

THE HISTORY OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

John Calvin, Pt. II

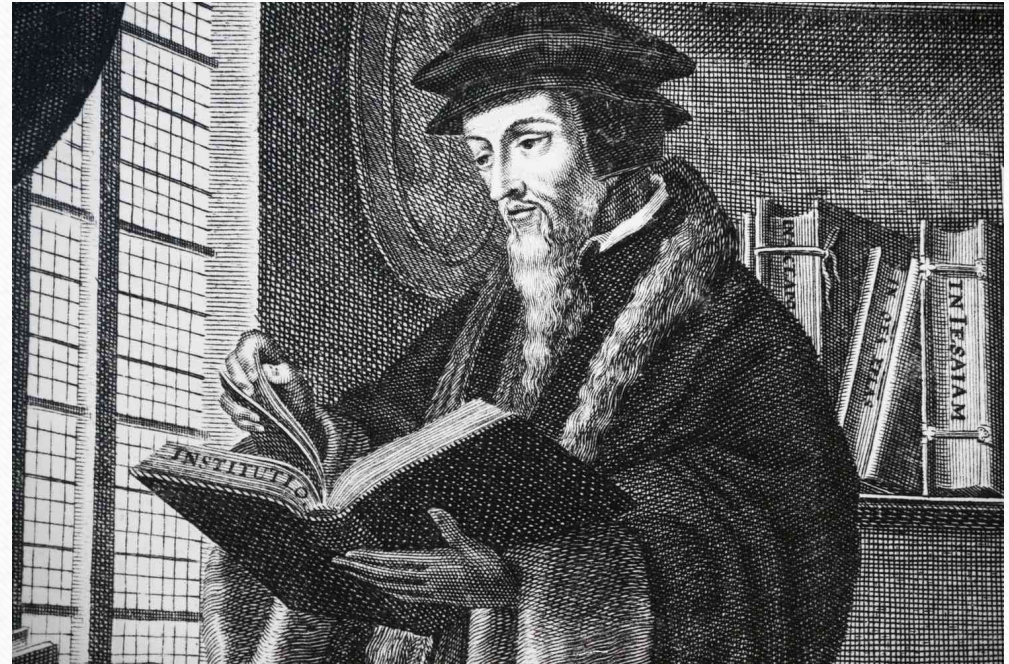
PREVIOUS WEEKS

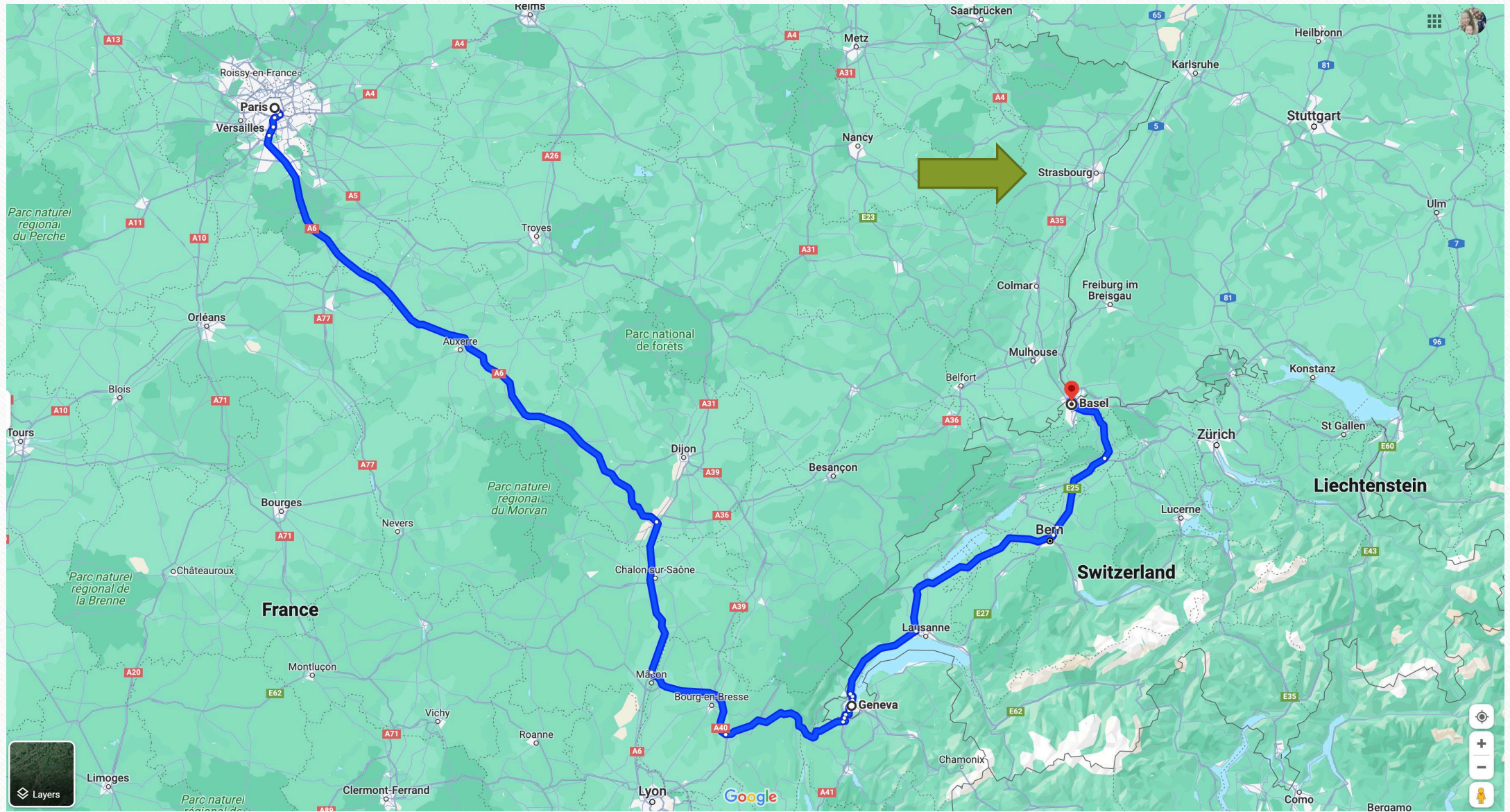
- The Church that needed to be Reformed: the Roman Catholic Church with its elaborate system of saints and sacraments
- Martin Luther: Reformer of Wittenberg who reclaimed the biblical gospel, which includes justification by grace alone through faith in Christ.
- Ulrich Zwingli: Reformer of Zürich whose efforts of reform involved bringing biblical data to bear upon *worship* in particular.



JOHN CALVIN

- *Jean Cauvin* born in Noyon of France, 1509.
- *“God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life. Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness, I was immediately inflamed with so intense a desire to make progress therein, that although I did not altogether leave off other studies, I yet pursued them with less ardour.”*





France

Switzerland

Liechtenstein

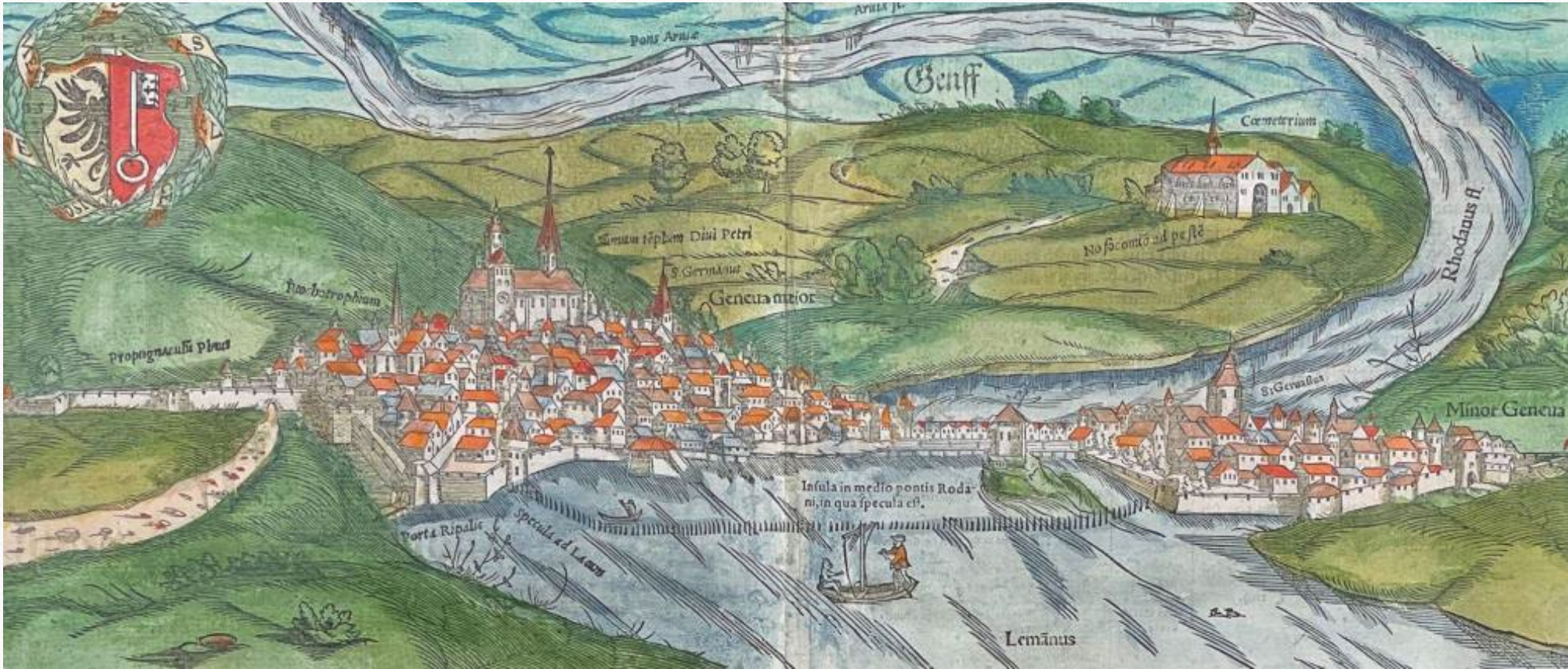


GENEVA

- *“Farel, who burned with an extraordinary zeal to advance the gospel, immediately strained every nerve to detain me. And after having learned that my heart was set on devoting myself to private studies, for which I wished to keep myself free from other pursuits, and finding that he gained nothing by entreaties, he proceeded to utter a threat that God would curse my retirement, and the tranquility of my studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance, when the necessity was so urgent. I was so struck with fear by this threat that I desisted from the journey which I had undertaken, but mindful of my natural bashfulness and timidity, I would not bring myself under any obligation to discharge any particular office.”*

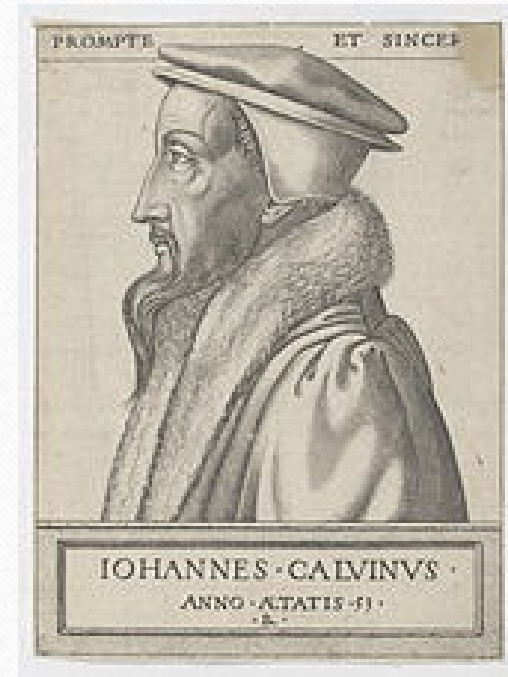


GENEVA



CATECHISM of GENEVA

- Calvin's *Catechism of the Church of Geneva, Being a Form of Instruction for Children in the Doctrine of Christ* first appeared in 1537 as an instruction for children, and was reorganized in 1542 to serve more broadly in the Church of Geneva.



M. What is the chief end of human life?

S. To know God by whom men were created.

M. What reason have you for saying so?

S. Because he created us and placed us in this world to be glorified in us. And it is indeed right that our life, of which himself is the beginning, should be devoted to his glory.

M. What is the highest good of man?

S. The very same thing.

M. Why do you hold that to be the highest good?

S. Because without it our condition is worse than that of the brutes.

M. Hence, then we clearly see that nothing worse can happen to a man than not to live to God.

S. It is so.

M. What is the true and right knowledge of God?

S. When he is so known that due honor is paid to him.

M. What is the method of honouring him duly?

S. To place our whole confidence in him; to study and serve him during our whole life by obeying his will; to call upon him in all our necessities, seeking salvation and every good thing that can be desired in him; lastly, to acknowledge him both with heart and lips, as the sole Author of all blessings.

M. He immediately added, “he descended into hell.” What does this mean?

S. That he not only endured common death, which is the separation of the soul from the body, but also the pains of death, as Peter calls them (Acts ii. 24). By this expression I understand the fearful agonies by which his soul was pierced.

M. Give me the cause and manner of this.

S. As in order to satisfy for sinners, he [summoned] himself before the tribunal of God, it was necessary that he should suffer excruciating agony of conscience, as if he had been forsaken of God, nay as it were, had God hostile to him. He was in this agony when he exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. xxvii. 46).

M. Was his father then offended with him?

S. By no means. But he exercised this severity against him in fulfilment of what had been foretold by Isaiah, that “he was smitten by the hand of God for our sins and wounded for our transgressions” (Isa. liii. 4, 5).

M. But seeing he is God, how could he be seized with any such dread, as if he were forsaken of God?

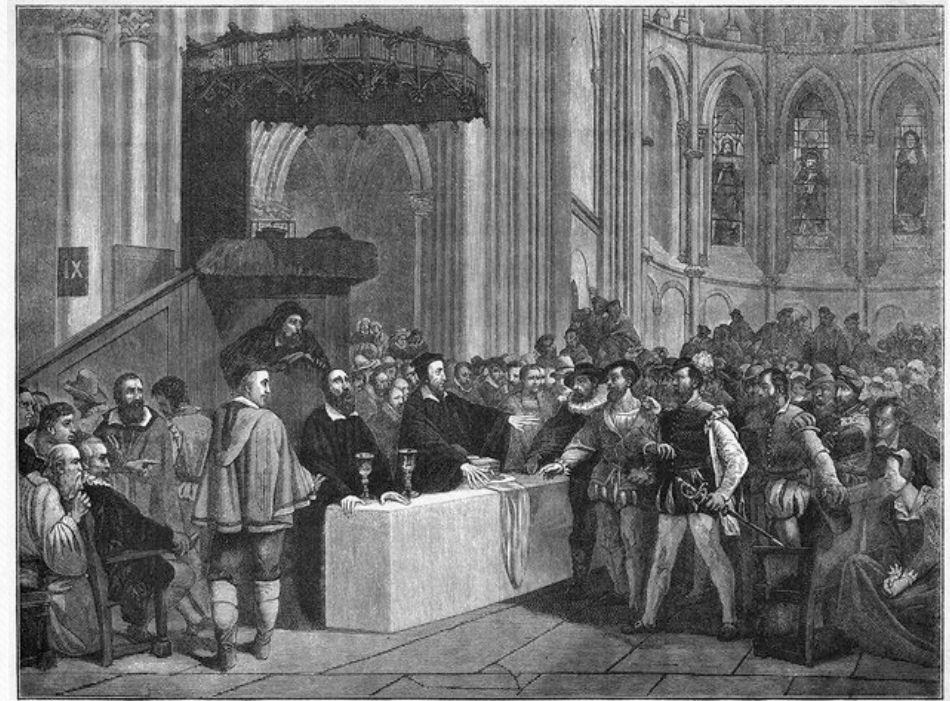
S. We must hold that it was in respect to the feelings of his human nature that he was reduced to this necessity: and that this might be, his divinity for a little while was concealed, that is, did not put forth its might.

M. How, on the other hand, is it possible that Christ, who is the salvation of the world, should have been subjected to this doom?

S. He did not endure it so as to remain under it. For though he was seized with the terrors I have mentioned, he was not overwhelmed. Rather wrestling with the power of hell he subdued and crushed it.

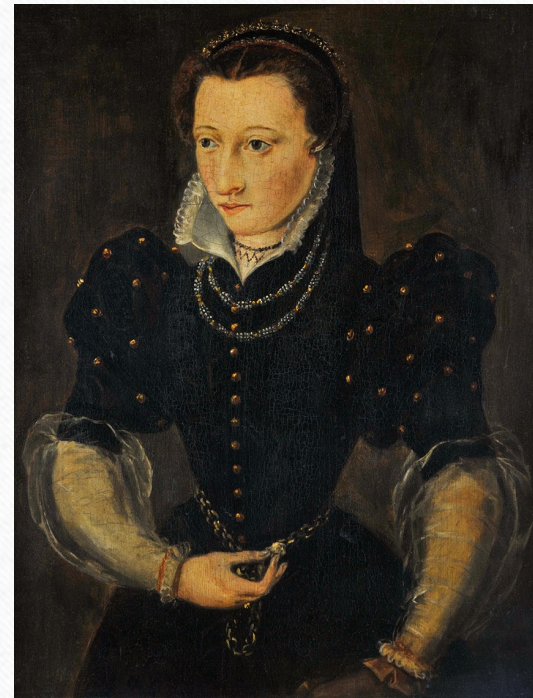
EXILE from GENEVA

- The Genevan magistrate (ca. 1538) embraced the liturgical forms of Berne, which precipitated the expulsion of Farel and Calvin from the city.
- The bulk of the following three years Calvin spent in Strasbourg.



IDELETTE de BURE

- Married August of 1540
- Idelette bore Calvin a son (James) as well as several daughters, none of whom survived infancy.
- Calvin writes with exceeding warmth concerning his wife throughout his letters.



DISCOURSE with SADOLETO

- Jacopo Sadoletto published a letter to the Genevan populace, urging them to return to the Roman Church.
- Calvin responded from Strasbourg with great zeal for the welfare of the Genevan church.



RETURN to GENEVA

To Doctor Calvin, Minister of the Gospel.

Monsieur, our good brother and special friend,—we commend ourselves very affectionately unto you, for that we are thoroughly informed that you have no other desire than the growth and advancement of the glory and honour of God, and of his sacred and holy word. On the part of our lesser, great, and general councils (which hereupon have strongly admonished us,) we pray you very earnestly that you would transfer yourself hitherward to us, and return to your old place and former ministry; and we hope, with the help of God, that this shall be a great benefit, and fruitful for the increase of the holy Evangel, seeing that our people greatly desire you among us, and will conduct themselves toward you in such sort, that you shall have occasion to rest content.—Your good friends,

The Syndics and Council of Geneva

CALVIN'S GENEVA

- Calvin's *Ordinances*, received by the magistrate only two months after his return, introduced wide-reaching reforms to the Genevan church.
- Calvin established two bodies—the Consistory and the Company of Pastors—to carry on the business of the church.



CALVIN'S MINISTRY

“The brethren we have lately elected will not be found unsuitable when they have had some practice; although he who is the most learned of them, to whom we assign precedence, is by no means popular ... He has certainly a confused manner of delivery, and were he even to pay more attention to correct and distinct utterance, his meaning would not be less obscure.”

Le baston pour chasser les Loups



MICHAEL SERVETUS

“You have doubtless heard of the name Servetus, a Spaniard, who twenty years ago corrupted your Germany with a virulent publication, filled with many pernicious errors. This worthless man, being driven out of Germany, and having concealed himself in France under a fictitious name, lately patched up a larger volume, partly from his former book, and partly from new figments which he invented ... There is no form of impiety which this monster has not raked up, as if from the infernal regions” (Calvin to ministers in Frankfurt, ca. 1553).



DEATH

- Calvin, having struggled against various health-related ailments throughout his life, passed into glory 27 May 1564.
- He was buried outside of Geneva in an unmarked grave.
- Beza: *“Thus in the same moment that day, the sun set and the greatest light which was in this world for the direction of the Church of God, was withdrawn to Heaven. We can well say that with this single man it pleased God in our time, to teach us the way both to live well and to die well.”*



