

A Reformation Debate--John Calvin and Jacopo Sadoleto

Edited by John C. Olin

If you have ever wondered what the Protestant Reformation was really about, this little book, A Reformation Debate, is, in my opinion, an essential read. Here's the setting: 1539, the battlelines had been drawn, each side digging in for a fight to the death, Roman Catholic versus "Protestant," cities and regions across Europe aligning themselves in one camp or another, and the stakes were the literal and spiritual life and death of the participants. Within the city-state of Geneva, Switzerland, a focal point of the Protestant effort to reform and re-establish a Biblically-based church, John Calvin, because of his zeal and uncompromising effort to institute a New Testament church and society, had been asked to leave the city. A brilliant pastor and theologian, Calvin and his strict adherence to what he saw as the clear pattern for worship and Christian living had by 1538 worn out the welcome that Geneva had previously extended. Calvin was asked to leave the city, and settled in Strasbourg. In 1539, taking advantage of the confusion in Geneva, Roman Catholic Cardinal Jacopo Sadoleto wrote an exhaustive letter to the leaders of Geneva, lambasting the Reformers and laying before the Genevans the case for their city to return to the Roman Catholic side. The majority Protestants in Geneva were now in a panic. How should this letter be answered? How could they respond to the threat at hand? They knew of only one man capable to theologically confront the power, persuasion, and might of Rome--John Calvin. And respond he did--in a manner that contains the essence and heart of the Reformation argument.

A Reformation Debate is a reprint of the letters by Sadoleto and Calvin. These two letters contain the essentials of the Reformation debate--the arrogance, guile, and intractability of the Roman Catholic Church; and the discipline, logic, and Biblically-based assertions of the Reformers. The letters amount to only sixty-five pages, so both can be read in one sitting. The editor has also included two appendices--one on Calvin's argument of justification by faith alone, and the other the Council of Trent's response to the Protestant affirmation of *sola fide*. As an aside, John Calvin's letter was so masterfully and skillfully crafted that from virtually the time it was written until today, Calvin's letter has been studied as one of the finest examples of literary correspondence of the period.

A Reformation Debate should be read by every Christian. The issues argued are the same ones we face today. A copy is available in the church library, or you can order your own copy at:

http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0801023904/qid=1135907868/sr=8-1/ref=pd_bbs_1/002-5219695-0037647?n=507846&s=books&v=glance

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