**Reformation 500 WEEK 48 Calvin’s Legacy**

“Calvin’s greatest achievement in the final years of his life was the establishment of the Geneva Academy, the first Protestant university anywhere. Calvin realized the need for an educated ministry. From his study of the Scriptures he also realized that God’s glory involves more than merely saving souls. This world is God’s world. The way men deal with each other is of concern to God. Therefore, government workers, doctors, lawyers, and all others needed a training that recognized and honored God” (Kuiper, *Church in History*, 199).

“Calvin’s view that God reigns everywhere and over all things led him to develop the biblical idea that man can serve God in every area of life – church, civil government, education, art, music, business, law, journalism. There was no need to be a priest, a monk, or a nun to get closer to God. God is glorified in everyday work and family life” (DeMar, *Reformation*, 207).

From “its beginning in 1559 the Geneva Academy enjoyed the highest reputation. Soon nine hundred boys were enrolled, coming from all over Europe. It wasn’t long before the king of France sent an official warning to Geneva complaining of all the preachers coming from this headquarters of Protestantism…. Calvin gained followers everywhere. His influence extended even into Italy, Hungary, Poland and western Germany…. Through him the light of the Gospel radiated from the little city of Geneva into every corner of Europe. Calvin was the only international Reformer.

“That Calvin could do so enormous a work is all the more amazing because he was frail of body, and much of the time suffered exceedingly from a complication of painful diseases. But his will triumphed over all difficulties and obstacles, God working with him. Worn out with his difficult and extensive labors, Calvin died May 27, 1564. His coat of arms was a hand holding a flaming heart. His motto was: … ‘My heart for Your cause I offer to You, Lord, promptly and sincerely’.” (Kuiper, 199-200).

“The earliest and most influential settlers of the United States – the Puritans of England, the Presbyterians of Scotland and Ireland, the Huguenots of France, the Reformed from Holland and the Palatinate [in Germany] – were Calvinists, and brought with them the Bible and the Reformed Confessions of Faith. Calvinism was the ruling theology of New England during the whole Colonial Period” (Schaff, 8:vi).

“The resistance of the Second Continental Congress to British tyranny in 1776 and the establishment of republican principles in the Constitution of the United States of America in 1787 owe much to the political thought of John Calvin” (Mark Larson, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the State*, 99).

“It is undeniable that he had a large influence on the American founding fathers, who had absorbed much more Calvinism, particularly in their views of the nature of man and the need for limited government, than some realize” (David Hall, *The Legacy of John Calvin*, 40). George Bancroft, the American historian, who himself was not a Calvinist, “credited the ‘free institutions of America’ as being derived ‘chiefly from Calvinism through the medium of Puritanism, … concluding: ‘He that will not honor the memory and respect the influence of Calvin knows but little of the origin of American liberty” (Ibid. 12).

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