

**THE LIFE and TEACHING
of JOHN CALVIN**

**Public Lectures given in 1959
to mark the 450th
Anniversary of Calvin's Birth**

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Introduction

THE two lectures now offered in printed form were delivered to representative audiences in Belfast and Ballymoney during the spring of 1959. It is hoped that they may serve to stimulate interest in the life and witness of the great preacher and theologian of the Reformation—John Calvin. Members of Reformed Churches should study Calvin in order to escape from the spectre too often presented today as his likeness, and also to learn the valuable lessons he can teach. Those who do not witness in distinctively Reformed circles should recognise a great Christian, and say with John Wesley: “I believe Calvin was a great instrument of God, and that he was a wise and pious man.”

The resurgence of Calvinism as a result of the disillusionment brought about by two world wars (despite the optimism of theological liberalism) is encouraging, especially when we consider the relevance of Calvin’s message to our present situation. Never did the world so desperately need to hear of God’s sovereignty as today—and no one can proclaim it so passionately and fully as Calvin. Therefore we offer our small contribution without apology, but with a compelling sense of duty.

F. S. L.

The Life of John Calvin

By REV. PROFESSOR A. LOUGHRIDGE, B.A.

THE year 1959 is one in which we may fittingly remember the life and work of John Calvin, for it is the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth and the four hundredth anniversary of the third and final edition of his famous Institutes of Religion. It is fitting too in this year, when we remember with gratitude the Revival of 1859 in Ulster, and pray for a fresh evidence of God's favour upon His Church, that we should take heed to the life and ministry of Calvin. For this apostle of the Holy Spirit proclaimed in his lifetime the basic principles of Revival, namely, the Sovereignty of God, the authority of Holy Scripture, the power of the Holy Spirit to convict and convert sinners and sanctify believers, and the effectiveness of plain practical exposition of the Word of God to transform the lives of men and to replace vice and corruption in a community with truth and integrity.

John Calvin was not a pioneer reformer like Martin Luther, but he had the gifts and graces to build well on the foundation of Reformed truth that he found already laid by Luther and others. Luther, like the Apostle Peter, was impulsive, zealous, and full of action, while Calvin, more like Paul, was the prince of theologians. Luther was the plain peasant's son, Calvin the cultured polished gentleman. There is no record of their having met, but even in those days, when travel was slow and news took time to travel, the story of Luther's attacks upon the Papacy surely reached the ears and influenced the mind of Calvin in his early years.

John Calvin was born at Noyon, in Picardy, on 10th July, 1509. His father was a highly esteemed lawyer, the confidential adviser of nobility and clergy of the district. He was a staunch Roman Catholic and as a layman occupied positions of responsibility on the councils of the Church. His mother was noted for her piety and sweet nature. John grew up with his four brothers and two sisters in the atmosphere of devout Roman Catholicism. His father saw that he was gifted with good sense, a keen spirit, and a desire for study. He was determined that the boy should have a good education and that he should become a priest.

When he was 14 his father's legal connection with men of rank procured for him a valuable association with a nobleman's family

and in their company he went to the university at Paris, where he had the benefit of the best education in the world at that time. When he was 18 he was appointed curate of a fair-sized parish, but just as he was about to begin work that involved the collection of stipends, his father, ever a man of an independent spirit, had a quarrel with the Church dignitaries and set him to study law.

The four years spent in this study were helpful to him, for it was during that time that his keen mind saw many fallacies in Romanism. Applying himself diligently to a study of Scripture, he came under deep conviction of sin and experienced a definite change of heart when about 20 years of age. Henceforth he was to be one of the great champions of the true reformed faith, and a great exponent of the Word of God.

The death of his father left Calvin his own master at the age of 22. He had obeyed his father in first studying for the Church and then for a career at law. Now he felt himself free to turn from the law to literature, and especially to a study of the Bible.

About this time he began to identify himself openly with other Protestants in Paris and pleasant meetings were held for the study of God's Word. Calvin continued his studies at the university and his fellowship with his fellow-Protestants was much enjoyed for some time. This state of affairs came to an end in a remarkable way. Calvin's friend, Nicolas Cop, was rector of Paris University. Calvin assisted Cop in preparing his rectorial address for 1533 and wrote an eloquent defence of evangelical truth based on the text, "Blessed are the poor in Spirit." There was a tremendous uproar; Cop was accused of heresy, and he and Calvin fled from Paris. He fled to Basle, in Switzerland, and when there he finished and edited one of the greatest theological works ever published—his Institutes of the Christian Religion. This work, based on the Apostles' Creed, was set out in four parts. It dealt in uncompromising fashion with the Reformed Faith in God the Father Creator; His Son Jesus Christ, and his redemption; in the Holy Ghost and means of grace and in the Holy Catholic Church. Its aim was to show that Protestants were better and truer Catholics than Romanists. It stands as one of the strongest weapons ever forged against the Papacy. It was an encouragement to young men to study the Word and it was a vindication of the teaching of the Reformers. His fame was spread abroad and on a visit to Italy he had to travel secretly and use another name. Returning from Italy, he was accidentally detained at Geneva. It looked a misfortune, but "God meant it for good," for it gave

him a sphere of work and it gave a leader to the hard-hit Protestant Church in Switzerland.

The Church in Switzerland had recently lost its founder, Zwingli. When Luther and Zwingli failed to agree in 1529 about the Lord's Supper the Swiss felt they were cast off by their brethren in Germany. At first the only point of difference was in the matter of the Lord's Supper. Later, further breaches appeared. Luther held by everything not forbidden in Scripture; the Swiss would retain nothing if Scripture did not require it. Luther retained images and pictures as ornaments; Zwingli swept them away as idolatrous.

Zwingli's death in a battle between Romanists and Protestants was a great blow to the Swiss Church. Romanism revived and, in 1535, only Geneva remained a stronghold of Protestantism under the able ministry of William Farel. Calvin, though a stranger to Geneva, was a born leader of men and he succeeded Zwingli as leader of the Protestant Reformed Church.

Geneva was a little republic—a city about the size of Bangor, Co. Down. That seems a small field of work for a man like Calvin, but he made work for himself and Geneva was a good centre. He was ably supported by Farel in all his labours.

He began his work by delivering lectures on the Epistles of Paul every day to the public. These were delivered in a powerful and attractive style and very soon they made a strong impression on the people of the city. The moral tone of the city was low but the *power of the Word* in the hands of Calvin proved mighty to effect a complete transformation in an almost incredibly brief space of time.

The *Church of Calvin* in Geneva was simple and plain. The order of worship was something like our own. The Psalms were sung, and we are still using tunes that have been taken from the Genevan Psalter, viz., Old 100th, Old 124th, and Old 134th. The Word was read and preached to eager thousands. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed about once a month. On this subject Calvin struck a middle course between Luther and Zwingli. Luther held that Christ was physically present in the bread and wine. Zwingli said that the bread and wine were symbols and the feast was simply one of commemoration. Calvin taught that by faith the believer partook of Christ's body and blood and that the sacrament was a definite means of grace. Christ was *spiritually* present. Calvin admitted laymen to the affairs of Church Government and advocated an ordained eldership. We may thus look upon him as the man who established

in practice the Presbyterian system of church government as we know it today. Calvin was guided in this point, as in others, not by expediency but by the Word of God. He used often to declare that his theology and his worship were not new but that he merely carried on the work and witness of the Apostles and early fathers. He claimed spiritual independence for the Church and held that the Church had a right to exclude from her membership whoever she thought unfit. In addition to the Institutes, he wrote a *Confession* and *Catechism* and commentaries on most books of the Bible.

Calvin's strong will came into conflict with the civil authorities in Geneva and for some years he went into exile in Strassburg and ministered to the French section of that city.

On his return to Geneva he founded his famous Academy of Letters, later Geneva University. From this Academy were sent forth a steady supply of trained and disciplined ministers over Europe. It was here that John Knox received much of his training. He declared it to be the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles. "In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached, but manners and religion so sincerely reformed I have not yet seen in any place besides." The turbulent city was now quiet and almost completely in Calvin's control. Calvin continually emphasised the words, "Prove yourselves Christians by holiness of life." From Geneva there went out day after day courageous messages of the Reformed Faith to harassed communities throughout Europe. Calvin was now badly distressed by disease but in spite of that great handicap he spent all his energy in furthering the Reformation. Calvin's influence on Switzerland and particularly in Geneva may be summarised as follows—he gave the Church a trained ministry; he left an educated people who could give a reason for their faith; he established education on a sound basis, attracting scholars from all over Europe, by whom later his principles were disseminated far and wide, and he made Geneva the Citadel of the Reformation and a refuge for all oppressed Protestants. He died in 1564.

Up till now we have spoken of Calvin and Switzerland and how he made that little land a bulwark for Protestantism. A word should now be said about his influence upon his native France. Though a Roman Catholic country, *France had never yielded fully to Rome*. She preserved an independent spirit. Remnants of the Waldensian Protestant Church were to be found here and there. But the Reformation began really in France in 1522 when the *New Testament* was published in French and circulated

widely. In no other country did so many of the upper classes embrace the Protestant faith—notably the Queen of Navarre, who did her best for the Reformers in difficult days. But her brother, Francis I of France, was of a shifty nature and after wavering for some time decided to remain a Romanist. Later, in 1534, when placards denouncing the Mass and other Romish practices were exhibited all over Paris, and when one was actually put on the King's bedroom door, his wrath knew no bounds and he set himself to root out every trace of Protestantism from his Kingdom. Calvin had dedicated his Institutes to him but he was Calvin's foe. Chiefly for this reason Calvin was compelled to live out of France. The Gospel in France met with opposition from the first and there, first in Europe, were the fires of persecution lighted. Nowhere else was there so much civil war and blood and nowhere else were Protestants so late in receiving toleration.

In spite of opposition, the French Reformed Church in 1559 had half a million members. The first Synod met at Paris adopted a Confession prepared by Calvin and accepted the Presbyterian form of government. Then began a long period of persecution led by the Duke of Guise. The Huguenots, as they were called, led by Admiral Coligny, waged war in self-defence till peace was arranged in 1570. In 1572 the most dastardly crime ever committed by the Church of Rome was cruelly perpetrated. It is known as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. On 24th August about one hundred thousand Protestants were butchered. It had been cunningly planned and had the full support of Rome. It was looked upon as a great triumph for Romanism. Rome is still the same and where it is possible repeats that crime today and glories in the blood of saints.

After about seventy years' opposition and persecution, the Edict of Nantes gave toleration to French Protestants in 1598. The Huguenots of today are a small body, but are highly evangelical and strongly Protestant—a light burning for Christ in a nation of Papists and atheists, a Church that may yet save France.

And now a word concerning the personal characteristics of Calvin and his doctrine. He was a man of simple faith and humble consecration. His motto is said to have been, "I offer to God my heart as if slain for a sacrifice." Speaking of his study of law, he said, "I did it to please my father but God turned my course in another direction by the secret guiding of His providence." He had great faith in the power of prayer. He was possessed of matchless courage. Like John Knox, he feared not the face of man. When he returned to Geneva and found the city in turmoil he faced the angry crowd and, baring his breast, he called on the

mob first to vent their wrath upon him. He had a big heart and was most unselfish in all affairs. He showed deep sympathy for friends in sorrow. He was a hard worker and spent much time in faithful pastoral visitation.

One blot on his splendid character is his complicity in the death of Servetus, who was burned at the stake for heresy. Calvin could have saved him, so great was his power. But he did not, and if we want to pass judgement on Calvin for his stern and unrelenting attitude we would remember that men four hundred years ago were somewhat harsh in the administration of punishment and that Servetus, a Roman Catholic, had already been condemned to death by his own Church. Calvin felt no more responsible for his death than one does in pronouncing sentence on a criminal.

Mr. Leahy's paper will deal with the main features of Calvin's teaching. Suffice to say here that he always presented a well-interpreted idea of the plan of Salvation. It was preaching on these lines that reformed Geneva; and set the message of truth ringing in Switzerland. It was these doctrines that led many to the truth in France and left us today with that small but vital Huguenot Church. Calvinism develops strength of character, as illustrated by the people of Ulster and Scotland. It believes in milk for babes but strong meat for those who are of full age. It has successfully withstood error and criticism. It has brought life and power to the Church while, to the nations that have been influenced by it, it has brought the priceless boon of civil and religious liberty.

“Though Calvin built his theology on the foundations laid by earlier reformers, and especially by Luther and Bucer, his peculiar gifts of learning, of logic, and of style made him pre-eminently the theologian of the new religion.”

—*Encyclopædia Britannica.*

“To omit Calvin from the forces of western evolution is to read history with one eye shut.”

—*Lord Morley.*

The Teaching of John Calvin

By REV. F. S. LEAHY

THIS year is being marked throughout the Reformed world by special publications, conferences, and lectures, all celebrating the four hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of John Calvin and the four hundredth anniversary of the third and final edition of his "Institutes of the Christian Religion."

Covenanters are keenly interested in this commemoration, because they are an old bough of the tree of world-Calvinism—and, in the past at any rate, a tested bough. It is imperative that the young people of the Reformed Churches be given every opportunity and every encouragement to acquaint themselves with the life of Calvin and his teaching. This will not only deliver them from the grotesque caricatures of Calvin which one encounters even in this enlightened age, and in circles where one would expect a more accurate knowledge of the real man and his witness, but it will also introduce them to the rich heritage which they in particular, among the children of the Reformation, are privileged to cherish and maintain.

Before we examine the salient features of Calvin's teaching we might profitably note some common misconceptions in this connection, which must be carefully avoided.

So often we hear it said that Predestination is a doctrine of Calvin's, as if it were a pet belief of his, and Predestination is singled out as his main emphasis. This is a grave mistake. Predestination was a characteristic of the whole Reformation, and was held just as firmly by Luther, Melancthon, and Zwingli, as by Calvin. While Calvin was learning the doctrine, Luther was preaching it.

It is also common to identify the teaching of Calvinism with the famous "five points" which emerged from the Arminian debate. This is extremely misleading. That the "five points" are facets of "Calvinism" we readily agree—and very important facets they are—but, as Professor B. B. Warfield has well said, "They are historically at least only the Calvinistic obverse of 'the five points of Arminianism.'" It is incorrect to suggest that they are a comprehensive summary of Reformed theology. (The five points are easily remembered if associated with the word

TULIP—Total Inability, Unconditional Election, Limited (or definite) Atonement, Irresistible (efficacious) Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.) The “five points” are important branches from the main stem and root—and what that *formative principle* is we must now try to discover. Large books have been written setting forth the teaching of Calvin, or certain aspects of it, and to simplify this brief survey we shall consider two areas of our Reformer’s doctrine.

1—The Common Inheritance

The main branches of Protestantism, i.e., Calvinism and Lutheranism, have a great deal in common—more in common than they have in distinction. The Reformation was a great movement of Revival, brought about by the Spirit of God through the Holy Scriptures. And all the Reformers, without exception, rejoiced in their common inheritance—“the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.”

Thus we find the authority of Holy Scripture as our only standard for belief and conduct, firmly upheld by all the Reformers. The Sovereignty of God, with its consequent doctrine of Predestination, salvation by grace alone, substitutionary atonement, the conscience subject only to the Lordship of Christ, and the great creedal doctrines such as the Trinity, the Person of Christ—true God and true Man—the Virgin Birth, and similar redemptive events, were all proclaimed on the authority of the Bible alone. And some of the doctrines named were radically opposed to Roman Catholicism. All the Reformers had a high view of the Church, and regarded separation from her as a very serious matter, and Calvin is strongly opposed to *premature* secession from the Church on some doctrinal ground. Yet he is equally insistent that the true Church exists only where the pure Word of God is preached and the Scriptural Sacraments are rightly administered, and we find Luther, Calvin, and Knox again and again calling Rome the antichrist and seeing in the Papacy a fulfilment of 2 Thess. 2. They felt justified in withdrawing from the Roman Church—they had no option, for Christianity itself was at stake. Yet we discover that the Reformers were always aware that there were many Christians within the pale of the Papacy. Calvin has no doubts on this point.

Great and glorious as this common inheritance of the Gospel is, we cannot term it “the teaching of Calvin,” and therefore we must seek to discover his special emphasis and his greatest concern.

II—The Distinctive Emphasis

It is not easy to give a simple statement of the formative principle of Calvin's theology. But the view which seems most satisfactory and which has been upheld by such distinguished interpreters of Calvin as Emile Doumergue, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, Benjamin B. Warfield, and many more, is that the absolute Sovereignty of God is His fundamental doctrine which moulds all else. Dr. Warfield was the greatest interpreter of Calvin at the end of last century and the beginning of this one (he died in 1921), and he was convinced that the formative principle in Calvin's thought was "the vision of God and His Majesty." He was a man who had seen God in His glory, and his whole being bowed in worship and burned with intense and loving devotion.

Calvin did not contrast the Sovereignty of God with His love, or any other attribute. The Sovereignty of God is not, strictly speaking, an attribute, but a prerogative. "The love of God," as Professor H. H. Meeter puts it, "is just one of the modes in which this Sovereignty of God finds expression." Calvin found in Scripture a God Who is Sovereign in all His being and in all His activity—in His love, His mercy, His righteousness, and so forth. He saw a God Who is Sovereign in the unity of all His attributes.

This interpretation of Calvin is sometimes challenged. Professor John T. McNeill, of America, for example, in his recent work, "The History and Character of Calvinism," suggests that if we try to represent the Sovereignty of God as the constitutive principle of Calvin's theology, we have difficulty with his views of sin, predestination, and kindred subjects (p. 202). This objection has been well answered by Professor W. Stanford Reid, of McGill University, Montreal, who, in reviewing Professor McNeill's book, pointed out that Professor McNeill does not take Calvin's view of the Scriptures as seriously as he might. "Feeling that in them God speaks directly to man, Calvin was not too worried about all the logical connections within his thought, for he acknowledged that the thoughts of God were ultimately beyond him" (*Westminster Theological Journal*, May, 1955). One can hardly lay too much stress on this point; for, as Professor McNeill himself rightly says of Calvin, "The Scriptures were his guide, authority, and arsenal. . . . To classify him with any group of his contemporaries does not explain him, nor do we gain much by associating him closely with any present-day theological school." And, quoting Calvin's words, "God subdued my heart

to teachableness,” he continues, “This is the clue to his emphasis upon Divine Sovereignty and election. He is one whom God has made teachable, learning through the Scripture what to teach others of this God Who has laid hold of his life” (*ibid.*, p. 203).

Calvin, therefore, naturally avoided the unconscious “higher criticism” which has a twofold manifestation in modern evangelical circles—the position of “hyper-Calvinism” which virtually ignores the half of Scripture which emphasises human responsibility, and the attitude which ignores the half of Scripture which insists on God’s Sovereignty as manifest in Predestination and Providence. Calvin was faithful to both sides of the Word, and was humble enough to await the day when he would know even as he was known. Although always systematic, he never tried to force the Truth into a self-contained system, and therefore he was free to expound the Word.

If it be urged that Luther, too, taught God’s Sovereignty, we agree. But did the doctrine occupy the same position and exert the same influence in Luther’s thought as in Calvin’s? Lutheranism tends to be subjective, being mainly concerned with the vital question, “What must I do to be saved?” whereas Calvinism goes further and deeper and asks, “Whence this faith by which I live?” “Where is the source of my salvation?”

Calvin taught and applied the Sovereignty of God as Luther did not—and that is not to disparage the witness of Luther—especially in the realms of history, redemption, in our experience of salvation and in society. In all history God is absolutely Sovereign, although His will is inscrutable to us. The Cross of Christ is the grand proof of this, for there God made the wrath of man to praise Him.

In redemption we see God’s Sovereignty active in Predestination; Calvin knew nothing of a fettered God, nor did he believe in the God of modern universalism. It is in the sphere of the application of redemption to the soul that Calvin made his most notable contribution and earned the great name of “the theologian of the Holy Spirit.” “What Calvin did,” says Dr. Warfield, “was, specifically, to replace the doctrine of the Church, as sole source of assured knowledge of God and sole institute of salvation, by the Holy Spirit. Previously men had looked to the Church for all the trustworthy knowledge of God obtainable, and as well for all the communications of grace accessible. Calvin taught them that neither function has been committed to the Church, but God the Holy Spirit has retained both in His own hands and confers both knowledge of God and communion with God on whom

He will.” Compare, for example, Calvin’s doctrine of our acceptance of the authority of the Bible—i.e., solely because of the witness of the Holy Spirit (*testimonium Spiritus Sancti*); also his doctrine of regeneration, repentance, and faith. In his hands, for the first time in many centuries, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit comes to its rights.

The social consciousness of Calvin was a direct result of his awareness of the Sovereignty of God and his desire to glorify God in all of life. Calvin knew that the Gospel was addressed to man in the totality of his being, and he proclaimed it in all its fulness. In proclaiming Geneva a city of God, he was simply striving to bring that whole society to the feet of the King of kings. (For an elaboration of this, see “John Calvin, 1509-1959.”)

Conclusion

The Reformation was one of the greatest revivals that the Church of God has experienced—it was revival in the true sense of the word. The common notion that Calvinism is a hindrance to the preaching of the Gospel is completely erroneous. When we think of such staunch Calvinists as George Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards and C. H. Spurgeon, we see at once that the doctrines of grace, when properly understood and applied, are most effective in the conversion of sinners. Jonathan Edwards, who died two hundred years ago in 1758, is a striking example of this. He preached with volcanic intensity, and there were multitudes found in the valley of decision. Dr. Ralph G. Turnbull, in his recent book, “Jonathan Edwards the Preacher,” says: “Grace was the power to achieve the change in the community, and thus the preaching of Edwards was acknowledged as an instrument of God’s supernatural power” (p. 117).

Coming to our own land, we need only think of the evangelistic labours of Rev. Wm. J. Patton, of Dromara, Co. Down, author of “Pardon and Assurance,” to see that an acceptance of the doctrines taught by Calvin is no hindrance to evangelical fervour. But the best example of all is Calvin himself, who offered his life “promptly and sincerely” to the Lord, and who laboured as probably no one else in the history of Christianity to spread abroad the message of the Gospel.

Calvin’s teaching is enshrined in many famous confessions and catechisms—especially “The Confession of Faith” (Westminster), Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Savoy Declaration, the Heidelberg Catechism, 1562, and the Canons of Dort (1619). It would take many volumes to trace

the influence of Calvinism, as the doctrines of grace are known historically, in society, in missionary enterprise, and in Protestantism throughout the whole world. As preacher, theologian, social reformer, ecumenical churchman (in the best sense of the term), Calvin was consistently loyal to Scripture and to his vision of the glory of God. His teaching still remains not only as the strongest possible challenge to the many and pernicious errors of Romanism, but also to Marxist Communism, materialism, and that old enemy of the Gospel of Sovereign Grace—Arminianism. May we thank God for raising up a man who cleared away the over-growth of centuries, until the glory of God was seen as the chief end of man. May we never be ashamed of our heritage as sons of the Reformation, and of those doctrines which gave it authority and life.

“This tree,” says one author, “may have, to prejudiced eyes, a rough bark, a gnarled stem, and boughs twisted often into knotted shapes of ungraceful strength. But, remember, it is not a willow-wand of yesterday. These boughs have wrestled with the storms of a thousand years; this stem has been wreathed with the red lightning and scarred by the thunderbolt; and all over its rough rind are the marks of the battle-axe and the bullet. This old oak has not the pliant grace and silky softness of a greenhouse plant, but it has a majesty above grace, and a grandeur beyond beauty. Its roots may be strangely contorted, but some of them are rich with the blood of glorious battlefields, some of them are clasped around the stakes of martyrs; some of them hidden in solitary cells and lonely libraries, where deep thinkers have mused and prayed, as in some apocalyptic Patmos; and its great tap-root runs back, until it twines in living and loving embrace around the cross of Calvary. Its boughs may be gnarled, but they hang clad with all that is richest and strongest in the civilisation and Christianity of human history.”

That is not just oratory; it is a truth manifest in the gallant witness of Huguenots, Pilgrim Fathers, Covenanters, and, more recently, the Hungarian Presbyterians.

We agree with the remark of Dr. Cunningham, successor to Dr. Chalmers, that, “next to Paul, John Calvin has done most for the world”—and yet, as Calvin would have us say, not Calvin, but Calvin’s God.

The Ecumenical Churchman

THE following quotations from a letter sent by Calvin to Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, show his concern for true and Scriptural Church unity—a concern that was equally shared by Cranmer.

Your opinion, most distinguished sir, is indeed just and wise, that in the present disordered condition of the Church no remedy can be devised more suitable than if a general meeting were held of the devout and prudent, of those properly exercised in the school of God, and of those who are confessedly at one on the doctrine of holiness. . . . And would that it were attainable to bring together into some place, from various Churches, men eminent for their learning, and that after having carefully discussed the main points of belief one by one, they should, from their united judgments, hand down to posterity the true doctrine of Scripture. This other thing also is to be ranked among the chief evils of our time, viz., that the Churches are so divided, that human fellowship is scarcely now in any repute amongst us, far less than Christian intercourse which all make a profession of, but few sincerely practise. . . . Thus it is that the members of the Church being severed, the body lies bleeding. So much does this concern me, that, could I be of any service, I would not grudge to cross even ten seas, if need were, on account of it. . . . Adieu, very distinguished Archbishop, deserving of my hearty reverence. May the Lord continue to guide you by His Spirit, and to bless your holy labours!

JOHN CALVIN.

Geneva, April, 1552.

Servetus

IN support of Professor Loughridge's comments on the burning of Servetus (p. 9), is the manner in which Theodore Beza, in his *Life of John Calvin*, which was published a few weeks after the Reformer's death, records the event without apology—"On the 27th of October, the unhappy man, who gave no sign of repentance, was burned alive." It is significant that the Calvinists of a later day were to erect their expiatory monument: This was unveiled in November, 1903, on the spot where Servetus died, near Geneva. The inscription reads—

"Duteous and grateful followers of Calvin, our great Reformer, yet condemning an error which was that of his age, and strongly attached to liberty of conscience, according to the true principles of the Reformation and of the Gospel, we have erected this expiatory monument, October 27, 1903."

The funds for the erection of this monument were contributed by members of Reformed Churches in Switzerland, France, and Holland, and of Presbyterian Churches in the United Kingdom and America.

*Obtainable from the Convener of the
Witness-Bearing Committee:*

Also available—

"JOHN CALVIN: 1509-1564." A study of Calvin's doctrine of Church and State, and his social concern. Price 1/-.