

Tape three Greg Bahnsen on the Institutes of Calvin

Prayer:

Our Lord and our God, we do thank you that you have cared for us and watched over us this day. That you have expressed your faithfulness by that care and concern and love and we ask that we begin a study of important matters that should affect our Christian lives and our understanding of the truths that you have presented in your Word, that you might forgive us of our lack of faith toward you. That you would forgive us of our transgressions of your law, that you would forgive us for not trusting you as we should and not living in an obedient way. And we do thank you that even we ask your forgiveness, we are assured of the forgiveness of our sins because you have given your only begotten Son in our behalf. We thank you for His shed blood and for His perfect life of righteousness and we do praise you for His miraculous resurrection. And we do bow before Him as the One who has ascended on high and does now rule over all of creation as the Lord. And we do pray that the Lord indeed might be pleased with the words of our mouths this night and that it might be helpful to us that we would go forth and obey you to advance the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And we do pray Father, even as we begin now that you would give us a true sense of proportion and evaluation of those things we are going to hear and discuss. That we might properly respect a saint of old, even John Calvin, as he was lead to serve in Your Church. But Father, we do pray that we might hear Calvin himself as he teaches us not to respect men but that only the Word of God and those values taught therein. And we pray these things in the Name of our Savior, Amen.

In our last meeting, we had an introductory lecture for a couple hours on the life of Calvin, so will know something about the historical setting out of which the *Institutes* was written and also the kind of man who wrote *The Institutes*. I think we all enjoyed that time together and particularly came to have an appreciation for the personality of this reformer. By no means a perfect man, flawed in some ways. And yet not at all, it seems to me, the kinds of flaws that most of his enemies make him out to have. Tonight, what I want to do is to turn from the life of Calvin, turn from that as our focus, although we will be talking about his life, and to look now at the actual writing in the origin of the book that he wrote, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. It might seem to some people that we are taking an inordinate time on introductory matters. Why couldn't we have spent ten minutes saying, "Well, John Calvin lived from such and died in such and such and that sort of thing." Well, it turns out that part of the beauty and the power of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* resides just in the fact that it was the appropriate vehicle that God in His providence used at the time of the Reformation to inspire men and to clarify their thinking about Christian theology. Much of which you are going to hear and read of in the *Institutes* over this next year as we study in this seminar, is going to appear to you perhaps, to be passe,' old hat. The important thing to remember is that at the time that the book was written, these things were not taken for granted. These things were disputed points. These things were not clearly perceived by the masses or even by those who were students of theology. And so that is why take the time to study Calvin in his setting and life and then tonight we are going to be studying *The Institutes*. They have a history of their own as well. And perhaps at the end of our time together you will appreciate why it is necessary to take time on the book itself and how it came into being.

So, I am going to begin, the first point of tonight's lecture is: The setting in life, that is, Calvin's life, the setting in life for the writing of *The Institutes*. For the sake of those who were not with us and for the refreshing of those who were, you will remember that during his student days, Calvin had made friends with Nicholas Cop in Paris, where Calvin was studying. Cop in time became the rector of the University of Paris. In 1533, Cop made the annual All Saints Day address in which he called for a more spiritual church and advocated ideas which sounded to most people, to be very much like Martin Luther's. The rumor then spread about that this address had been written upon the advice, if not actually at the dictation of one, John Calvin. Both men eventually had to flee the city to save their lives. In the spring of 1534, Calvin surrendered his clerical benefices which had financed his studies up to that point and as I told you the last time we were together, I take that and most scholars do, as the mark, the sure mark, of the time

of his conversion. That he was so adamant about the need for the Protestant faith, that he gave up his Roman Catholic privileges, that money that came in for him doing nothing, remember, just because his father had bought some church offices for him in his childhood. Kind of like buying an insurance policy for his child. You know, that is what his father did. Calvin renounced that, even though it had financed his education. The necessity of reform was now an immovable conviction of Calvin's heart, I told you last time. On May 26 Calvin was arrested however, in Noyon, his home town. He had gone back and had given up the clerical offices that his father had bought for him. But on the 26th of May, 1534, he was arrested in connection with, all we know from history is this quotation, "an uproar made in the church." Now that may very well have been an uproar caused by Calvin in the church. But, I think it is more likely, more probable that this had something to do with the prosecution of Calvin's brother, Charles. This prosecution took place at this time. He was being prosecuted for heresy. And so we have John Calvin and Charles Calvin. We tend to forget about Charley. And he got into trouble and was prosecuted for heresy and John Calvin, being there at the time, was arrested. Actually he spent two very short periods in prison and then was allowed to leave Noyon. His home town of Noyon, by the way, would later rejoice in a rumor that Calvin had died and actually go through a funeral service for him and all. You know, the remark of Mark Twain, the humorous remark about the reports of his death being exaggerated.

Question from the audience****What happened ultimately to Charles Calvin?

Answer: Um, I think he was, he died, excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church.

Question from the audience*** But, he did spend some time in prison after the prosecution?

Answer: Yes, yes.

All right, we are in 1534. In fact, I should have told you. Our last lecture was kind of an overview of Calvin's life. You know, a real sweeping sort of thing, trying to get everything in there one way or another. And now what I am doing is that I am taking a microscope and I am going to look very exactly *ij-* at these years, 1534, 35, 36. Because this is where the *Institutes* come from. So, Calvin is in his home town, he is arrested, probably along with his brother, but he is allowed to leave. Calvin then wandered from city to city under assumed names for a year's time. He returned to Paris, which was somewhat dangerous, and stayed with his former host, Etienne, de la Forge. Etienne de la Forge will play a very important role in the stimulation of the writing of *The Institutes*. You may want to note that. He stays with Etienne and numerous individuals sought him out privately while he was there in Paris. Individuals, it turns out, from all social strata. We know the names of some of the people that were his tutors at this time. An upholsterer, a milkman, students, professors. So from all strata of society and as well Calvin was sought out by people, not only individuals sympathetic to reform, but libertines and Anabaptists and anti-Trinitarians. Question for trivial pursuit sometime? Who is the most famous person to have stood Calvin up in an appointment-for a conference to discuss theology, while he was in Paris? Will you know the name? Michael Cervetus. Cervetus had written and asked for a conference with Calvin and he never showed up for it. Well, from Paris Calvin went on to three other French cities: Poties ***sp and Angalume***sp? and Orleans ***sp? always becoming wherever he went, a center for large groups of inquirers. Now during 1534 he also composed his long and first theological tract entitled, *Psychopanacea*. It sounds like some kind of horror movie. *Psychopanacea* ***sp? Does anybody know what psychopanacea means in Latin, by any chance?

Answer from the audience **** I know psycho and pan but I am not sure.

Actually in this case you have to put, no, I guess the pan would hold it. It is psychopannychia. Psychopannychia means "the sleep of the soul." Soul sleep, dealing with the view of some, not all, but some Anabaptists, that when a person dies, his soul sleeps until the resurrection. There is no intermediate state then, but only life in the body as we know. That is right, it is the position of Seventh Day

Adventists today.

Comment from the audience***Some evangelicals even hold it.

Right, and the publication in the last ten years of certain books in eschatology, more evangelicals are being tempted to it, I think. He wrote this during 1534, but interestingly, was not published until 1542. So, the *The Institutes* becomes his first, urn, published work.

Comment from the audience ***inaudible.

Yes, it is easy for those who are drawn to the unity and I think properly, to stress the unity of the human constitution and personality as made by God, to think, "Well then how can the dead, how can there be something like the soul that survives the death of the body." So the idea of soul sleep is attractive to people who would stress that. Although it is not at all of Calvin. I think it is easily demonstrated.

Now, also during 1534 Calvin wrote two prefaces for a translation of the Bible which was done by his cousin whose name was Olivetan. Actually his name was Pierre Robert. He got the nickname Olivetan. And you know how he got that nickname? By burning the midnight olive oil ~ that's true — that's what they called the oil that was used, you know, and so he was such a student working late at night, that he got to be called Olivetan.

Olivetan was preaching Reformation doctrines to a group of Waldensians. Every sentence I gives you calls for some more explanations. Who are the Waldensians? The Waldensians were organized in the 12th century, that is, in the 1100's by Peter Valdes, who was a rich merchant from the city of Lyons in France, who gave up his wealth to become a preacher against the worldliness of the Romanist clergy. The Romanist church, however, forbade him to preach, and so the followers of Valdes organized themselves outside the Roman Catholic communion and decided to ignore its decrees. That didn't go over well with the Roman Catholic Church and so grave persecution followed the Waldensians, although that didn't stop their rapid growth, as you might guess. A group organized outside the Roman Catholic Church that hears of the Protestant Reformers and the Protestant movement, would naturally be inclined in their direction and so they consulted with the Reformers and a senate was held in 1532, which was attended by 2 representatives of the Protestant Reformation movement — one whose name was Farel, you'll know him because of his keeping Calvin in Geneva, and the other Olivetan. And at that senate, the Waldensians adopted a predestinarian confession of faith and renounced all connection with Roman Catholicism.

OK, so they have a history that goes beyond this too. Much more to be said and you can profitably pursue that in the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church if you wish. Anyway, Olivetan did a translation for the Waldensians and Calvin wrote the prefaces for the Old and the New Testaments. The New Testament preface to this translation contains his first public and passionate avowal of Christian faith, the first statement that really indicates Calvin's understanding of evangelical conviction.

Alright, now we come to October of 1534, and on the 18th of October in 1534 and incident took place which made it unsafe for Calvin to stay anywhere in French jurisdiction. This you will find in your books often referred to very briefly as the placard's incident. Placards against the Roman mass — many of them written in very crude language, by the way — were affixed to many doors in Paris and elsewhere and, in fact, a certain bundle of these tracts were actually thrown into the King's bedchamber through a window. In the following months, many of those adhering to Protestantism were imprisoned, were tortured, and a good number burned at the stake because of the placards incident.

Audience question: Placards are tracts *** inaudible *** or kind of a poster?

Yeah, like a small poster.

Audience comment: They're probably like some of the anti-Catholic posters you see people picking up today.

Yeah, and so when people would get up in the morning, on their front door as they go out, there would be this nasty thing written out about the mass. 1534, October the 18th.

Audience comment: A version of the free press, huh?

Yes. Now, among those who were burned at the stake, because of the placards incident, was *** Eten de la Forge (sp?) ***, Calvin's dear friend. He died the 15th of February, 1535. And to make things even worse following this placards incident, in June of 1535 the public reputation of the Protestants was confusedly sullied by an Anabaptist revolt in the German city of Miinster. The Anabaptists took over the city. The city was laid siege by the Army and it took quite a while for it to be rescued again for an orderly civil government. These are - how am I going to put this. The Anabaptists are divided, historically, into the violent Anabaptists and the pacifistic Anabaptists. We know them mainly as pacifists today but in the early days of the Reformation movement, the Anabaptists were equally known for then-sedition and for their violence against any form of authority.

Audience question: Aren't some of them like *** inaudible *** pacifistic groups *** inaudible *** their purpose in their violent and that's just their purpose? In other words, they're pacifistic when it gets to the head and then...?

It's always possible that people will play that kind of game but I think the people here were, you know, deadly wrong, but very committed to the idea that they should overthrow the government and set up their own perfect form of government, which, of course, was communistic, socialistic; and some areas of the city allowed for free sex. They not only believed that all money was held in common, they believed that women were held in common.

Well, that Minister incident called for suppression and, of course, blackened the name of Protestantism although it wasn't Protestantism at all. It was Anabaptism that was guilty for it.

Well, Calvin had to be out of French territory and he also, as you remember from our discussion two weeks ago, was seeking a quiet place to study. He just wanted to live out the rest of his life as a good scholar publishing his books and all that. Toward the beginning of 1535, Calvin found rest and safety as well for a while in Boswell, Switzerland. And Calvin there took the assumed name of— and I want everybody to write this down because this is the all time Trivial Pursuit question for Calvinists. What was Calvin's assumed name when he wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*? Anybody know? Oh, you let me down. *** Martianus (sp?) *** Lucanius. I'm going to tell you. It's not a Latin name. It's an Anagram of a Latin name. Can anybody see what you might be able to spell in Latin if you used the letters there? Calvinus. Calvinus. He took the Latin form of his name and made an anagram out of it and he was living under that name, Martianus Lucanius in Basil Switzerland, early 1535, hoping to gain relief from the distractions of notoriety so that he could do some writing. And in Basil Lucanius read extensively in the Church fathers, mastered Hebrew, began his most important literary work, which was to be an orderly formulation of the truths of the Bible. And you know the name of that of course, *Christiane Religionis Institutio*. He wrote the dedicatory letter for his *Christiani Religionis Institutio* in August of 1535. And to whom did he address the dedication? The king of France. France, the king of France. And six months later, after writing that dedication, the book finally appeared and this is the date you want finally. We have been working up to it, March 1536 was the first edition then of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. It was a small volume at that time. The publisher was Jean Oporin and the printer, Thomas Platter. Calvin, when this book was published in March of 1536, was 27 years old. He had been converted for about 2 to 3 years. This is virtually two years from the time that he surrendered his clerical benefits in Noyon. Calvin tells us that nobody in Basil had known that he was the author of

the book and he didn't stay around long enough to be discovered. After the publication of the *Institutes*, he traveled to Italy, now under a new assumed name, the name of Charles, de est de Ville, d'es peville spelled. Nobody will ever know these things except my students in this class. But he now travels under this name to Italy in order to confer with the Duchess of Ferrara and then he returned to Noyon and settled his family estate. That would be the last time he would go to Noyon. And in August of 1536, thinking that he was the unknown author of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin was on his way to Strassbourg to take up the quiet life of the scholar and what happened to him? He decided to delay for one evening in the city of Geneva.

Question from the audience*** It was a little bit out of his way wasn't it?

Answer. It was. Remember he had to take a detour because of the warfare between, uh, oh come on, Charles. Refer to your notes from last time, I have forgotten. But, yes he had to detour a bit that took him around the lake Geneva and he stayed the evening in Geneva. Farel found out he was in the city and well, the rest of it you know. That is history. Calvin becomes the Genevan reformer.

Question from the audience. ***What was that last name again in Italy?

Answer. He went to Italy as Charles d'espeville. d'espeville.

All right, now that is the setting in life. You understand then what Calvin was doing, what his name was, where he was. And if you think about it, it should not be too difficult to see what the purpose then of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* was. At the time that Calvin composed the *Institutes*, as I told you, his friends and his fellow Protestants in France were being persecuted by the government. In particular Calvin's friends, Etienne de la Forge, had been burned at the stake for his reformation convictions. And then, of all things, and this really was the straw that broke the camel's back, the king of France attempted to whitewash this assault against the Protestants by declaring in a manifesto dated February 1 of that year, that his victims were only Anabaptists and other sideshows men. Boy that is not something you say to John Calvin. That he was an Anabaptist and that his friends were Anabaptists and sideshows men. To Calvin they were, as he said, "faithful and saintly persons, nothing less than holy martyrs for the true faith of Christ." And so Calvin resolved that would not bear in silence the king's adding slander now to the cruelty toward those who favored reformation in the church, and it was at this point then he apparently resolved that he would publish *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

I would like to read for you again that portion from the preface to Calvin's Commentary on Psalms. I didn't bring the commentary. It is more conveniently reproduced here in this book of selections by John Dillonberger that I encourage you to pick up if you wish. But I want to remind you that autobiographical account here in the preface to the Commentary on the Psalms of what he says about his writing of the *Institutes*. He says, "But lo, whilst I lay hidden at Basil and known only to a few people, many faithful and holy persons were burnt alive in France. And the report of these burnings having reached foreign nations, they excited the strongest disapprobation among a great part of the Germans whose indignation was kindled against the authors of such tyranny. In order to allay this indignation, certain wicked and lying pamphlets were circulated stating that none were treated with such cruelty but Anabaptist and seditious persons, who by their perverse ravings and false opinions were overthrowing not only religion but also all civil order." What had happened just two months before of course? The Munster incident in Germany where the Anabaptists and sideshows men had to be overthrown. I continue the quote. "Observing that the object which these instruments of the court aimed at by their disguises was not only that the disgrace of shedding so much innocent blood might remain buried under the false charges and calumnies which they brought against the holy martyrs after their death, but also that afterwards they might be able to proceed to the utmost extremity in murdering the poor saints without exciting compassion towards them in the breast of any, it appeared to me that unless I opposed them to the utmost of my ability, my silence could not be vindicated from the charge of cowardice and treachery. This was the consideration which induced me to publish my *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. My

objects were first to prove that these reports were false and calumnious and thus to vindicate my brethren whose death was precious in the sight of the Lord. And next, as the same cruelties might very soon after be exercised against many unhappy individuals, foreign nations might be touched with at least some compassion towards them and solicitude about them. When it was then published, it was not that copious and labored work which it is now but only a small treatise containing a summary of the principle truths of the Christian religion and it was published with no other design than that men might know what was the faith held by those whom I saw basely and wickedly defamed by those *** flagigeous (sp?) *** and perfidious flatterers."

Strong words, obviously, but in these we find the specific, as stated, explicit purpose for the *Institutes* in the author's own words. "One," he says, "to vindicate my brethren and to keep other nations from being inclined toward such persecutions." To vindicate these men is not being, as they were slandered to be, Anabaptists and seditious persons. And then secondly, he uses this word, "a treatise containing a / summary of the Christian truths of the Christian religion published with no other design than that men /K might know what was the faith held by those." And so we find two expressed aims for the *Institutes*, to vl/vindicate the martyrs of the Reformation in France who had been falsely accused of sedition and protect X others from similar treatment, and then, secondly to summarize the truths of the Christian faith held by / those adhering to the Reformation. Very briefly put^TheJnstituies_wa.s ajheolog^ treatise^tha^ political point. Just the sort of thing you would expect. Evangelicals would be clamoring to read today a "theological treatise with a political point. It was a political apology putjgajngtthe background of theological exposition. " a

Now, Calvin's admonition addressed to King Francis was written with a burning eloquence. How many of you, by the way, read his address to the King of France? OK, we really must in addition to the assignment for next time. Do read that so that you get some sense of what I'm talking about tonight; an admonition that was just eloquent and burning in its fervor and I think it is likely that Calvin had serious hopes of persuading the King. I want to look at something, here. In the edition that we are using, if you have it, turn to page 31 in the prefatory address to King Francis of France. Page 31 would be the very end of the address. And the paragraph actually begins in the last line of page 30. "The wicked poison of our calumniators has, O King, in its many details, been sufficiently disclosed that you may not incline an ear credulous beyond measure to their slanders. I fear even that too many details have been included, since this preface has already grown almost to the size of a full-scale apology. In it I have not tried to formulate a defense, but merely to dispose your mind to giving a hearing to the actual presentation of our case. Your mind is now indeed turned away and estranged from us, even enframed, I may add, against us," but now listen to this, "but we trust that we can regain your favor, if in a quiet, composed mood you will once read this our confession, which we intend in lieu of a defense before your majesty." It's amazing. He says, "We trust we can regain your favor." But he says, it is conditioned upon something: "If you will but once read our confession in quiet. If you will just pay attention and get away from these wires."

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referendums or debates such as Luther expected when he posted the 95 theses, to so change the opinion of the scholarly community or raise such a fuss among the masses that the government might have to exceed to your power and influence. But Calvin you see, went right to the source. He knew that the persecution would not stop in France unless the king himself could be appealed to.

Comment from the audience** Even after the king said what he said, he still felt as though he had to try.

Answer: Oh yes. And I am going to say something in just a minute. I think Calvin felt there was ah, um, does anyone dare say chance when you are discussing Calvin, that there was some likelihood that they could win him back over.

Comment from the audience ***inaudible.

No, it is. I want to finish reading this because it is a marvelous ending. But let me tell you what I am referring to. Calvin had these serious hopes of persuading the king because a few months earlier Frances had invited Bucer and Melancthon to Paris to advise him about the reforming of the French Church. That is how fickle he was. He was killing the Protestants and at the same time writing letters to Bucer, who was of course Calvin's most respected mentor and to Melancthon who was the man on whose shoulders Luther's mantle fell, to come to France to advise him about the reformation of the church. And so Calvin knowing this, was hopeful that maybe the king could be turned around.

Comment from the audience** I thought that it did not work with Bucer and Melancthon, I thought.

No, the didn't go eventually.

Let me finish the end of this now. He says, "After we trust that we can regain your favor if you will just listen quietly." He says, "Suppose however the whisperings of the malevolent so fill your ears that the accused have no chance to speak for themselves. But those savage furies, while you connive at them, ever rage against us with imprisonings, scourgings, rackings, maimings and burnings." That is the kind of age he lived in. "Then we will be reduced to the last extremity even as sheep destined for the slaughter. Yet this will so happen that in our patience we may possess our souls and may await the strong hand of the Lord which will surely appear in due season, coming forth armed to deliver the poor from their affliction and also to punish their despisers who now exalt with such great assurance." Boy, I love that. What Calvin says, he says, "I know we can regain your favor if you will just quietly read what we actually have to say and not to listen to these liars. But if you won't, then we will reduced to the last extremity. We will go to death as sheep to the slaughter. But be assured, the hand of Lord, the arm of the Lord is not shortened and He will arise and He will vindicate our cause." Boy, in that of course he was not inspired, but he rises to the point of an OT prophet who is willing to call down the powers that be if they opposed the King of heaven. But, now this is the last paragraph. Just a second. "May the Lord, the King of Kings, establish your throne in righteousness and your dominion and equity, most illustrious king." Why is Frances persecuting the Protestants? Because they are seditious men. They want to overthrow the government. Calvin says, "If you will just listen, you will know that that is not true. But if you won't listen, then God will vindicate us." And then he ends by saying, "And may your throne be established, Oh illustrious King." Does that sound like a seditious man? He says, "We will go to death for the sake of our faith and God will vindicate us. But let your throne be established." Many of the followers of Calvin and I count myself among them today, are sorely tempted to forget the attitude of that last paragraph. We want to stick our finger in the face of the powers that be and tell them off. But we don't want to go on and say, "Let God establish your throne. We are willing abide His time."

Comment from the audience *** inaudible

Exactly, listen to this sentence.

Comment from the audience****inaudible

Oh, exactly, listen to this. It would be fun to write this out and leave the blank where I am going to put it {<C and ask modern day Calvinists to fill in the blank. Calvin says, urn. "Then we will be reduced to the last ^ extremity even as" then fill in the blank. Calvin says, "If you won't hear us then we will be taken to our last resort and what is our last resort?" And today we would say, "Take your guns and let's fight." Calvin says, "No, in our last resort will be to go like sheep to the slaughter. We are willing to die. If you are going to persecute us, then let it be, but God, God, will overthrow you. But we pray for the establishment of your in righteousness, in righteousness." You see, always there the, the barb. "We don't pray that you will be established in your wickedness, but that you will be established in righteousness."

Comment from the audience****Would you say then in that particular part where he says ****inaudible*** or rather when he goes on to say that ***inaudible*** that the means of the Lord could be an armed army for example, another king or whatever?

Answer Sure, sure. It could be. But Calvin I am absolutely confident and I think we will see as we read, Calvin would never have raised a grass roots rebellion against the government, never. Calvin's doctrine was that others who in authority must take the lead in fighting those who are illegally persecuting the Protestants. That is to say, in submitting to the lower powers that be, as they fight against the higher powers that be, one could righteously take up arms. But one could not just raise a revolt against them.

Comment from the audience* **How about the other way around?

Answer. Well, in the case of the king, there is no higher. But, certainly the higher could direct the lower to knock off the persecution. But Calvin also felt that if the estates and governors and other sorts of men were, would take up a position against the king that the masses then would be in a position where they had to choose which power they would follow.

Comment from the audience****Say we would be in a position where we have say lower authority where you have say, magistrates in a local community that want to say take over that area for reformation and it is the people who are under those local authorities that should submit to those authorities and say arm themselves and resist.

Sure, sure. Yeah it is the King of France were to.

Comment****Say if the king of France came to our city and the local authorities took up arms to fight the king off.

Yeah, to defend ourselves. Calvin would feel that you had the right to do that.

Comment from the audience****inaudible The southern states seceding from the US during the Civil War, would Calvin approve?

Well, in the case of US history, urn, first of all, slavery was never the, anything but the propaganda rationale for the North's position in the War Between the States. After all, Lincoln didn't emancipate them until three years into the War which is a strange thing to do if that is the reason you are fighting. But, the southern states plead as their cause and you can read Dabney's *Defense of Virginia* for instance, plead not so much that the lower magistrates lead them against the federal government, but rather they plead that they voluntarily entered this confederation and that the confederation was now breaking the terms of the covenant and that therefore they had the right to voluntarily withdraw. And so, they really plead something akin to urn, the Declaration of Independence. That you are the covenant breakers and therefore we are gaining our liberty that way rather than that we have lower magistrates to follow. I don't want to get too far into US history. That is pretty far afield from Calvin

****inaudible comment from the audience****

It would be difficult however, to establish at this time that the king of France had made a constitutional commitment to the people. Had he of course, you could appeal to the constitution against the king. But remember we are still in the 1500's. We aren't that far along in political history.

Comment You would not label Calvin as a pacifist?

Answer. No, no not a pacifist. It is interesting that Calvin addresses the king with formal courtesy,

calling him his majesty and that sort of thing. And what he suggests actually is that the king, I mean this is an old ploy. And I do believe it is a ploy. I think Calvin was doing it righteously and all, but Calvin suggests, "You have received bad advice. King, you are not such a bad guy, but you know, these guys who were talking to you, they are a bunch of liars." Listen to this. Page 11 of our edition. Calvin says, "For this reason, most invincible king, I not unjustly ask you to undertake a full inquiry into this case which until now has been handled, we may even say, tossed about, with no order of law, and with violent heat rather than with judicial gravity. And do not think that I am here preferring my own personal defense, thereby to return safely to my native land, even though I regard my country with much natural affection as becomes me. As things now stand I do not much regret being excluded." Ha,Ha. "Rather I embrace the common cause of all believers, that of Christ Himself, a cause completely torn and trampled //; in your realm today, lying as it were utterly forlorn, more through the tyranny of certain Pharisees than \Jr with your approval." You see what he is doing. He is buttering up the king. He is saying, "King, if you knew better, if you just read, you know, the actual position, I know that you wouldn't do this. But those Pharisees and liars who are slandering us, they are the ones who are causing all this persecution."

Comment from the audience ***In other words, if you are really smart enough, you would be on my side.

That is right, "If you knew better, you would be. If you knew better you would certainly side with us." Of course, having expressed such deference to the king, he expresses scorching and indignant denunciations of the cruel persecutors who he says, "Inflamed the king and people with hatred against the evangelicals by their malicious lies." Turn back to the very beginning of the preparatory address on page 9. And urn, he says, "When I first set my hand to this work nothing was farther from my mind most glorious king than to write something that might afterward be offered to your majesty. My purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal of religion might be shaped to true godliness. And I undertook this labor especially for our French countrymen very many of whom I knew to be hungering and thirsting for Christ. But I saw very few who had duly imbued with an even a slight knowledge of Him. The book itself witnesses that this was my intention, adapted as it is to a simple and you may say elementary form of teaching. But I perceive that the fury of certain wicked persons has prevailed so far in your realm that there is no place in it for sound doctrine. Consequently it seemed to me that I should be doing something worthwhile if I both gave instruction to them and made confession before you with the same work. From this you may learn the nature of the doctrine against which those madmen burn with rage who today disturb your realm with fire and sword. And indeed I shall not fear to confess that here is contained almost the sum of that very doctrine which they shout must be punished by prison, exile, proscription and fire and be exterminated on land and sea. Indeed, I know with what horrible reports they have filled your ears and mind to render our cause as hateful as possible to you. But, as fits your clemency, you ought to weigh the fact that if it is sufficient merely to make accusations, then no innocence will remain either in words or in deeds." It is evident that the charge which Calvin was exercised to refute was especially the charge of political treason. Let me continue here on page 10. He says in this paragraph at about eight lines down.

"It is sheer violence that bloody sentences are meted out against this doctrine without a hearing. It is fraud that it is undeservedly charged with treason and villainy. So that no one may think that we are wrongly complaining of these things you can be our witness, most noble king, with how many lying slanders it is daily traduced in your presence. It is as if this doctrine looked to no other end than to wrest the scepters from the hands of kings, to cast down all courts in judgments, to subvert all orders in civil governments, to disrupt the peace and quiet of the people, to abolish all laws, to scatter all lordships and possessions and in short, to turn everything upside-down." That is what Calvin wanted the king to know was not true. He said, "You are being told daily that we want to overthrow governments."

Turn to the very end of the dedicatory address. Page 30. He says, "But I returned to you oh king. May you be not at all moved by those vain accusations with which our adversaries are trying to inspire terror in you. That by this new gospel, for so they call it, men strive and seek only after the opportunity for sedition's and impunity for all crimes." Then he says, "For our God is not the author of division, but of

peace. And the Son of God is not the minister of sin, for He has come to destroy the devil's works," quoting scripture of course in three places, "and we are unjustly charged too with intentions of such a sort that we have never given the least suspicion of them. We are I suppose, contriving the overthrow of kingdoms. We, from whom not one seditious word was ever heard." All right, so you get the point clearly from these quotations and my exposition, that Calvin began to write a short treatise in theology for those who had very little knowledge of Christian doctrine. And then with the report of the burnings in France and the persecution of the Protestants he decided that he must write to the king of France and set forth not only the summary of doctrine, but a confession of faith for the Protestants to show that these charges of sedition and treason were nothing but lies.

Question from the audience* **Was the reason the king was so misinformed that the only information that he got was filtered through the Catholic Church?

Answer. Yes, I think that is true. I don't think that that exculpates him from having found out the truth about the Protestants. But, I do think it is true that most of what he thought of them was given to him by the enemies of the Protestants and so he a very bad opinion of them. That is true.

Question***Was he indeed an evil man?

Answer. King Frances? King Frances, like most of the monarchs of that day, was a man concerned most of all with maintaining his position.

Question***Social order really rested on the institutional church?

Answer. Yes, if the Roman Catholic Church should be disrupted then that meant that the masses were not kept under control. You can understand why Machiavelli would say that religion was a good thing if it was used to keep the masses in line. Because that is what kings thought of their kissing the pope's ring. They thought they were actually buying a peaceful and tranquil rule, because the popes, through the threat of excommunication and penance and that sort of thing, would force the masses to obey their monarch.

Comment from the audience* **The church then was in the eyes of the people, a benevolent dictator?

Answer. No. Martin Luther was terrorized by the church and its teachings of a cruel Christ who would, who demanded penance and remember that Luther was just again terrorized of soul that he had not done enough penance, had not bruised his body enough to gain the forgiveness of Christ. The church was the kind of church which in its crassest moments, could sell salvation for your dead mother. If you would buy an indulgence for your mother, she would be let out of purgatory. Well, you know, the masses are as stupid as people often think. The masses had figured out that well, "if all it takes is a word from the pope to let my mother out of purgatory a few years early, why doesn't the pope give a general pardon to all, so that none have to go to purgatory whatsoever?" And so the church was I think seen in its teaching and practice as I have just explained it, as a cruel institution, as a harsh institution anyway. And then on top of that, the men who were supposed to be the godly pious men of the society, the priests, were known to be womanizers, drunkards, men who bought church office. Who were interested in nothing but being lazy and indulgent. They gathered great riches. They would shove the peasants off the road as their little thrones were carried by.

Comment from the audience*** But the general population was still deeply loyal to the church?

Answer. You would have to distinguish two senses of the word "loyal" for that sentence to be true. Not inwardly loyal because they did not respect and honor the church. But it was an external conformity for fear that they would sent to hell.

Comment from the audience*** Did they think as Martin Luther, that any viciousness upon them by the church was less than what they deserved?

Answer. No, they were pretty well taught that they deserved it. And I guess then that we as Protestants would have to say that they deserved it. I mean, hell will be much worse than what Martin Luther went through. The problem was that they were taught that if they went through their own daily hell now, they would not have to go eternally to hell. The masses believed that. Yeah, they believed that they deserved it.

Comment from the audience****The church has brought hell to earth.

Answer. Yeah, instead of bringing heaven to earth, they had brought hell to earth.

Comment from the audience* **inaudible.

Answer. Well, they had a real, you know, case to be made publicly against the Romanists and so people would hear them.

Well, after Calvin explains then that he wants to refute this charge of political treason, he boldly claims that because the evangelical teaching is that of the Word of God, it cannot be overthrown. Page 12, just a little below the middle Calvin says, "But our doctrine must tower unvanquished above all the glory and above all the might of the world. For it is not of us but of the living God and of His Christ Whom the Father has appointed king to rule from sea to sea and from the rivers even to the ends of the earth. And He is so to rule as to smite the whole earth with its iron and brazen strength. With its gold and silver brilliance, shattering it with the rod of its mouth as an earthen vessel, just as the prophets have prophesied concerning the magnificence of His reign."

Calvin was a post-millennialist. I say that without any embarrassment as a scholar. Calvin says, "our doctrine will tower unvanquished, regardless of what you do, because the prophets have said that Jesus is the King of Kings and He will rule from sea to sea. Our cause will be vindicated. Our doctrine is right because it comes from God." Then, one by one at this point Calvin reviews and refutes the charges currently being laid against the Protestants. And if you go through your edition you will see this. He begins on page 14. Charges of antagonists refuted. Newness. The first charge is: the Protestant reformation is novel in what it says. Secondly, it is uncertain. It makes the Word of God uncertain. And then the Roman Catholic Church plead the value of miracles. They have no miracles and we have miracles. Follow us. Calvin's response was to that. "Yes, Satan and all his magicians have miracles if that's what you want."

Next, the charge that the church fathers opposed the reformation teaching. I want you to see how Calvin replies to this. Do we have time to read the whole thing? Yes. Let me begin on page 18, "Moreover, they unjustly set the ancient fathers against us (I mean the ancient writers of a better age of the church) as if in them they had supporters of their own impiety. If the contest were to be determined by patristic authority, the die of victory — to put it very modestly ~ would turn to our side. Now, these fathers have written many wise and excellent things. Still, what commonly happens to men has befallen them too, in some instances. For these so-called pious children of theirs, with all their sharpness of wit and judgment and spirit, worship only the faults and errors of the fathers. The good things that these fathers have written they either do not notice, or misrepresent or pervert. You might say that their only care is to gather dung amid gold." Ha ha ha ha ha!!!! He says, "If you want to go to the fathers, we can win the battle," but the amazing thing is, their opponents keep going to dung instead of the gold of the church fathers. "Then, with a frightful to-do, they overwhelm us as despisers and adversaries of the fathers! But we do not despise them; in fact, if it were to our present purpose, I could with no trouble at all prove that the greater part of what we are saying today meets their approval. Yet we are so versed in their writings as to remember always that all things are ours, to serve us, not to lord it over us, and that we all belong

to the one Christ, whom we must obey in all things without exception. He who does not observe this distinction will have nothing certain in religion, inasmuch as these holy men were ignorant of many things, often disagreed among themselves, and sometimes even contradicted themselves." And then jump down a few sentences. "But if they love to allegorize so much, why do they not accept the apostles (rather than anyone else) as the 'fathers' who have set the landmarks that is its unlawful to remove?"

What Calvin is saying, here ~ I mean, he's going on and on and using some dramatic language ~ but what Calvin is saying is, "Look the fathers, in their best days, supported us in our doctrine but it's the 'apostles who are our church fathers," and that's the real issue here. The fathers have to be judged to have contradicted themselves and to have made mistakes. We still think the fathers are, for the most part, on our side but the important thing is that the apostles are on our side.

Turn to page 21, there about three quarters down, "They forgot this limit when they established so many constitutions, canons, and doctrinal decisions, without any word of God." Page 22, in the very middle, "All the fathers with one heart have abhorred and with one voice have detested the fact that God's Holy Word has been contaminated by the subtleties of sophists and involved in the squabbles of dialecticians." You want to learn something from the fathers? Calvin says, "Learn this. The fathers abhorred the idea that people would depart from the Holy Scriptures," and to descend to the level of the debaters and the 0^ sophists of their day. And so we just can't stress enough. In our day, and if you're going to get a i yy^historical, a proper, perception of Calvin, I can't stress enough as your teacher that Calvin's burning, ' (fundamental, methodological conviction was *sola Scriptura*.

OK, the next claim against the Protestants that he takes up is how the Catholics appeal to custom against truth, and then he speaks of their errors about the nature of the church, how they say it is dangerous to depart from the Church. And then they claim that (page 27) tumults alleged to result from the Reformation preaching. The Catholics said, "Look at all these bad things that happened when the Reformation preaching comes about." So Calvin, you see, in this prefatory address, goes one by one through the various charges made against the Protestants, and one by one he refutes them. Novelty, disrespect of the fathers, schism, and finally sedition. He answers that.

t Now, *the Institutes* ~ I've really tried to stress something which you do not get in even many seminaries "today, and that's a perception of the political purpose for which Calvin wrote; and yet, having said that, I do want to emphasize that the *Institutes* was more than a plea from immunity from persecution for those who were holding the opinions expressed in Calvin's book. It was also a book of religious instruction for inquirers. ^-"^ "~~" ---■ _____■ ■ *

At the outset of the dedicatory epistle, Calvin explained that the book had originally started to satisfy multitudes hungering and thirsting after Christ but who had little knowledge of him. That's in the very first paragraph of this. So apparently Calvin had already begun either to outline or to write and compose the *Institutes* before he heard of the persecutions in France, and so he wanted to write, basically, a <^, summary of Christian doctrine.

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Audience question: Isn't that what the content represents? and the other purpose?

It comes to. It comes to represent that. I'm going to talk about the development and evolution of the *Institutes*. The content that he stresses, eventually, is that, but the beginning and the end are a political apologetic. The dedicatory epistle which, you know, pretty thick as you have already seen. In the last two chapters of the original edition have a political purpose. And from that point he begins to expand and most all the expansion is in the theological rather than the political realm. After starting the work Calvin received news of the firey persecutions that his brothers in the faith and thus he says that he then purposed to direct this work to the king. He decided he was going to write it not only for his, not for Calvin's followers, but for the reformation followers in France. But, now he is going to write it for the king of France. And accordingly the catechatical and the apologetical elements are interwoven

throughout. Both of those are to be found. Calvin calls the work in one sentence, a confession, speaking in behalf of a resolute group of men united in belief for which they are being condemned to death. He calls it a confession. But he also calls it a summary of Christian truth. Now, later editions of *The Institutes* however place greater emphasis upon instruction than upon political defense. Most of the amplification and most of the reordering of the materials by Calvin serve the purpose of theological teaching and clarification rather than political persuasion. Indeed, the sections of political apology and especially the dedicatory letter to the king are virtually untouched as the subsequent editions are written. So you see the point that Calvin has this work here and when he goes back to fine tune, he pays attention to the theological expositions. The political parts are done really. That is the window dressing and that is the setting in life purpose for it. But then he wants to get to something that he thinks is of deeper significance and that is expanding the theology.

Question from the audience*** inaudible

Answer. I should be able to answer that question but as I search for a minute I am not sure.

Question** * *inaudible

Answer. I would not be surprised. When you look at the size of it and what kings have tendency to be interested in, he may not have. He may have given it to one of his advisors and said, "Hey, give me a synopsis of this." And of course the advisor's synopsis would not have looked very favorable.

Question***Calvin did believe in the separation of church and state?

Answer. Oh yes. Remember I said last time that he was the original Western defender and expositor of that.

Question*** Did he therefore address the political problems just simply because of the persecution that he was under?

Answer. That stimulated him to address the political problem, the persecution.

Question**** He would have kept as separate though?

Answer. He probably would have had that as a subordinate chapter along the way. But it takes on a greater significance and prominence in the work because of the situation.

* * * end of side two of tape three* * * * *