious, since all was subject to their power." And Calvin, at the close of that year, wrote to a friend: "For four years the factions have done all to lead by degrees to the overthrow of this Church, already very weak. . . . Behold two years of our life have passed as if we lived among the avowed enemies of the gospel."

The hostility of the Council to Calvin and his discipline continued even after the execution of Servetus for nearly two more years. He asked the assistance of Bullinger and the Church of Zürich to come to his aid again in this struggle. He wrote to Ambrose Blaurer, February 6, 1554: "These last few years evil disposed persons have not ceased on every occasion to create for us new subjects of vexation. At length in their endeavors to render null our excommunication, there is no excess of folly they have left unattempted. Everywhere the contest was long maintained with much violence, because in the senate and among the people the passions of the contending

parties had been so much inflamed that there was some risk of a tumult."

We do not know whether Servetus was aware of this state of things. But he could not have come at a time more favorable to him and more unfavorable to Calvin. Among the Libertines and Patriots, who hated the yoke of Calvin even more than the yoke of the pope, Servetus found natural supporters who, in turn, would gladly use him for political purposes. This fact emboldened him to take such a defiant attitude in the trial and to overwhelm Calvin with abuse.

The final responsibility of the condemnation, therefore, rests with the Council of Geneva, which would probably have acted otherwise, if it had not been strongly influenced by the judgment of the Swiss Churches and the government of Bern. Calvin conducted the theological part of the examination of the trial, but had no direct influence upon the result. His theory was that the Church must convict and denounce the heretic theologically, but that his condemnation and punishment is the exclusive function of the State, and that it is one of its most sacred duties to punish attacks made on the Divine majesty.

"From the time Servetus was convicted of his heresy," says Calvin, "I have not uttered a word about his punishment, as all honest men will bear witness; and I challenge even the malignant to deny it if they can." One thing only he did: he expressed the wish for a mitigation of his punishment. And this humane sentiment is almost the only good thing that can be recorded to his honor in this painful trial.

#### THE FIRST ACT OF THE TRIAL AT GENEVA.

Servetus was confined near the Church of St. Pierre, in the ancient residence of the bishops of Geneva, which had been turned into a prison. His personal property consisted of ninety-seven crowns, a chain of gold weighing about twenty crowns, and six gold rings (a large turquoise, a white sapphire, a diamond, a ruby, a large emerald of Peru, and a signet ring of

coralline). These valuables were surrendered to Pierre Tissot, and after the process given to the hospital. The prisoner was allowed to have paper and ink, and such books as could be procured at Geneva or Lyons at his own expense. Calvin lent him Ignatius, Polycarp, Tertullian, and Irenæus. But he was denied the benefit of counsel, according to the ordinances of 1543. This is contrary to the law of equity and is one of the worst features of the trial.

The laws of Geneva demanded that the accuser should become a prisoner with the accused, in order that in the event of the charge proving false, the former might undergo punishment in the place of the accused. The person employed for this purpose was Nicolas de la Fontaine, a Frenchman, a theological student, and Calvin's private secretary. The accused as well as the accuser were foreigners. Another law obliged the Little Council to examine every prisoner within twenty-four hours after his arrest. The advocate or "Speaker" of Nicolas de la Fontaine in the trial was Germain Colladon, likewise a Frenchman and an able lawyer, who had fled for his religion, and aided Calvin in framing a new constitution for Geneva.

The trial began on the 15th of August and continued, with interruptions for more than two months. It was conducted in French and took place in the Bishop's Palace, according to the forms prescribed by law, in the presence of the Little Council, the herald of the city, the Lord-Lieutenant, and several citizens, who had a right to sit in criminal processes, but did not take part in the judgment. Among these was Berthelier, the bitter enemy of Calvin.

Servetus answered the preliminary questions as to his name, age, and previous history more truthfully than he had done before the Catholic tribunal, and incidentally accused Calvin of having caused the prosecution at Vienne. It is not owing to Calvin, he said, that he was not burnt alive there.

The deed of accusation, as lodged by Nicolas de la Fontaine, consisted of thirty-eight articles which were drawn up by Calvin (as he himself informs us), and were fortified by references to

the books of Servetus, which were produced in evidence, especially the "Restitution of Christianity," both the manuscript copy, which Servetus had sent to Calvin in advance, and a printed copy.

The principal charges were, that he had published heretical opinions and blasphemies concerning the Trinity, the person of Christ, and infant baptism. He gave evasive or orthodox-sounding answers. He confessed to believe in the trinity of persons, but understood the word "person" in a different sense from that used by modern writers, and appealed to the first teachers of the Church and the disciples of the apostles. He denied at first that he had called the Trinity three devils and Cerberus; but he had done so repeatedly and confessed it afterwards. He professed to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God according to His divinity and humanity; that the flesh of Christ came from heaven and of the substance of God; but as to the matter it came from the Virgin Mary. He denied the view imputed to him that the soul was mortal. He admitted that he had called infant baptism "a diabolical invention and infernal falsehood destructive of Christianity." This was a dangerous admission; for the Anabaptists were suspected of seditious and revolutionary opinions.

He was also charged with having, "in the person of M. Calvin, defamed the doctrines of the gospel and of the Church of Geneva." To this he replied that in what he had formerly written against Calvin, in his own defence, he had not intended to injure him, but to show him his errors and faults, which he was ready to prove by Scripture and good reasons before a full congregation.

This was a bold challenge. Calvin was willing to accept it, but the Council declined, fearing to lose the control of the affair by submitting it to the tribunal of public opinion. The friends of Servetus would have run the risk of seeing him defeated in public debate. That charge, however, which seemed to betray personal ill-feeling of Calvin, was afterwards very properly omitted.

On the following day, the 16th of August, Berthelier, then smarting under the sentence of excommunication by the Consistory, openly came to the defence of Servetus, and had a stormy encounter with Colladon, which is omitted in the official record, but indicated by blanks and the abrupt termination: "Here they proceeded no further, but adjourned till to-morrow at mid-day."

On Thursday, the 17th of August, Calvin himself appeared before the Council as the real accuser, and again on the 21st of August. He also conferred with his antagonist in writing. Servetus was not a match for Calvin either in learning or argument; but he showed great skill and some force.

He contemptuously repelled the frivolous charge that, in his Ptolemy, he had contradicted the authority of Moses, by describing Palestine as an unfruitful country (which it was then, and is now). He wiped his mouth and said, "Let us go on; there is nothing wrong there."

The charge of having, in his notes on the Latin Bible, explained the servant of God in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, as meaning King Cyrus, instead of the Saviour, he disposed of by distinguishing two senses of prophecy—the literal and historical sense which referred to Cyrus, and the mystical and principal sense which referred to Christ. He quoted Nicolaus de Lyra; but Calvin showed him the error, and asserts that he audaciously quoted books which he had never examined.

As to his calling the Trinity "a Cerberus" and "a dream of Augustin," and the Trinitarians "atheists," he said that he did not mean the true Trinity, which he believed himself, but the false trinity of his opponents; and that the oldest teachers before the Council of Nicæa did not teach that trinity, and did not use the word. Among them he quoted Ignatius, Polycarp, Clement of Rome, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria. Calvin refuted his assertion by quotations from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen. On this occasion he charges him, unjustly, with total ignorance of Greek, because he was

embarrassed by a Greek quotation from Justin Martyr, and called for a Latin version.

In discussing the relation of the divine substance to that of the creatures, Servetus declared that "all creatures are of the substance of God, and that God is in all things." Calvin asked him "How, unhappy man, if any one strike the pavement with his foot and say that he tramples on thy God, wouldst thou not be horrified at having the Majesty of heaven subjected to such indignity?" To this Servetus replied: "I have no doubt that this bench, and this buffet, and all you can show me, are of the substance of God." When it was objected that in his view God must be substantially even in the devil, he burst out into a laugh, and rejoined: "Can you doubt this? I hold this for a general maxim, that all things are part and parcel of God, and that the nature of things is his substantial Spirit."

The result of this first act of the trial was unfavorable to the prisoner, but not decisive.

Calvin used the freedom of the pulpit to counteract the efforts of the Libertine party in favor of Servetus.

#### THE SECOND ACT OF THE TRIAL AT GENEVA.

The original prosecution being discharged, the case was handed over to the attorney-general, Claude Rigot, in compliance with the criminal ordinance of 1543. Thus the second act of the trial began. The prisoner was examined again, and a new indictment of thirty articles was prepared, which bore less on the actual heresies of the accused than on their dangerous practical tendency and his persistency in spreading them.

The Council wrote also to the judges of Vienne to procure particulars of the charges which had been brought against him there.

Servetus defended himself before the Council on the 23d of August, with ingenuity and apparent frankness against the new charges of quarrelsomeness and immorality. As to the latter, he pleaded his physical infirmity which protected him against the temptation of licentiousness. He had always studied the



Scripture and tried to lead a Christian life. He did not think that his book would disturb the peace of Christendom, but would promote the truth. He denied that he had come to Geneva for any sinister purpose; he merely wished to pass through on his way to Zürich and Naples.

At the same time he prepared a written petition to the Council, which was received on the 24th of August. He demanded his release from the criminal charge for several reasons, which ought to have had considerable weight: that it was unknown in the Christian Church before the time of Constantine to try cases of heresy before a civil tribunal; that he had not offended against the laws either in Geneva or elsewhere; that he was not seditious nor turbulent; that his books treated of abstruse questions, and were addressed to the learned; that he had not spoken of these subjects to anybody but *Æcolampadius*, *Bucer*, and *Capito*; that he had ever refuted the Anabaptists, who rebelled against the magistrates and wished to have all things in common. In case he was not released, he demanded the aid of an advocate acquainted with the laws and customs of the country. Certainly a very reasonable request.

The attorney-general prepared a second indictment in refutation of the arguments of *Servetus*, who had studied law at *Toulouse*. He showed that the first Christian emperors claimed for themselves the cognizance and trial of heresies, and that their laws and constitutions condemned antitrinitarian heretics and blasphemers to death. He charged him with falsehood in declaring that he had written against the Anabaptists, and that he had not communicated his doctrine to any person during the last thirty years. The counsel asked for was refused because it was forbidden by the criminal statutes (1543), and because there was "not one jot of apparent innocence which requires an attorney." The very thing to be proved!

A new examination followed which elicited some points of interest. *Servetus* stated his belief that the Reformation would progress much further than *Luther* and *Calvin* intended, and that new things were always first rejected, but afterwards received.

To the absurd charge of making use of the Koran, he replied that he had quoted it for the glory of Christ, that the Koran abounds in what is good, and that even in a wicked book one might find some good things.

On the last day of August the Little Council received answer from Vienne. The commandant of the royal palace in that city arrived in Geneva, communicated to them a copy of the sentence of death pronounced against Villeneuve, and begged them to send him back to France that the sentence might be executed on the living man as it had been already executed on his effigy and books. The Council refused to surrender Servetus, in accordance with analogous cases, but promised to do full justice. The prisoner himself, who could see only a burning funeral pile for him in Vienne, preferred to be tried in Geneva, where he had some chance of acquittal or lighter punishment. He incidentally justified his habit of attending mass at Vienne by the example of Paul, who went to the temple, like the Jews; yet he confessed that in doing so he had sinned through fear of death.

The communication from Vienne had probably the influence of stimulating the zeal of the Council for orthodoxy. They wished not to be behind the Roman Church in that respect. But the issue was still uncertain.

The Council again confronted Servetus with Calvin on the first day of September. On the same day it granted, in spite of the strong protest of Calvin, permission to Philibert Berthelier to approach the communion table. It thus annulled the act of excommunication by the Consistory, and arrogated to itself the power of ecclesiastical discipline.

A few hours afterwards the investigation was resumed in the prison. Perrin and Berthelier were present as judges, and came to the aid of Servetus in the oral debate with Calvin, but, it seems, without success; for they resorted to a written discussion in which Servetus could better defend himself, and in which Calvin might complicate his already critical position. They wished, moreover, to refer the affair to the churches of Switzerland, which, in the case of Bolsec, had shown themselves much

more tolerant than Calvin. Servetus demanded such reference. Calvin did not like it, but did not openly oppose it.

The Council, without entering on the discussion, decided that Calvin should extract in Latin, from the books of Servetus, the objectionable articles, word for word, contained therein; that Servetus should write his answers and vindications, also in Latin; that Calvin should in his turn furnish his replies; and that these documents be forwarded to the Swiss Churches as a basis of judgment. All this was fair and impartial.

On the same day Calvin extracted thirty-eight propositions from the books of Servetus with references, but without comments.

Then, turning with astonishing energy from one enemy to the other, he appeared before the Little Council on the 2d of September to protest most earnestly against their protection of Berthelier, who intended to present himself on the following day as a guest at the Lord's table, and by the strength of the civil power to force Calvin to give him the tokens of the body and blood of Christ. He declared before the Council that he would rather die than act against his conscience. The Council did not yield, but resolved secretly to advise Berthelier to abstain from receiving the sacrament for the present. Calvin, ignorant of this secret advice, and resolved to conquer or to die, thundered from the pulpit of St. Peter on the 3d of September his determination to refuse, at the risk of his life, the sacred elements to an excommunicated person. Berthelier did not dare to approach the table. Calvin had achieved a moral victory over the Council.

In the mean time Servetus had, within the space of twenty-four hours, prepared a written defence, as directed by the Council, against the thirty-eight articles of Calvin. It was both apologetic and boldly aggressive, clear, keen, violent and bitter. He contemptuously repelled Calvin's interference in the trial, and charged him with presumption in framing articles of faith after the fashion of the doctors of the Sorbonne, without Scripture proof. He affirmed that he either misunderstood him or

craftily perverted his meaning. He quotes from Tertullian, Irenæus, and pseudo-Clement in support of his views. He calls him a disciple of Simon Magus, a criminal accuser, and a homicide. He ridiculed the idea that such a man should call himself an orthodox minister of the Church.

Calvin replied within two days in a document of twenty-three folio pages, which were signed by all the fourteen ministers of Geneva. He meets the patristic quotations of Servetus with counter-quotations, with Scripture passages and solid arguments, and charged him in conclusion with the intention "to subvert all religion."

These three documents, which contained the essence of the doctrinal discussion, were presented to the Little Council on Tuesday, the 5th of September.

On the 15th of September Servetus addressed a petition to the Council in which he attacked Calvin as his persecutor, complained of his miserable condition in prison and want of the necessary clothing, and demanded an advocate and the transfer of his trial to the Large Council of Two Hundred, where he had reason to expect a majority in his favor. This course had probably been suggested to him (as Rilliet conjectures) by Perrin and Berthelier through the jailer, Claude de Genève, who was a member of the Libertine party.

On the same day the Little Council ordered an improvement of the prisoner's wardrobe (which, however, was delayed by culpable neglect), and sent him the three documents, with permission to make a last reply to Calvin, but took no action on his appeal to the Large Council, having no disposition to renounce its own authority.

Servetus at once prepared a reply by the way of explanatory annotations, on the margin and between the lines of the memorial of Calvin and the ministers. These annotations are full of the coarsest abuse, and read like the productions of a madman. He calls Calvin again and again a liar, an impostor, a miserable wretch (*nebulo pessimus*), a hypocrite, a disciple of Simon Magus, etc. Take these specimens: "Do you deny that you are a man-

slayer? I will prove it by your acts. You dare not deny that you are Simon Magus. As for me, I am firm in so good a cause, and do not fear death. . . . You deal with sophistical arguments without Scripture. . . . You do not understand what you say. You howl like a blind man in the desert. . . . You lie, you lie, you lie, you ignorant calumniator. . . . Madness is in you when you persecute to death. . . . I wish that all your magic were still in the belly of your mother. . . . I wish I were free to make a catalogue of your errors. Whoever is not a Simon Magus is considered a Pelagian by Calvin. All, therefore, who have been in Christendom are damned by Calvin; even the apostles, their disciples, the ancient doctors of the Church and all the rest. For no one ever entirely abolished free-will except that Simon Magus. Thou liest, thou liest, thou liest, thou liest, thou miserable wretch."

He concludes with the remark that "his doctrine was met merely by clamors, not by argument or any authority," and he subscribed his name as one who had Christ for his certain protector.

He sent these notes to the Council on the 18th of September. It was shown to Calvin, but he did not deem it expedient to make a reply. Silence in this case was better than speech.

The debate, therefore, between the two divines was closed, and the trial became an affair of Protestant Switzerland, which should act as a jury.

CONSULTATION OF THE SWISS CHURCHES. THE DEFIANT  
ATTITUDE OF SERVETUS.

On the 19th of September the Little Council, in accordance with a resolution adopted on the 4th, referred the case of Servetus to the magistrates and pastors of the Reformed Churches of Bern, Zürich, Schaffhausen, and Basel for their judgment.

Two days afterwards Jaquemoz Jernoz, as the official messenger, was despatched on his mission with a circular letter and the documents,—namely the theological debate between Calvin and Servetus,—a copy of the "Restitution of Christianity,"

and the works of Tertullian and Irenæus, who were the chief patristic authorities quoted by both parties.

On the result of this mission the case of Servetus was made to depend. Servetus himself had expressed a wish that this course should be adopted, hoping, it seems, to gain a victory, or at least an escape from capital punishment. On the 22d of August he was willing to be banished from Geneva; but on the 22d of September he asked the Council to put Calvin on trial, and handed in a list of articles on which he should be interrogated. He thus admitted the civil jurisdiction in matters of religious opinions which he had formerly denied, and was willing to stake his life on the decision, provided that his antagonist should be exposed to the same fate. Among the four "great and infallible" reasons why Calvin should be condemned, he assigned the fact that he wished to "repress the truth of Jesus Christ, and follow the doctrines of Simon Magus, against all the doctors that ever were in the Church." He declared in his petition that Calvin, like a magician, ought to be exterminated, and his goods be confiscated and given to him in compensation for the loss he (Servetus) had sustained through his accuser. "To dislodge Calvin from his position," says Rilliet, "to expel him from Geneva, to satisfy a just vengeance—these were the objects toward which Servetus rushed."

But the Council took no notice of his petition.

On the 10th of October he sent another letter to the Council, imploring them, for the love of Christ, to grant him such justice as they would not refuse to a Turk, and complaining that nothing had been done for his comfort as promised, but that he was more wretched than ever. The petition had some effect. The Lord Syndic, Darlod, and the Secretary of State, Claude Roset, were directed to visit his prison and to provide some articles of dress for his relief.

On the 18th of October the messenger of the State returned with the answers from the four foreign churches. They were forthwith translated into French, and examined by the magistrates. The Swiss Reformers and churches were unanimous

in condemning the theological doctrines of Servetus, and in the testimony of respect and affection for Calvin and his colleagues. Even Bern, which was not on good terms with Calvin, and had two years earlier counselled toleration in the case of Bolsec, regarded Servetus a much more dangerous heretic and advised to remove this "pest." Yet none of the churches consulted, expressly suggested the death penalty, and left the mode of punishment with the discretion of a sovereign State. Haller, the pastor of Bern, however, wrote to Bullinger of Zürich that if Servetus had fallen into the hands of Bernese justice, he would undoubtedly have been condemned to the flames.

#### CONDEMNATION OF SERVETUS.

On the 23d of October the Council met for a careful examination of the replies of the churches, but could not come to a decision on account of the absence of several members, especially Perrin, the Chief Syndic, who feigned sickness. Servetus had failed to excite any sympathy among the people, and had injured his cause by his obstinate and defiant conduct. The Libertines, who wished to use him as a tool for political purposes, were discouraged and intimidated by the council of Bern, to which they looked for protection against the hated régime of Calvin.

The full session of the Council on the 26th, to which all counsellors were summoned on the faith of their oath, decided the fate of the unfortunate prisoner, but not without a stormy discussion. Amy Perrin presided and made a last effort in favor of Servetus. He at first insisted upon his acquittal, which would have been equivalent to the exile of Calvin and a permanent triumph of the party opposed to him. Being baffled, he proposed, as another alternative, that Servetus, in accordance with his own wishes, be transferred to the Council of the Two Hundred. But this proposal was also rejected. He was influenced by political passion rather than by sympathy with heresy or love of toleration, which had very few advocates at that time. When he perceived that the majority of the Council

was inclined to a sentence of death, he quitted the senate house with a few others. The Council had no doubt of its jurisdiction in the case; it had to respect the unanimous judgment of the churches, the public horror of heresy and blasphemy, and the imperial laws of Christendom, which were appealed to by the attorney-general. The decision was unanimous. Even the wish of Calvin to substitute the sword for the fire was overruled, and the papal practice of the *auto-da-fé* followed, though without the solemn mockery of a religious festival.

The judges, after enumerating the crimes of Servetus, in calling the holy Trinity a monster with three heads, blaspheming the Son of God, denying infant-baptism as an invention of the devil and of witchcraft, assailing the Christian faith, and after mentioning that he had been condemned and burned in effigy at Vienne, and had during his residence in Geneva persisted in his vile and detestable errors, and called all true Christians tri-theists, atheists, sorcerers, putting aside all remonstrances and corrections with a malicious and perverse obstinacy, pronounced the fearful sentence:

“We condemn thee, Michael Servetus, to be bound, and led to the place of Champel, there to be fastened to a stake and burnt alive, together with thy book, as well the one written by thy hand as the printed one, even till thy body be reduced to ashes; and thus shalt thou finish thy days to furnish an example to others who might wish to commit the like.

“And we command our Lieutenant to see that this our present sentence be executed.”

Rilliet, who published the official report of the trial in the interest of history, without special sympathy with Calvin, says that the sentence of condemnation was odious before our consciences, but just according to the law. Let us thank God that these unchristian and barbarous laws are abolished forever.

Calvin communicated to Farel on the 26th of October a brief summary of the result, in which he says: “The messenger has returned from the Swiss Churches. They are unanimous in pronouncing that Servetus has now renewed those impious errors with which Satan formerly disturbed the Church, and that he is a monster not to be borne. Those of



Basel are judicious. The Zürichers are the most vehement of all. . . . They of Schaffhausen will agree. To an appropriate letter from the Bernese is added one from the Senate in which they stimulate ours not a little. Cæsar, the comedian [so he sarcastically called Perrin], after feigning illness for three days, at length went up to the assembly in order to free that wretch [Servetus] from punishment. Nor was he ashamed to ask that inquiry might be made at the Council of the Two Hundred. However, Servetus was without dissent condemned. He will be led forth to punishment to-morrow. We endeavored to alter the mode of his death, but in vain. Why we did not succeed, I defer my narration until I see you."

This letter reached Farel on his way to Geneva, where he arrived on the same day, in time to hear the sentence of condemnation. He had come at the request of Calvin, to perform the last pastoral duties to the prisoner, which could not so well be done by any of the pastors of Geneva.

#### EXECUTION OF SERVETUS, OCT. 27, 1553.

When Servetus on the following morning heard of the unexpected sentence of death, he was horror-struck and behaved like a madman. He uttered groans, and cried aloud in Spanish, "Mercy, mercy!"

The venerable old Farel visited him in the prison at seven in the morning, and remained with him till the hour of his death. He tried to convince him of his error. Servetus asked him to quote a single Scripture passage where Christ was called "Son of God" *before* his incarnation. Farel could not satisfy him. He brought about an interview with Calvin, of which the latter gives us an account. Servetus, proud as he was, humbly asked his pardon. Calvin protested that he had never pursued any personal quarrel against him. "Sixteen years ago," he said, "I spared no pains at Paris to gain you to our Lord. You then shunned the light. I did not cease to exhort you by letters, but all in vain. You have heaped upon me I know not how much fury rather than anger. But as to

the rest, I pass by what concerns myself. Think rather of crying for mercy to God whom you have blasphemed." This address had no more effect than the exhortation of Farel, and Calvin left the room in obedience, as he says, to St. Paul's order (Tit. 3: 10, 11), to withdraw from a self-condemned heretic. Servetus appeared as mild and humble as he had been bold and arrogant, but did not change his conviction.

At eleven o'clock on the 27th of October, Servetus was led from the prison to the gates of the City Hall, to hear the sentence read from the balcony by the Lord Syndic Darlod. When he heard the last words, he fell on his knees and exclaimed: "The sword! in mercy! and not fire! Or I may lose my soul in despair." He protested that if he had sinned, it was through ignorance. Farel raised him up and said: "Confess thy crime, and God will have mercy on your soul." Servetus replied: "I am not guilty; I have not merited death." Then he smote his breast, invoked God for pardon, confessed Christ as his Saviour, and besought God to pardon his accusers.

On the short journey to the place of execution, Farel again attempted to obtain a confession, but Servetus was silent. He showed the courage and consistency of a martyr in these last awful moments.

Champel is a little hill south of Geneva with a fine view on one of the loveliest paradises of nature. There was prepared a funeral pile hidden in part by the autumnal leaves of the oak trees. The Lord Lieutenant and the herald on horseback, both arrayed in the insignia of their office, arrive with the doomed man and the old pastor, followed by a small procession of spectators. Farel invites Servetus to solicit the prayers of the people and to unite his prayers with theirs. Servetus obeys in silence. The executioner fastens him by iron chains to the stake amidst the fagots, puts a crown of leaves covered with sulphur on his head, and binds his book by his side. The sight of the flaming torch extorts from him a piercing shriek of "misericordias" in his native tongue. The spectators fall back with a shudder. The flames soon reach him and consume his mortal frame in

the forty-fourth year of his fitful life. In the last moment he is heard to pray, in smoke and agony, with a loud voice: "Jesus Christ, thou Son of the eternal God, have mercy upon me!"

This was at once a confession of his faith and of his error. He could not be induced, says Farel, to confess that Christ was the eternal Son of God.

The tragedy ended when the clock of St. Peter's struck twelve. The people quietly dispersed to their homes. Farel returned at once to Neuchâtel, even without calling on Calvin. The subject was too painful to be discussed.

The conscience and piety of that age approved of the execution, and left little room for the emotions of compassion. But two hundred years afterwards a distinguished scholar and minister of Geneva echoed the sentiments of his fellow-citizens when he said: "Would to God that we could extinguish this funeral pile with our tears." Dr. Henry, the admiring biographer of Calvin, imagines an impartial Christian jury of the nineteenth century assembled on Champel, which would pronounce the judgment of Calvin "Not guilty"; on Servetus, "Guilty, with extenuating circumstances."

The flames of Champel have consumed the intolerance of Calvin as well as the heresy of Servetus.

#### THE CHARACTER OF SERVETUS.

Servetus—theologian, philosopher, geographer, physician, scientist, and astrologer—was one of the most remarkable men in the history of heresy. He was of medium size, thin and pale, like Calvin, his eyes beaming with intelligence, and an expression of melancholy and fanaticism. Owing to a physical rupture he was never married. He seems never to have had any particular friends, and stood isolated and alone.

His mental endowments and acquirements were of a high order, and placed him far above the heretics of his age and almost on an equality with the Reformers. His discoveries have immortalized his name in the history of science. He

knew Latin, Hebrew and Greek (though Calvin depreciates his knowledge of Greek), as well as Spanish, French, and Italian, and was well read in the Bible, the early fathers, and schoolmen. He had an original, speculative, and acute mind, a tenacious memory, ready wit, a fiery imagination, ardent love of learning, and untiring industry. He anticipated the leading doctrines of Socinianism and Unitarianism, but in connection with mystic and pantheistic speculations, which his contemporaries did not understand. He had much uncommon sense, but little practical common sense. He lacked balance and soundness. There was a streak of fanaticism in his brain. His eccentric genius bordered closely on the line of insanity. For

“Great wits are sure to madness near allied,  
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.”

His style is frequently obscure, inelegant, abrupt, diffuse and repetitious. He accumulates arguments to an extent that destroys their effect. He gives eight arguments to prove that the saints in heaven pray for us; ten arguments to show that Melancthon and his friends were sorcerers, blinded by the devil; twenty arguments against infant baptism; twenty-five reasons for the necessity of faith before baptism; and sixty signs of the apocalyptic beast and the reign of Antichrist.

In thought and style he was the opposite of the clear-headed, well-balanced, methodical, logical, and thoroughly sound Calvin, who never leaves the reader in doubt as to his meaning.

The moral character of Servetus was free from immorality of which his enemies at first suspected him in the common opinion of the close connection of heresy with vice. But he was vain, proud, defiant, quarrelsome, revengeful, irreverent in the use of language, deceitful, and mendacious. He abused popery and the Reformers with unreasonable violence. He conformed for years to the Catholic ritual which he despised as idolatrous. He defended his attendance upon mass by Paul's example in visiting the temple (Acts 21: 26), but afterwards confessed at Geneva that he had acted under compulsion and sinned from fear of death. He concealed or denied on oath

facts which he afterwards had to admit. At Vienne he tried to lie himself out of danger and escaped; in Geneva he defied his antagonist and did his best, with the aid of the Libertines in the Council, to ruin him.

The severest charge against him is blasphemy. Bullinger remarked to a Pole that if Satan himself came out of hell he could use no more blasphemous language against the Trinity than this Spaniard; and Peter Martyr, who was present, assented and said that such a living son of the devil ought not to be tolerated anywhere. We cannot even now read some of his sentences against the doctrine of the Trinity without a shudder. Servetus lacked reverence and a decent regard for the most sacred feelings and convictions of those who differed from him. But there was a misunderstanding on both sides. He did not mean to blaspheme the true God in whom he believed himself, but only the three false and imaginary gods, as he wrongly conceived them to be, while to all orthodox Christians they were the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of the one true, eternal, blessed Godhead.

He labored under the fanatical delusion that he was called by Providence to reform the Church and to restore the Christian religion. He deemed himself wiser than all the fathers, schoolmen, and Reformers. He supported his delusion by a fanciful interpretation of the last and darkest book of the Bible.

Calvin and Farel saw, in his refusal to recant, only the obstinacy of an incorrigible heretic and blasphemer. We must recognize in it the strength of his conviction. He forgave his enemies; he asked the pardon even of Calvin. Why should we not forgive him? He had a deeply religious nature. We must honor his enthusiastic devotion to the Scriptures and to the person of Christ. From the prayers and ejaculations inserted in his book, and from his dying cry for mercy, it is evident that he worshipped Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour.

## THE THEOLOGY OF SERVETUS.

To the contemporaries of Servetus his last and maturest work, *The Restitution of Christianity*, appeared to be a confused compound of Sabellian, Samosatenic, Arian, Apollinarian, and Pelagian heresies, mixed with Anabaptist errors and Neo-platonic, pantheistic speculations. The best judges—Calvin, Saisset, Trechsel, Baur, Dorner, Harnack—find the root of his system in pantheism. Tollin denies his pantheism, although he admits the pantheistic coloring of some of his expressions; he distinguishes no less than five phases in his theology before it came to its full maturity, and characterizes it as an “intensive, extensive, and protensive Panchristism, or ‘Christocentricism.’”

Servetus was a mystic theosophist and Christopanteist. Far from being a skeptic or rationalist, he had very strong positive convictions of the absolute truth of the Christian religion. He regarded the Bible as an infallible source of truth, and accepted the traditional canon without dispute. So far he agreed with evangelical Protestantism; but he differed from it, as well as from Romanism, in principle and aim. He claimed to stand above both parties as the restorer of primitive Christianity, which excludes the errors and combines the truths of the Catholic and Protestant creeds.

The evangelical Reformation, inspired by the teaching of St. Paul and Augustin, was primarily a practical movement, and proceeded from a deep sense of sin and grace in opposition to prevailing Pelagianism, and pointed the people directly to Christ as the sole and sufficient fountain of pardon and peace to the troubled conscience; but it retained all the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and especially the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation.

Servetus, with the Bible as his guide, aimed at a more radical revolution than the Reformers. He started with a new doctrine of God and of Christ, and undermined the very foundations of the Catholic creed. The three most prominent *negative* features of his system are three denials: the denial of the orthodox dogma of the Trinity, as set forth in the Nicene Creed; the

denial of the orthodox Christology, as determined by the Œcumenical Council of Chalcedon; and the denial of infant baptism, as practised everywhere except by the Anabaptists. From these three sources he derived all the evils and corruptions of the Church. The first two denials were the basis of the theoretical revolution, the third was the basis of the practical revolution which he felt himself providentially called to effect by his anonymous book.

Those three negations in connection with what appeared to be shocking blasphemy, though not intended as such, made him an object of horror to all orthodox Christians of his age, Protestants as well as Roman Catholic, and led to his double condemnation, first at Vienne, and then at Geneva. So far he was perfectly understood by his contemporaries, especially by Calvin and Melancthon. But the *positive* features, which he substituted for the Nicene and Chalcedonian orthodoxy, were not appreciated in their originality, and seemed to be simply a repetition of old and long-condemned heresies.

There were Antitrinitarians before Servetus, not only in the ante-Nicene age, but also in the sixteenth century, especially among the Anabaptists—such as Hetzer, Denck, Campanus, Melchior, Hoffmann, Reed, Martini, David Joris. But he gathered their sporadic ideas into a coherent original system, and gave them a speculative foundation.

#### 1. CHRISTOLOGY.

Servetus begins the "Restitution," as well as his first book against the Trinity, with the doctrine of Christ. He rises from the humanity of the historical Jesus of Nazareth to his Messiahship and Divine Sonship, and from this to His divinity. This is, we may say, the view of the Synoptical Gospels, as distinct from the usual orthodox method which, with the Prologue of the fourth Gospel, descends from His divinity to His humanity through the act of the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity. In this respect he anticipates the modern humanitarian Christology. Jesus is, according to Servetus, begot-

ten, not of the first person of God, but of the essence of the one undivided and indivisible God. He is born, according to the flesh, of the Virgin Mary by the overshadowing cloud of the Spirit (Matt. 1: 18, 20, 23; Luke 1: 32, 35). The whole aim of the gospel is to lead men to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (comp. John 20: 31). But the term "Son of God" is in the Scriptures always used of the man Jesus, and never of the Logos. He is the one true and natural son of God, born of the substance of God; we are sons by adoption, by an act of grace. We are made sons of God by faith (John 1: 12; Gal. 3: 26; Rom. 8: 23; Eph. 1: 5). He is, moreover, truly and veritably God. The whole essence of God is manifest in Him; God dwells in Him bodily.

To his last breath Servetus worshipped Jesus as the Son of the eternal God. But he did not admit Him to be the *eternal* Son of God, except in an ideal and pantheistic sense, in which the whole world was in the mind of God from eternity, and comprehended in the Divine Wisdom (Sophia) and the Divine Word (Logos).

He opposed the Chalcedonian dualism and aimed (like Apollinaris) at an organic unity of Christ's person, but made Him a full human personality (while Apollinaris substituted the divine Logos for the human spirit, and thus made Christ only a half man). He charges the scholastic and orthodox divines, whom he calls sophists and opponents of the truth, with making two Sons of God—one invisible and eternal, another visible and temporal. They deny, he says, that Jesus is truly man by teaching that He has two distinct natures with a communication of attributes. Christ does not consist of, or in, two natures. He had no previous personal pre-existence as a second hypostasis: His personality dates from His conception and birth. But this man Jesus is, at the same time, consubstantial with God (*ὁμοούσιος*). As man and wife are one in the flesh of their son, so God and man are one in Christ. The flesh of Christ is heavenly and born of the very substance of God. By the deification of the flesh of Christ he materialized God, destroyed the real humanity of Christ, and lost himself in the maze of a pantheistic mysticism.



## 2. UNITY AND TRINITY.

The fundamental doctrine of Servetus was the absolute unity, simplicity, and indivisibility of the Divine Being, in opposition to the tripersonality or threefold hypostasis of orthodoxy. In this respect he makes common cause with the Jews and Mohammedans, and approvingly quotes the Koran. He violently assails Athanasius, Hilary, Augustin, John of Damascus, Peter the Lombard, and other champions of the dogma of the Trinity. But he claims the ante-Nicene Fathers, especially Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Irénæus, and Tertullian, for his view. He calls all Trinitarians "tritheists" and "atheists." They have not one absolute God, but a three-parted, collective, composite God—that is, an unthinkable, impossible God, which is no God at all. They worship three idols of the demons,—a three-headed monster, like the Cerberus of the Greek mythology. One of their gods is unbegotten, the second is begotten, the third proceeding. One died, the other two did not die. Why is not the Spirit begotten, and the Son proceeding? By distinguishing the Trinity in the abstract from the three persons separately considered, they have even four gods. The Talmud and the Koran, he thinks, are right in opposing such nonsense and blasphemy.

Yet, after all, he taught himself a sort of trinity, but substitutes the terms "dispositions," "dispensations," "economies," for hypostases and persons. In other words, he believed, like Sabellius, in a trinity of revelation or manifestation, but not in a trinity of essence or substance. He even avowed, during the trial at Geneva, a trinity of persons and the eternal personality of Christ; but he understood the term "person" in the original sense of a mask used by players on the stage, not in the orthodox sense of a distinct hypostasis or real personality that had its own proper life in the Divine essence from eternity, and was manifest in time in the man Jesus.

Servetus distinguished—with Plato, Philo, the Neo-Platonists, and several of the Greek Fathers—between an ideal, in-

visible, uncreated, eternal world and the real, visible, created, temporal world. In God, he says, are from eternity the ideas or forms of all things: these are called "Wisdom" or "Logos," "the Word" (John 1: 1). He identifies this ideal world with "the Book of God," wherein are recorded all things that happen (Deut. 32: 32; Ps. 139: 16; Rev. 5: 1), and with the living creatures and four whirling wheels full of eyes, in the vision of Ezekiel (1: 5; 10: 12). The eyes of God are living fountains in which are reflected all things, great and small, even the hairs of our head (Matt. 10: 30), but particularly the elect, whose names are recorded in a special book.

All things are one in God, in whom they consist. There is one fundamental ground or principle and head of all things, and this is Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the fifth book Servetus discusses the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He identifies Him with the Word, from which He differs only in the form of existence. God is, figuratively speaking, the Father of the Spirit, as He is the Father of Wisdom and the Word. The Spirit is not a third metaphysical being, but the Spirit of God Himself. To receive the Holy Spirit means to receive the anointing of God. The indwelling of the Spirit in us is the indwelling of God (1 Cor. 3: 16; 6: 19; 2 Cor. 6: 16; Eph. 2: 22). He who lies to the Holy Spirit lies to God (Acts 5: 4). The Spirit is a *modus*, a form of divine existence. He is also called the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Son (Gal. 4: 6; Rom. 8: 9; 1 Pet. 1: 11). The human spirit is a spark of the Divine Spirit, an image of the Wisdom of God, created, yet similar. God breathes His Spirit into man in his birth, and again in regeneration.

In connection with this subject, Servetus goes into an investigation of the vital spirits in man, and gives a minute description of the lesser circulation of the blood, which he first discovered. He studied theology as a physician and surgeon, and studied medicine as a theologian.

## 3. CHRISTOPANTHEISM.

The premises and conclusions of the speculations of Servetus are pantheistic. He frequently refers with approval to Plato and the Neo-Platonists. "All is one and one is all, because all things are one in God, and God is the substance of all things." "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 stone, in gold it is gold, in the wood it is wood, according to the proper ideas of things. In a more excellent way the deity in man is man, in the spirit it is spirit." "God dwells in the Spirit, and God is Spirit. God dwells in the fire, and God is fire; God dwells in the light, and God is light; God dwells in the mind, and He is the mind itself. In one of his letters to Calvin he says: "Containing the essence of the universe in Himself, God is everywhere, and in everything, and in such wise that He shows Himself to us as fire, as a flower, as a stone." God is always in the process of becoming. Evil as well as good is comprised in his essence. He quotes Isa. 45: 7: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I am the Lord, that doeth all these things." The evil differs from the good only in the direction.

When Calvin charged him with pantheism, Servetus re-stated his view in these words: "God is in all things by essence, presence and power, and Himself sustains all things." Calvin admitted this, but denied the inference that the substantial Deity is in all creatures, and, as the latter confessed before the judges, even in the pavement on which they stand, and in the devils. In his last reply to Calvin he tells him: "With Simon

Magus, you shut up God in a corner; I say that He is all in all things; all beings are sustained in God."

But his views differ from the ordinary pantheism. He substitutes for a cosmopanteism a *Christopanteism*. Instead of saying, The world is the great God, he says, *Christ* is the great God. By Christ, however, he means only the ideal Christ; for he denied the eternity of the real or historical Christ.

#### 4. ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY.

Servetus was called a Pelagian by Calvin. This is true only with some qualifications. He denied absolute predestination and the slavery of the human will, as taught first by all the Reformers. He admitted the fall of Adam in consequence of the temptation by the devil, and he admitted also hereditary sin (which Pelagius denied), but not hereditary guilt. Hereditary sin is only a disease for which the child is not responsible. (This was also the view of Zwingli.) There is no guilt without knowledge of good and evil. Actual transgression is not possible before the time of age and responsibility, that is, about the twentieth year. He infers this from such passages as Ex. 30: 14; 38: 26; Num. 14: 29; 32: 11; Deut. 1: 39.

The serpent has entered human flesh and taken possession of it. There is a thorn in the flesh, a law of the members antagonistic to the law of God; but this does not condemn infants, nor is it taken away in baptism (as the Catholics hold), for it dwells even in saints, and the conflict between the spirit and the serpent goes on through life. But Christ offers His help to all, even to infants and their angels.

In the fallen state man has still a free will, reason and conscience, which connect him with the divine grace. Man is still the image of God. Hence the punishment of murder, which is an attack upon the divine majesty in man (Gen. 9: 6). Every man is enlightened by the Logos (John 1: 17). We are of divine origin (Acts 17: 29). The doctrine of the slavery of the human will is a great fallacy (*magna fallacia*), and turns divine grace into a pure machine. It makes men idle, and neglect

prayer, fasting and almsgiving. God is free Himself, and gives freedom to every man, and His grace works freely in man. It is our impiety which turns the gift of freedom into slavery. The Reformers blaspheme God by their doctrine of total depravity and their depreciation of good works. All true philosophers and theologians teach that divinity is implanted in man, and that the soul is of the same essence with God.

As to predestination, there is, strictly speaking, no before nor after in God, as He is not subject to time. But He is just and merciful to all His creatures, especially to the little flock of the elect. He condemns no one who does not condemn himself.

#### 5. THE SACRAMENTS.

Servetus admitted only two sacraments, thereby agreeing with the Protestants, but held original views on both.

(a) As to the sacrament of Baptism, he taught, with the Catholic Church, baptismal regeneration, but rejected, with the Anabaptists, infant baptism.

Baptism is a saving ordinance by which we receive the remission of sins, are made Christians, and enter the kingdom of heaven as priests and kings, through the power of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the water. It is the death of the old man and the birth of the new man. By baptism we put on Christ and live a new life in Him.

But baptism must be preceded by the preaching of the gospel, the illumination of the Spirit, and repentance, which, according to the preaching of John the Baptist and of Christ, is the necessary condition of entering the kingdom of God. Therefore, Servetus infers, no one is a fit subject for baptism before he has reached manhood. By the law of Moses priests were not anointed before the thirtieth year (Num. 4: 3). Joseph was thirty years old when he was raised from the prison to the throne (Gen. 41: 46). According to the rabbinical tradition Adam was born or created in his thirtieth year. Christ was baptized in the Jordan when He was thirty years (Luke 3: 21-23), and that is the model of all true Christian baptism. He was

circumcised in infancy, but the carnal circumcision is the type of the spiritual circumcision of the heart, not of water baptism. Circumcision was adapted to real infants who have not yet committed actual transgression; baptism is intended for spiritual infants—that is, for responsible persons who have a childlike spirit and begin a new life.

(b) Servetus rejected Infant Baptism as irreconcilable with these views, and as absurd. He called it a doctrine of the devil, an invention of popery, and a total subversion of Christianity. He saw in it the second root of all the corruptions of the Church, as the dogma of the Trinity was the first root.

Children are unfit to perform the office of priests which is given to us in baptism. They have no faith, they cannot repent, and cannot enter into a covenant. Moreover, they do not need the bath of regeneration for the remission of sins, as they have not yet committed actual transgression.

But children are not lost if they die without baptism. Adam's sin is remitted to all by the merits of Christ. They are excluded from the Church on earth; they must die and go to Sheol; but Christ will raise them up on the resurrection day and save them in heaven. The Scripture does not condemn the Ismaelites or the Ninevites or other barbarians. Christ gives His blessing to unbaptized children. How could the most merciful Lord, who bore the sins of a guilty world, condemn those who have not committed an impiety?

Servetus agreed with Zwingli, the Anabaptists and the Second Scotch Confession, in rejecting the cruel Roman dogma, which excludes all unbaptized infants, even of Christian parents, from the kingdom of heaven.

(c) In the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Servetus differs from the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Zwinglian theories, and approaches, strange to say, the doctrine of his great antagonist Calvin. Baptism and the Lord's Supper represent the birth and the nourishment of the new man. By the former we receive the spirit of Christ; by the latter we receive the body of Christ, but in a spiritual and mystical manner.

Baptism kindles and strengthens faith ; the eucharist strengthens love and unites us more and more to Christ. By neglecting this ordinance the spiritual man famishes and dies away. The heavenly man needs heavenly food, which nourishes him to life eternal (John 6 : 53).

Servetus distinguishes three false theories on the Lord's Supper, and calls their advocates *transubstantiatores* (Romanists), *impanatores* (Lutherans), and *tropistæ* (Zwinglians).

Against the first two theories, which agree in teaching a literal presence and manducation of Christ's body and blood by all communicants, he urges that spiritual food cannot be received by the mouth and stomach, but only by the spiritual organs of faith and love. He refers, like Zwingli, to the passage in John 6 : 63, as the key for understanding the words of institution and of the mysterious discourse on eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ.

He is most severe against the papal doctrine of transubstantiation or transelementation, because it turns bread into no-bread, and would make us believe that the body of Christ is eaten even by wild beasts, dogs and mice. He calls this dogma a Satanic monstrosity and an invention of demons.

To the Tropists he concedes that bread and wine are symbols, but he objects to the idea of the absence of Christ in heaven. They are symbols of a really present, not of an absent Christ. He is the living head and vitally connected with all His members. A head cut off from the body would be a monster. To deny the real presence of Christ is to destroy His reign. He came to us to abide with us forever. He withdrew only His visible presence till the day of judgment, but promised to be with us invisibly, but none the less really, to the end of the world.

#### 6. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND THE REIGN OF ANTICHRIST.

We have already noticed the apocalyptic fancies of Servetus. He could not find the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, so often spoken of in the Gospels (while Christ speaks only

twice of the "Church"), in any visible church organization of his day. The true Church flourished in the first three centuries, but then fled into the wilderness, pursued by the dragon; there she has a place prepared by God, and will remain a thousand two hundred and threescore prophetic days or years (Rev. 12: 6)—that is, from 325 to 1585.

The reign of Antichrist, with its corruptions and abominations, began with three contemporaneous events: The first Œcumenical Council of Nicæa (325), which split the one Godhead into three idols; the Union of Church and State under Constantine, when the king became a monk; and the establishment of the papacy under Sylvester, when the bishop became a king. From the same period he dates the general practice of infant baptism with its destructive consequences. Since that time the true Christians were everywhere persecuted and not allowed to assemble. They were scattered as sheep in the wilderness.

Servetus fully agreed with the Reformers in opposition to the papacy as an antichristian power, but went much further, and had no better opinion of the Protestant churches. He called the Roman Church "the most beastly of beasts and the most impudent of harlots."

He finds no less than sixty signs or marks of the reign of Antichrist in the eschatological discourses of Christ, in Daniel (chs. 7 and 12), in Paul (2 Thess. 2: 3, 4; 1 Tim. 4: 1), and especially in the Apocalypse (chs. 13-18).

But this reign is now drawing to a close. The battle of Michael with Antichrist has already begun in heaven and on earth, and the author of the "Restitution" has sounded the trumpet of war, which will end in the victory of Christ and the true Church. Servetus might have lived to see the millennium (in 1585), but he expected to fall in the battle, and to share in the first resurrection.

He concludes his eschatological chapter on the reign of Antichrist with these words: "Whosoever truly believes that the pope is Antichrist, will also truly believe that the papistical trinity, pædobaptism, and the other sacraments of popery are



doctrines of dæmons. O Christ Jesus, thou Son of God, most merciful deliverer, who so often didst deliver Thy people from distresses, deliver us poor sinners from this Babylonian captivity of Antichrist, from his hypocrisy, his tyranny, and his idolatry. Amen."

#### 7. ESCHATOLOGY.

Servetus was charged by Calvin and the Council of Geneva with denying the immortality of the soul. This was a heresy punishable by death. Etinne Dolet was executed on the place Maubert at Paris, Aug. 2, 1546, for this denial. But Servetus denied the charge. He taught that the soul was mortal, that it deserved to die on account of sin, but that Christ communicates to it new life by grace. Christ has brought immortality to light (2 Tim. 1: 10; 1 Pet. 1: 21-25). This seems to be the doctrine of conditional immortality of believers. But he held that all the souls of the departed go to the gloomy abode of Sheol to undergo a certain purification before judgment. This is the baptism of blood and fire, as distinct from the baptism of water and spirit (1 Cor. 3: 11-15). The good and bad are separated in death. Those who die without being regenerated by Christ have no hope. The righteous progress in sanctification. They pray for us (for which he gives six reasons, and quotes Zech. 1: 12, 13; Luke 15: 10; 16: 27, 28; 1 Cor. 13: 18), but we ought not to pray for them, for they do not need our prayers, and there is no Scripture precept on the subject.

The reign of the pope or Antichrist will be followed by the millennial reign of Christ on earth (Rev. 20: 4-7). Then will take place the first resurrection.

Servetus was a chiliast, but not in the carnal Jewish sense. He blames Melancthon for deriding, with the papal crowd, all those as chiliasts who believe in the glorious reign of Christ on earth, according to the book of Revelation and the teaching of the school of St. John.

The general resurrection and judgment follow after the millennium. Men will be raised in the flower of manhood, the

thirtieth year—the year of baptismal regeneration, the year in which Christ was baptized and entered upon His public ministry. “Then wilt thou,” so he addresses Philip Melancthon, who, next to Calvin, was his greatest enemy, “with all thy senses, see, feel, taste, and hear God Himself. If thou dost not believe this, thou dost not believe in a resurrection of the flesh and a bodily transformation of thy organs.”

After the general judgment, Christ will surrender His mediatorial reign with its glories to the Father, and God will be all in all (Acts 3 : 21 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 24–28.)\*

\*This account is taken from a rare copy of the *Restitutio Christianisma*. The first edition of 1,000 was destroyed except 4 copies; but a small edition was reprinted in 1790 from the original copy which is preserved in the Imperial Library at Vienna. See the bibliography on Servetus in the Seventh volume of Schaff's *Church History*, pp. 681 sqq., which has just been published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.