

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

LECTURE 23 – (1) JOHN CALVIN; (2) ARMINIANISM

We'll start with a prayer from the period to be studied.

Grant, Almighty God, that as you shine on us by your Word, we may not be blind nor wilfully seek darkness, and thus lull our minds asleep; but, being roused daily by your Word, may we stir ourselves more and more to fear your name, and thus present ourselves, and all our pursuits, as a sacrifice to you, that you may peaceably rule us, and perpetually dwell in us, until you gather us to your heavenly habitation, where there is reserved for us eternal rest and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

John Calvin always closed his sermons with a prayer. This one, from his series on the Minor Prophets, demonstrates his profound sense of reverence for the Word of God.

The rest of this page is an outline of this Lecture.

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TOPIC – CALVIN'S *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*

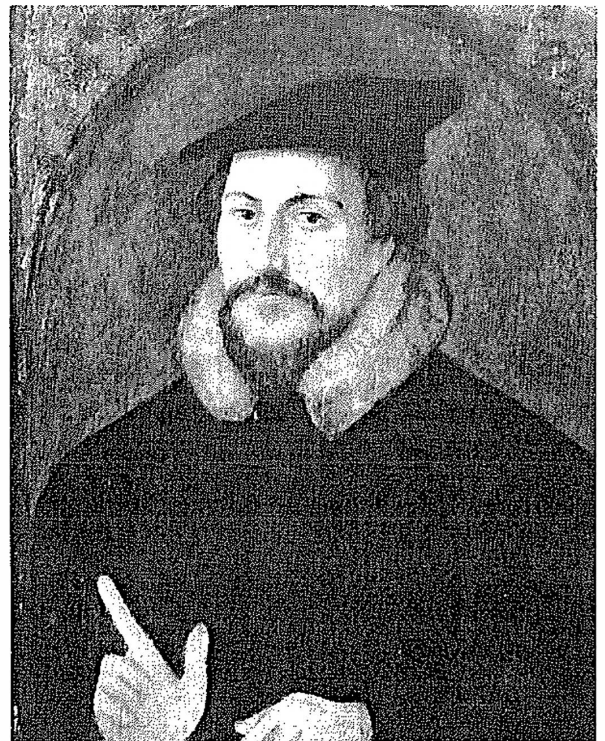
2 JOHN CALVIN - SIGNIFICANCE

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Calvin as a young man, from the painting by Holbein at Castle Aschbach, near Bamberg, West Germany.

In preparation, for Calvin, read Cairns, 300-5; Olsen, 408-13; Lion, 380-1; Vos, 91-3; Lane, 141-3. for Arminians, Cairns, 317-8; Olson; 451-72; Lion, see index; Vos, 113; Lane, 146-9.

1. JOHN CALVIN (1509 - 1564) - BIOGRAPHY

(Cairns, 302-4; Lion, 380-1; Hanks, *70 Great Christians*, 114-9; Hanks, *Great Events*, 201-8; Lane 141-3)

1.1 Introduction

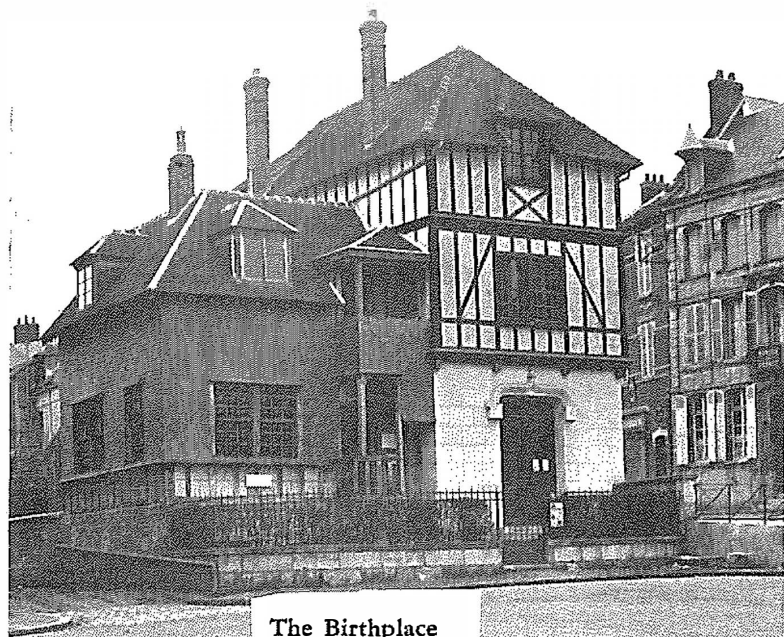
If you asked a group of Christians, ‘whose name first comes to mind when you hear about the Protestant Reformation?’, the commonest answer might be Martin Luther - the first and the best-known. But if you asked a second question, ‘which Reformer do you think has most influenced the Church over the years since the Reformation?’, the commonest answer might be John Calvin; we’ll see in this Lecture why many regard him as the greatest theologian of the various Reformations.

We saw in Lecture 20 that Huldreich Zwingli started the Swiss Reformation in Zurich. When he was killed in battle, aged only 47, it was taken forward in the city of Geneva, especially when John Calvin arrived there. In the picture on the first page of the Notes he looks healthier than in many other pictures you see; as he grew older, his health declined, probably through overwork but also through migraine headaches and irritable bowel condition, so many paintings show him looking stern, even haggard.

1.2 Calvin’s biography to 1534

Calvin was a Frenchman, born in 1509 in a little town in northern France, Noyon, north-east of Paris, where his father was secretary to the Bishop of Noyon (top-left on the map on the next page). He was 26 years younger than Luther and Zwingli, so he was a second generation Reformer.

We know little about Calvin’s childhood. His mother, a daughter of a member of the Noyon town council, was a pious woman, who took her young son on devotional pilgrimages to local shrines, to reverence the relics and to pray to the saints, as was the practice for pious people at that time.



The Birthplace
of John Calvin
in Noyon, France

Because his father worked for the bishop, young Calvin was given (what we would call) a bursary, to study at the University of Paris in 1523, age fourteen. Martin Luther’s ideas were a hot topic of debate there, and Calvin was interested but not yet persuaded to adopt them.

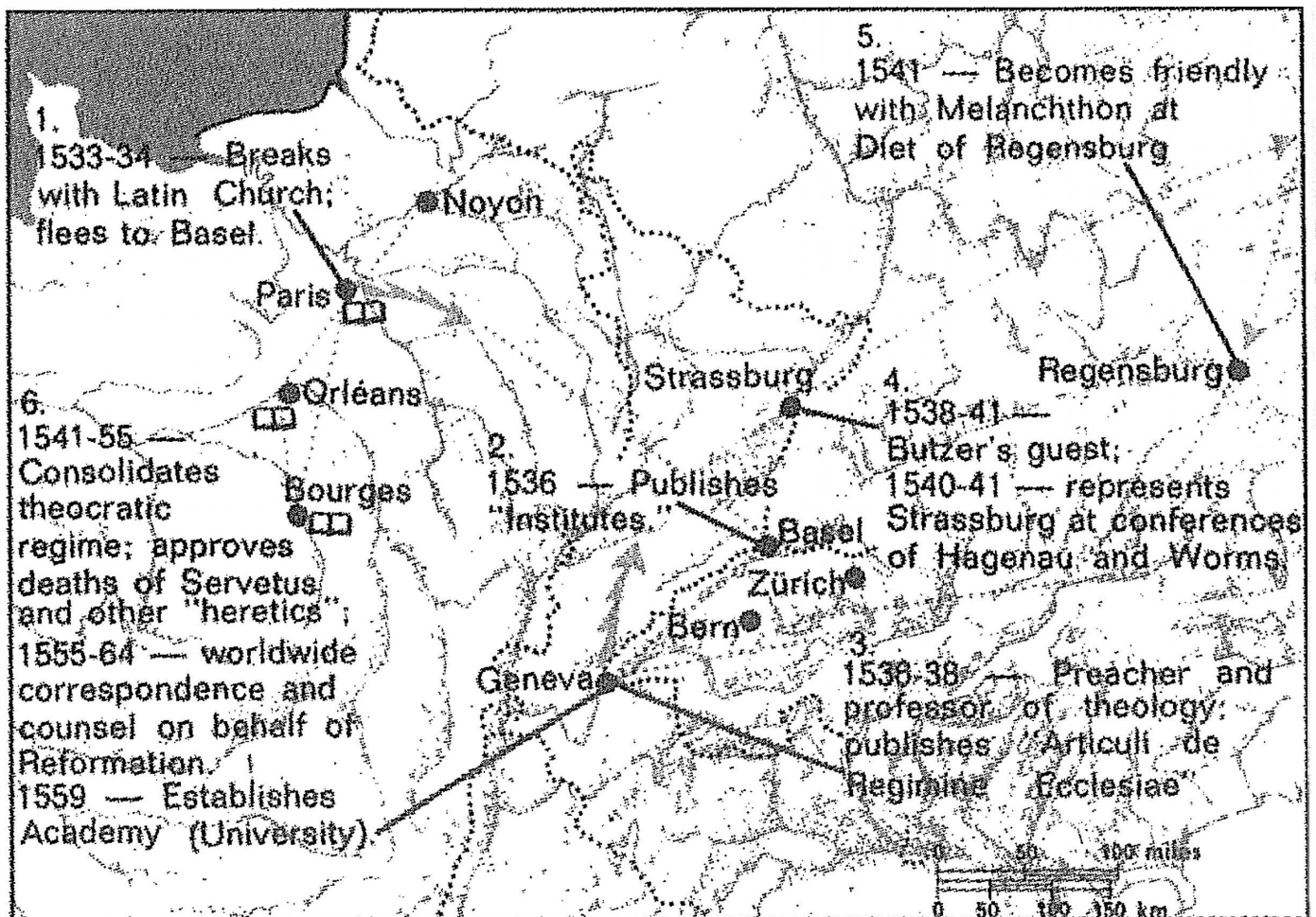
After Paris, he moved to other universities, where he studied Hebrew and Greek, including the Greek New Testament - remember the Humanists went ‘back to the sources’ - and he then returned to Paris in 1533. Calvin now associated openly with reforming groups, and he dated his conversion to the Protestant cause from about this time - remember, he had been brought up as a Catholic. The issue came to a head in the autumn of 1533. The new rector of the University of Paris spoke, in his inaugural address, about the need for reform and renewal within the Catholic Church, which offended the Catholic establishment. Since Calvin had written the speech for the rector, both of them prudently left Paris before they were arrested.

1.3 Basle and the first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

For a year Calvin moved about France, teaching small groups in secret about the Reformation, continually on the move to avoid arrest. Then he settled in Basel (2 on the map below) in Switzerland, now a Protestant city - cities were going over, one by one to the Protestant cause. What could Calvin do, to further reform in France - he wasn't welcome there, but here he was, aged 26, highly educated at three universities and with time on his hands - what could he do to help the French Protestants? He decided to write a basic textbook about the Reformed faith, lucid, systematic, persuasive, to aid French Evangelicals to understand their faith. He called it the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and published the first edition in 1536. The word 'Institutes' meant, in the C16, 'instruction', so the book was to educate and instruct in the Christian faith. That's our topic, after we've gone a bit further through Calvin's life.

Calvin then returned to his home at Noyon, to finalise his father's estate. When that was done, he set off for Strassburg, in south-west Germany, where he intended to settle. (4 on the map below, but ignore the date 1538 in the meantime – we'll come to that but we're still, at the moment, in 1536. A war in the area meant he had to detour via Geneva (3 on the map), where he had never been before. This is said to be 'the most fateful diversion in European history' - we'll see why.

He arrived in Geneva in July 1536, aged 27, intending to bed and breakfast for one night, on his way to Strassburg. A Protestant Reformer, William Farel, had two months previously persuaded the leaders of Geneva to accept the Reformation and to make Protestantism the official religion of Geneva, in the same way as Zwingli had persuaded the Town Council of Zurich, eleven years before - that's how the Swiss Reformation spread, from town to town. Tempers were still fairly raw in Geneva and although Farel was a powerful speaker, he had a fiery temper and he was not the man to



bring peace and order in the divided city. He had read Calvin's *Institutes* and when he heard that Calvin was in Geneva, he hurried to the inn where Calvin was staying for one night. Calvin was astonished when someone asked for him by name, and even more astonished when Farel tried to persuade him to stay for a while, to consolidate the reform. The more he heard about the situation, the more determined he was to leave for Strassburg as soon as possible. He wanted time to study in a peaceful location. He did not need a job because his father had left him enough money to live on. When he told Farel that nothing would persuade him to stay, Farel looked young Calvin full in the face and thundered: (the words beside the picture).

"May God curse your studies if now in her time of need you refuse to lend your aid to His Church!"



Calvin was shaken, indeed, as he himself said later, he was terrified because in Farel's thundering voice he heard the voice of God. He agreed to stay. It has been said that Farel persuading Calvin to serve the church in Geneva had consequences for the Church worldwide which are a small reflection of Barnabas persuading Paul to leave Tarsus and come to Antioch in Acts 11.

1.4 First stay in Geneva - 1536-1538

The Reformation in Switzerland began in the German-speaking city of Zurich, in the north of the country (middle of the map on the previous page). Geneva, in the south-west of the country, was French-speaking. Having adopted the Protestant Reformation, and having abolished the mass, its first priority was to find French-speaking pastors. Calvin was appointed to the Reformed Church in Geneva - we'll define later what we mean by the Reformed Church - but he was never ordained - he was never 'Rev John Calvin'.

Calvin soon found that Geneva had reformed in name but not in heart - people were looking for freedom from church interference in their lives, rather than for guidance from the Word of God. The city council controlled religion in the city, and the issue of 'who does what' came to a head on Easter Sunday in 1538. Calvin said that he would decide who was and who was not fit to attend the quarterly Communion. The City Council insisted that they, not Calvin, would decide. Calvin preached on Easter Sunday but refused to celebrate Communion, so the Council expelled him from Geneva. It was another round in the struggle between State and Church, as to who controlled who. At this point, the State won and Calvin went to Strassburg, where he had originally been heading, two years before. He was welcomed by Martin Bucer, another prominent Reformer (4 on the map on the previous page).

In Strassburg, Calvin was the pastor to a congregation of 500 French refugees – Protestants who had been persecuted in France and had taken refuge in there. He

implemented the reforms that had not been accepted in Geneva, such as compulsory instruction in the faith for young people, communion only for those living consistent Christian lives, etc. These three years in Strassburg were crucial in his development - in Geneva, he had seen what needed to be done for a city to be truly Reformed under the Word of God, but the magistrates had opposed him. In Strassburg he was able to put his ideas into practice and to fine-tune them, so that when he was invited back to Geneva - which we're coming to in a moment - he had a working programme ready to implement.

While in Strassburg, he wrote a second (expanded) edition of the *Institutes*, increasing it from 6 chapters to 17; it kept growing throughout his life, until the final edition had 80 chapters and 1,500 pages. Calvin set out basic Protestant beliefs about God, the Trinity, the authority of the Bible, the sovereignty of God, predestination, justification by faith, the nature of the Church and much more. As the *Institutes* are our Topic, later in this Lecture, I'll not say any more about them here.

While in Strassburg, Calvin met many other Reformers as they passed through or attended conferences and he became warm friends with Melancthon (remember, our Topic in Lecture 19), although he never met Luther. Also, during his three years at Strassburg, he married.

1.5 Second stay in Geneva - 1541-1564

In 1540, a pro-Calvin group gained control of the city council in Geneva and invited Calvin to return. He was initially unwilling, but agreed to come for as long as it took to re-establish Reformed Church Order. He was still there when he died twenty-three years later.

Calvin insisted on a four-fold ministry, based on Ephesians 4.11: (1) Pastors, to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments and to visit the sick; (2) teachers (he called them 'doctors'), to 'teach sound doctrine to the faithful'; (3) lay elders, to enforce discipline; and (4) lay deacons, to care for the poor and the sick. He insisted also on having a Consistory (next).

1.6 The Consistory

This was the most distinctive and controversial aspect of Calvin's reform. Twelve elders and the all the pastors (nine when he started in 1542 and nineteen by the time he died in 1564) met weekly on Thursday to bring Genevans to 'live in accordance with the Word of God'. They dealt with moral and business problems, and also what we today would consider minor issues, such as laughing during sermons, cursing, lying and cheating, unhealthy reading, singing of obscene songs, having their fortunes told or playing cards on Sunday and dice on any day, or holding improper dances in their homes, or gluttony or drunkenness.

One in fifteen of the population of Geneva appeared before the Consistory in a single year, as it sought to shape their behaviour. Excommunication was a very powerful sanction - you couldn't get married or be a godparent to children at baptism, while you were excommunicated.

Calvin was aware that enforced discipline could produce hypocrisy but he believed that it was worthwhile. He insisted on complete independence from the City Council - he brooked no interference by the State in Church affairs. Indeed, Calvin expected the City Council (a secular body) to support the rules of the Consistory. We'll note at 3.2 below

how much he differed from Luther in this - Luther allowed and encouraged the State to have a great deal of power over the Church, because that was the way he worked.



John Calvin lived here at what is now No. 11 Rue Jean Calvin until his death in 1564.



Calvin
Conferring with
the Geneva
Council

Michael Severtus

It has been said that Calvin has had a bad press over the centuries for (1) inventing predestination and (2) executing a Spanish refugee called Michael Severtus; I'll try to explain why both charges are unfair. We'll deal with predestination at 2.8 in this Lecture, but, at this point, a brief explanation about the execution of a Spanish physician.

Michael Servetus had been condemned as a heretic by the Catholic authorities in France, because he openly rejected the Trinity and Infant Baptism. When he said he was coming to Geneva, Calvin warned him strongly to stay away from the city, but he insisted on coming and he was arrested in August 1553. He was given the choice of returning to France, but he was determined to stay and so he was put on trial for his heretical views - not by Calvin's Consistory (Church disciplinary body) but by the City Council. Calvin was involved only in framing the charges and appearing as a witness, but popular history blames him for Severtus' execution.

Moving on to more positive views of Calvin:

1.7 Busy Pastor

Calvin lived an incredibly busy life - marriages, baptisms, appointments with parishioners, visits, cases of discipline, preaching twice on Sundays and three times in the week. He took great care to visit the sick - 'no one is to remain three full days confined to bed without the minister being notified'.

Calvin died of illness in Geneva, aged 54, worn out by years of overwork and stress.

Calvin doesn't come across as an attractive personality. He lacked the humour and warmth that made Luther popular with people. He was stern, increasingly irritable as his health declined, and he attacked individuals who opposed him. As mentioned on page 2, he probably suffered from migraine headaches and irritable bowel condition - both symptoms of stress. However, like him or not, we must note his significance, and our Topic looks at one of the most lasting of his legacies.

TOPIC - Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* - was taken at this point in the Lecture; here, it is printed at the end of the Notes for this Lecture.

2. JOHN CALVIN - SIGNIFICANCE

2.1 Introduction

Calvin is a key figure in Church History. It has been said that if you had to choose three key figures in all of Church history, they should be the apostle Paul, Augustine in C5 North Africa and Calvin.¹ When I consider him, I think of the humorous story of two cows grazing in a field when a tanker-lorry went past with a logo on the side, '5,000 gallons of fresh milk'. One of the cows said to the other, 'Do you ever feel your contribution is inadequate?'

Calvin's brilliance was his ability to organize/systematize his knowledge.

The key to understanding Calvin's thought is the absolute sovereignty of God. He taught that we must acknowledge this and build our lives on it, and build society on it - the Church has an obligation to tell secular society what the sovereign God has decreed and to guide society to do it. That meant reforming both Church and State and bringing them together. He believed that Christianity should engage directly with social and political issues. Reformed theology was a new way of thinking about God and about the Bible's teaching.

The words 'Reformed Theology' / 'Calvinism' are not, now, a synonym for 'The Reformed Church' as it was in Calvin's day. We noted at the end of Lecture 20, and it's worth repeating, that in the sixteenth century, 'The Reformed Church' combined a distinct theology with a distinct form of church government. Nowadays, as we saw then, you can be 'Reformed' in your theology but combine that with your choice of Church government. There are now Reformed Baptists, Reformed Anglicans as well as Reformed Presbyterians - the word 'Reformed' (now) describes your theology, not your church government.

So what was Calvin's significance?

2.2 As an Expositor

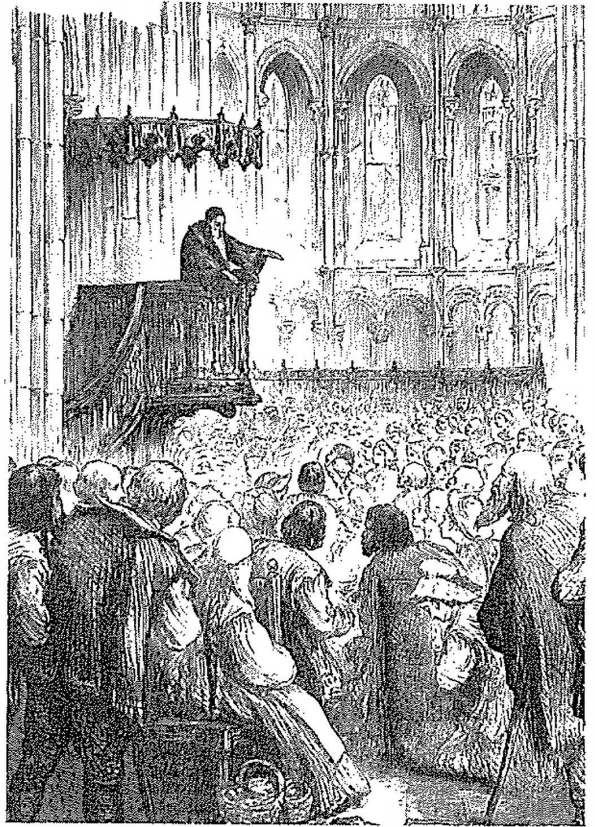
Grammatico-historical.

Remember, away back in lecture 3, when we looked at early Christianity in Alexandria in Egypt, we saw that the Alexandrians insisted on finding three meanings for every passage of Scripture - the literal meaning, a more hidden meaning and a spiritual meaning, with the second and third being more important than the first but not available to ordinary

¹ As mentioned in Lecture 16, many add a fourth, Thomas Aquinas, to these three giants in the history of the Church.

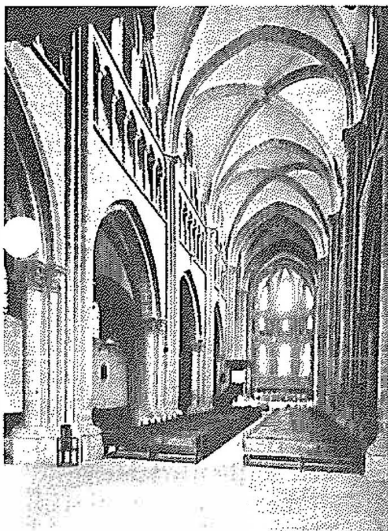
Christians. This was known as the ‘allegorical’ way of interpreting Scripture, and it contrasted with taking Scripture at face value, which was known by the rather clumsy phrase the ‘grammatico-historical’ way of reading the Bible. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages carried forward the ‘allegorical’ method, and worse still, said that it alone could decide on the meaning of Scripture. Calvin preached the plain and literal meaning of Scripture, asking what the original writer had said and why he had said it?

So Calvin placed preaching of Scripture at the heart of the Reformation, believing in its powerful influence on ordinary people. His form of worship centered on the pulpit. Here are three pictures of where he preached, St Peter’s Cathedral, which was/is the largest church building in Geneva, dating back to 1160. Under Calvin, the interior was renovated; the altar was removed and a pulpit, raised high above the congregation (shown in the sketch here), was installed. All statues and religious imagery were removed; the focus of the building was now on the pulpit. God was to be encountered through the preaching of the Word.

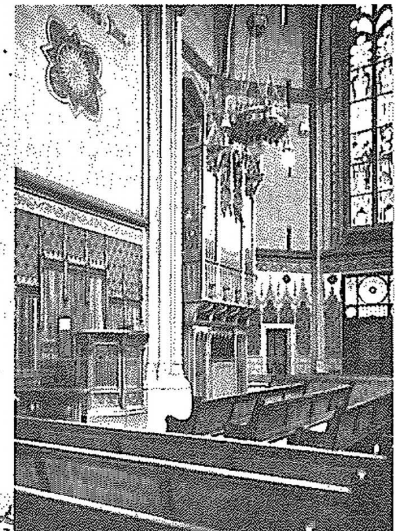
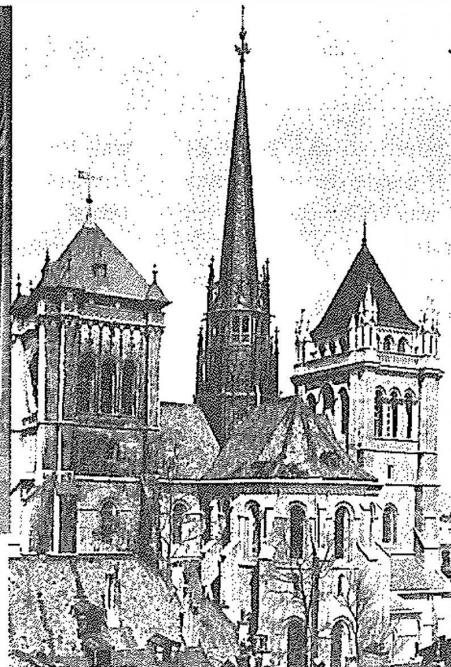


Calvin preaching in the Cathedral of St. Peter's, Geneva, in his old age

Calvin preaching in
Geneva – note central pulpit



The Nave



The Chapel
of the Maccabees

The Cathedral of St. Peter was built between 1160 and 1220 on the site of previous basilicas and the still earlier pagan temples of the Roman days. The people of Geneva had reformed their worship here before Calvin arrived. For thirty years Calvin preached in St. Peter's. The 223-foot spire was added in 1899.

In a traditional Scottish Presbyterian church, the pulpit is central and prominent, while in many Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, the pulpit is on one side, to allow the congregation a clear view of the church's main feature, the altar. The difference is not accidental. As we will see in Lecture 25, Scotland was deeply influenced by the Reformation in Geneva. When, after the Second World War, Scottish church architects pioneered the concept of a multi-purpose church and hall, with chairs rather than fixed pews, traditional worship was held on Sundays and the chairs were moved for 'social' activities. The centrality of the pulpit for preaching - still important - was achieved by making it 'movable' to the side of the platform when 'other' activities were taking place.

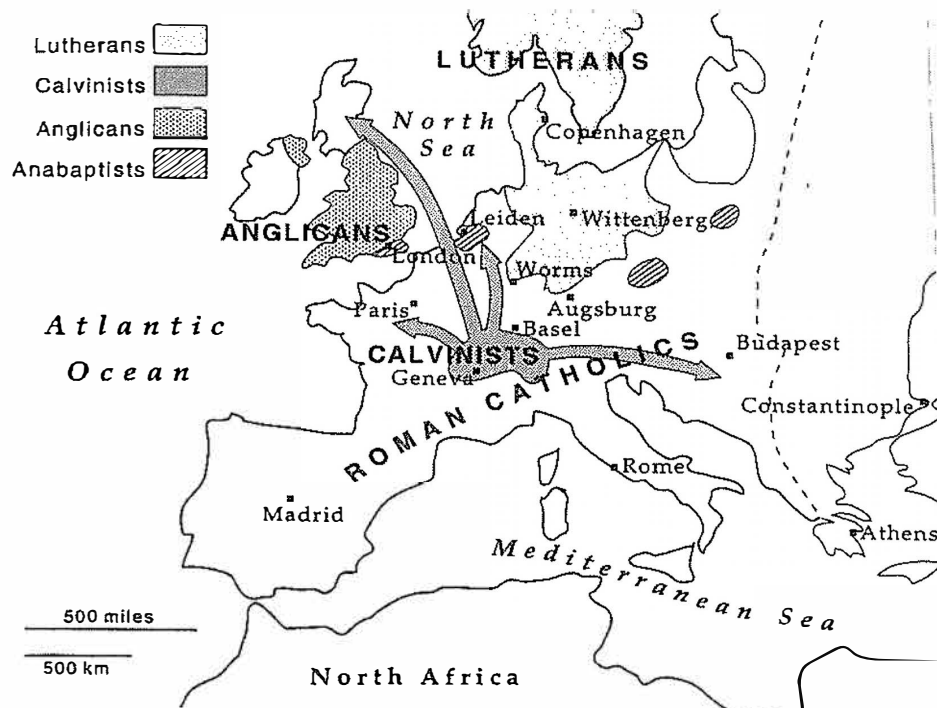
2.3 Wider community

Calvin believed that ministry included 'public welfare' as well as the church. He took an active part in political and civil affairs, fire-fighting, building inspection, guard duty, the markets. Calvin extolled thrift, hard work, sobriety, responsibility and self-reliance, virtues that were crucial for those who wished to make progress in a mercantile society. Geneva was a visible godly society under divine sovereignty.

It's worth repeating an important distinction we noticed in Lecture 20 at 2.1 - Lutheran Reformers retained everything that was not expressly forbidden in Scripture - they kept as much as possible of the architecture and the form of worship in the Roman Church. The Swiss Reformers, Zwingli and then Calvin and others, retained only what was expressly taught in Scripture. That gives two very different approaches - (1) is it contrary to Scripture - if not, I am free to do it, or (2) is it taught in Scripture - if not, then I won't do it. For example, Luther loved hymns and wrote many himself, such as 'A mighty fortress is our God'. Singing in Calvin's churches consisted only of Psalms set to music, unaccompanied by an organ - as, until a few years ago, singing in the Free Church of Scotland was only metrical psalms and paraphrases of Scripture, led by a precentor.

2.4 Geneva Academy

Calvin not only improved secular schools in Geneva, but he founded a 'College', the first Protestant University anywhere, to prepare people 'for ministry and civil government'. Note 'civil government' - Calvin believed it was God's world, so government, teachers, etc, laypeople, needed training in the Word of God, in order to be active in civic affairs. The College opened in 1558, with 600 students, rising in the next year to 900 - there was hunger to hear the Word of God and the demand for preachers was widespread. Protestants flocked from all over Europe, and after training became Reformed pastors in their homelands. As Calvin put it, 'Send me word and I will send you back arrows'. He kept in contact with his former students - he was a voluminous letter writer.



2.5 Christology

Calvin consistently stressed that it is in Christ alone that we can know God. He spoke of the work of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King (a common three-part sermon when I was younger, although I have not heard one on it for some time). As Prophet, Christ heralds the grace of God, as Priest he acts as Mediator to reconcile us to God and as King he rules over the Kingdom of God. Calvin thought of Christ's work on Calvary as a substitutionary punishment for sin - our guilt is transferred to Christ. Christ died for us because God loves us for 'God loved us even when we practised enmity towards him and committed wickedness ... he loved us even when we hated him'. (*Institutes*, 2.16.4)

2.6 Eucharist

Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper was a diplomatic balance between the views of Luther and of Zwingli (Lecture 20, 3.2). He believed that neither of their understandings was true to the Gospel, that Zwingli had too little regard for the outward signs and that Luther extolled them too much.

So, by the middle of the sixteenth century, five views of the Lord's Supper were being taught in Europe:

1. The Catholics maintained 'transubstantiation', by which the bread and wine are, through the priest's words, changed into Christ's body and blood.
2. Luther maintained 'consubstantiation', that the bread and wine 'represent' a real/literal presence of Christ's body and blood, ('This is my body ...') but it is God's doing, not the priest's.
3. Zwingli maintained that Christ was uniquely and spiritually (but not literally) present in the Lord's Supper. He also, like (5) below, saw it as a memorial, a proclamation, and a commitment.
4. Calvin balanced the views of Luther and Zwingli by teaching a 'spiritual real presence' of Christ, in which Christ comes only to believers.
5. Anabaptists taught that the Lord's Supper was (no more than) a memorial, a reminder, of what Christ had done on the Cross.

In 1549, all the Swiss Reformed Churches adopted Calvin's view, as the other Reformed Churches of Europe did later. However, in practice many Protestants now follow Zwingli's understanding of the Lord's Supper.

2.7 Baptism

This is not the place to discuss various views on baptism, but be aware that for Calvin, infant baptism was 'a sign of initiation by which we are received into the society of the church, in order that, engrafted in Christ, we may be reckoned among God's children'. (*Institutes*, 4.15.1) Although baptism has no inherent power and is not essential for salvation, he still called for infant baptism in opposition to the Anabaptists, drawing a close parallel between it and circumcision, and Christ's example in receiving little children. (*Institutes*, 4.16.7)

2.8 Predestination

This is the most controversial aspect of Calvin's writings. Traditional predestination, taught by Luther and going back to Augustine in C5 North Africa, was that some were chosen for salvation 'before the foundations of the earth'. Calvin extended this by preaching 'double predestination', which means some were chosen to be saved while others were chosen to be damned. Calvin, like all Protestants, claimed to be teaching only what the Bible taught, although he was aware of the difficulties that double predestination involved. He believed that God knew that Adam would fall because he had decreed that he would do so. What should astound us, said Calvin, is the wonder of God's mercy, that he has spared some from the retribution which all deserve. God's choices cannot be understood, he said, because the ways of God are a great mystery that cannot be grasped by humans.

Personally, I take refuge in the simplistic illustration of going through a door. Written over the outside of it are the words of John 3:16, which invites 'everyone who believes on Jesus' to enter. Having gone through the door, one looks back and sees the words of Ephesians 1.11 written on the inside of the door, 'In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.'

Finally on Calvin, he taught that Christ died only for the elect, not for all people. This is a contentious issue, not to be explored here, but we will touch on it in section 4.3 below. 'Because we do not know who belongs to the number of predestined or does not belong, our desire must always be that all may be saved' (*Institutes*, 3.23.14).

3. Calvinism and Lutheranism - five watchwords and one (other) difference

3.1 Five watchwords - the Five *Solas* (alone) - from the Latin *sola* = 'alone'

Five watchwords undergirded everything that both Luther and Calvin understood about the Reformation. We'll glance at them now, and come back to them in Lecture 26, after we have looked also at the English Reformation, the Scottish Reformation and the Catholic Reformation. After seeing the wider picture, we will have a better understanding of the significance of the five *Solas*.

Sola scriptura, 'by Scripture alone'. 'It is by the Word of God and the Word of God alone.' Luther and Calvin both believed that everyone has the right and duty to read and study the Bible for themselves. The Reformation recovered the Bible for the Church. To make this possible, Luther translated it into German and Calvin translated it into French.

Solo Christo, 'by Christ alone'. People have direct access to God through Christ. Neither Mary nor dead saints nor priests should take over the role that Christ alone was given.

Sola gratia, 'by grace alone'. Salvation through Christ comes to us by the grace of God alone. He initiates a relationship with us, seeks and draws us to him saves the lost.

Sola fide, 'through faith alone'. Our response to God's grace is one of faith. We can never save ourselves. We can never earn salvation. Salvation is through Christ and Christ alone, through his profound grace and through faith in him.

Soli deo gloria, 'to the glory of God alone'. Everything should be done for God's glory, to the exclusion of mankind's self-glorification and pride. Christians are to be motivated and inspired by God's glory and not their own.

3.2 Different attitudes to the relationship of Church and State

Both Lutherans and Calvinists defined the Church as the spiritual body of all who were truly united to Christ and their children - the number being known to God alone. However, Lutherans worked so closely with Christian kings, princes and city councils, that, crucially, they allowed the State, not the Church, to exercise the power of excommunication. As we'll see in Lecture 28, this led in time to the Lutheran Church becoming little more than a 'Department' of State, politically controlled. Calvinists saw the danger of this, and, following the example of Calvin in Geneva, insisted that Church must be a free and independent partner with the State, whose aim was to build a Christian society, in which only the Church was responsible for internal discipline. The power of excommunication belonged to the Church, not to the State. Calvinism's exalted view of the visible Church was expressed in its distinctive system of Church government (1.5).

4. ARMINIANISM

(Olson 460, Lane, 146-9)

4.1 Introduction

Eighty years after Calvin's death, some who called themselves Calvinists (although Calvin would not have approved of what they were teaching in his name), provoked a theologian in Holland called James Arminius to challenge what the Calvinists were teaching. At a Church gathering called the Synod of Dort in Holland, they condemned his views and affirmed what have become known as 'the five points of Calvinism', under the acronym TULIP. Arminius' followers took a contrary theological position, that many hold today, and it became known as Arminianism.

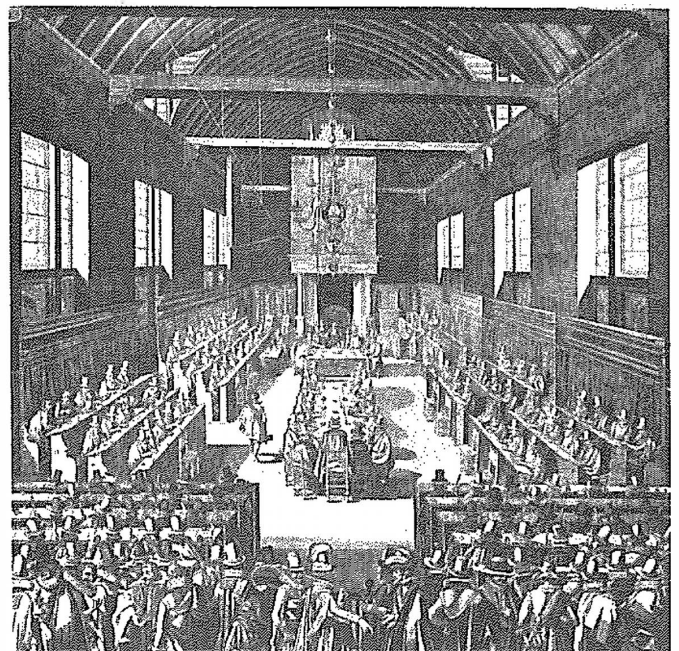


Jacobus Arminius

Jacobus (James) Arminius (1560-1609) was a follower of Calvin, a pastor in Amsterdam and a professor of theology. He was asked to prepare a paper defending predestination. While doing so, he changed his mind about it, so he and his followers in the Dutch Reformed church began to preach a different understanding of predestination. Arminius died in 1609 and his followers became known as Arminians. The difference between them and the Calvinists came to a head at an international Calvinistic assembly, called a Synod, held at Dort and attended by 130 Calvinists.

4.2 Synod of Dort, 1618

Five Calvinistic articles were drawn up, condemning the Arminians, who were to be deprived of their clerical positions unless they accepted what became known as the 'Five Points of Calvinism', are summarised by their acronym TULIP. If you hear someone today say, 'I am a five-point Calvinist', this is what they mean.



Delegates to the historic Synod of Dort meet in a large recreation hall in Dort, the Netherlands.

4.3 TULIP

1. **The total depravity of humankind:** since the Fall, people can only sin; they are incapable of sinless acts. Obviously that does not mean that everyone is as depraved as they could be; an illustration is putting a drop of ink into a glass of water - every molecule of the water is tainted but the water is not as black as it could be.
2. **Unconditional election:** God chose some humans to save, before and apart from anything they do - that is before they put their faith in Christ. It is his choice, so once a person is saved (by faith), that person is always saved - because God has chosen them.

3. **Limited atonement:**
Christ died to save the elect, not to save everyone. His atoning death is not universal, for all humanity - only the elect will receive it and be saved by it.

4. **Irresistible grace:**
there is no freedom to resist God's grace.

5. **Perseverance of the saints:** the elect must lead saintly lives and persevere to the end; they cannot assume they are saved, nor can they rest in an assurance of salvation, but if they are elect, they will inevitably persevere to eternal salvation.

Theological Issues—Calvinist vs. Arminian

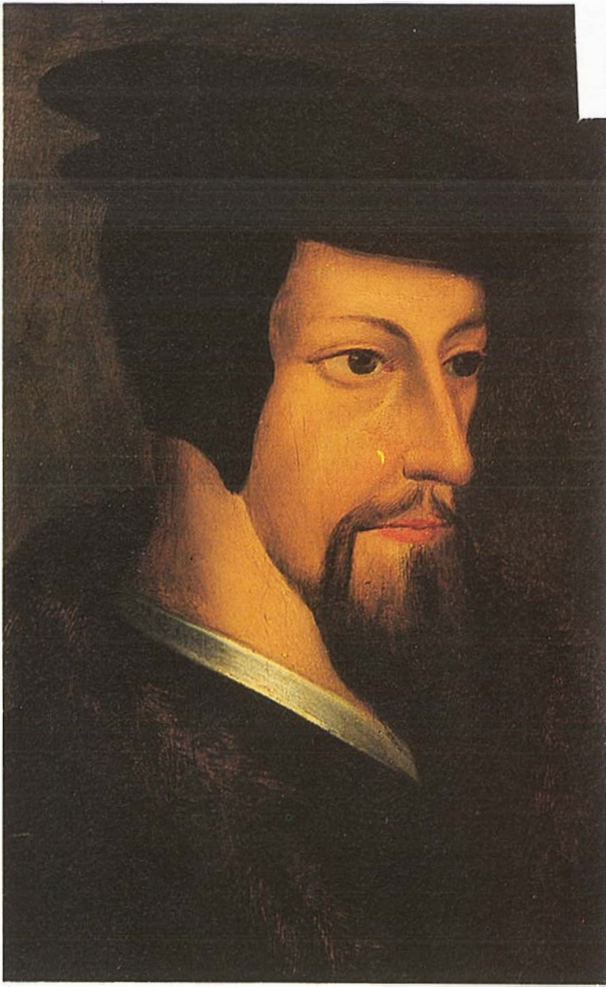
ISSUE	CALVINIST POSITION	ARMINIAN POSITION
ORIGINAL SIN	total depravity and guilt inherited from Adam	weakness inherited from Adam
HUMAN WILL	in bondage to sin	free to do spiritual good
GRACE OF GOD	common grace given to all; saving grace given to elect	enabling grace given to all; saving grace given to those who believe; persevering grace given to those who obey
PREDESTINATION	rooted in God's decrees	rooted in God's fore-knowledge
REGENERATION	monergistic	synergistic
ATONEMENT	Christ's death a substitutionary penal sacrifice	Christ's death a sacrifice that God benevolently accepted in place of a penalty
EXTENT OF ATONEMENT	intended only for the elect	intended for all
APPLICATION OF ATONEMENT	by power of the Holy Spirit according to the will of God	by power of the Holy Spirit in response to the will of the sinner
ORDO SALUTIS	election, predestination, union with Christ, calling, regeneration, faith, repentance, justification, sanctification, glorification	calling, faith, repentance, regeneration, justification, perseverance, glorification
PERSEVERANCE	perseverance of all the elect by the grace of God	perseverance dependent on obedience

Legacy of Arminianism

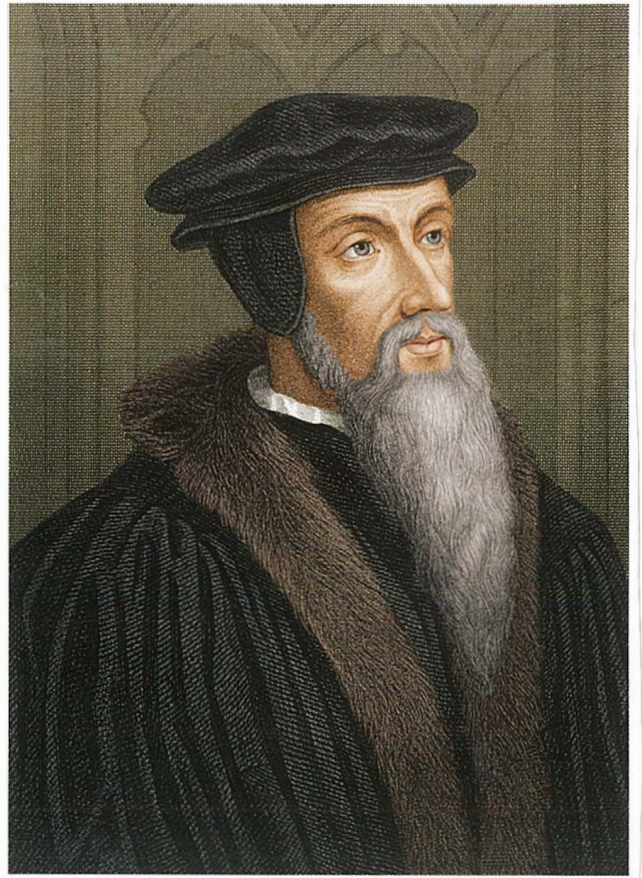
Arminianism had a considerable influence on one wing of the Anglican church in the C17, on the Methodist movement of the C18, and the Salvation Army

When we come to C19 Scotland in Lecture 25, we'll see how the prevailing Calvinism of C18 Scotland gradually gave way to Arminianism. This resulted in huge changes of mind-set, for example in evangelistic services - 'Come to Jesus' instead of waiting for God to 'call' the sinner - and in the assurance of salvation - 'Am I one of the elect?'

We'll conclude this Lecture by looking, on the next page, without comment, at two more pictures of Calvin and at one of the practical consequences of an area adopting his ideas.



This portrait of John Calvin is the only one painted during his lifetime. He was twenty-seven when he arrived in Geneva



John Calvin, a posthumous engraving.



THE RISE OF CALVINISM

This Flemish engraving (dated 1566) shows Calvinists destroying statues in Catholic churches. Calvin's ideas spread quickly and his biblical pamphlets and commentaries were read and studied widely.

Geneva became not only a refuge for Calvinists, but the centre of the new movement. Elsewhere in Europe, Calvinism found supporters in England, Scotland, Germany, and Holland.

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH HISTORY IN 36 ILLUSTRATED LECTURES

TOPIC FOR LECTURE 23 - *INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION*

Please tell us about John Calvin's greatest work, first published in 1536, known in English as the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

The Course textbooks mention it only in passing, Cairns, 302-3 and (briefly) 309 and 349; Olson 408-9, 411; Hanks, *Great Events*, has a fuller description at 206-8; Lane, 144-5.

Although the title *Institutes of the Christian Religion* is universally used in English translations, it is not the best description of the contents of the book. A literal, word-for-word translation of the original Latin title *Institutio Christianae Religionis* is *Instruction of Christian Piety*. Calvin's purpose was not to designate a particular religion, but to establish an inner sense of piety that brings people to worship.

The *Institutes* has four parts. It is based on the Apostles' Creed - Lecture 10. The first part examines God the Father; the second part, the Son; the third part, the Holy Spirit; and the fourth part, the Church.

Apostles' Creed	Calvin's <i>Institutes</i>
I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth	Book One Knowledge of God the Creator
And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord	Book Two Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ
I believe in the Holy Spirit	Book Three Way we Receive Grace of Christ
I believe in the holy Catholic Church	Book Four External Means or Aids by which God Invites us into Society of Christ

By setting out the *Institutes* like this, Calvin was making an important point: Protestants had not invented new doctrines of their own; they were simply rejecting various errors that had grown up in the Western Catholic Church during the Middle Ages, and returning to the pure apostolic faith of the early Church.