

Jean Calvin † 27th May 1564

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RECENT DEATHS IN SWITZERLAND

Felician Besmer, 80, Schwyz, priest and philanthropist.
 Elie Gaillard, 58, Sion, cantonal forestry inspector.
 Hans Flury, 53, musician and composer.
 Dr. Werner Stocker, 60, Zurich, federal judge, former central secretary of the Swiss Socialist Party.
 Jakob Muff, 68, Roggliswil, Lucerne, well-known folkloristic writer and poet.
 Dr. Hans Gerster, 70, Basle, former secretary of the Basle trade federation, politician.
 Dr. Jakob Welti, 70, Zurich, former editor of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", playwright.
 Dr. Roger Freudweiler, 56, Lausanne, well-known pharmacologist and university lecturer.
 Paul Amstad, 45, Beckenried, lawyer and presiding judge of the Nidwalden Cantonal Court of Justice.
 Dr. h.c. Alfred Kreis, 78, Chur, former teacher of physics and mathematics at the Grisons Cantonal School from 1910-1951. Expert seismologist.
 Baron Eduard von der Heydt, 81, Ascona, eminent art patron.
 Regierungsrat Karl Mueller, 69, Appenzell, lawyer and politician, initiator of the Ebenalp railway.
 Gordon Young, 59, Zurich, author, Vice-Chairman of the International Press Institute.
 Madame Aloise Corbaz, 78, Gimel, well-known artist.
 Dr. Hans Hefti, 80, Schwanden, Glarus, industrial lawyer and former Commune President of Schwanden.
 Carl Griot, 75, Lucerne, architect.
 Frau Agnes von Segesser, 80, Lucerne, writer.
 Erwin Schenker, 72, St. Gall, builder, politician and director of the OLMA from 1943 to 1964.
 G. Vogt-Schild, 85, Hertenstein, publisher and founder of the printing works of Vogt-Schild A.G., Solothurn and the "Solothurner Zeitung".
 Agénor Krafft, 68, Lausanne, former French-speaking secretary of the Commission of the Swiss Abroad, President of the Lausanne Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, legal consultant, one-time Consul of Finland, founder of the Henry-Dunant Association and the league for the protection of the pedestrians, member of the International Diplomatic Academy. For a few months Secretary of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique in 1922/23.
 Hans Lauterburg, 74, Heiligenschwendi, Berne, lawyer, former chief of the news section of the Agence Télégraphique Suisse.
 Gottlieb Landolf, 66, Berne, journalist, teacher, editor of the "Bund".
 Joseph Burgener, 92, Sion, lawyer former Valais State Councillor.
 Dr. Ruth Picot, 58, Lausanne, doctor with the Mission in Sambesi (Northern Rhodesia).
 Dr. Josefina Steffen-Zehnder, 62, Lucerne, well-known suffragette and writer on educational and family problems.
 Paul Uetz, 65, Langenthal, President of the Swiss Saddlers' Federation.

The following centenarians and near-centenarians have died:

Madame Clara Wermeille-Chipret, 98, Saignegier, the oldest inhabitant of the Franches Montagnes.
 Konrad Bosshard-Morf, 99, Bassersdorf, Zurich.
 Fräulein Elisabeth Kaufmann, 100, Horw, seamstress, one of the oldest inhabitants of the Canton of Lucerne.
 Léon Jeanneret, 100, Couvet, farmer.
 Madame Aline Juillard-Gerber, 102, the oldest inhabitant of Porrentruy.

Frau Rosette Lanz, 104, Thuelboden (Huttwil).

[A.T.S.]

JEAN CALVIN † 27th MAY 1564

Jean Calvin was born 10th July 1509, at Noyon, in Picardy, where his father, Gérard Caulvin or Cauvin, was procureur-fiscal and secretary of the diocese. He studied Latin in Paris (from 1523) under Corderius; subsequently as a law-student in Orleans he received from the Scriptures his first impulse to theological studies. From Orleans he went to Bourges, where he learned Greek, and began to preach the reformed doctrines. After a short stay (1533) in Paris, now a centre of the "new learning" and of religious excitement, he visited Noyon. We next find him at Saintonge; at Nerac, the residence of the Queen of Navarre at Angoulême, with his friend Louis du Tillet; then in Paris again. Persecution raged so hotly, that Calvin was no longer safe in France; in Basle he issued (in 1536) his *Christianae Religionis Institutio*, with the famous preface addressed to Francis I. After a short visit to Italy to Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, he revisited his native town, sold his paternal estate, and set out for Strasburg, by way of Geneva, where Farel persuaded him to remain and assist in the work of reformation. The citizens had asserted their independence against the Duke of Savoy, and magistrates and people eagerly joined with the reformers. A Protestant Confession of Faith was proclaimed, and moral severity took the place of licence. The strain, however, was too sudden and extreme. A spirit of rebellion broke forth under the "Libertines", and Calvin and Farel were expelled from the city (1538). Calvin, withdrawing to Strasburg, devoted himself to critical labours on the New Testament; and here in 1539 he married the widow of a converted Anabaptist. But in 1541 the Genevians, wearying of the Libertine licence, invited Calvin to return; and after some delay, he acceded to their request. By his College of Pastors and Doctors, and his Consistorial Court of Discipline, he founded a theocracy, which was virtually to direct all the affairs of the city and to control the social and individual life of the citizens. His struggle with the Libertines lasted fourteen years, when the reformer's authority was confirmed into an absolute supremacy (1555). During that long struggle occurred also Calvin's controversies with Castellio, Bolsec, and Servetus. The last whose speculations on the Trinity were abhorrent to Calvin, was apprehended in Vienne by the Catholic authorities (to whom Calvin forwarded criminalizing documents), and was sentenced to be burned, but effected his escape, and in Geneva, on his way to Italy, was subjected to a new trial, condemned, and burnt to death (1553). Calvin's intolerance was approved by the most conspicuous Reformers, including the gentle Melancthon. Through Beza he made his influence felt in the great struggle in France between the Guises and the Protestants. In 1651 his energies began to fail; and he died on 27th May 1564.

None can dispute Calvin's intellectual greatness or the powerful services which he rendered to the cause of protestantism. Stern in spirit and unyielding in will, he was never selfish or petty in his motives. He rendered a double service to Protestantism: he systematised its doctrine and he organised its ecclesiastical discipline. His fame is enduring as a religious writer, as a social legislator and a powerful and grateful writer of modern French. His commentaries embrace the greater part of the Old Testament and the whole of the New except the Revelation.

(Chambers's Biographical Dictionary.)