

# Surprising and Exciting Possibilities at Calvin Library

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## Abundance of Calvin Literature

YOU could store a library in your living room. And it could be a collection of the rarest books in the world.

Surprising?

Well, yes. But no more surprising than another fact, equally true. This second fact: so many books, monographs, and articles are now being written about Calvin and Calvinism that merely to list the titles, with brief annotations, requires several pages. In truth, were you to list only the books written about our spiritual forefather since, say, 1900, you might (as indeed Dr. J. T. McNeill did in *Church History*, September, 1948) need more than 30 pages to do the job. In 1949 Dr. McNeill added half a dozen more pages to his bibliography, and Dr. Roland Bainton added eight more in 1955, to which Hanns Reuckert added 11 more pages in the *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* in the summer of this year. All of these pages were required for simply listing and brief discussion of the works appearing about Calvin and Calvinism from 1900 to last year.

Surprising?

Yes, and exciting, too!

## Library in Miniature

PAUSE now a moment and put these two thoughts together: a whole library, say about 15,000,000 pages or so . . . in your living room. And that

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Presidents Spoelhof and Kromminga studying a microfilm enlargement in the reading machine. Prof. DeKoster holds package of film containing reproduction of 25,000 pages of rare books.

whole library by and about Calvin and Calvinism.

Impossible? Not at all.

We live at a time in the Providence of God that these two things — a library in miniature, and the international study of Calvin — could be joined together. Not in your living room, nor in anyone else's, but in the new Calvin College and Seminary Library at the Knollcrest Campus.

Look at the two facts separately:

First, the library.

Do you remember when you saw the "tiniest book in the world" at some fair or in some store? You could read in it only through a magnifying glass. That is not the kind of book I mean for your living room sized library. Books are now photographed on film, the same kind of film that you use in your own camera. This miniature copy of the book can be stored in a small cabinet, thousands of volumes in

one cabinet. The St. Louis University Library stores in one room, in a space less than the size of most living rooms, a collection of 11,000,000 pages of filmed copies of rare Vatican manuscripts. Special readers, designed to enlarge the copy to as much or more than the size of the original have been designed. And so, you *could* enjoy in your living room a true copy of any book or document which can be filmed anywhere in the world.

## Nominal Cost

VERY costly, did you say?

No hardly. Some of those Vatican manuscripts could not be purchased at any price, but the film copy cost about three cents per page. All of the manuscripts which once scholars traveled gladly to Rome to see, are now available in perfect copies at St. Louis. And so the scholars go there.

The room at St. Louis contains other forms of microcopy. Several commercial firms now print whole books on three or four cards just the size of those



Prof. DeKoster shows Presidents Spoelhof and Kromminga the microfilm reproduction of Sabin's American bibliography. Box contains 29 volumes on microprint cards. Shown also are hand readers for cards and for film, and package of 25,000 pages of film.



### An Exciting Challenge

BUT if a library could be housed in your living room . . . ?

What then?

Yes, this is exactly what some of those whose hearts are given to Calvin College and Seminary have been thinking, too. It is possible, isn't it? Copies of all of the editions of the works of Calvin himself could be filmed, if the Calvin Library does not already hold them — and it holds many. Copies of all the works about Calvin and Calvinism could be filmed. No one knows how many this would be, as digging goes on back before 1900, before 1800, before 1700, all the way to the middle of the 16th century. But the keys — the great bibliographies and the small ones — for finding such books are available, and already the Calvin

### Be Still and Know

Merle Meeter

*Beyond the blue immensities  
of sky—God dwells.  
A distant cloud-surrounded peak  
projects, snow-browed.  
And massive, rocklike, grey, with moss-  
encrusted hide,  
A thick-trunked oak with pendant  
leaves, begilt, alive,  
Reveals in whispers that within the  
hush of dusk—God dwells.*

Lynden, Wash.

Library has a growing list of such titles. Find it, then; film it, it is yours to use.

All this can be done. And the collection could find a cosy spot in the new Knollcrest Library. And, as the years roll by, and the film comes in, scholars will follow it, coming to Grand Rapids instead of going say, to London. And the students who study in College and Seminary will have in the reading machines the copies of books and documents they would otherwise only hear about.

When you think about this for a while, the surprise gradually gives way to excitement. We small people, in numbers, have it given us to live at a time when the advances of science, the gift of a new campus, and the tremendous challenge of Calvinism to secular Communism may all be joined together through our very own efforts.

Could you have wished to live at any other time than this?

Will you, too, join in thinking, talking, praying about it?

And will you find some gift, if you can, of your goods, too, to join us all together in making such a gift to the world of learning, to the world of suffering men and women of all kinds, possible?

in your recipe file, 3x5, or on slightly larger cards, 100 pages to the card. These processes are called microcard, and microprint. And again, a small reader enlarges the page to its original size, or larger; and, again, the cost is sometimes less than that of the original book itself.

We have been born to live at such a time as this. Whole libraries, garnered from anywhere, at nominal cost, can be housed and used in less space than we need for rearing our families.

This does not mean that the printed book is dead, or dying.

Libraries will be buying books for circulation, and for convenience in use, for many years.

What this does mean is that rare books are no longer rare.

### Renaissance of Calvin Studies

AND that brings us to a further thought: the renaissance of Calvin studies.

There are many reasons why the scholarly world, and the world of all kinds of men and women should be turning to the thoughts of and words of God as they came to expression and explanation in the work of Calvin. Are not the inescapable facts of two world wars, ruthless dictatorships, and world-wide insecurity enough to make men ask once more if man can really save himself? And who better answers that question than Calvin? and the inspired Word he expounded?

Whatever the reason, the flood of interest in Calvin rolls on.

And where do the scholars turn in their search for materials? To Geneva, to Paris, to London, to Edinburgh, to New York, Princeton, Chicago, Grand Rapids. To all of these they go, and to more.