

SPECIAL  
ARTICLES

## Our Contributors

BOOK  
REVIEWS

## CALVIN AS A REFORMER.

By Prof. Henry E. Dosker, D.D.

The next question to be discussed is that of the position of Calvin among the Reformers. Chief among them are the great quartette—Luther, Zwingli, Melancthon and Calvin. Of these Zwingli died young and Melancthon was by nature and temperament precluded from the task of true leadership; Luther and Calvin, therefore, remain as the two greatest leaders of the Reformation. And between these two fair comparison seems impossible. Each was marvelously great in his own sphere. We can, however, conceive of Luther without Calvin, but not the reverse. Their task was divinely appointed, each moved in his own orbit and occupied his own peculiar place in the great work of the Reformation.

Luther stands forth as the great originator of the Reformation, Calvin as its great organizer. Both men thoroughly respected each other. Melancthon tells us that, after reading Calvin's "Institutes" on the Supper, Luther said: "I hope he will some day think better of us. It is right, however, to hear something in so excellent a spirit." Calvin addressed Luther as: "Very renowned man and faithful servant of Jesus Christ and at all times my revered father." Luther said of Calvin's letter to Sadoleto: "This writing has hands and feet and I rejoice that God has called up such people, who, if it be his will, may give the final blow to the papacy and finish, by His help, what I began against anti-Christ." And after reading Calvin's special tract on the Lord's Supper, he lamented the fact to Maurice Goltsehen, his bookseller, that "Zwingli and Oecolampadius should not thus have explained themselves." Said he to Calvin, on that occasion—"Certainly a learned and pious man, and I might well have entrusted the whole affair of this controversy to him, in the beginning." Luther, therefore, deeply appreciated Calvin's conciliatory spirit.

Melancthon became Calvin's bosom friend, and although pointed things were frequently said in their correspondence, especially when Calvin detected between them was only broken by Melancthon's death in 1560. Some passages in this correspondence, especially on Calvin's part, are pathetic in their tenderness. An equally strong and abiding friendship existed between Calvin and the Strasburg Reformers and especially between Calvin and Bullinger, the successor of Zwingli at Zurich, and his spiritual heir. There was not a theologian of name in his day with whom Calvin did not stand in direct contact. Melancthon first called him "the theologian" and afterward Scaliger said of him—"Calvin stands alone among the theologians." His great power and erudition were recognized on every hand and his relation to nearly all the great leaders of the Reformation was one of mutual esteem and confidence.

Luther was the idol of the German people, even his enemies paying him secret homage; Calvin remained an alien in a strange city, almost to the last. He did not become a citizen of Geneva till 1559, four years before his death. When we look at the lives of the two greatest Reformers, they appear to be anomalous. Luther's effervescent, impulsive temperament seems better suited to the volatile French character; Calvin's tranquilizing temperament to that of the Germans. As Henry says, "the watchword of the one was war, of the other, order."

Luther uprooted old things, Calvin organized new things. The former planted one foot in the past, the other in the present; the latter one foot in the present, and the other in the future. Luther never completely broke with his Catholic past; Calvin created an entirely distinct and new view of the world and of the Church. He dug up again, from the neglect of ages, the doctrine of "common grace" and ranged all human development under it.

In Catholicism and also in Lutherism, the link between God and man is the Church. Calvin knew no intermediary. He brought God and man face to face in the most intimate relation and received the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. In a sectarian sense Calvinism may stand for a group of believers; in a confessional sense it may indicate a faith, but in its truest and wisest, that is in the historical sense, it stands for a "Weltanschauung," a view of the world and of life. And that view of the world, combated as it is alike by the rationalism of the last century and by its revolutionary idealism, is after all the strong foundation, on which modern civilization is built. It has its own viewpoints, its own principles, its own ideals. Luther could never have organized the Reformation; Calvin found it on a downward grade, in distress and confusion, and did organize it. But it is equally certain that Calvin, with his methods, could never have inaugurated it. The Melancthonian Reformation, as the Interimperial witnesses, would have reverted to Rome and would have shared the fate of Hussitism. Calvin, to use his own favorite doctrine, was predestinated for the task and for the hour.

The two systems appealed to the world of the sixteenth century and whilst Germany largely clung to Luther, together with Denmark and Scandinavia, the rest of Europe followed the banner of Calvin. Nor is this strange. None of the Reformers had so wide an outlook as Calvin. Providentially trained both for the law and for theology, gifted with a mind both acute and profound, practical as well as erudite, a man of meditation as well as of action, a man with an immense store of reserved force—he was the very man God needed for His work among the nations. Rome always recognized in Calvin her chief enemy. Dr. Kuyper has pointed out this fact in his "Stone Lectures."

Geneva radiated a power far greater than Wittenburg had ever done. Its influence was literally felt all over Europe. Besides, with all the Swiss and German theologians, Calvin corresponded with Cranmer, Grindal, Hooper, Coverdale, Cox and Wittingham in England. In Poland with A. Lasco, who has imprinted himself forever on the Anglican and Dutch Churches. In Holland with Louis of Orange and Marnix of Aldegonde, the great poet-statesman and the right-hand man of William of Orange. Princes and nobles were among his correspondents. Margaret of Navarre and Renata de Ferrara (a daughter of Louis XII), Coligny and Conde, and King Anthony of Navarre, Lord Sommer set and King Edward VI, Frederick III of the Palatinate and King Sigismund of Poland. Wonderful Calvin! A man of marvelous industry and marvelous reach of influence! Does anyone wonder that he could make of Geneva a fulcrum? He has been called "the Protestant Pope" and with a show of truth, though what a Pope! How poor and humble and unostentatious! When King Anthony of Navarre had proved unfaithful, Calvin wrote to him—"The enemy has flung this dirt upon you that

he might be able to sing a song of triumph at your disgrace." But when the same king needed money, he applied to the poorly paid Geneva pastor and Calvin obtained the money for him. When the French Government invited Calvin to attend the colloquy of Poissy, in 1561, the Council of Geneva would not let him go unless hostages of the highest rank were given for his safety. He addressed Charles V on the convocation of a general council and fiercely attacked the first seven sessions of the Tridentine Council, as if he were the mouthpiece of organized Protestantism.

None of the Reformers, therefore, exerted such an influence as he did; his life was fuller than that of any of them. During his lifetime he saw the growth of the Church he had founded, and when he closed his eyes, in 1564, he might well have said with Paul: "I labored more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me."

What he did say was this: "I have labored with all my strength for the common good. It would be hypocrisy not to own that the Lord has been pleased to employ me, and that not unprofitably in His service."

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## CHARACTER MOULDED BY PURSUIT.

By Joseph Hamilton, author of "The Spirit World," etc.

Whatever be the ambition that rules a man, that ambition will give to the man something of its own complexion and character. Our pursuits react upon us, and bring us more or less into sympathy with them. So, if a man have an earthly ambition, he becomes earthly; if he have a heavenly ambition he becomes heavenly. Our pursuit, whatever it is, somehow moulds us into its likeness. If a man gives himself to cunning and intrigue, his heart becomes a labyrinth of tortuous, crooked, ways. If a man's great ambition is to be rich, his heart in time becomes as hard as the gold he is pursuing. If a man's ambition is to scatter seeds of kindness, he finds that "the quality of mercy is not strained; it blesses him that gives and him that takes."

Thus our character is moulded by our pursuits. As a heavy cloud casts its dark shadow upon the earth, or as the setting sun gilds the earth with beauty, so we catch something of the color of the object to which our face is turned. If we look to the earth chiefly, we get the earthly look. If we lift our face to the heavens, we get the heavenly look. Wherever our treasure is—on earth or in heaven—there our heart will be; and it is the heart that gives the tone to the whole man.

## A FAMOUS STATESMAN'S EARLY TRAINING.

When Sir Robert Peel was a little boy, his father used to set him on a table and teach him to make short speeches; and, while still very young, he accustomed him to repeat as much of the Sabbath's sermon as he could recollect. At first, it is said, the boy found some difficulty, and did not make great progress; but he steadily persevered, and soon attention and perseverance were rewarded, and he was able to repeat the sermon almost word for word. It was in this way that he began to cultivate those powers of memory which he displayed so brilliantly when, in after life, he became one of the most distinguished statesmen of his country.