

preaching position. After 1555 he was hardly questioned in detail about ideas and their implementation. His interest in the city being "Christian" led to the suggestion of some sharp practices and things he deemed beyond the pale of Christianity he sought to root out. This has allowed history to offer some cruel characterizations of him not generally supported by the facts.

In time Calvin will get a "big-brother" tag from the anti-calvinistic thinkers. But as time went, governmental interference in private life in Geneva was probably less than that in many other places..particularly those under the Roman rule. Geneva was a small, tightly-knit community and in such settings every action is exaggerated, whether good or evil. Those wishing to read an interesting account in the mode of historical fiction will find in Norton-Taylor's: JOHN CALVIN; GOD'S MAN IN GENEVA.

The Spiritual Program

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Calvin's chief interest, as we have noted, was spiritual. He arranged for a preaching service in every church at 9 AM daily. While he favored a weekly communion, the council leaned towards a quarterly communion for the people. In most churches a monthly service was held...some sort of compromise. Calvin favored church organization with an oversight of elders and Calvin sought to minimize the clergy laity distinctions so heavy in Rome. This he did by having all elders as equals and referring to them as the "VENERABLE COMPANY" (The parity of elders is a reformed position). He insisted on church officers knowing the faith and these were thoroughly catechized and instructed. He also argued for the impeccability of their moral behavior. In his spiritual program, Calvin met many foes (the famous "libertines", for example) but of them all, none found a moral judgment against him. His moral purity was some kind of a watchword and in an age when men were not well known for sobriety or keeping their word, Calvin concentrated on both. When the plague came to Geneva, although his own health was always on the weak side, he elected to remain in the city and minister to the people, rather than leaving until health should return. He could easily have lectured on the "victorious life" from a reformed posture, of course.