

## THE GENERATIONS OF THE FAITH

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy  
Norwich, Vermont

"He was a man of battle and of creative genius, a man who could tear apart and could build up, a man endowed with as vigorous an intellect, as lofty a conscience and, above all, as high a courage as the human race has ever produced."

This has been said of Jean Calvin by a modern unbeliever, by a humanist. It is sheer nonsense, for the human race never produces anything. Quite the contrary, *cette race maudite* of Adam is itself a miserable product of the earth unless God recreates its members into stars in his sky. In this sense Calvin's first biographer, Theodor Beza, answered the question why we should read his book on John Calvin: because we should deserve to be plunged back into Egyptian darkness, if we ceased to look up to the stars which have led us out of it. Not as a product of race or earth, but as a star in the sky, as one witness in the cloud of witnesses, let Jean Calvin speak here today to us from his translation of our faith, as it dominated the Western World from 1536 to 1564, and let us speak of its retranslation among us in our own times by the effort of our friend Battles whom we salute today. For if this book comes to life, its author springs to life. More than most books and men, Calvin and the author of the 'Institutes' are one. A man of slime and clay is transformed into a star of history by becoming voice; in this manner his voice and his sufferings become a word of God for one time: each generation needs such a voice or choir of voices in God's economy of salvation. We could know this ourselves. But from our scientific cleverness we often suppress our own experiences. Must not fathers speak to their sons of their encounter with God? The book of Genesis was written out of such experience in the writers' own generations. Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, these four generations had

become vocal in a grandiose, painful quartet of voices. They stand before us to this day. So overwhelming was this revelation to the contemporaries that the whole Bible took the same shape. From his heart, the author of Genesis knew how God creates and so he wrote the creation story from experience: in six toledoth, six generations, the heavens and the earth also were created by God's Word. Biblical criticism has ignored these empirical origins of the Pentateuch.<sup>1</sup> But how could I otherwise speak of "the twentieth century" instead of myriads of seconds? Calvin himself tells us the same truth. He wrote: "rightly does king David put the times of his youth into the plural. For, without God, there only are incoherent moments of time." I remain ephemeral as long as I babble myself. The little devils sell me short. Only God's commands can create units of time, id est, epochs, ages, generations, centuries, eras. As you know in the Bible, 'eternity' is not timelessness, but is literally, the recurrence of epochs.<sup>2</sup> God creates the epochs by our obedience. Calvin thunders: "La première règle c'est que nous aions la bouche close et qu'il n'ait que lui qui parle et que nous ouvrons les oreilles pour écouter. Nous ne sommes que ses organes et ses instruments." Only God's word creates that which we may call our times, our epoch, our age, our century. When we let God speak and listen and behave as his tools and instruments, only then can the times coalesce. "Dieu seul règne et tout le monde soit assujettie à lui, brief qu'il ni ait que sa parole, qui ait toute audience, sans que personne y ajoute un seul mot." (69, 446) God alone is king and the whole world is subjected to him, in short, nothing but God's word should be heard, without anybody adding one single word. Through Jean Calvin's subjection, the word of God was king for one generation: it reigned for the second day of the Protestant Reformation in the form and shape of the 'Institutes' of Calvin's personal piety, humbly generalized by him into 'Institutes of the Christian Religion'. Every generation is a word of God, a line of God's great chant and Calvin is the pentameter as Luther is the hexameter in the distich of the Reform. Because Calvin was the second line in God's couplet of the Reformation his book for the king of France was a task like that of St. Luke when he dedicated his book to his Excellency the Lord

<sup>1</sup>Only Benno Jacob (1934) clearly stated the true relation of "Samuel" and "Kings" to the books of Moses in his masterful commentary to "Genesis."

<sup>2</sup>The liturgical phrase "world without end" is a totally unwarranted mistranslation. Vide my *Soziologie* II, Die Vollzahl der Zeiten 1958 S. 384ff.

Theophilus. Luther had been the great occasionalist, the speaker and writer of the kairos, of the appointed hour. Luther is a journeyman of the Spirit. Luther came forward with his 95 theses because the salesman of indulgences passed his house in Wittenberg bodily and presently. And Luther remained the man of the hour, of the inspired moment, of the table talks. Aye, did he not boast that the great light of 'sola fide', by faith alone, from Habakuk II, had flashed through his mind "auf dem Gang," i.e. in the bathroom? Calvin was required to condense Luther's daily beads of faith into the rosary of his one book. In moving terms, Jean Calvin has bowed to the miracles of God's timing so that Luther's experience of this free and open and surprising economy of salvation was enshrined in the system of Calvin's 'Institutes'. His humility in this respect places his textbook outside the range of all the other academic or scholastic textbooks. Calvin, most successful systematizer, preacher, textbook writer, reverently placed his own skills in the second line of the couplet, in the second generation of the reformed faith. For he humbly wrote: "not the routines of preaching convert. God's ordinary economy and dispensation by which he calls his own children follow no unvarying rule. He may use other ways. Certainly God has used many another way of giving a man true knowledge of his maker by inward means, that is by some illumination of the Spirit apart from the medium of preaching." In these lines the teacher and unexcelled systematizer, Jean Calvin, voluntarily has taken second seat in the economy of salvation, just as Paul did when he, the greatest of teachers, cried out "Scio cui credidi." I know to whom I have given my heart. The child Jesus was not a prophet, not a teacher or rabbi. For this reason, after Christ, all we professional people have to be given the slip time and again lest God become predictable. We shall not come to the end of this memorial hour before recognising that Calvin's notorious doctrine of predestination represents a parallel reverence before the economy of faith, parallel to the one of which you have just heard here in his refusal of accepting any foreknowable monopoly for preaching or teaching. Mostly the interplay of the successive generations of the spirit is glossed over, as it is glossed over for Peter and Mark, Paul and Luke, the Aramaic and the Greek Matthew. Luther and Calvin are lumped together as the reformers, or we hear that Calvin came a little later than Luther, and it is true that the 'Insti-

tutes' were written nineteen years after the 95 theses. Figured mechanically, 'nineteen times one' is not impressive. But it is as with Hegel and Marx. Only 17 years separated Hegel's climax and Marx's Communist Manifesto. Nevertheless Marx lived a whole epoch apart from Hegel. Calvin was separated from Luther and Melancthon not by nineteen years but by an abyss. The abyss between Hegel and Marx obviously was the proletarian disillusion with the bourgeois ideas, a disillusion of which Hegel had no inkling but which visited Marx. The abyss between Luther and Melancthon on the one side and Calvin on the other, was opened in the peasants' war of 1525 and the anabaptist movements, reaching its depth in the New Jerusalem of the anabaptists of Münster in 1535. Please, present to your mind this fact: Calvin began to think, to formulate, to write after the potential abuses and limitations of the Reformation herself shone forth. Not from an in itself meaningless external chronology should we call him the authoritative voice of the second generation. Alas, the humanists think of man's generations in astronomical terms. But in God's economy of history a second generation is required as soon as the utmost, the extreme consequences of the first generation's novelty in action may be assessed. In this sense, for example, Chief Justice John Marshall embodied the second generation for the Common Law in the new United States. In this same sense, Calvin is not free—as Luther had been—to speak out regardless of ranters, of antinomians, of anabaptists and all the proud doctrinarians of the Reformation. Calvin has become the man, the voice, the power of this second generation. As a Lutheran who later became a deacon in the French Reformed Church in Frankfurt and who in the U. S. worships in the Congregational Church for a generation, I had much cause to ponder over the dialectics between Luther and Calvin, and I deem it one of the open desiderata of our Sunday school instruction that this dialectics be used for edification. For, it reveals a perpetual crux of our faith. Our faith is meaningless unless it receives its doctrine from history. The Bible history is the source for our teaching. Calvin lived immersed in this necessity. And in as far as he did, his book itself in a measure has reached the stature of an inspired creature. This cherub of the Reformation did not dish out classroom generalities. He voiced an emergency in history; hence it should not be labelled 'Institutes of Christian Religion', it is Calvin's account of his own

piety. Here, however, we come to the limitations of the man's self-understanding. He did not know and he did not wish to know that his was a place in history. He made himself smaller than he was. He introduced his book with this misleading sentence: "However the knowledge of God and of ourselves may be mutually connected, the order of right teaching requires that we discuss the knowledge of God first, then proceed afterwards to treat the latter." This is the wrong order. It vitiates the whole book, and, by the way, all theology, as it cannot help generalizing God into the God of Aristotle, far away from myself. Soon we shall have to explain Calvin's famous and frightening chapters on predestination as the result of his kowtowing to our inherited and unbiblical order of teaching. They still dare to teach among us the divine mysteries per se, abstracted from your and mine and Adam's and Eve's and John's and Joseph's and Mary's and Luther's and Calvin's encounters with God. But outside these encounters we may know nothing of God. Because Calvin seems to omit them purposely he has to be supplemented today. Fortunately the real fact is that he was bound by history. Calvin was called forth by the historical crisis into which the Reformation had driven. By now you may be more willing to listen to my request of today that we should celebrate Calvin himself as a translator. In your mind the translation of our friend Battles may seem the translation of an original work, the 'Institutes' by John Calvin.

I defy you on this. Today's celebration would not be more than sentimentality unless we trace the history of the spirit as a sequence of translations. Yes, today we do celebrate the *re-translation* of Calvin's celebrated opus magnum. But this man's written word binds together thirty years, one whole generation's Christian life. As God created the generations of heaven and earth in six generations and then he created man, he further created us as generations and he requested us to leave our name, our word of faith on our own time, and from the Bible we may know that under the name above all names every epoch, every generation translates God's word and for doing so comes under the judgment and the name calling and the roll call of our creator. While Luther was aging and bodily failing young Calvin already grew into the name-giver of the second generation by translating Luther's genius into lasting doctrine, a veritable Luke of a veritable Paul. But if this be

so, then all spiritual life must be seen as translation. And although we still may distinguish translations of the first and the second degree, it is more urgent to consider both, the "institutiones" of 1560 and the "institutes" of 1960 as translations. Could it be that any future doctrine of the Holy Spirit may have to start with the mystery that we all are required to translate, from the days of Adam to the last judgment? Instead of talking of originals and their translations, it is high time to treat the so called originals as attempts to translate. Calvin's was the task to retranslate. For the Holy Spirit is the translator from eon to eon.

Hence the 'Institutes' had to draw the line against all overcleverness and overconclusiveness, against all pure reason. He who translates, remains immersed in the water of faith. Innumerable were Calvin's refusals to think for the fun of thinking. The modern mentality of the quizzkid he abhorred and, to appreciate his chastity, please face up to the brutal truth that nothing is destroying the mind in this country so wantonly as the right claimed by every unwashed mouth to spit out questions as irreverently as cherry-stones. Children and students are fed on curiosity which in itself is just a worthless itch. Certainly this has not been John Calvin's vice. It is difficult to convey his eloquent silences, his reticence. However, when Faustus Socinus pestered him with questions, Calvin wrote, in 1549: "If you wish to know more, ask someone else. For you shall never succeed in your quest of making me from eagerness to serve you, transgress the boundaries placed on our knowledge by the Lord (XIII, 485)." More than once has his greatest experience remained shrouded in silence, as in his decisions of leaving France, fleeing to Strassbourg, returning to Geneva. A great man of Calvin's stature and suffering has described these secrets of the soul's trembling as Calvin has trembled innumerable times. "When horror gripped him despite his longing to do God's will, then something happened which gave him the one thing yet lacking: the decisive shove, compulsion. That eased the strain. On this miracle, mostly, man remains silent, although perhaps we all may taste it once. But it violates our pride. Man seeks his honour in his free act. However in the midst of the act a moment occurs in which man's courage is deficient simply because he has invested all his courage in the act. Unless at this point the shove of constraint is added and helps the act to be born, it never would see the light of

day. But this compulsion arrives. Man has an inborn right to be donated with this compulsion, a right which God acknowledges. All prayer ultimately is a prayer to see one's own free will alleviated by this compulsion. All thanksgiving gives thanks for just this. But the shame which surrounds all prayer is caused by this mysterious interplay of our free choice and God's decisive shove." (Franz Rosenzweig, *Jehuda Halevy*, 2 ed., 1929, on the poem "Zwang")

It is wise to remember the profound reticence around this mystery of Calvin's own prayers when reading the 'Institutes'. The book and its author have been much abused because of the doctrine called 'horrible' by Calvin himself, the doctrine of predestination. I am stressing the reticence because I hope that you may do justice to Calvin's passion for this doctrine with the help of a few tools which I shall try to offer you now: Calvin knew that a book like the 'Institutes' represented only a second voyage, a transformation of tales told, of prayers, and of commands, into teachable abstractions. How small was the weight of such abstract syllogisms in comparison to his daily sorrows and conflicts and perils? How often did he have to enter into the agony of solitude, of powerless ignorance which is the fountainhead of any fully personal prayer, of any encounter of a man's unique soul with the creator, in Calvin's term 'for our election'. In prayer we have to learn that God is not called Almighty because he created the sun and the heavens and the earth. He is almighty because he can conquer all the mighty powers of sloth, cowardice, routine, vanity, pride, tradition, law encroaching on my freedom at this very moment. God is almighty not for his horsepowers but for his triumph over all powers in our tiny frightened heart; This very different almightiness was Calvin's central experience. Hence he knew before becoming a professor that which some professors of theology now apparently will have to learn long after they have studied theology, that the language of prayer is and shall remain the soul's first and fundamental key board of speech: the intonations of dread and desire, of endearment and of exorcism, of repulsion and attraction are a linguistic reality. The subjunctives of the passionate heart are more important and more real than the figures of mathematics and the facts of physics. Our school children all learn the wrong logic. For a complete logic would be the whole life of the logos, of God's dialogue with us, about our many ways through his one creation. That which the schools call

logic is a ridiculous rudiment. It is a fourth quarter of God's fullness of speech. Does not the logic taught in the schools of the occident only mention the phrases of the indicative? '2+2=4'. 'The earth is round'. But the first quadrant of the universe of discourse consists of imperatives. Even prayer is preceded by commands given and obeyed: come, go, get up, go to bed, look in your heart and write, tolle lege, emigrate, become a doctor, taisez-vous! Calvin never tired of commanding silence. God compels in his presence that highest of all praise, silence. When Norway seceded from Sweden the great and very loquacious poet Björnsterne Björnson wired the new Prime Minister Michelsen "now we all must hang together." He received the reply: "Now let us keep our mouths shut." That is divine logic unknown in our textbooks of logic. Yet the validity of this divine logic is a condition of all worship or prayer. The third divine chapter of logic is that of piety, of grateful remembrance. We remember, we narrate, we tell the stories of God's mercies, of men's follies or of our heroes who embodied God's mercy. That means that, as command or prayer, the tales of history also precede mathematics or science. In his 'Institutes' Calvin uses the eloquent and untranslatable phrase 'meminerimus'—'then we shall have to recall', when he feels that history must be safeguarded against scientific logic. And here you see Calvin's dilemma. Writing after the orgies of the ranters he had to step forward into the field of teaching. Teaching exists only with regard to prehistoric man. And I mean pre-historic. The newcomers, the next generation, the laity, the people, the children by teaching are to be recruited for the army of God's fighters. Teaching has to be logical in the diminished sense of mere logic because the laity is prehistoric, the students are this side of experienced law giving, experienced passion, experienced history, id est, of the fullness of the logos of God. Because you, dear listeners, expect me to translate the logos of God's commands to Calvin, of Calvin's passionate prayers, the logic of his painful 'life history' into the prehistoric logic of this classroom, after all I too have to speak here in the indicative of timeless reasoning, of abstract truth, of  $2+2=4$ . In real life  $2+2$  never equals 4. Because we have to make sacrifices for each other not the slightest life process can even start, unless the sentence,  $2+2=4$  is thrown out of the window.

And now you will be able to do justice to Calvin's task in his



'Institutes'. Our students learn that Calvin lived from 1509-1564, that he reformed the church of Geneva, that his book still is read and now is retranslated by Ford Lewis Battles. They, under the pressure of our world of mechanics, place this with all their other facts. Even the weather they treat as a merely objective fact. Where I am free to shout "What a beautiful day!" "What a horrible season!" they would like to limit themselves to meteorology and repeat the indifferent indicatives of the weather man 'It is zero weather'. How can Calvin teach these dead souls? How can you speak to these dreadful brats and quizkids who expect to be stimulated, who talk back at random, who base their pride on their I.Q.s? This was Calvin's dilemma as it is ours. And there, to me, lies the explanation of his doctrine of predestination. Often, in his book, he may seem to drag it in like a red herring and the mild Philippus Melancthon, this teacher by nature, omitted the whole doctrine. But Calvin was, as we have seen, a teacher by super-nature, by history, by God's call, to embody in a book of instruction the living experiences of the years 1517 to 1536. By predestination Calvin projects the three other quarters of logic, of command, of desire, of telltale into the fourth quarter of the philosopher's logic. For Calvin in all his cruel manner of letting God give his decrees in unending freedom at least abolished the abstract, timeless laws which we deduce. Predestination restored the hidden, the miraculous, the lifeblood of reality, the trust in God to the world of braintrusters. And their world Calvin dreaded. He dreaded students who would never learn to tremble as he trembled when Farel cursed him, invoking God's presence, unless Calvin became the Reformer of the unruly Canton of Geneva. Calvin wrote for our modern students in the abstract academic style of the indicative: 'God is such and such. His church is this and this. His sacraments mean this and this'. But he wanted these poor minds of the mere indicative to learn of the true God who blesses and curses, who decrees and demands. And how could he translate into a textbook the styles of God and the soul, the language of commands and the language of prayer? His way out was the double predestination. Impassionately he translated the presence of God into the abstract doctrine of his ever inscrutable sovereignty. Predestination projects prayer and obedience, desire and compulsion into the logic of facts. It is a grandiose transposition from the key of faith and communion into the key of reason. I sub-

mit that the doctrine of predestination is a heroic effort of translating man's temporality and so-to-speak non-existence and God's eternal existence into the purely spatial concepts of reason. Loyal to Luther's primacy of faith and cautioned by the Anabaptists' frenzies to teach orderly and rationally, he undertook to place God's unending incalculability into the midst of human reasoning. Let us recognize this doctrine of eternal damnation as his attempt to keep the way open for God's presence, as his replacing the insolent descriptions of a ridiculous 'God in general' of the philosophers by the only valid form of speaking of God by invoking him in fear as being my God, our God in this very moment, of our being here before Him. For this unacademic trustiness Calvin may strike us as a lunatic. And in fact, when I told an otherwise intelligent humanist, age 75, that I would have to speak here on Calvin, his send off was: "but he was a lunatic!" Well, to this gentleman Thou, O God, art "an object of praise!"<sup>3</sup>

The style of the indicative and of humanism and of logic is unable to transform our minds from their sinful state into one of a new revelation. Logic cannot repent. Calvin's doctrine of predestination attacks logic in its innermost den of  $2+2=4$ . For God may say: your  $2+2$  do not equal 4. To my own old congregation in Frankfurt, Calvin wrote this on March 3rd, 1556: "Vous savez la règle que nous donne le S. Esprit pour nous réconcilier, c'est que chacun cède et quitte son droit." The first thing God says is: "2 rights and 2 properties do not equal 4, for your rights and properties are wrongs in my eyes." Calvin is the great translator of God's freedom and of the soul's faith in God's free new action, the two treasures of the Reformation. Calvin translated them into the doctrinal sobriety of the second generation. Listen to these words in the pithy English of F. L. Battles: "Human curiosity renders the discussion of predestination, already somewhat difficult of itself, very confusing and even dangerous. No restraints can hold it back from wandering in forbidden bypaths and thrusting upward to the heights. If allowed it will leave no secret to God that it will not search out and unravel. Since we see so many on all sides rushing into this audacity and impudence, among them certain men not otherwise bad, they should in due season be reminded of the measure of their

<sup>3</sup>More on this lunacy of the gentlemen in the chapter 'vivit Deus' of "Das Geheimnis der Universität," Stuttgart 1958.

duty in this regard.

“First then, let them remember that when they inquire into predestination, they are penetrating the sacred precincts of divine wisdom. If anyone with carefree assurance breaks into this place, he will not succeed in satisfying his curiosity and he will enter a labyrinth from which he can find no exit. For it is not right for man unrestrainedly to search out things that the Lord has willed to be hid in himself, and to unfold from eternity itself the sublimest wisdom which he would have us revere but not understand that through this also he should fill us with wonder. He has set forth by his Word the secrets of his will that he has decided to reveal to us. These he decided to reveal so far as he foresaw that they would concern us and benefit us.

“‘We have entered the pathway of faith,’ says Augustine, ‘let us hold steadfastly to it. It leads us to the King’s chamber, in which are hid all treasures of knowledge and wisdom. For the Lord Christ himself did not bear grudge against his great and most select disciples when he said: “I have . . . many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.” (John 16, 12) We must walk, we must advance, we must grow, that our hearts may be capable of those things which we cannot yet grasp. But if the last day finds us advancing, there we shall learn what we could not learn here’. If this thought prevails with us that the word of the Lord is the sole way that can lead us in our search for all that it is lawful to hold concerning him, and is the sole light to illumine our vision of all that we should see of him, it will readily keep and restrain us from all rashness, For we shall know that the moment we exceed the bounds of the word, our course is outside the pathway and in darkness, and that there we must repeatedly wander, slip and stumble. Let this, therefore, first of all be before our eyes: to seek any other knowledge of predestination than what the Word of God discloses is not less insane than if one should purpose to walk in a pathless waste (cf. Job 12:24), or to seek in darkness. And let us not be ashamed to be ignorant of something in this matter, wherein there is a certain learned ignorance. Rather let us willingly refrain from inquiring into a kind of knowledge, the ardent desire for which is both foolish and dangerous, nay, even deadly. But if a wanton curiosity agitates us, we shall always do well to oppose to it this restraining thought: just as too much honey is not good, so for the curious the investigation of

glory is not turned into glory (Prov. 25:27. cf. Vg.). For there is good reason for us to be deterred from this insolence which can only plunge us into ruin.

“There are others who, wishing to cure this evil, all but require that every mention of predestination be buried; indeed they teach us to avoid any question of it, as we would a reef. Even though their moderation in this matter is rightly to be praised, because they feel that these mysteries ought to be discussed with great soberness, yet because they descend to too low a level, they make little progress with the human understanding, which does not allow itself to be easily restrained. Therefore, to hold to a proper limit in this regard also, we shall have to turn back to the Word of the Lord, in which we have a sure rule for the understanding. For Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which, as nothing is omitted that is both necessary and useful to know, so nothing is taught but what is expedient to know. Therefore we must guard against depriving believers of anything disclosed about predestination in Scripture, lest we seem either wickedly to defraud them of the blessing of their God or to accuse and scoff at the Holy Spirit for having published what it is in any way profitable to suppress.”

Jean Calvin has redeemed theology from Aristotle by holding on, in the midst of the clutter of mere concepts, to God's living and abhorrent mystery.

Let us then celebrate Mr. Battles' translation and Mr. McNeill's edition by placing Calvin himself among the translators. His 'Institutes' have transposed, transported, transferred the treasures of the liturgy, of baptism and communion, into the impossible language of reason by way of this doctrine that God remains free to go on creating new times, new people, a true *creatio ex nihilo*, in every generation and that his children who fall silent before him, may be called to do his creative will for one more generation. Always must the world of man perish, if we do not generate our generation, the next generation of His word. Always the end of our hectic times is upon us. A generation is a creature to be created by our obedience to the true new and next command of creation. History is the chain of translations of God's word in an unceasing stream of generations '*assujetties sous sa parole*', listening to his command instead of speaking insolently out of their own will and arbitrariness and opening their own mouth as a mob may open it for

empty shouts, usually thereby murdering Cinna the poet.

Your own translation, friends, is ennobled by this brotherhood of faithful translators, by your brother Calvin's pious translation. In a few examples let me point out, how your new edition participates in the common effort of our own generation.

We find it unpalatable to peddle Calvin's abstract doctrine of eternal damnation. I at least do. But I can afford to do this, because my generation looks through the arrogance of the academic style and the allegedly infallible scientific language. Only children, mathematicians, and semanticists believe today that an indicative is wiser than an imperative or a song. God is not a topic for conversation in his absence. He listens in even when students of divinity dare discuss him as a concept as though he did not harken. The tri-unity of the commanding, the beloved and the recognisable God is irreducible to any 'Institutes of Christian Religion'. We therefore can do without the doctrine of double predestination as soon as we refrain from the lunacy of translating God's overpowering presence into conceptual indifference. Your new translation is protected by this saving grace of our times. Many of you may know, how Karl Barth mutinied from his own Calvinistic background in this question of predestination.

Your new translation, instinctively, contains a parallel to Barth's conversion. I find that your new edition at innumerable places is translating the term, 'God's counsel', *dei consilium*, by the word 'plan'. To Calvin himself, however, 'plan' was to be expressed by 'machination'! And your own translation also uses 'plan' at times for this rather contemptuous term. In most cases, however, your 'plan' translates Calvin's 'consilium'. Is plan counsel? Is consilium plan? Plan did not exist in 1556. The term 'plan' is of revolutionary origin. Since the world wars and since the Russian revolution, plan widely differs from counsel. By "economic planning" a consistency is emphasized which in Calvin was not suggested by the word, 'consilium'. "Consilium" points to a here and now deliberation, intention, conclusion; its accent is on the present. It may, of course, affect past and future, but the ictus is on the present state of mind. In plan, the starting point is the last date envisaged. From 1969, for instance, a nine year plan would work backwards to 1961 and 1960.

Yet, my taking note of this change from counsel to plan is not a

critique. The spirit of our times has inspired you. You have moved away from the liberal dogma of a heap of separated individual souls, elect or damned, each one of them faced by an inscrutable judge. Your translation as a living translation always must do, moves us on into a more complete understanding of God's providence. Karl Barth discovered that God's predestination received meaning only if the soul turned away from her splendid isolation. Barth asked: 'Who is the most predestined man?' The answer is with Paul in Romans: 'Jesus Christ our Lord.' In fact he is the only fully predestined man ever to appear between Adam and judgment day. The Godman Jesus being free, being beyond life and death, may recreate the patriarchs in limbo. Where is eternal damnation since Christ entered hell? Christians daily rewrite history, our belief in the triune God changes the whole picture of predestination as Christ is much more predestined than any lame, limited, lukewarm sinner's self. The gates of hell daily may set free another battalion of hitherto damned souls when our Lord descends.

In the word 'plan' this grandiose unity which Ephesians calls the economy of the fullness of all the times in the 'enanthroposis' of God, reenters our thinking from an unexpected angle. The present world revolution pushes the term into the foreground. I am reminded of the birth of the term 'homousios' in Niceaea. It was a Neoplatonist word and the philosophical emperor Constantine, not a Christian himself, used this non-scriptural term. Similarly 'plan' is a non-biblical term. The biblical term is economy. However we have lost this term. For the Latin Church and the theologians have translated economy by 'dispensation' and this term dispensation today is anemic. It became especially ambiguous as 'dispensation' also means to dispense with, make allowance for an exception or to dispense paper-towels. Worse than this ambiguity of the latin term was the loss of continuity in the use of the genuine biblical word 'economy'. Christianity pays dearly today for this loss which is born out by your index: the term 'economy' is not in it. Yet the Church has been the first world economist as the letter to the Ephesians points out. Alas, we have ceded our most praiseworthy possession, God's economy of salvation, to Karl Marx. We have lost the true economy first by our pale substituting of 'dispensation' for it, and then dropping it altogether. Marx's economic and historical materialism originated from the same kind of heretical necessity with

which our pentecostal sects plague us today. The pentecostal sects are indispensable in righteous punishment for our forgetting the third article on the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. Correspondingly marxism is an indispensable heresy. For no 'ecumenical movements' will save us, as they spring from the purely geographical vision. Christianity never moves in space but it conquers death through new joints in time. When the times are out of joint, Hamlet must put them right in his death. This economy of the generations of souls must supersede the economy of commodities. When life triumphs over death the standard of living may lapse. The economy of salvation alone can overcome the economy of secular revolution. Why do our theologians remain blind to their own loss of their best term? Our friend Battles' splendid indices do show that Calvin nowhere has quoted the locus of this term, the tenth verse of the first chapter of Ephesians. In part, this is remedied by Battles through his using the term 'plan' for consilia. For in God's plan Jesus Christ, the most predestined man of God, can never be omitted from any one single man's relation to the predestinating father of our Lord. By using the word 'plan' we are compelled to call into every occult counsel of God the comforting presence of the Name who is above all names. Your name, my despondent friends, is not to stand naked and mute against the Judge. You appear under the mighty name of your firstborn brother and King. My own lifework has centered around the parallel task to overcome the Toynbees, the van Loons, the Spenglers and the Gibbons by a true economy of salvation, a 'full count of the times'. Christ is the Lord of the eons, according to the ancient word: 'si creatura Dei, merito et dispensatio Dei sumus.' (Paulus Orosius II, 1, 4) Since we are God's creation, we deserve to consider ourselves part of his plan. Thank you, translator Calvini, for your liberality in this use of the word 'plan'. You have moved one step onward to the times when Christ becomes transparently all in all and may submit all nations and all the eons which are embodied in the nations, to the father. For the purpose of this submission Christ lends every nation and every soul her unending freedom to advance, to break the prison and the spell of diabolical isolation.

I have jotted down many other sentences in your translation which have made me jump. For instance 'trencherman' for 'comes-tor' is such a felicitous term. Another example: you ask us to

'mount up' to God, your realism made me marvel. Calvin rests fully assured that we at all times may change our level which, for an allegedly rigid predestinarian, presupposes a remarkable faculty of free will. We are, after all, capable of being elevated beyond our own system. I should think that a concordance of this single topic might give us a very important help in our strange sea of troubles which a witty Frenchman has well described: 'L'erreur en cette manière est de verser dans l'esprit des systèmes alors même qu'on veut y échapper.' The error in this matter makes us remain inside the mentality of systems even when we wish to escape from it (M. Delbrouille, *Chanson de Roland*, 1954, 166). But Calvin allows us at all times a spontaneous ascent to God whence to look down upon the systems of the Aristotelians and Platonists and the logical positivists who would like to have us feed exclusively on the dead quarter of God's full logos. We shall need that free ascent for our plight is enormous.

Our generation is not a first nor a second generation as that of Luther and of Calvin. It is a third generation after two world wars. For this reason it now lives in a third sterile time, in the cold war. In other words, three generations have remained torn, unformed, uninformed, inarticulate. We are three silenced generations and their fragments rightly are called 'angry', 'beatniks', 'lost'. This time, therefore, these three silenced generations will have to chant the word of God for our three generations together. I am reminded of the songs of old Tyrtaios. Tyrtaios made the three generations in Sparta, the old, the mature, the young, sing together. In today's ambient we have an encouraging symbol. By your loyalty and devotion and industry long distant times are bound again to our own time and by your translating, you fortify us for our own overdue task. Our Reforming Word obviously has as its very theme the rift between the generations. Why are they paralyzed? Because they no longer seriously speak to each other. You, however, admonish us to coalesce with many more than three generations. The gospel generations and St. Augustine and Luther and Calvin coalesce. God's bliss is on those who make his 'Holy, Holy, Holy' ring in such a manner that all the ages seem to become One more and more. This is the promised fullness of the times, the remedy in the economy of salvation. Hence it is my privilege to call this day, in thankfulness to God and you, a true holiday.