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Calvin

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JOHN CALVIN

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REV. R. C. REED, D. D.,  
Columbia, S. C.

# CALVIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE REFORMATION.

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REV. RICHARD C. REED, D. D., LL. D.,  
*Columbia Seminary.*

It will hardly be expected of me to answer with perfect precision the question, What was John Calvin's contribution to the Reformation of the 16th Century? That mighty revolution was not the work of one man, nor of a few men, but it was wrought by the combined labors of a multitude of men. Consequently, there was the blending of forces, and it would be impossible to segregate the work of the one from the many, and to weigh with nice accuracy the sum total of influence emanating from the single individual. Every actor in the great drama was acted on. He was at the same time a generator and a transmitter of power. Only an omniscient eye could separate the intermingling currents, and trace each to its true source. Nevertheless, John Calvin stands out with marked distinctness, from his colaborers, and we can specify the most important things which he did, and estimate with some approach to accuracy the value of these as a contribution to the great movement.

Calvin was a mere lad, eight years old, when, on the 31st of October, 1517, Martin Luther struck the blow that marked the birth-throes of the Reformation. While he was growing to man's estate, there followed thick and fast the thrilling events of an ever-expanding struggle. In Germany there was the disputation with

Eck, the excommunication, the burning of the bull, the diet of Worms, the Knight's war, the Peasant's war, the Protest of Spiers, the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald League; in Switzerland, the eloquent voice of the noble, patriotic Zwingli had stirred the hearts of his fellow-countrymen, and the War with Rome was on in earnest. While Calvin was growing to man's estate, there were fifteen years of noise and tumult, of high and hot debates, of diets and edicts, of terrible anathemas, and bold defiance, with the result that nearly the whole of North Germany, the Scandinavian countries and many of the cantons of Switzerland were hopelessly lost to the Papacy. The Reformed Faith was still spreading. In thousands of hearts the dawn was breaking, fresh life was throbbing, heaven-born hopes were kindling. But the war was still on. Martyr fires were burning in France, in the Netherlands, in England and Scotland. The life-blood of Zwingli had stained the battlefield of Cappel; and nowhere outside of Germany was there a man gifted with powers of leadership, and filled with the spirit of God, who could point the way, and lead these newly emancipated souls out of the wilderness into the promised rest. Such was the condition of affairs when John Calvin, having reached the age of 23, and having been trained in the best schools of France for the role he was to play, was born into the Kingdom of God. It had not yet been determined whether Luther was to be the hero of a great success or the victim of a great failure.

Just when and where and under what circumstances Calvin was converted, the most diligent students of his life have not been able to discover. He is silent touching time, place and circumstance. He is not

silent touching the fact, and that is the great thing—one of the greatest things of the kind that has happened since Jesus met Saul of Tarsus near the gates of Damascus. Calvin speaks of his conversion as sudden. However sudden, it was thorough, lifting him at once and forever out of the superstitions of Popery into the clear, radiant light of the Gospel. Calvin was not only certain of his conversion, but he was equally certain that his conversion was the work of God, and was an act of His sovereign, electing grace. This constituted both his fitness and his call to service. His doctrine was that election unto eternal life meant election to eternal obedience.

Immediately he began to make his contribution to the Reformation. "A year had not elapsed," he says, "when all who were desirous of purer doctrine were continually coming to learn of me while as yet but a novice and a tyro." He tried to hide himself, "but this was so far from being permitted to me that all of my retreats were like a public lecture room." "Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel." Men were groping in darkness, yearning for the light, and God set John Calvin on a candlestick, and constrained him, however reluctantly, to give light to all who were in the house.

I feel that I can best serve the demands of this occasion by not attempting too much. I shall select, therefore, for consideration only the most signal contributions which Calvin made to the Reformation. I. His Theological and Exegetical Writings. II. His Church Polity and Genevan Reformation. III. His Educational Measures and Correspondence.

I. *His Theological and Exegetical Writings.* He was at Paris when he cast in his lot with those who were

breaking away from the old faith; and consequently in the midst of enemies who were alert to detect and to suppress every outcropping of heresy. His life was soon in danger and he fled in disguise. In 1535, we find him at Basle, Switzerland. The gracious Providence of God could not have done him a greater kindness than to direct his footsteps to this spot. It furnished just the secure retreat and the literary atmosphere which his retiring nature and his scholarly tastes craved. We might expect him to make this his permanent resting place, and we find that he had planned to do this at a later day. For the present he has brought in his heart to this paradise of the scholarly recluse the sorrows of his suffering fellow-countrymen. The King, the Parliament, the University of Paris, the Sorbonne, were roasting some of these over slow fires. Not content with this, they were putting upon their names and memories the most base and unjust accusations. They spread abroad the report that these saintly martyrs were fanatical anabaptists, whose turbulent and disorderly lives were a menace to society. They were especially concerned to have these slanders believed by the Lutherans of Germany, whose friendship the King was courting for political purposes. This was more than Calvin could silently endure. He must speak a word in their defense. Such was the origin of the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

It was a brief manual as published at that time, and was published for no other reason, as Calvin avers, than to bear witness to the faith of those whom he saw basely maligned. He was not attempting to do a great thing, nor did he suppose, when he put forth his little book that he had done a great thing. So



far was he from seeking fame from it that he slipped away from Basle without anyone's knowing that he was the author of it, and resolved that he would keep it a secret elsewhere, as it was his purpose to avoid taking open part in the fierce religious war that was raging around him. But at once the lovers of evangelical truth saw the value of this book. It met, as no other writing had yet met, the most exigent need of the times. It did for struggling Protestantism what the Council of Trent later did for Rome, defined clearly the issue. It put into lucid, logical and succinct form, with solid scriptural basis, the doctrines over which the tremendous conflict was waging. Friend and foe alike could see just what it was that some men were willing to die for, just what it was that other men were willing to make them die for.

Calvin dedicated the book to the King of France in a preface which for manly frankness, sustained eloquence, directness and pathos, has never been surpassed. If it had been in the power of words to touch the King's heart, and secure for his suffering subjects a fair and just treatment, this appeal would not have been in vain. But the proud monarch had already chosen his ground. Having decided that the safety of his kingdom required that there should be "*un roi, un loi, un foi,*" he turned a deaf ear and held on his ill-starred course. Other ears however heard, other hearts felt, and from the day that the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* saw the light, the champions of Reform knew that a power had been added to their cause which would be felt from one end of Europe to the other.

In respect to the dominance and extent of their influence only two theologians in the history of the

Church can be placed by the side of Calvin—St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. By common consent, these three have been lifted to a solitary eminence of fame. Without claiming for Calvin greater genius than the other two, no Protestant can hesitate to claim for him a more intelligent and unbiased devotion to the word of God, the one exclusive source of all true theology. Both Augustine and Aquinas were in slavish subjection to the Church, and it was impossible for them to elaborate a system of doctrine that would not be darkly shaded, and fatally distorted by the great and manifold errors which had been embraced, and consequently hallowed for them by the authority of the Church. In contrast with these, Calvin, with mind freed from the trammels of tradition and superstition, freed from the doctrines and commandments of men, bowed with absolute and undivided reverence before the living oracles, and, discarding speculation, drew from these alone the doctrines out of which he constructed his matchless System. The value of such a gift to the Reformation can not easily be exaggerated. Protestants and Romanists bore equal testimony to its worth. The one hailed it as the greatest boon; the other execrated it with the bitterest curses. It was burnt by order of the Sorbonne at Paris and other places, and everywhere it called forth the fiercest assaults of tongue and pen. Florimond de Raemond, a Roman Catholic theologian, calls it “the Koran, the Talmud of heresy, the foremost cause of our downfall.” Kampschulte, another Roman Catholic testifies that “it was the common arsenal from which the opponents of the Old Church borrowed their keenest weapons,” and that “no writing of the Reformation era was more feared by Roman Catholics, more zeal-

ously fought against, and more hostilely pursued than Calvin's *Institutes*." Its popularity was evidenced by the fact that edition followed edition in quick succession; it was translated into most of the languages of western Europe; it became the common text-book in the schools of the Reformed Churches, and furnished the material out of which their creeds were made.

Perhaps we should name this book in its final and enlarged form as the greatest contribution that Calvin made to the Reformation. It controlled or colored, moulded or guided, the theological thinking for the next hundred years of all the countries that adopted the Reformed faith. Not yet have the Protestant churches grown away from it, nor will they leave it behind so long as the Pauline conception of the Gospel continues to command the homage of Christian students. Its comprehensive mastery of Biblical and Patristic lore, its logical strength and coherence, its pure and elevated style, its reverend tone, its freedom from scientific technicalities must ever secure for it a prominent place in the regard of all who have a taste for theological studies.

Three years after the first edition of the *Institutes* issued from the press, Calvin published the first volume of his commentaries on the Scriptures. This was on the Epistle to the Romans, and was followed by other volumes from time to time throughout the remainder of his life. The completed series, as published in English translation, comprises forty-five portly volumes and covers nearly the whole of both Old and New Testaments. Viewed in connection with the other labors of Calvin, the magnitude of this work is nothing less than marvellous. It was not the magnitude, however, but the quality of this splendid series

which gave it a permanent place in the front rank of exegetical works on the Scriptures. The style which Calvin proposed to himself was comprehensive brevity, transparent clearness and strict adherence to the spirit and letter of the author. The best description of the result is to say that Calvin accomplished what he intended to do.

To estimate the service which he rendered to the Reformation by these commentaries, it must be borne in mind that commentaries based on correct principles of exegesis were rare in that day. Calvin has indeed been called the founder of that method of exegesis which stresses dictionary, grammar and history. He led the way in discarding the custom of allegorizing the Scriptures, a custom which had come down from the earliest centuries of Christianity and which had been sanctioned by the greatest names in the Church, from Origen to Luther, a custom which converts the Bible into a nose of wax, and makes a lively fancy the prime qualification of an exegete. Calvin proceeded on the sound assumption that the writers of the Bible, like all other sensible writers, had in mind one definite thought, and that they used language in its natural, everyday meaning to express this thought. "I acknowledge," he says, "that Scripture is a most rich and inexhaustible fountain of all wisdom, but I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which any man at his pleasure may put into it. Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only refuse as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruption those pretended expositions of Scripture which lead us away from the natural meaning." In addition to correct

principles of hermanentics, Calvin brought to his task ample learning, deep spiritual insight and a heart that delighted in the work. The word of God was to him "more precious than gold, yea, much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." If he ever did any work *con amore*, it was the work of studying and expounding the Scriptures.

The way in which the commentaries were received, and the influence allowed to them are sufficiently indicated by a statement in a MS. note quoted from Hooker. "The sense of Scripture which Calvin alloweth was held in the Anglican Church to be of more force than if ten thousand Augustines, Jeromes, Chrysostomes, Cyprians were brought forth." If such was the weight allowed to Calvin in the Anglican Church, much given to reverence for the fathers, we can hardly overstate the weight attached to his expositions in the Reformed Churches, made up of those who were altogether willing to be known as his disciples.

I can not dwell upon all the writings of Calvin, but must pass over many that exerted a profound and wide influence—his catechisms, sermons, treatise on the Lord's Supper and many other minor works that did much to fashion the views of his day. I must, however, say a word about some of his polemical writings, aimed directly at Rome. His "Reply to Cardinal Sadolet," his tract "On the Necessity of Reformation," and his sarcastic "Admonition showing the advantages which Christendom might derive from an Inventory of Relics," were merciless exposures of the corrupt and corrupting doctrines and practices of the Romish Church. These not only inspired the friends of Reform, but furnished them their most deadly ammunition. What Luther said of one of these

writings might, with truth, have been said of them all: "They had hands and feet"—they could smite and they could travel. Calvin took occasion in all of his writings to uncover the hideous deformities of the Papacy, and he did it with such telling effect as to make himself the most hated man of the Reformation period. It was early recognized that as a controversialist, in which intellectual force, a well-disciplined mind, and keen powers of analysis are supreme requisites, Calvin stood out, the most formidable antagonist with which the enemies of the Reformation had to contend.

II. *His Church Polity and Genevan Reformation.* In 1536, when Calvin set foot in Geneva, he had reached the spot which God had predestined as the field of his life-work. His fellow-countryman, William Farel, had prepared the way for him by battering down the strongholds of Popery and securing freedom for the preaching of the gospel. For two years these earnest fellow-laborers not only preached the pure gospel, but they tried by calling in the aid of Caesar, to make the people of Geneva live the pure gospel. The yoke was found to be too heavy, and so the people deposed the preachers and drove them out. This, however, was but an episode. Calvin's field was Geneva. A brief experience of anarchy, following his expulsion, convinced the Genevese that they had separated what God had joined together. Deeply penitent, they pleaded for his return. The prospect offered to Calvin nothing but a life of prolonged crucifixion, but the call was too manifestly from God for him to resist it.

He entered Geneva a second time in the fall of 1541. He was just 32 years old, when it was recognized by both parties that they belonged by divine appointment to each other. Certainly no young man,



Earnestly Pleading with Calvin to Remain in Geneva and Help in the Work.

standing practically alone, ever confronted a more formidable task than that which now confronted this ardent reformer. He faced "a tottering republic, a wavering faith and a nascent church." His first concern, of course, was with the Church, and his first concern for the Church was to provide for it an organization. Fortunately, during the period of his recent banishment, he found time to mature his views on church government. He had just published these views in the fourth book of the second edition of his *Institutes*. He knew, therefore, as he confronted the situation in Geneva, just what he wanted. At once, on his arrival, he waited on the Civil Council and asked for the appointment of a commission to draft the ordinances for the government of the Church. He was appointed on the commission and the work was his. But before the ordinances were adopted, and put into effect, they were modified, so that we do not see in the Genevan Church an exact realization of the theory set forth in the *Institutes*.

Without going into any analysis of these ordinances, we may say that they embodied the following fundamental principles. First, clear distinction between Church and State; second, as permanent officers of the Church, pastors, ruling elders, and deacons; third, the exercise of ecclesiastical power by a court composed of pastors and ruling elders; fourth, unity of the Church to be realized by placing a number of congregations under the jurisdiction of one court. In the application of these principles, in Geneva, the civil government took a hand and prevented Calvin from realizing his ideal. It must also be said that his ideal was not exactly our ideal. Still, these four fundamental principles are the fundamental principles of



Presbyterianism, and hence this church may rightly be called the mother church of all modern Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

If Calvin's church polity was not his greatest contribution to the Reformation, it was certainly his most original contribution. His system of theology was not new; his church polity was. There was nothing even remotely like it in the bounds of Christendom. It differed radically from the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church of England, the Lutheran churches of Germany, and the Zwinglian, or Reformed churches of Switzerland. So far was Calvin from copying any existing form that he did not even borrow from any existing form. Where, then, did he get the form of his church organization? He went to the same source from which he drew his system of theology—the word of God. Whatever we may be in this degenerate day, John Calvin was, with all his soul, a *jus divinum* Presbyterian. What he proposed to do, what he believed he did and what I believe he did, was to bring once again to the light of day and make effective those inspired principles of church government, laid down by the apostles, which had for centuries been buried under the colossal structure of Papal despotism. Calvin was a high-churchman in the sense that he cherished a profound reverence for the visible church, as an institution of Christ, endowed with rare prerogatives, and discharging vital functions. "We may learn," he says, "from the title *mother* how useful and even necessary it is for us to know her; since there is no other way of entrance into life unless we are conceived by her, born of her, nourished at her breast, and continually preserved under her care and government till we are divested of this mortal flesh and be-

come like the angels." With such views of the church, he naturally assumed that God had not left the form of its organization to the device of man. He never had any misgivings touching the Scriptural basis, and therefore the divine origin of the church polity which he provided for the city of Geneva. Moreover, he secured from the whole city, through its representatives, an expression of the same conviction. In the preface to the ordinances they say, "We have ordained and established to follow and to keep in our town and territory the ecclesiastical polity following, *which is taken out of the gospel of Christ.*" The convictions of the people were shallow, not so Calvin's conviction. Consequently, to make this church polity effective, he consented to wrestle with the turbulent democracy of Geneva, and for years to live over the thin crust of a rumbling volcano. John Calvin alone of the Reformers found his chief foes, his most relentless foes, to be those of his own household. The reason was that he alone of the Reformers set to work with a resolution "fixed as the stars," to rule his own household according to the law of God.

Certainly it was no slight contribution which John Calvin made to the Reformation when he gave to it a restored Apostolic Presbyterianism. In connection with this, and perhaps we might say as a part of this, he gave to the Reformation a demonstration of the value of ecclesiastical discipline. For a thousand years and more there had been a lamentable divorce of religion from morals. The church had not drifted further away from the doctrinal teachings of the New Testament than from its ethical standards. Piety of heart and purity of life were no longer associated with the Christian profession. It was not enough for the church

to grant tolerance to all forms of immorality among the private members, but it went so far as to enthrone iniquity in its highest offices. What sins in the whole history of human depravity, more gross and more offensive than those which soiled the lives of such Popes as John XXIII. and Alexander VI. When, as frequently happened, the head of the church, allowed to be the vicar of Christ, set an example of shameless debauchery, it is not surprising that the general state of morals throughout Catholic Europe was almost intolerable. John Calvin believed that reforming the church meant not merely the restoration of a pure doctrine and a pure worship, but above all and as the end of all, the restoration of the morals enjoined in the Word of God. He purposed to establish a church which should not only glorify orthodoxy by the profession of a true creed, but which should glorify God by the practice of holy living. He determined to draw the line so that all might discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. Moreover he insisted that the church must be the sole judge of the qualification of its own members.

There may seem to us no novelty in such a conception of the church and its functions. Such a conception may commend itself to us as so manifestly just and true as to hardly deserve mention. But this only shows how far we have travelled since Calvin's day. He was the first of the Reformers to demand for the church complete separation from the State, with the right of untrammelled discipline over its members. He was the first of the Reformers who actually inaugurated a system of discipline which was designed

to make the church a mighty witness to the ethical purity of the gospel of Christ.

Calvin lived to demonstrate the value of this contribution to the Reformation. When God gave Geneva to Calvin, He gave him a field that would put his reforming principles to a crucial test. "The Genevese," says an eminent writer, "were a light-hearted, joyous people, fond of public amusement, dancing, singings, masquerades, and reveleries. Reckless gambling, drunkenness, adultery, blasphemy, and all sorts of vice abounded. Prostitution was sanctioned by the authority of the State, and superintended by a woman called the *Reine du bordcl*. The people were ignorant. The priest had taken no pains to instruct them, and had set them a bad example." Just how bad the example set by the priests, the writer does not tell us, but we learn from other sources. Shortly before Calvin went there, the monks and even the bishop were guilty of crimes, for which in our day, hanging is not adjudged too severe a penalty. In that age of relaxed morals, there were few, if any, cities in Europe more wicked than the one which Calvin set himself, with God's help, to reform. For fifteen years he fought a doubtful battle, the scale of victory frequently inclining against him. In 1547, he wrote to Viret: "Wickedness has now reached such a pitch here that I hardly hope that the church can be upheld much longer, at least by means of my ministry. Believe me, my power is broken, unless God stretch forth His hand." Eight years more of unyielding, unflinching, uncompromising struggle, vibrating between hope and despair, victory and defeat, and then the climax and crisis of the battle was reached. Calvin believed that he was going down, but he harbored not for one mo-

ment the thought of striking his colors. He preached his farewell sermon expecting banishment on the morrow. But the trembling scale turned in his favor, and for the short remainder of his life, about nine years, he was left the undisputed master of the city.

If his theology was his greatest contribution, and his church polity his most original contribution, we may safely say that his demonstration of the value of discipline was his most costly contribution to the Reformation. He has been persistently reproached and sometimes maliciously censured for burning Servetus. Grant that he was responsible for the death of Servetus, and that he ought not to have prosecuted him before the civil tribunal, this should not be forgotten, that he was at that time standing in the midst of enemies, numerous and powerful, who would gladly have substituted him for Servetus, because of his unparalleled zeal for righteousness. For years he imperilled his life for no other reason than that he might see the glory of the gospel reflected in the life of Geneva.

Were the results such as to vindicate the wisdom of Calvin and the efficiency of his methods? The answer is that Geneva became more famed for the quiet, orderly and moral lives of its citizens than it had previously been for their wickedness. John Knox, who lived in Geneva for several years, wrote to a friend in 1556: "In my heart I could have wished, yea, I can not cease to wish, that it might please God to guide and conduct yourself to this place, where I neither fear nor am ashamed to say, is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on the earth since the days of the Apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion to be so

seriously reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place besides." Dr. Philip Schaff, born and reared in Switzerland, with every qualification for forming a trustworthy judgment says: "If ever in this wicked world, the ideal of Christian society can be realized in a civil community with a mixed population, it was in Geneva, from the middle of the 16th to the middle of the 18th century." Without endorsing the severity of the discipline employed, much less the aid rendered by the State in enforcing with civil pains and penalties the censures of the church, we may assert that Calvin did demonstrate in the eyes of all the world the value of a representative form of church government as a means for purifying public morals, and developing the highest type of Christian character. To show how much this was worth to the Reformation, we should have to write a history of the Reformed churches, and show that in respect to the realization of true Christian ideals, they shone with a glory all their own.

III. *Calvin's Educational Measures and Correspondence.* It was principally through these means that Calvin's influence overflowed the narrow bounds of the little city where he lived and wrought. It has been said, and I think truly said, that with Calvin, Geneva was never an end, but always a means. From the beginning of his ministry Calvin set himself to make Geneva an asylum for the persecuted, and a training school for the Reformed faith. In a large measure his purpose and his hopes were realized. From all the countries of Europe the persecuted fled for safety to this retreat. Many of these refugees were men of great learning and distinguished ability, but none were too

eminent to learn from Calvin; and no one returned to his distant home without carrying away knowledge that he was eager to impart.

In 1558, the famous Academy of Geneva was established. This has been called Calvin's crowning work in the field which God had given him to subdue and to cultivate. In this crowning work especially we can see that Calvin's vision was sweeping a wider horizon than that which bounded his little city. No sooner was the Academy opened than it enrolled 900 pupils, representing the same wide range of territory that was represented by the refugees. In addition to these, there were sometimes as many as 1,000 sitting under Calvin's theological lectures. Thus pastors and evangelists were trained to go forth and spread the doctrines which they had learned, and to establish churches after the model which they had seen in Geneva. It is easy for us to see with what good reason this city was called the Rome of Protestantism. It was the center from which emanated the spiritual power, and the educational forces that guided and moulded the Reformation in the surrounding countries. While Calvin soon came to be so bitterly hated that he was never permitted to set foot on the soil of his native France, yet to him the eyes of the Huguenots turned for advice and counsel at every step in their mighty struggle, and when under cover of darkness they met to organize their 2,000 congregations into one united whole, his hand drafted their Confession of Faith, and their form of government. Through France his doctrines invaded the Netherlands, and coming into contact with Lutheranism, which was first on the ground, won the day. John Knox added Scotland to the theological domain of Calvin. The ardent Reformers from England, who

rested in Geneva during the reign of Bloody Mary, carried back to their island home the teachings and the spirit of Calvin, and gave to England the Puritanism which proved such a thorn in the side of tyranny, until finally it brought down the Stuart dynasty tumbling in ruins.

There was yet another method by which Calvin propagated his influence. He carried on a voluminous correspondence with all the conspicuous leaders in both church and state throughout Protestant Christendom. We have to-day from Calvin's fertile brain letters addressed to over 300 different persons and bodies, some of them to crowned heads, some to princes and nobles and some to high ecclesiastical dignitaries. As a rule, they are not brief documents designed merely to pass the compliments of the day, but they are carefully prepared treatises discussing in masterly manner the profound and perplexing questions with which statesmen and churchmen had to do. The influence of these in moulding the thought, in guiding the policy of those who were holding the reins of power and shaping the history of those tumultuous times cannot easily be over-stated.

To sum up the aggregate of Calvin's influence outside of Geneva, we may say that all the non-Germanic countries that embraced the Protestant faith, with the one exception of England, enthroned the doctrines of Calvin and set up his church polity. Had not the free development of Protestantism been repressed in England by the iron hand of royal despotism, it is morally certain that England would have been no exception. As it was, Calvinism found its way into the doctrinal system of the Established Church, and into the hearts and creeds of all dissenting bodies.



What shall we say more? Time would fail us to trace in detail the manifold currents of influence that had their source in Geneva, and that were flowing in every direction to carry and deposit the seeds of the new faith. One testimony to the predominant influence that radiated from this center must be mentioned—it is the testimony borne by the great adversary. No spot in Europe was so hated as Geneva. Philip II, than whom the Pope was not more zealous for the old order, wrote to the King of France: "This city is the source of all mischief for France, the most formidable enemy of Rome. At any time, I am ready to assist with all the power of my realm in its overthrow." When the Duke of Alva was to lead his Spanish army near Geneva, Pope Pius V asked him to turn aside and "destroy that nest of devils and apostates." Do we admire Calvin for the friends that he made? Equally may we admire him for the enemies that he made.

I shall close this discussion of John Calvin's contribution to the Reformation of the 16th century with a statement, to which I am sure friend and foe would alike assent. John Calvin contributed to the Reformation all that he could contribute. He put into it all that God put into him; all the resources of his intellect, all the devotion of his heart, all the energies of his will. For 30 years he had but this one interest, and to this he consecrated every moment of his time, every element of his influence, every faculty of body, mind and soul. He toiled for it to the utmost limit of his strength, fought for it with a courage that never quailed, suffered for it with a fortitude that never wavered, and was ready at any moment to die for it. He literally poured every drop of his life into it, unhesitatingly, unsparingly. History will be searched

in vain to find a man who gave himself to one definite purpose with more unalterable persistence, and with more lavish self-abandon than Calvin gave himself to the Reformation of the 16th Century. There was a pathos in his position which almost moves to tears. During many weary years when the burden was the heaviest, when the conflict was the fiercest, and when the issue still was doubtful, he stood to his post, an alien in a strange city, without citizenship, without a family, broken in health, and living in the shadow of a desolate home from which he had buried his wife and only child. He toiled on with an utter self-immolation, giving to his personal sorrows no voice, and refusing his physical infirmities the solace of rest and care. He burned the candle to the socket, and at the age of 55 "went to God." They buried him without pomp in an unmarked grave. Buried John Calvin! No, no, they put the frail, wasted body under the ground, but John Calvin has never been buried, nor will be, till all the Reformed churches of two hemispheres have apostatized from the faith once delivered to them by this saint. May God postpone this evil day forever and forever.