

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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REFORMATION 500 WEEK 48: HEIDELBERG CATECHISM QA 123

Question 123: WHAT IS THE SECOND PETITION? **“Your kingdom come;” that is, so govern us by Your Word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves to You always more and more; preserve and increase Your Church; destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalts itself against You, and all wicked devices formed against Your holy Word, until the fullness of Your kingdom come, wherein You shall be all in all.**

We learned from Questions 50-51 that the Lord Jesus Christ has a universal kingdom over all things (Eph. 1:20-23). He is “the ruler over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5). “He is the head of the whole world by way of dominion, but a head to the church by way of union and special influence (John 17:2)... The Church is His special care and charge. He rules the world for its good” (Flavel, *The Mystery of Providence*, 27). We learned that Christ rules us through the ministry of His Word and Spirit (Eph. 4:7-13), that He preserves His ministry, gives His Church resting places, makes His Word effectual to the conversion of the elect (Rom. 10:17). He will defend us against all enemies (the devil, the evil world, and our inborn sin), and He will at length bring us to heavenly glory. “For He must reign, until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

Jesus said this spiritual kingdom will increase and spread to all nations (Matt. 13:31-32). It comes to us, first, “by conversion, when some are converted to God, who grants to them faith and repentance [Col. 1:13].” Secondly, “when the godly make progress in holiness [Rom. 14:17; Rev. 22:11];” and ultimately, “by the perfection and glorification of the church at the second coming of Christ [Eph. 5:27]” (Ursinus, 636).

Therefore, when we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we desire that “this kingdom may come, increase and be defended we desire both that it may be established among and in us in this life, and that it may be brought to its highest and ultimate development in the life to come [1 Cor. 15:28]” (Ursinus, 633).

We desire and pray, first, that God may “so govern us by Your Word and Spirit, that we submit ourselves to You always more and more.” “Oh, that my ways were directed to keep Your commandments” (Ps. 119:5; see also verse 35). Second, “preserve and increase Your Church.” “Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem” (Ps. 51:18; cf. Heb. 12:22-24). Third, “destroy the works of the devil, every power that exalts itself against You, and all wicked devices formed against Your holy Word.” “Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let those who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God” (Ps. 68:1-2). “May sinners be consumed from the earth, and the wicked be no more” (Ps. 104:35). Fourth, cause “the fullness of Your kingdom to come, wherein You shall be all in all [1 Cor. 15:28].” “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20).

“We ought to pray that the kingdom of God may come both as to its commencement and ultimate development,” first, “for the sanctification and hallowing of His name; for that we may sanctify the name of God, it is necessary that He should rule us by His Word and Spirit.” Second, for “our comfort and salvation. God gives this kingdom to none except those who desire and pray for it, just as He gives His Holy Spirit to none but such as desire Him [Luke 11:13]” (Ursinus, 636).

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