

But the division was already made when Calvin came along, and European Protestantism was divided into the Lutheran section and Reformed section simply over the difference of the attitude toward the communion, and not so much regarding Calvin's attitude as regarding Zwingli's attitude.

Luther was already 26 yrs. old when Calvin was born. Calvin was only 8 yrs. old when Luther fastened his theses on the church door. As you see Calvin was definitely second generation! Luther was a great German and he founded the modern German language. Calvin was the first great writer in the French language. Calvin was born in northern France. His background was very similar to that of Luther. Each had grandparents who had been extremely poor. Each of them had a father who by work and toil had advanced himself, and had raised himself from poverty into respectable middle class.

When Calvin was born his father had proceeded a bit further than Luther's father had at the time Luther was born. Luther had to sing on the street with other poor children to get money to get his elementary education. Calvin's father was able to take care of that. Calvin's father, like Luther's was anxious that his son should become a great man in the world. So when Calvin was 13 yrs. old, his father sent him down to Paris to study. There in Paris Calvin studied under the best teachers and got a solid foundation in liberal arts, and thought he would fit himself for the priesthood. Then he got a letter from his father which said, I think you can make a greater standing in the world by going into law. His father urged him to go to Orleans(?) where the great law-school of the time was, and Calvin went there and had a thorough training in law. The careful training in clear thinking analysis was something that stood him in good stead all through his life.

Calvin had just finished his training in law when his father died, and with his father's death he no longer had the necessity of going forward in the direction his father wanted. His own taste was for liberal arts. So he turned back to the studies he had earlier in Greek and in Latin. He studied in the classics, and it seemed as if he would become quite a leader in this direction. But some of his friends had been greatly affected by the writings of Luther and others, and Calvin had an experience which he does not describe in detail, but he said it was as if God reached down and took him and turned his life all around. This great light suddenly came into his life he said, and he saw that his whole life must be devoted to the service of God. So he set to work studying the Bible, studying the ancient patristic writings, etc. At this time the Reformation had already begun in France. There were little groups standing for the Word of God. Some of them were being greatly persecuted. Some of them were even being burned to the stake. But there was no systematic persecution as yet.

Calvin became a close friend of one of his professors who was elected Rector of the U. of Paris, a position of great honor tho no great power. Each year you had a different rector! And the rector had to give an inaugural address. And this professor asked his young friend to write an address for him.