

STORY for All Ages on the weekend of the 450th anniversary of the death of Michael Servetus:

What Goes Around Comes Around by Gretchen Thomas

Twenty years ago I was a graduate student at a seminary called Starr King School for the Ministry. I took a course in Unitarian Universalist history. We learned about the school's unusual collection of rare books.

The first Head of our School, Earl Morse Wilbur, had gathered all these books and papers in the 1920's and 30's. Back then Wilbur was writing a landmark history of the radical left of the Protestant Reformation, in which the Unitarians in Transylvania, led by Francis Dávid, played an important part. In order to write his history book Wilbur spent many years in Europe and learned to read seven new languages. He had to search hard for many of the books he needed, because the facts of the history he was writing about had been suppressed, and many copies of the books he needed had been destroyed. All the books that Wilbur collected and gave to Starr King School when he died, had either been bought or else duplicate copies had been given to him by universities, libraries, seminaries, and scholars in Romania, Hungary, Poland, France, England, Spain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Quite a few were given to Wilbur by the Transylvanian Unitarians because they knew he was writing their history in English for the first time. Eventually the Board of Starr King School told Wilbur either to come home to California to run the school, or quit being head of the school and finish his history. Wilbur quit, and finished his history.

During one of our history classes we went down deep into the basement to take a look at these books. Standing in that small, windowless room with its many floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, I recognized lots of names: Balazs, Priestly, Emerson, Channing, deBenneville, and Starr King. But there were hundreds of other authors I'd never heard of, and mostly books in many languages I could not read. I especially liked one from Transylvania with many beautiful woodcut prints of Transylvanian Unitarian churches. At that time I knew there were Unitarians in Romania, but I'd never wondered what their churches might look like, and it never occurred to me that I'd ever meet any of them face-to-face. Our teacher pointed out one special book by an author named Socinus, and another by Servetus, both written in Latin. But then I graduated from the school and went to work as the minister of a nearby congregation. I forgot all about those old books, hidden away in the basement Room.

Ten years went by, and our congregation invited a Transylvanian Unitarian minister from Romania named József Kászoni to visit us, because our two congregations had been paired as "partner churches" so that we could work together and grow to know and understand each other. One afternoon I took József on a tour of my seminary. The history teacher said, "I know József would like to see Earl Morse Wilbur's books, because some of them were originally given to Wilbur by *his* seminary in Transylvania". Oh, yes. The books in the basement.

When József walked into the little room stacked floor to ceiling with all these special, one-of-a-kind papers, letters and books written by people he had studied all his life, and many of them hundreds of years old, his eyes got *very* big. He went slowly up every aisle, taking out book after book to look at. He would open them, sigh, smile, and continue on, until he saw a book by Servetus—the very book my professor had pointed out to our class 10 years before. Holding Servetus' book open in his trembling hands, József eyes filled with tears.

You see, in the 1970's when József was a seminary student in Romania, there was also an original copy in his seminary's library of this same book by Michael Servetus. (The title of the book is *On the Errors of the Trinity*.) "Of course we never handled the real book," he said. "This is a priceless book. But you know that." No. Up to that moment I did not know that.

At his seminary József and all the other students there learned Latin so they could study Michael Servetus' books from photocopies of transcripts made for students to use. In my seminary we were taken one afternoon to look at a priceless copy of an original book, but we never actually read any of Servetus' writings. The book made József tremble *not* because the book was worth so much money, but because it contained many of the most important ideas that in 30 years would become the foundation of his own church--Transylvanian Unitarianism.

In the 1980's the books and copies of books in József's seminary in Romania were confiscated by the Ceauçescu government. A few of the seminary's books were hidden and saved, but most were taken away to the National Archives in Bucharest. No Unitarian students or scholars could use them. Then during the 1989/90 uprisings against the government the President's Palace and the headquarters of the Secret Police were burned. The protesting crowds also broke into the Archives, and parts of it too burned. Many of those priceless books confiscated from every library in Romania burned. Turned to ash.

Down in the basement József turned to the history teacher, and with enormous excitement asked if she realized that the books in this small, hidden room could raise up his seminary's library on the other side of the world, could rise it from the ashes and restore it to life.

But as I stood in the doorway, listening to József and my teacher talk so excitedly about sending copies of Wilbur's books back to the seminary library in Kolozsvár, I was embarrassed. Actually, I was more than embarrassed; I was ashamed. It was not until someone from halfway around the world came to visit that I realized that my own school's book collection was very important to me, and to each of you here, and to every Unitarian anywhere in the world.

When a stranger comes and walks for a while in our shoes, it forces us to look at our own lives through new eyes. If we let it happen, we can see ourselves anew. It is good to have visitors from foreign lands. Always be ready to learn all you can from them.

READING

Taken, with some changes of wording, from the Prologue [pp. 1-4] of:

Out of the Flames: The Remarkable Story of a Fearless Scholar, a Fatal Heresy, and One of the Rarest Books in the World, by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone (2002, Broadway Books, Random House, New York):

"At noon on a cold and rainy late October day in 1553, a procession began at the town hall of Geneva. At its head were the local dignitaries—magistrates in their robes and hats, members of the town council, clergymen in their gowns, and the *lieutenant-criminel*, the chief of police. Behind them rode a wave of officers on horseback and a guard of mounted archers. Next came the citizens of the city—the well-to-do burghers, then the trades people and artists, and [a large crowd] of the poorest Genevans. Their destination was a hillside at Champel, about a mile outside the city's walls.

"In the [middle], one man stood out—the prisoner who was surrounded by a crowd of clergymen all urging him to confess his sins. The prisoner's shabby appearance [did not fit his actual position] as one of Europe's [greatest scholars and Reformers,] and a leading physician and preeminent thinker. His name was Michael Servetus and his crime was writing a book that redefined Christianity in a more tolerant and inclusive way.

This book also contained, almost as an afterthought, a great scientific discovery (a clear explanation of the human circulatory system), a discovery which would eventually propel medicine into the modern age. But on that October afternoon in 1553, no one in Geneva knew about that, or cared.

“Michael Servetus had risked his life and position to publish this book called *Christianismi Restitutio -- The Restoration of Christianity*. Twenty years before he had been condemned by the Inquisition for writing an earlier version called *On the Errors of the Trinity*, and since then he had lived underground in the south of France with an assumed name and a new profession—doctor of medicine. Noblemen traveled great distances to consult with him as “Dr. Villeneuve”. But Michael Servetus was not willing to live out his life without [trying again to reform the Christian churches of his time] and [publishing] his beliefs and principles [for all to read.]. So he rewrote his book and had it secretly printed.

“Shortly after the publication of the 1,000 copies [but before any of them had been sold], Servetus was arrested by the French Inquisitors and sentenced to die on the next day. But [that night] he managed a daring escape and eluded re-capture for months. He was on his way to Italy where he expected he would be safe, when he was recognized in a church in Geneva and arrested.

“Before his supporters could rally to his defense, Michael Servetus was thrown into a dark, bug-infested cell where he was kept for seventy-five days. He had no access to the outside world and was forced to participate in a highly politicized trial, the outcome of which had far more to do with local political power struggles than the merits of the [radical] positions he took in his book. During the trial Servetus defended himself brilliantly, going head to head with his accuser, John Calvin, who was perhaps the greatest mind of the Reformation and who had risen to be the virtual dictator of Geneva. But the quality of Servetus’ arguments never mattered. Servetus’ fate had been sealed from the moment Calvin learned he was in Geneva. Servetus was found guilty of the charges brought by a tribunal hand-picked by Calvin, who was Servetus’ sworn enemy and archrival.

“450 years ago today the tribunal condemned Servetus “to be led on the next day to Champel and burned there alive together with his book.” Of all the punishments of the 1500s, the worst was to be burned alive, and so this horror was reserved for the most terrible crime there was—heresy. Heretics were especially loathed because they put not only their own souls in mortal jeopardy, but also those of the otherwise innocent people they led away from God and His heavenly reward by their heretical teachings.

“When Servetus was led to the pyre, chained to his side was what everyone thought was the last surviving copy of his book. The ideas were to be burnt along with the man. There was no escape.

“The fire was lit, but the wood was deliberately green. Michael Servetus’ life was not extinguished quickly in a blazing wall of fire. For a full half hour he was slowly roasted. At last he uttered a final prayer to God, saying, “Oh Jesus, Son of *the Eternal God*, have pity on me!” To the end he remained true to his belief in the Errors of the Trinity. He did *not* say, “Oh Jesus, *eternal son* of God.” Finally, his ashes co-mingled with those of his book.

“What is a book? Paper, cardboard, leather, glue, ink? An embodiment of our ideas? A physical representation of our souls? Unlike other old, rare books, this one was attacked from the first moment of its publication—attacked viciously and systematically, with the goal of total eradication, by forces of overwhelming power. And yet, miraculously, with no organized defense operating on the book’s behalf, three copies survived [so that today we know about the thoughts and discoveries of Michael Servetus, a remarkable man who had a

than had previously been available to entire institutions. It was a time when writing books and suppressing books took place in a highly incendiary environment. It was a time when a single person with ideas and initiative could easily travel from city to city and in each find friends and protectors. And most important, it was a time when the old order was breaking apart. The hold of the Catholic Church on European society East and West—on government, on people's lives and fortunes, on their hearts and minds--was breaking apart, and the question of what would replace it was up for grabs. (When I say "Church,"

I mean the Catholic Church centered in Rome and headed by the Pope. This was the only Christian Church of Servetus' time. Servetus died just before the days when the Lutheran, Calvinist, Baptists and Unitarian denominations that declared themselves no longer Catholic, but rather Protestant, congregations of "protestors." If you had an idea or a point of view, with the help of a publisher you could capture the attention of the reading world. If your book was controversial, radical, revolutionary or even heretical, there was no longer any effective power to stop it.

Does this sound to you like our own times?

A revolutionary technology leads to an information explosion that leads in turn to far more people traveling to foreign countries and learning new languages. There is a breaking up and re-formation of many old orders and long-held borders. Religious and ethnic wars break out, followed by trials in which individuals and nations are held to new international standards. One result is that the world seems smaller and its people are thinking much more globally. On this day many Unitarian and UU congregations are holding services about Servetus. 50 years ago on the 400th anniversary of his death, very few such services were held. But 50 years ago we did not all have e-mail.

Here's

the big question: In what ways were Servetus' views Unitarian?

As a child in Spain Servetus watched Jews and Muslims resist Catholicism, and the Navarrese

resist Spain. Both were powerless minorities fighting desperate battles for religious and ethnic freedom. He learned to identify with and defend the rights of outcasts long before he discovered that for the rest of his life he would be one himself.

Servetus never experienced a Church that was not corrupt. He was disgusted by the lives of decadent opulence led by most church leaders in his time. Like Luther and every other Reformer, Servetus was deeply shocked by Pope Leo X's practice of selling high-priced sweeping indulgences that claimed to completely remit *all* one's sins, past

and future. As an 18-year-old scholar's assistant Servetus attended the coronation of Charles V as the last Holy Roman Emperor. Two years before that, Charles's soldiers had sacked Rome, held the Pope prisoner and shaken the Church's financial and moral foundations. In Italy Servetus was horrified by the way Pope Clement VII was clearly worshipped as a divine being. Seeing the Church in its most flagrant pomp and circumstance was a turning point in Servetus' life. He felt compelled to speak out. Books were flooding Europe. Most popular were the books by young, outspoken authors who commented on the pressing issues of the day, and no issue was more pressing than the scandalous state of the Church. At age 19 Servetus wrote the book he would rewrite and expand two more times. The title was *On the Errors of the Trinity*. (Remember JßKßsoni standing in the basement of Starr King School holding an original copy of this book in his hands?) Servetus believed that with this book he could personally disprove the idea of the Trinity and thereby

undermine the entire rotten structure on which rested the power of Rome. But in fact because of this book (which had already infuriated many of the Protestant Reformers) Servetus was sentenced to death by both the Spanish and the French Inquisitors as well as by the Swiss Reformers, led by John Calvin.

 [From *For Faith and Freedom* pp. 28-31] Servetus maintained that nowhere in the original text of the Bible, was the Trinity affirmed. He believed that only God was eternal. Jesus was born a man who was then made eternal by God. All

human beings had the spirit of God (the Holy Spirit) dwelling within them, moving within their hearts, and so every human being had worth and dignity. At his trial in Geneva Servetus did not argue to disprove the Trinity so much as to redefine the relationship between God and humanity, and he put God forward as intangible, transcendent, present in all things as a positive force, the ultimate source and creator of all things.

 Since Servetus, like so many other liberal and humanist Reformers, was running from the Inquisitors, he changed his name and then retreated in Paris to become a physician. He worked for 15 years as a doctor outside Lyon in the south of France. Much of the content of *On the Errors of the Trinity* was restated 15 years later when he wrote *The Restoration of Christianity* which also contained the explanation of the relationship of the heart and lungs and how blood flowed between them. It was a discovery that could have catapulted medieval medical practice into modern times, but it would be another 100 years before anyone paid attention to that. What readers did pay attention to was Servetus' siding with the Anabaptists and the Humanists against the more orthodox Reformers like Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, who were attempting to reform the 16th century Christian church. The Anabaptists were attempting to restore early Christian practices in the daily life of congregations. This "restoration" included replacing infant baptism with the early Christian practice of baptizing only those adults who had repented their sins and declared themselves reborn into a new life as Christians. Rather than being baptized, Servetus argued, babies should be dedicated with a prayer that God protect and preserve them until they were ready for spiritual rebirth. Baptism would take place when one became an adult--following the example of Jesus, in one's 13th year. This has always been the Transylvanian Unitarians' practice.

 In *The Restoration of Christianity* Servetus sounded a call to return to more original Christianity. He maintained that Rome had corrupted both the text of the Bible and the fundamental tenets of Christianity. He felt that only a return to classical Biblical scholarship could save the Church. There could be no truth in Christianity until its corruption was eliminated.

 Perhaps the way in which Servetus was most "Unitarian," was that as a great scientific thinker (who developed his new understandings while performing and recording the results of autopsies) he asserted that rather than basing one's beliefs on established traditions and accepted understandings, one must develop one's own understandings through direct observation and actual experience. He supported intellectual curiosity. It is, of course, only a short step from this to relying on your own reason and conscience rather than depending upon a priest or pope to decide for you what you should do or believe. Like the Unitarians who followed after him, Servetus placed moral responsibility with each individual. This was an infuriating threat to every centralized religious institution—whether Catholic or Protestant.

(It is a unique genius of Unitarianism that it has survived as an institution despite its radical trust in individual freedom of conscience and individual moral responsibility.)

It is interesting that Servetus was as much a Universalist thinker as a Unitarian. In fact, it was Servetus' Universalist denial of a punishing God, that most infuriated Calvin. Among the many branches of Protestant Reformation thought, Calvin had staked out his special territory by developing his view of a judging, condemning God that dictated a person's religious fate even before they were born –the concept of predestination. And for Calvin the world was wicked, and the wicked required discipline and punishment. Like Servetus and Luther, Calvin was "protesting" the Church's practice of allowing the wealthy to actually purchase their salvation by making contributions to the Church. But in practice, Calvin's doctrine of predestination led to the same separation of society into the accepted and the rejected, the saved and the condemned. Even worse, it implied that forgiveness and reform were not possible. In the end it was for his Universalism that Servetus was killed. It was because Servetus attacked the central doctrine of Calvinism that Calvin made absolutely sure Servetus was judged a heretic and condemned to be burned. Of course the execution took place not only because Calvin was determined to suppress Servetus' liberal theology, it also had everything to do with Calvin's fear at that time of losing his position as the dictator of the city-state of Geneva.

After the execution, Calvin ordered Servetus' printer, Robert Estienne, to hunt down all the remaining copies of *The Restoration of Christianity* and see that they were burned. It was Calvin's intention to eradicate Servetus' ideas along with the man. He almost succeeded. So far as we know today, three copies survived. How has each of these three surviving copies become woven through our own Unitarian history?

[Paris] Yesterday 25 of us met at the Bibliothèque Nationale to see with our own eyes the Collodion copy of *The*

Restoration of Christianity. On the three blank pages at the end of it are handwritten notes that reveal it was the very copy used by the prosecutor (whose name was Collodion) appointed by Calvin to argue against Servetus at his heresy trial in Geneva in 1553. The Goldstones tell the fascinating story of how the Collodion copy was bought and sold, lost and found, stolen and traded. This copy was kept by Collodion and lost after his death. It must have gone through several book sales, and was eventually stolen from the library of a German noble, Karl von Hessen-Kassel. It was 125 years before it resurfaced in the library of Richard Mead, then Britain's most prominent physician and owner of the largest personal library in England. In the early 1700s Mead exchanged the Collodion copy with a Parisian friend and fellow book collector for some rare metals. It then passed through at least four more Parisian owners, entering into two libraries of book-collecting heirs of mistresses of three kings of France. The prices increased with each sale from 1,200 livres (about 6,000 euros at that time) to 3,810 livres (about 20,000 euros at that time).

Finally, in 1784 the important library of the only daughter of the Duke de Châtillon was auctioned. It included 20 works by Servetus. The Bibliothèque Royale in Paris was the successful bidder for the Collodion copy, which was then thought to be the only surviving copy of *The Restoration of Christianity*, for 4,120 livres.

It was the highest amount that the Bibliothèque had paid for a book. The equivalent today would be 2 million US dollars. An unidentified buyer bought a copy of Calvin's work *Defense of the True Faith of the Sacred Trinity against the Hideous Errors of Michael Servetus, Spaniard* for 19 livres. (about \$90) The Bibliothèque saved their new purchase during the French Revolution from the attempted purges of the *vandalisme révolutionnaire* movement of anything that harkened back to "the rot that was the monarchy."

The book then rested undisturbed for 219 years among the rare books in the Bibliothèque Nationale except that many thinkers of Unitarian persuasion -- Socinus, Leibniz, Voltaire, Priestly, Osler, Theodore Parker and Thomas Jefferson -- all went to see and study it. And so can you.

[Vienna] The second surviving copy has played a more central and crucial role in Unitarian history. 1665 was 113 years after Servetus' death and the supposed destruction of all the copies of *The Restoration of Christianity*. It was one year before the Great Fire of London, the time of the many important British Unitarians, including the scientist Isaac Newton and the political philosopher John Locke. London was a city teeming with refugees. Because of the English Civil War between the Crown and Cromwell's Puritan Reformers, many great British libraries had been disbanded. Other libraries in Germany, the Low Countries and Eastern Europe were shipped crate by crate to England to escape the on-rushing armies of Europe's Thirty-Years War. Many refugees took their jewels and their books with them to England, which had more liberal censorship laws and charged no taxes on printing and no duty for importing foreign books.

So it happened that a noted Hungarian count and book-collector named Szent-Iványi, while looking through a simple bookseller's stall, uncovered among a lot of other old books, a clean, unmarked, complete copy of *The Restoration of Christianity*. This copy must have been hidden carefully away out of the destructive reach of both Catholics and Calvinists and kept safe from flood, fire, war, and plague for 100 years until the fortunes of war or theft or ex-patriotism had carried it to that bookstall in London.

Szent-Iványi recognized the book (although the bookseller certainly hadn't), because in his 100 year-old faith (Transylvanian Unitarianism) *The Restoration of Christianity* was considered a great work. A version of *The Restoration of Christianity* (made from careful notes taken from an original copy -- either the Collodon or the Calvin copy) by one of the liberal Swiss Reformers) had been published by the Transylvanian Unitarians. Michael Servetus was held up as one of the most important early definers of Unitarianism and an influence on the founder of Unitarianism, Francis Dávid. (Francis Dávid would himself die in prison for his own religious reforming, carving on the wall of his cell "Oh, Jesus, have mercy on me, but No force can stop that which is right." So it was not surprising

that when Szent-Iványi returned home to Transylvania, he gave his priceless book to his church, into the care of his church's Bishop in Kolozsvár (Cluj) the capital of Transylvania. And there it stayed, unknown to the rest of the world, but influencing the thought of every Transylvanian Unitarian minister and scholar for over a century.

In 1784 when the Paris Bibliothèque Royale bought the Collodon copy at auction, the losing bidder was Joseph II of Austria,

owner of the Imperial Library in Vienna. Joseph's disappointment at losing out on buying the Collodon copy came to the attention of an influential nobleman and member of Joseph's court, yet another passionate book collector, Count Sámuel Téleki de Szek. Télek was the lord-lieutenant of two Transylvanian districts next to Kolozsvár (Cluj) where the Transylvanian Unitarians had their headquarters.

During the uncertain years of the Catholic Joseph's reign—a decidedly CounterReformation Empire-- the Transylvanian Unitarian Church became deeply fearful for its survival. Either as a bribe to buy protection, or in gratitude for how he had already helped them, the Unitarians gave Sámuel Téleki their most important and valuable possession, *The Restoration of Christianity*. The temptation for him to keep it, to make it the centerpiece of his book collection, must have been great. But Téleki knew it was dangerous to advertise that he owned something coveted by his sovereign. So Count Téleki graciously gave the by now priceless book to Joseph II. Téleki was made assistant-chancellor

and eventually became chancellor of all of Transylvania. He protected the Transylvanian Unitarians in many ways until his death in 1822. It would not be an overstatement to say that Servetus bought the Transylvanian Unitarians their survival, with his *Restoration of Christianity*, a restoration that is the ground of their denomination's being.

[Edinburgh/ Ed-in-bur/rah] The story of the third copy is equally amazing; it is definitely the most ironic. Fast forward another half-century to 1877 when a Scottish physician and medical historian named Robert Willis was writing the first serious historical record in English of Servetus' life and trial, and his discoveries about the human circulatory system. Willis worked with records from Geneva and Vienna. About a year after his biography of Servetus was published, the University of Edinburgh, Willis' own alma mater, answered his request for information about any materials by Servetus. They had discovered a listing in their card catalogue for an original (1553) copy of *The Restoration of Christianity*. Imagine how the head librarian must have been shaking, as he searched out the shelf in the library stacks where the card catalogue indicated it was supposed to be. Was it possible that this priceless treasure had been stored, untouched from the day it had been donated to the library in 1695 until that moment in 1878? Yes, it was.

This Edinburgh University copy was missing its first 16 missing pages, Section One--Calvin's exchange of letters with Servetus. Calvin himself had cut out these pages in order to send them to the French Inquisitors in Lyon as evidence of Servetus' heretical views. The great irony is that after he ordered that every copy of *The Restoration of Christianity* be hunted down and destroyed, and after he threatened anyone who saved and hid a copy with the same death Servetus had suffered, Calvin could not bring himself to destroy his own copy.

This weekend Andrew Hill, historian and Unitarian minister in Edinburgh is in Geneva at the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists' Servetus Symposium. He will give a paper on "Why Unitarians and Unitarian Universalists owe more to John Calvin than they do to Michael Servetus." He told me, "They won't need an effigy of John Calvin to burn; they can just burn me instead!" But actually, I would hope Servetus would applaud Andrew's courage to put forward a very unpopular—one could say heretical-- position in the face of the gathered Unitarian historical establishment?

In his book *For Faith and Freedom* [pp.41-60] Charles Howe describes how Servetus'

death and writings have left all Unitarians and Universalists a double legacy. First, the widely publicized protests against Servetus' trial and execution grew into a passionate protest movement that eventually led to the growth of religious tolerance. And second, Servetus' writings eventually did cause many to reconsider and revise some of the most basic doctrines of Christianity. And unlike Andrew Hill, Howe maintains that Servetus "provided the crucial catalyst that would initiate the Unitarian movements" in Poland and Transylvania. [p.60]

[From *Out of the Flames*, pp. 321-22)] "Servetus' detractors, and indeed some of his supporters, have denounced him as an extremist—obsessed, inflexible, and blind to the [political] forces around him. Yet these were the very qualities that compelled his refusal to compromise his beliefs even unto death. And it was that refusal, in turn, that drove his enemies to ... exert the full force of repression to silence him. And so the Servetus trial stands as a testament to courage of conscience. ... [It became a starting point] at which other champions of justice and fairness could draw a line and say, "This was wrong. [I will not stand for it.]"

[Had [Servetus] lived just [one generation] earlier, he might well have been completely forgotten. The difference for him was the development of the widespread reading of recently written books. The three copies of *The Restoration of Christianity* that survived became surrogates for their author, going into hiding and relying on secret supporters for protection, until, centuries later, they could be safely read, appreciated and acted upon. The book kept alive the spirit of the man, and the evidence of his genius, so that others of similar spirit and genius might draw inspiration from Servetus' unsparing quest for truth. Today, 450 years later, we are [all much] richer for it."

[Adapted from pp. 323-24] Standing in Geneva today, in a park near the walls of the old city, there is a famous monument to leaders of the Reformation. At the center are four twice-life-sized figures—Farel, Knox, Beza and the dominant figure of Calvin, glowering down on the many visitors. Out on the Plateau de Champel there is a square stone tablet to memorialize Servetus. It is a steep climb up from rue Michel Servet, and so well hidden among untended bushes and uncurbed dog leavings that the official Geneva tourist guide calls it "the lost monument." Carved on the stone beneath Servetus' name are the words "burned here" and "Spanish physician."

Tomorrow is the actual day of the anniversary of Servetus' death. Take some time tomorrow to think about Servetus' many-faceted life, about his books and the heritage they have wrought. Take time to consider their newfound importance in your own life.