

THE REFORMATION



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*The Reformation in Spain in the Sixteenth Century (Part II)*¹

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After reviewing an outline of the sixteenth century Spanish Reformation we are now going to draw near to contemplate some of its more concrete aspects—some of its characters, their doctrines, and the ways in which they sought to serve the Lord. In the final analysis, this is what it is all about: as we are with them we draw nearer to the knowledge of our Redeemer.

Reiterating that this is not a discourse about historical facts (that can be more or less helpful) but an effort to encourage us to reflect on the acts of the Lord *in* history. Therefore, we are in the presence of that which is alive and real.

Recognizing that that work in Spain was in the past a work of God, we should assume that (as any work of his in the context of confrontation in which his Kingdom lives) there will be attempts to cover it up so it will be forgotten. If this is not possible, efforts will be made to distort and modify its true content so it will not be received as truly the work of God's sole power and authority. This is a very real danger today also. The works of the past, or of the present in the life of the people of God, ultimately are presented as a fruit, not of the grace of God nor of the power of his Spirit, but of the *human* power of Christians. A power that is *expressed* religiously, but in the final analysis, is human power.²

¹This article is a translated transcription of an address by the same title delivered at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 27 August 2009. It has been translated from the original Spanish to English by Dr. Daniel Sanchez (Distinguished Professor of Missions, Patterson Center for Global Theological Innovation at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary).

²One must be alert regarding this matter, because it occurs with the Scripture itself. Ultimately it is only "human" fruit. Very beautiful, yes, very religious and very moral, but only human, it is presented only as an expression of the human religious experience. Many printings of the sacred text are made, many anniversaries of translations or similar things, to show the great human achievements and to point out the moral power of humanity. Ultimately we are left with man and not God, therefore, much less with a Redeeming Christ and Judge. The "translation" in our western context that we need today of the Scripture is not so much to the languages of the peoples—it is clear that this is important also—but to the "language" of the Bible itself, which is an infallible Word of the eternal and sovereign God.

Understanding the Spanish Reformation

I place this question before you, because if you read some article or book about the Reformation (although they would not even give it that name) in Spain in the sixteenth century, the majority would present to you a perspective of the facts that is very different from the one I am proposing to you. The process has followed these steps: first forgetting, then distorting.

Recognizing, therefore, the existence of divergent opinions about this matter, we should go to the facts themselves, because it is not a matter of basing pious opinions on imagination itself. Rather, it is a matter of ensuring that the results are the fruit of a correct knowledge of the facts. For that we have the texts that the authors themselves left for us. In these texts we can investigate the nature of their positions and statements. There are, providentially, many of these texts that have been preserved.

In the preservation and publication of these texts, one cannot forget the work that was done by two characters in the nineteenth century.³ We are talking about Luis Usoz y Río (1805–1865) and Benjamín Barron Wiffen (1794–1867). From their collaboration came the collection published by Usoz called *Obras Antiguas De Los Españoles Reformados (Ancient Spanish Reformers)*.⁴ In it are included most of the works of Juan de Valdés and the translation of Calvin's *Institutes* done by Cipriano de Valera (21 volumes in total). The contribution of the editor also included the economic support he was able to provide due to his substantial personal wealth. Without entering into details, on a trip to Spain Wiffen met Usoz to finalize a project of searching for and publishing the works of the Spanish Reformers.⁵ Upon the death of both of them, a collaborator who was a professor of the romance languages at the University of Strasburg, Eduard Bohemer, continued the work. It must be pointed out that this was the personal, isolated work of several individuals. This is due to two facts: the evangelical churches that were being established and the foreign missions that were working in Spain were both not interested in this subject. The Catholic reaction to the recovered history was expressed by an ultra-Catholic scholar, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912), in a work entitled *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles (History of the Heterodox Spaniards)*.⁶ In this work, the memory of the Spanish Reformation of the sixteenth century is retained, but an effort is made to destroy its theology.⁷ We are in a phase, therefore, in which the events of

³One cannot talk of a time before this because in Spain, from the middle of the Sixteenth Century there was practically no evangelical presence until the middle of the Nineteenth Century.

⁴Luis de Usoz y Río and Benjamin Barron Wiffen, *Obras Antiguas De Los Españoles Reformados* (San Sebastián, 1847).

⁵This happened in Seville.

⁶Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles, Volume 2* (Madrid: University of Madrid, 1880).

⁷Even though the language in many cases is offensive, it continues to be an important reference work.

the sixteenth century are considered “Protestants,” even though this is done to categorize them as something already expired that cannot be revived in Spain. This author, in the conclusion of his history of our Reformation, says, “Here ends the history of the Reformation in Seville. A strong Catholic reaction erased even the very last relics of the contagion. The monastery of San Isidro was purified.”⁸

In the twentieth century a key event that relates to the topic before us took place. The prestigious French Hispanicist Marcel Bataillon (1895–1977) developed what would become central in all of his research trajectory: the influence of Erasmus in the Spanish culture, especially in the sixteenth century. His doctoral thesis “Erasmus y España” (Erasmus and Spain)⁹ created a model of interpretation of our history that endures to this day. In Spain, according to that model, there were no “Protestants” but Erasmians. The characters that we reviewed in our previous lecture would have been only Catholics who followed the first humanistic suggestions of Erasmus to “reform” the customs of the Church. Then, upon leaving Spain, through contact with European Reformers, did they change their religion? This model had much acceptance because it did not annoy anyone. The Church of Rome continued to be the only true church in Spanish identity, and the dissidence of the characters and groups as the ones in Valladolid and (especially) in Seville were only that: *dissidents* with regards to customs that remained *within* the Roman Church itself and never desired a *rupture*, as was occurring in Europe. The Protestant Reformation was, therefore, something from the outside, foreign; and if there was someone who was evangelical, it was due to “conversion” as a result of the work of some foreigner. The evangelical churches and missions that were in Spain were not inconvenienced by this model either. In some way, with it they would put aside those reformers of the sixteenth century that were so radical and doctrinal. The ideas that had been instilled in their inner being with respect to the mere human character of the Bible and the preeminence of human work in any other type of “salvation” converted our reformers into undesirable guests.¹⁰

It is not that we despise the cultural effects and the benefit for society that Christianity produces, quite the contrary. Much of our activity in Seville is channeled precisely to divulge “the social liberties of the Protestant Reformation” through conferences and workshops in the University. But that is one thing; it is a very different thing to consider for today only that aspect as worthy of being presented, and that which has to do with the biblical faith, well, to relegate it to oblivion. Precisely, we must emphasize that one is the

⁸Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de los Heterodoxos Españoles*, 449. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Spanish texts to English have been translated by Dr. Sanchez: “Aquí termina la Historia de la Reforma en Sevilla. Una enérgica reacción católica borró hasta las últimas reliquias del contagio. El monasterio de San Isidoro fue purificado.”

⁹Marcel Bataillon, “Erasmus y España: estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI” (doctoral dissertation, University of Paris, 1937).

¹⁰In many cases, we continue to be the same today.

fruit of the other, and that social liberty cannot be preserved without a biblical faith.

Another aspect into which some authors want to fit our Reformation has something else of interest, even though this cannot be fully defined. I am referring to what in Spain is known as the *alumbrados* (enlightened ones). It is something typical of our land and it happened in the sixteenth century. These were groups (all of Jewish ancestry) that met for Bible study. We really do not know much about these groups. It is difficult to give an accurate description of them, because what is known of them indicates that their activities varied from one place to another. What did unite them was the purpose of living a religious life based more on their inner being and less on external ceremonies. Their name “enlightened ones” is due to the fact that they emphasized spiritual personal illumination in order to know and live the Christian faith. They would meet in private homes around a leader. It is important to note that they did not consider themselves a “church” and never intended to form an organization. Among the beliefs of these groups are found some instances of formulas that today we would call “evangelical.” In effect, we know that the leaders of the one that Juan de Valdés attended believed in doctrines that were clearly evangelical.¹¹ Therefore, we do consider this author as one of the pioneers of the Spanish Reformation, for it is true that it had the influence of the “enlightened ones.” But to consider it as a sort of extension of that movement is not acceptable, for, among other things, the Spanish Reformation considered itself “a church.” The clandestine communities in Valladolid or Seville did not see themselves as study groups to advance personal piety, but as churches.¹²

More Examples of this Model of Interpretation

For the study of the reformer from Seville, Antonio del Corro, it is absolutely necessary to read the doctoral thesis about him that William McFadden presented.¹³ If one reads the facts that are given, one will encounter a faithful servant of Christ, someone who has been regenerated and has a singular calling to serve his Lord in conformity with the supreme authority of His Word. However, in the final appraisal of the author, he is only presented as a brilliant humanistic, promoter of human liberty (which is also true). For the study of Constantino Ponce de la Fuente another doctoral thesis is very important.¹⁴ In the final analysis we have the same thing: the facts present to us a biblical believer who in his heart, preaching, and writings is outside the Church of Rome. For the author, however, he is an Erasmian Catholic

¹¹They were condemned by the Inquisition.

¹²This included having their own recognized pastors.

¹³William McFadden, “The life and works of Antonio del Corro (1527–1591)” (PhD diss., Queen’s University of Belfast, 1953).

¹⁴William Burwell Jones, “Constantino Ponce de la Fuente: the problem of Protestant influence in sixteenth-century Spain” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1965).

who, as other Catholics, clashed with the Inquisition.¹⁵ This author utilizes the extremely erroneous term “Evangelical Catholic” to classify Constantino and other characters of our Reformation. That was the term that other authors used also, in the artificial construction of which is the fruit of a curious theory. However, it is a term that is widely applied in our historiography due to the influence of Rome. A Spaniard, if he is religious, has to be Catholic.¹⁶ To study Casiodoro de Reina a very important biography is by Arthur Gordon Kinder (1917–97).¹⁷ The numerous works of this Hispanicist and professor at the University of Manchester are required reading for the study of the Reformation. But once again we are faced with the same situation regarding the assessment of these characters. In a note to one of the articles of the confession of faith that Reina wrote for the Spanish church in London, in which the eternal condemnation of the unbelievers is stated, Kinder says, “One would have expected Reina to subscribe to a view which envisaged the final salvation of all, or, at least, the final destruction of the wicked, rather than their eternal torment.”¹⁸

More examples could be given but these are sufficient. The result is that we have some researchers who have produced very important studies about the Reformation in Spain or about some specific characters, whom we have to consult if we want to have a good knowledge of the facts.¹⁹ But these authors, because of their lack of theological knowledge, change the focus of many of the facts that they research. It can be said that they have spent much time accompanying in their writings the social communities of the sixteenth century or following in an exhaustive manner some of their characters, but they have never entered the throne of grace with them. They have never been at the cross with Christ and have never been resurrected with him. Traveling their entire lives along the road of the history of the Reformation and they never had an encounter with the Lord of the Reformation!

In any library, therefore, the entry “Spanish Reformation” can have at least eighty percent of the books. Some may be required reading, but with this incorrect perspective they can become a stumbling block more than a benefit for the student who approaches this topic for the first time. This is why I give my warning. However, in the last few years we have attempted

¹⁵Of the other Catholics who clashed with the Inquisition (Teresa de Jesús, Fray Luis de León, Juan de la Cruz, etc.), none ended up in the bonfire condemned as heretics, and today they are a part of the Roman collection of saints.

¹⁶A German, for example, if he reads Paul could come out being Lutheran. But if a Spaniard reads it, he always comes out as a Catholic, regardless of the shades of meanings this might have.

¹⁷Arthur Gordon Kinder, *Casiodoro de Reina: Spanish Reformer of the Sixteenth Century*, volume 50 of *Monografías A* (London: Tamesis Books, 1975).

¹⁸Casiodoro de Reina, *Confesión de Fe Cristiana*, ed. A. Gordon Kinder, volume 46 of *Exeter Hispanic Texts* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1988), 38. Kinder is the one who published this work in Spanish.

¹⁹Some of these researchers have dedicated their entire lives to this work.

to incorporate a vision of the Reformation that is more in accord with its nature. In this task I am obligated to point out at least two: Dr. David Estrada²⁰ and Dr. Francisco Ruiz de Pablos.²¹ They continue in this task with great enthusiasm. I also cannot forget the absolutely necessary contribution of D. Luis Abril, director of the publishing house that publishes the collection of works with which we rescue the memories of our fathers of the sixteenth century. Another person whom we must mention is Dr. José C. Nieto. His studies are pioneer in the effort to accredit the Spanish Reformation as a *reformation*, even if it is not identifiable in every aspect with the one from Europe. He had his first field of service in Spain, but he went to the United States of America, where he carried his activities as a professor at Juniata College in Huntingdon Pennsylvania. Something of which I am convinced is that the invitation of Dr. Paige Patterson and the collaboration of Dr. Daniel Sánchez at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, which makes this presentation possible, are *already* a part of the dynamic that the Lord is providing to edify his people with the doctrines and lives of our reformers. They are already a part of our history. In those brothers the power of the Word of God was demonstrated, and today with us the same power and the same Word are present.

Two Primary Aspects of the Spanish Reformation

With this criterion of approach, with this ambit of *communion with the saints*, with this feeling that their tears and their joys are ours also, with this shared life, let us look at two aspects of their pilgrimage through the obedience of faith that today are basic for our own pilgrimage: preaching and evangelization.

Preaching in the Spanish Reformation

The effigy, the straw doll, that the inquisitors showed us to represent Dr. Constantino Ponce de la Fuente in the public execution was decorated with some diabolic figures (as they used to do) to demonstrate their condemnation. They kept, however, his clothing and representative figure, one hand lifted and the other one holding on to the pulpit. Not even in their intent to erase his memory could they hide his *presence* as a preacher. The anonymous author, through whom we know many of these events, declares:

in substitution for the dead person, a straw effigy was placed on the pulpit with one hand lifted and the other holding on the pulpit, carried out with such great skill, that it represented a living Constantino with that gesture with which he had habitually

²⁰Dr. Estrada studied at Westminster Theological Seminary and has been a professor at the University of Barcelona.

²¹Dr. Ruiz de Pablos is a formidable Latin scholar who, with his studies and translations, has provided a correct perspective for the study of our Reformation.

preached. And there was no doubt that that empty effigy preached to the souls of many with the same efficacy as he had done before in the life of the one whom that scene mockingly represented.²²

In effect, if we see the scene with the eyes of faith, we find a permanent lesson of what an effigy, with the memory of the preaching of the one whom it represents, has more authority, honor, and power than the entire Inquisition tribunal and the civil authorities together (even if these can shed blood and take physical life away). That effigy is there, with the memory of the preached Word, a smell of death for some and a smell of life for others.

The Reformation movement in Europe is configured and molded to diverse circumstances: a Lutheran model, a Geneva model, an English model, a Scottish model, etc. There could not be a Spanish model. But is the Reformation only a model that is adjusted to some social circumstance? Is an external form adjusted to a cultural sphere required? Evidently not. There is a “Reformation” where the primacy of the Word is; if that is lacking, everything else is superfluous. Our Spanish Reformation had that primacy, and in that primacy is included, in a natural way, the primacy of the *preached* Word. This constitutes the essence of Christianity. That fruit was abundant in Spanish Christianity, rescued from the chains of ignorance of that Word that Rome postulated. That *taught* word that was giving birth and sustenance to the local church and was reaching a crucial moment as it was *proclaimed* (or preached). I will not tire you with names, but there is not a single one of our reformers in whom this element was not fundamental. If we think about Constantino, or Casiodoro de Reina, or of some other one in a special way, it is because in them could be seen an outstanding emphasis on this aspect, but it was also common to all of the others. What a difference from the panorama that sometimes is found in contemporary evangelical churches—filled with social activities, marketing, publicity, etc. These things can be useful, but the teaching and the preaching of the Word does not appear anywhere! That is why I have warned of the importance of not staying with external forms as we study our Reformation.

In addition to this, we encounter, as happened in some moments in the European Reformation, the occurrence of the natural birth of local churches. I say “natural” in the sense that they did not originate from other “mother churches.” There we can see the power of the Spirit saving and guarding the “decency and order” of his church. We mentioned already the evangelistic activity of Rodrigo de Valer. Even though he began by himself, with his calling directly from God and His Word, he was nonetheless “recognized” as

²²Nicolas Castrillo Benito, *El “Reginaldo Montano” Primer Libro Polemico Contra la Inquisicioin Española* (Madrid: CSIC, 1991), 453. “en lugar del muerto colocaron una figura de paja en el púlpito con una mano levantada y otra apoyada en él dispuesto con tal arte, que representaba al vivo a Constantino en el mismo ademán con que solía predicar. Y no hay duda de que ese día aquella estatua vacía habló a las almas de muchos tan eficazmente, como antes en vida lo hiciera aquél a quien por escarnio representaba.”

such by the other believers in the church in Seville. Regarding the position of “preacher,” it is true that most came from a Catholic background, that is to say they were friars or priests (in a sense they were already preachers). But then the church recognized them and held them as such. Even in the case of the congregation in Seville, we know that it had established, as its own, a pastor who did not come from a previous ecclesiastical setting. It is true that the Lord had already prepared the way, placing some of these servants outside the ecclesiastical sphere. This is especially true of the nucleus in the monastery of San Isidro del Campo, but we see that the church recognized the ministry of the Word as something that was fundamental in its new status of having been “saved,” not as an automatic prolongation of what existed previously.²³

It is true that Constantino (and others without doubt) was wise in the knowledge of the Latin, Hebrew, and Greek languages; that he was a consummate teacher in the use of the Castilian language; and that he was a master in the art of the catechisms and designed models for instruction and teaching. But all of this (as important as it is) would have been burned in his effigy. What lasts there until today, what had and has authority, is that Constantino had been *sent* by the Lord to preach and through him his Lord spoke to his people. That position (common to the other reformers) is what makes it possible for true *preaching* to take place. That preaching, as it is based on the Word, is not of the sixteenth century but is present and alive today. Time burns the culture and human contributions, but what is of God lasts forever. That is why today we can also be edified with that preaching and teaching. That is why those who are of God search for his works in our soil of Seville, and the ones who do not are looking for human works in our same soil and in the same episodes. Moreover, when I propose that we retain this aspect of preaching, it is not a matter of our retaining “one part” of these authors. In reality, for them that was what was fundamental; it was everything. The rest of their gifts were that—“gifts” to fulfill adequately their ministry of teaching and preaching.

Teaching and preaching *the Word*, that central point that was taught in Europe was also lived in Spain. With the relevant fact that in this case we find the use of the Old Testament texts to propagate the gospel. The commentaries of Constantino (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon) have not been conserved, but the indications that remain demonstrate that his teaching method was expository preaching. He wrote several books to help in teaching the faith. One of them, *Doctrina Christiana (Christian Doctrine)*, is of great relevance because it draws together the fundamental doctrines of the Reformation.²⁴ The second part remained unpublished (which he envisioned as a type of Systematic Theology), in which other fundamental doctrines were included and which enabled the Inquisition to accuse him of

²³Would the converted priest of a church necessarily have to be its pastor?

²⁴Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, *Doctrina Christiana, En Que Esta Comprehendida Toda la informacion que pertenece al hombre quiere servir a Dios* (Anvers: Steelsius, 1555).

heresy. We do not have it. The Inquisition did have it in its hands, and from the public sentence in the trial we know that it contained, at least, the following topics:

On the state of the Church; On the true Church and the Church of the Pope—in this section he calls the pope the Antichrist; On the sacrament of the Eucharist and the invention of the Mass—a reason why the world (an anonymous witness of the events tells us) was bewitched by the ignorance of the Holy Scriptures; On the justification of man; On Purgatory—he calls purgatory the head of the wolf and an invention of the friars to fill their stomachs; On the Papal Bulls and indulgences; On the merits of men; On confession; and on all of the other chapters of the Christian religion.²⁵

These published works are in reality explications of the Scriptures. The base and authority for their understandings is the biblical text. The same occurs with their preaching. We only have a small sample from his six sermons on Psalm 1, which are a practical exegesis of the first psalm. He consults the Hebrew meaning of its words, he explains, and he applies. It is used to counsel, to edify, and to reject false doctrines and their preachers. There is Life. He declares to his hearers:

it is clear and ascertained that this first psalm, in the only six verses it has, contains in it, summarized and abbreviated, all of the doctrine of the Christian religion, of the faith, of the sentiment of the works, and of the hope that is essential for man to have in order that he may truly be reached by the redemption and sacrifice of Christ, our Redeemer, so that the eternal Father will shelter him, love him, favor him, and make him blessed.²⁶

²⁵Raimundo González de Montes, *Artes de la inquisición española: primer traducción castellana, de la obra escrita en latín*, volume 5 of *Reformistas antiguos españoles* (Madrid: Letitia, 1851), 320–21. “Del estado de la Iglesia. De la verdadera Iglesia, i de la Iglesia del Papa, a quien llamaba anticristo. Del sacramento de la Eucaristia, i del invento de la Misa: azerca de todo lo cual, afirmaba él, estar el mundo faszinado, a causa de la ignoranzia de las Sagradas letras. De la Justificazion del hombre. Del Purgatorio, al que llamaba b cabeza de lobo, e invento de los frailes en pró de su gula. De las Bulas e Induljenzias Papales. De los méritos de los hombres. De la Confesion, i de todos las demas capítulos de la relijion Cristiana.”

²⁶Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, “Exposición del primer salmo de David, cuyo principio es beatus vir, dividida en seis sermones,” in *Constantino Ponce de la Fuente*, ed. Emilio Monjo Bellido, volume 5 of *Obras de los Reformadores Españoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2009), 138–89. “queda claro y averiguado que este primer salmo, en solo seis versos que tiene, contiene en sí resumida y abreviada toda la doctrina de la religión cristiana, de la fe, del sentimiento de las obras y de la esperanza que conviene que tenga un hombre para que verdaderamente le alcance la redención y sacrificio de Cristo, nuestro Redentor, para que el Padre eterno le ampare, le ame y le favorezca y haga bienaventurado.”

In actuality, in these 150 or so pages we find an entire tract of practical theology. A theology that is preached where evangelization and exhortation take place results in the house of God being edified and the house of the devil being destroyed. It follows a model that we could consider similar to the *lucid brevity* that Calvin advocated for exegesis and the preaching of the Word.²⁷ He did not speak about things that were not appropriate to the purpose of the text; it was a matter of feeding, not of enlightening the cook, not about understanding but about edifying and nourishing. A preaching that knows the Scripture knows the human heart with its miseries, and knows the power of God!²⁸

The preaching of Constantino Ponce de la Fuente is an example of something that is now quite forgotten: that preaching takes place in the midst of hostility. Surely for many, preaching is something that they assume is carried out in a congregation with some problem perhaps but within an environment with a certain degree of respect and consideration. If that is the case, it is a good thing, but we should not forget that the proclamation of the royal rights of the Redeemer has to be done in many cases in the presence of his enemies. In the presence of that proclamation, some repent and obey and others show their enmity. Constantino preached in Seville, a city blessed by the mercy of the Lord (as our reformers affirm), but also it was a type of earthly Jerusalem which continued to persecute and kill the Messiah and his servants. He does not preach at the table of his friends but in the plaza of the enemies. It is a proclamation with which there are many possibilities of ending up in jail or the bonfire. It is a proclamation of life and death, because the gospel either saves or certifies condemnation (but also because with it the preacher has to be ready to give up his life). Constantino did not preach with the prelude of a sweet melody in a silent and respectful church (surely many times he also did this) but with the sound of moaning from his brothers in jail in Triana. He knew that if his hearers accepted the Word he was announcing they could also end up in the dungeons. All of us know that we have been called to proclaim that the Lord reigns, but let us not forget that we do it “outside” the camp, in fellowship with the vituperations of Christ.

Constantino, as a good preacher, is conscious of his own weakness and impotence and of the power of the Word. He knows that it is the seed that effects the rebirth and remains forever. But he is also a man of books. His library, at a time when a book was a costly item and difficult to obtain, is formidable (without counting the books that he kept hidden). Complete

²⁷Ponce de la Fuente’s absolutely essential “Confesión de un pecador” is not more than twenty pages long. Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, “Confesión de un pecador delante de Jesucristo redentor u juez de los hombres,” in *Constantino Ponce de la Fuente*, ed. Emilio Monjo Bellido, volume 5 of *Obras de los Reformadores Españoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2009).

²⁸If one reads the sermons of Calvin, as one hears the ones of Constantino one finds oneself in the same syntony.

confidence in the power of God is never for the believer an excuse for laziness or negligence. Confidence in the grace of God is the best ingredient to encourage our responsibility, knowing that if the Lord does not build the house the work is in vain. They also knew that it was their duty to work as hard as possible always.

Even though Constantino stays in Seville and other reformers are able to leave and settle in Europe, their vision concerning the ministry of the Word is identical. It was only one ministry in diverse circumstances. All of them saw themselves as a part of one body, not only with the ministers of their day, but with all of the preceding ones (and for the ones who would come later). None of them considered himself the creator of a new church, but a servant of the one that Christ bought with his blood and has lived throughout the ages. That is why in their preaching, even though the situation was not at all favorable, they would place before them a future of victory where the fruits of the cross would blossom in due time. On this was the proposition always based that their hearers follow a Christian life of honor and adoration of the Lord according to his Word. It is true that this in Seville was very problematic in that particular circumstance. In the midst of Rome's many superstitions and deceits, our preachers insisted that the people not pay attention to the external things and that they strive for a service to Lord that is from the heart. They preached a holy way of living, not with the "sanctity" that was being taught by the priests through the sacraments and liturgies but through the obedience of faith. This implies that our preachers had *authority* and felt that they were in communion with the entire body of ministers of the Word. Casiodoro de Reina in the confession of faith that he presented in London says that for our justification we count also on the:

external means of the Ministry of the Word, which we confess to be constituted by the Lord in order that his chosen ones, scattered throughout the world, may be called to his fold with the voice of his gospel and, thus called, be justified [by that Word]. We believe that it is the very function of the Lord himself, as Lord of the harvest, to call, authorize and equip with his gifts and Spirit, the ministers of the New Covenant and send them to call his Church; and having called it, to congregate it in the unity of faith and of love; that they shepherd it with the pasture of his Word and with it maintain the Church in Christian discipline and harmony. The authority of the Apostleship or Ministry of the Word of the Gospel residing *solidly* in the only Apostle, Minister, and Teacher of our faith: the Christ, and being sent in his name ... respect and obedience are owed ... having a legitimate calling to the Ministry and not teaching another Gospel but the one that the Lord taught and ordered that it be preached among the peoples, neither, with tyranny, lord over the conscience of those

whom they ought to serve, for they are the Lord's own Kingdom and inheritance.²⁹

Juan Pérez de Pineda, in like manner demonstrates to us how he understood the ministry of the Word. With regard to the claim of Rome to make hierarchical differences he declares, "that the ministers of the Gospel are sent by God to be servants and stewards, and not to be lords; and that the Word that they administer makes them all equal."³⁰ Taking into account the situation of their days and of what was happening in Spain he says:

As the only remedy and defense, God left us his Word so that guided by it we would know how to serve him and draw near to him to be helped in every need ... Because only those who follow Christ (and follow those who embrace his pure Word) have this knowledge and clarity ... But Satan, through his ministers, has always worked to deprive us of this ... They brought us through this path [depriving us of the Scriptures] to a miserable slavery even more intolerable and hard than the one that the people of God suffered in Egypt and in Babylon under cruel tyrants. They came in that manner to deprive us of our being as men and to take away from us the judgment of reason, wanting us to enjoy what was pleasing to them. Forcing us to receive as true God the false one that they themselves had invented, to fill their stomachs ... The freedom that in his mercy [God] has given us is to not depend on men with regard to our salvation, but on his Word and through it to condemn and discard constantly everything that contradicts it, no matter how ancient, authorized, and approved [it might be by the servants of Satan] ... In Scripture alone is the purity of the truth, and to it the Lord sends us through his evangelists and prophets to seek truth. The expositions of men,

²⁹Casiodoro de Reina, *Confesión de fe Christiana*, 26; italics original. "el externo ministerio de la palabra; el qual confessamos ser instituydo del Señor a fin de que sus escogidos, esparzidos por todo el mundo, sean llamados a su aprisco con la boz de su Evangelio y, llamados, sean por ella justificados [por esa Palabra] ... Creemos ser proprio officio del mismo Señor, como Señor de la miesse, llamar, autorizar y hazer idóneos con sus dones y Espíritu a tales ministros del Nuevo Testamento, y embiarlos a que llamen su Iglesia; y llamada, la congreguen en unidad de fe y de charidad, la apacienten con el pasto de su palabra y la mantengan con la misma en christiano conceierto y disciplina. Residiendo la autoridad del apostolado o ministerio de la palabra del Evangelio *in solidum* en el único apóstol, ministro y maestro de nuestra fe, el Christo, y siendo ellos embiados en su nombre ... deverse tanto respecto y obedeciére ... siendo legítima su vocación al ministerio, y no enseñando otro Evangelio que el que el Señor enseñó y mandó que se predicasse entre todas las gentes, ni enseñoreándose con tyrannía sobre la consiencias de aquéllos a quien antes deven servir, por ser proprio reyno y heredad del Señor."

³⁰Juan Pérez de Pineda, *Breve Tratado de Doctrina Útil para Todo Cristiano* (Madrid: Librería de A. Duran, 1871), 167. "que los ministros del Evangelio son enviados de Dios para ser siervos y despenseros, y no para señores: y que la Palabra que administran los hace á todos iguales."

no matter how holy they might have been, are not Holy Scripture, nor do they have carats of truth, nor the spirit with which it was written ... This is the rule of the gospel, that Scripture is entirely divine, which has as its author the one who is the eternal truth and eternal wisdom of God; who does not deceive nor can he deceive. Therefore, we would rather believe the gospel, and follow what it orders and teaches, than men, because the gospel is infallible, true, immutable and does not contain anything but the truth ... [The works that the servants of Satan have produced that follow his superstitions] much more than the Word of God, even though they are nothing but straw, and the true Gospel remained in perpetual silence, so much so that even its words came to be forgotten ... leaving the masters and teachers of the people without its knowledge.” Imagine how sad and miserable is the nation that bases its identity precisely on that silence of the Gospel and on the voice and triumph of superstitions.³¹

That the authority of preaching depends upon its being based only on the Scriptures and on all of the Scriptures was something that was evident to our reformers. Regarding this, Antonio del Corro encountered an effort on the part of some of the Lutheran pastors in Ambers to include a definition of orthodoxy in one of their doctrinal documents that placed the statement on par with Scripture in authority. He immediately wrote them a letter with great Christian love but with firmness. In it he rejected their effort as something harmful and pernicious to the church:

³¹Pérez de Pineda, *Breve Tratado*, 3–11. “Por único remedio y defensa nos dejó Dios su Palabra, para que guiados por ella, le supiésemos servir y nos acogiésemos a Él, para ser ayudados en toda necesidad ... Sólo los que siguen á Cristo en verdad los que abrazan su Palabra ... Pero Satanás por medio de sus ministros, ha siempre trabajado por privarnos de esto ... Trajéronnos por esta vía [privarnos de la Escritura] á una miserable servidumbre, harto más intolerable y dura que la que sufrió el pueblo de Dios en Egipto y en Babilonia debajo de tan crueles tiranos. Vinieron de esta manera á despojarnos del sér de hombres y quitarnos enteramente el juicio de la razon, en querer que tomásemos gusto en lo que á ellos les sabía bien. Haciéndonos recibir por verdadero Dios al falso que ellos mismos habian inventado, para dar hartura á sus vientres ... La libertad que por su clemencia [Dios] nos tiene dada, que es no depender de hombres en el negocio de nuestra salud, sino de sola su palabra; y por ella condenar y desechar constantemente todo lo que la contradice por muy antiguo, autorizado y aprobado que [esté por los siervos de Satanás] ... En sola la Escritura divina está la pureza de la verdad, y á ella nos manda el Señor por sus Evangelistas y Profetas que la vayamos á buscar. Las exposiciones de los hombres, por santos que hayan sido, no son Sagrada Escritura, ni tienen aquellos quilates de verdad, ni aquel Espíritu con el que ella fué escrita ... Esta es la regla del Evangelio, que es toda divina, la cual tiene por autor al que es verdad y sabiduría eterna de Dios, que ni engaña ni puede engañar. Por tanto, queremos antes creer al Evangelio y seguir lo que él enseña y manda, que á los hombres. Porque él es infalible, cierto, inmutable, y no contiene (otra cosa) que verdad ... [los trabajos de los siervos de Satanás han producido que se sigan sus supersticiones] mucho más que si fueran palabra de Dios, con ser, á la verdad, no otra cosa que paja. Y el verdadero Evangelio quedó en un perpetuo silencio, tanto que se vino á olvidar aun hasta los vocablos de él, y los maestros y enseñadores de los pueblos no lo sabian.”

There are others who view their confessions, catechisms, commentaries and traditions as if they were a fifth Gospel, and want to authorize their particular interpretations in such a way that they are placed on the level of the articles of faith, and dare to call heretics all who do not follow their imaginations exactly: which even though might be good and full of edification, are made by men and, as a consequence, unworthy of being compared with the Word of God.³²

Such things would be normal among:

some monks or hypocrites, organs of the Roman Anti-Christ, sent by their accomplices to disturb the Church of Jesus Christ, to darken his glory and cause the retreat of the advance of his kingdom ... knowing well that such types of Prophets are the disciples of Balaam, who sell their tongue to curse the people of God ... We are sure that the mouth of such hypocrites will not be able to bring forth anything other than infected words, smelly and filled with bad odor. Because they are whitened and shiny sepulchres that cannot bring forth more than what is hidden and covered inside, which is all infection and decay.³³

But if that begins to appear in the ranks of Protestants, ruin is certain! These servants of God warned about the danger that was found in the camp of the Reformation because in it were being introduced the same models with which Rome had corrupted the church.

Give me permission to cite another reformer. Cipriano de Valera, presenting to the Spaniards his translation of Calvin's *Institutes*, says regarding the sole authority of the Scriptures:

Even though all in general confess the great danger that there is from the deceivers, with all of this, very few know and understand

³²Antonio del Corro, "Carta los Pastores Luteranos de Amberes," in *Antonio del Corro*, volume 1 of *Obras de los Reformadores Españoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2006), 55. "Hay otros que hacen de sus confesiones, catechismos, comentarios, y tradiciones, como si fueran un quinto Evangelio, y quieren autorizar sus interpretaciones particulares, de manera que los ponen al nivel de los artículos de fe, y se atreven a llamar heréticos a todos los que no siguen exactamente sus imaginations: las cuales aunque fueran buenas, y llenas de edificación, son hechas por los hombres, y por consiguiente indignas de ser comparadas con la palabra del Señor."

³³*Ibid.*, 51–52. "algunos monjes o hipócritas, órganos del Anticristo Romano, enviados por sus cómplices para perturbar la Iglesia de Jesucristo, para oscurecer su gloria, y hacer retroceder el avance de su reino ... sabiendo bien que tal suerte de Profetas son discípulos de Balaam, que venden su lengua para maldecir al pueblo de Dios ... Estamos seguros que la boca de tales hipócritas no podrá producir otra cosa sino palabras infectas, apestosas, y llenas de todo mal olor. Porque son sepulcros blanqueados y lustrosos, que no obstante no pueden echar fuera más que lo que adentro está escondido y cubierto, a saber, toda infección y podredumbre."

who these deceivers might be. Therefore, it seems to me that it is not inopportune to explain here a certain and true rule, through which the Christian reader, as he is helped and enlightened, will be able to easily distinguish and differentiate between the faithful servants of Christ and the deceivers, so that all may know and understand whom they should follow and hear, and whom, on the other hand, they should detest and flee from according to the commandment of Christ. This would not ever be understood through human corrupt judgment and understanding, which, as false weight, is an abomination before God, but through the celestial wisdom that he reveals to us in the Holy Scripture, which is an accurate and truthful weight that pleases God.³⁴

Therefore, we are faced with a preaching with *authority*, that because it is based on the Scripture opens and closes heaven and binds and looses sinners in the name of the eternal Judge. We have a preaching that is also *universal*, which is extended to all—from the prince to the least of the slaves, including Catholics, Muslims, Evangelicals, etc. But who granted such a ministry to those preachers? I have already mentioned that we can contemplate precisely that enriching moment when the church demonstrates her life in the expression of her ministries that come from her and are flesh of her flesh. It can be concluded that our reformers understood their ministry with the authority of Christ *in* and *for* his church, but always *with* his church.³⁵ We truly do not know what conversations about this matter Constantino and his companions Juan Gil (Latinized Egidio) and Francisco de Vargas might have had, but we do know that their calling was not the same one they had when they entered the priesthood. Now they recognized one another, and the church in Seville recognized them. The others who went abroad demonstrate to us what understanding they had of the ministry. In the city or the state where they resided they joined the church and recognized its authority and order (at times with reproaches regarding what they considered to be inadequate, as good free Christians), and they sought that their status

³⁴Cipriano de Valera, introduction to *Institución de la Religión Cristiana*, trans. Cipriano de Valera (Países Bajos: Fundación Editorial de Literatura Reformada, 1967), xvii. “De manera que aunque todos en jeneral confiesen el gran peligro que hai de los engañadores, con todo esto, mui pocos saben i entienden cuales sean estos engañadores. Por tanto me parece que no será fuera de propósito mostrar aquí una regla zierta i verdadera, por la cual siendo ayudado i alumbrado el lector Cristiano podrá fázilmente distinguir i hazer diferencia entre los fieles siervos de Cristo i los engañadores: para que todos sepan i conozcan aquellos a quién deban oír i seguir, i cuáles por el contrario deben detestar, i huir, conforme al mandamiento de Cristo. Esto no se podría jamás entender por el corrupto juicio i entendimiento humano, el cual como peso falso, es abominacion delante de Dios: sino por la sabiduría zelestial que nos es revelada en la sagrada Escritura, la cual es peso fiel i verdadero que agrada á Dios.”

³⁵This has nothing to do with those “spiritual people” who receive their calling on a night of insomnia—or sleepiness—and launch themselves out to the world with no other authority than their own imagination.

as preachers be also accepted by those churches that already existed, submitting themselves to the norms that those churches had.

Evangelization in the Spanish Reformation

There is in this a very important point: none of our reformers had to take a “course” on evangelism. It is difficult to insert the meaning that today is usually given to this term in the normal life of the church of the Reformation. They found evangelization in a natural way in their conversion, then it was affirmed in their ministerial calling. What was essential was their recognition that the mercies of the Lord that had put the gospel in their hands had not done it “for” them in particular but for the nation of Spain. They considered themselves debtors to all of their countrymen, for they had something that the Lord had given them for all even though at the moment it was only in the hands of a few. These few should take to others the treasures that the Lord had given them as a gift. It is as if someone brought to your house some medicines with the name of one of your neighbors to cure him from certain death. The most natural thing is to consider that you have to deliver them as soon as possible. Then one can talk about the “methods of delivery” and look for better ways to do it. We know, moreover, that there is a mortal enemy who seeks to impede the delivery, that false messengers will deliver false medicines, that the person for whom it is intended will not want to recognize that he needs these medicines, etc. But the essential thing is to accept the fact that we have something that the Lord has given us *for* others.

This aspect is common to all the reformers. Even when they had to leave the country because their lives were in danger if they stayed, they did it with the purpose of being able to work harder in their task of taking the Gospel to those of their nation. Others stayed, as we have seen, and evangelized even when their bodies were being burned.

I want to underscore that all of them understood that evangelization was nothing more than the teaching of Scripture. In it are given the promises and the person of the Redeemer. That is why one of the first tasks that they imposed upon themselves was the translation of the biblical text in the language of the people. The primacy of the Word is absolute in their criterion for the announcement of the gospel. For example, when Antonio del Corro remembers his condition before being saved through faith in Christ, he reproaches the Roman Church that at every step one encounters something (sacraments, liturgies, masses, saints, bulls, or similar things) but never *sees* Christ. Everything is in the church, except Christ. When, at long last, someone encountered Christ, he was presented changed and cosmetically touched up, made into an idol, where there was no mercy nor justice, only merchandise and business. Christ’s mercy had to be bought and his justice could be escaped for a price. In the final analysis, it was not a matter of the external corrupt forms but of the corruption that they had made of Christ himself.³⁶

³⁶That is what differentiates it from the Reformation of Humanism, from the Renaissance, or from Erasmianism.

What was the use of preparing the way and removing obstacles when at the end you encounter only an idol instead of the Lord of heaven and earth?

What was for them evident and fundamental, that *to evangelize is to teach the Scriptures*, may sound strange to us today. In reality, as Antonio del Corro used to say in his days regarding the church of Rome, at the end something similar has happened in evangelical churches. The Lord is merciful and can call those who are his through very strange means, but there are evangelization campaigns with some practices that have followed the superstitions of Rome, where you encounter everything except Christ. The Christ that the preacher presents is nothing more than an abdominal idol fabricated by and for human success.

To teach the Scriptures means to proclaim Christ as it is written about him and proclaim man as it is written about man. One cannot do anything else if one wants to be faithful. It is not a matter of proclaiming a Christ who is pleasing to the unregenerate human heart. We proclaim Christ as the Savior of the sinner. One cannot open a discourse with people assuming a different position. If that is not pleasing, it is normal, but there is no other way. The *foolishness* of preaching continues to be foolishness, but also salvation for those whom God calls. Be careful not to try to remove the very nature of the proclamation of the gospel, because if its nature is removed so too will its effect be removed. There will not be foolishness but neither will there be salvation. Many will have been left with a false Christ, very acceptable for human success perhaps, but a Christ without the cross nor redemption.

Antonio del Corro explains the salvific effects of the gospel with the intervention of the Holy Spirit:

But being that miserable man, feeling estranged from God and his favor, could not believe that such a benefit could be for him, the Holy Spirit takes charge initially to write and engrave in his heart the good will that the Creator and Father has toward man. In addition to this, he is careful to open the eyes of understanding of the poor blind person, to that he can see the mediator of his salvation. Then he softens the dormant and obstinate will and makes it bold and powerful through the divine promises, so that he can want, desire, receive, and embrace Jesus Christ, who is the remedy that the Spirit presents him. The effect of this operation and work of the Spirit of God, in the heart, understanding, and will of sinful and repented man, we call faith, which is not a frivolous persuasion or acceptance of the Word of God, but a living thing that produces living effects, which is: true and certain assurance that God loves us and wants to make us heirs of all of his celestial goods, and to make us capable for such an inheritance, lost in the person of Adam, he wants us to enjoy the innocence, justice, fulfilled satisfaction and obedience of the second and celestial Adam. In addition to this, through this faith we are most

assured that the God who has received us in grace and reconciliation hates all injustice and partiality, and that the salvation he has given us, having liberated us from the power of our enemies, is so that from now on, stripping from ourselves of all enslaving fear, we live in a holy and just manner before him. (Luke 2; Titus 2) This faith engendered in man by the Spirit of God, serves him as a hand to welcome and embrace Jesus Christ, and also serves him as a mouth to receive him as spiritual food and nourishment. (John 17) Therefore, from now on the repented man is not seen in the house of God as a son of Adam, but as a brother of Jesus Christ, who is united to him through the faith and bond of the Holy Spirit, in such a way that the Christian and Christ, and the Christian man, are one same thing. (John 17)³⁷

Because the gospel is a matter of life or death for those who hear it, our reformers had great care in explaining the differences. When they spoke about the truth, they warned of as many types of lies as there were in the world. Above all, they took into account the evilness of error when this was found in the church itself. It had snuck into the church in such a way that there was then no truth but lies in what would have to be the house of God. All of this they attributed to the disdain that had been produced for the Scripture and how in its place had been put the imaginations of men. This was not an unimportant matter, but the very essence of the Christian message. If there is no Scripture, everything else is useless; there is no life. How

³⁷Antonio del Corro, "Carta a Felipe II," in *Antonio del Corro*, volume 1 of *Obras de los Reformadores Españoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2006), 163–64. "Pero en cuanto que el hombre miserable, sintiéndose tan alejado de Dios y de su favor, no podría creer que semejante beneficio sea para él, el Espíritu Santo toma el cargo primeramente de escribir y grabar en su corazón la buena voluntad que el Creador y Padre tiene para con los hombres. Además, toma cuidado de abrir los ojos del entendimiento del pobre ciego, para que vea al mediador de su salvación. En tercer lugar, ablanda la voluntad dormida y obstinada y la hace osada y poderosa por las divinas promesas, á fin de que pueda querer, desear, recibir y abrazar á Jesucristo, que es el remedio que el Espíritu le presenta. El efecto de esta operación y obra del Espíritu de Dios en el corazón, entendimiento y voluntad del hombre pecador y penitente, llamamos fe, la cual no es una frívola persuasión ó acogida de la palabra de Dios, sino una cosa viva que produce efectos vivos; á saber, verdadera y cierta seguridad de que Dios nos ama y quiere hacernos herederos de todos sus bienes celestiales y que para hacernos capaces de semejante herencia, perdida en la persona de Adán, quiere que gocemos de la inocencia, justicia, cumplidísima satisfacción y obediencia del segundo y celestial Adán. Además, por medio de esta fe estamos segurísimos que el Dios que nos ha recibido en gracia y reconciliación aborrece toda injusticia é iniquidad, y que la salvación que nos ha dado, habiéndonos librado del poder de nuestros enemigos, es para que desde ahora, despojados de todo temor servil, vivamos santa y justamente delante de él. (Luc. 2. Tito 2.) Esta fe engendrada en el hombre por el Espíritu de Dios, le sirve como de una mano para acoger y abrazar a Jesucristo, y también le sirve como de una boca para recibirle como comida y alimento espiritual. (Juan 17) Así que desde ahora el hombre arrepentido, no es ya estimado en la casa de Dios como hijo de Adán, sino hermano de Jesucristo, quien se une á él por medio de esta fe y lazo del Espíritu Santo, de tal manera que el cristiano y Cristo, y Cristo y el hombre cristiano, no son más que una misma cosa. (Juan 17)"

can one preach the gospel that gives life to the dead if one does not teach the Word? Is there anything else that produces this effect? This led them to point out and show clearly the superstitions and deviations of Rome, which they knew very well.³⁸ This is not acceptable today. It seems as though it would even be an obstacle for evangelization. To be sure our reformers, if they were told what at times is affirmed in evangelical circles (that it is not necessary to evangelize Catholics who are sincere and live their religion), would have immediately included this error in their warnings and admonishments. In their preaching and exhortations they not only explained clearly what road to follow but also from which false roads they should flee.

Conclusion

In this manner Cipriano de Valera would conclude an exhortation to his countrymen. With this feeling we conclude:

Therefore my dearly beloved brothers ... think truly what your duty should be. Do not receive in vain the grace of God, that he offers you through the preaching of the Gospel, through which the merciful God extends his hands of mercy to take the ignorant out of the hole and mud of ignorance to his knowledge and fellowship ... casting aside the doctrines and traditions of lying and deceiving men, hear the one who cannot lie, follow the one who cannot err, so that the name of the Lord will be sanctified in our Spain, and many being instructed by the Word of God, convert from the darkness to the light so that they will receive by faith in Jesus Christ remission of their sins and life and eternal blessing.³⁹

³⁸See Antonio del Corro, "Carta a Felipe II," 99–213. Antonio del Corro, in refuting the positions of Rome, offers us in an indirect way a course on Roman theology. These issues he explains in "Carta a Felipe II" so he would not persecute his subjects in the Lower Countries. And with these positions there would still be someone who says that what happened in Spain was not "Protestant": "prohibición de leer la Palabra en lengua vulgar" (107–08, prohibition of the reading of the Word in the vernacular language); "el Dios del papado cruel, injusto, y aficionado a los presentes" (109–10, the God of the papacy [cruel, unjust, and fond of gifts]); the "fe ... en el papado" (110–11, the faith of the papacy); "obras de superstición del papado" (111–12, works of superstition of the papacy); "falsa regeneración" (112–13, false regeneration); "la confirmación papista" (113, papal confirmation); "del matrimonio [como sacramento]" (113–14, matrimony as a sacrament); "de los sacramentos inventados por los hombres" (114–16, the sacraments invented by men); "adoración de las imágenes" (116, adoration of images); "ser farile como un segundo bautismo" (117–19, being a friar as a second baptism); "comerse a lost homres después de muertos" (119, eating men after they die); "de viene la autoridad de la Palabra de Dios" (130–31, the real authority of the Word of God); "del conocimiento de Dios sacado de la Palabra" (131–32, the knowledge of God taken from the Word); "de la creación del hombre" (134–35, the creation of man); "del pecado original" (135, original sin); "ceremonias de la iglesia papal" (142–42, ceremonies of the papal church); "partes de la penitencia en la iglesia papal" (148–50, parts of the penitence in the papal church); "la confesión papística" (151, the papist confession); "bulas" (159–60, bulls); "el purgatorio" (161, purgatory); and a long etcetera.

³⁹Cipriano de Valera, introduction to *Institución de la Religión Cristiana*, xxii. "Por tanto

This is a conclusion that is an affirmation of faith, a recognition that the Lord conserves and gives fruit to everything that we place in his hand. They placed their yearnings and prayers on the throne of the power of God. Today we gather the fruits. The only way to honor these reformers is to receive them as a fruit of grace. To have them with us as they were: servants of the Lord and ministers of his Word. To have them in our memories only to draw nearer to the one who is their Lord and ours. I believe that the most important thing today is that all of us have a living example of their way of receiving and proclaiming the Scripture, that Scripture that Rome wanted to burn when it burned them, that Scripture that in many evangelical churches today burns in their hands and they do not want it, that Scripture that continues to be the power of God to save his people, and the word of judgment against the nations.

hermanos míos muy amados ... pensad de veras cuál sea vuestro deber. No recibais en vano la gracia de Dios, que se os ofrece por la predicación del Evangelio, por el cual el piadoso Dios estienda las manos de su misericordia para sacar á los ignorantes del hoyo i lodo de ignorancia á su conocimiento i comunión ... desechando las doctrinas, i tradiciones de los hombres mentirosos i engañadores, oíd a aquel que no puede mentir, seguid á aquel que no puede errar: para que el nombre del Señor sea santificado en nuestra España, i que muchos siendo instruidos por la palabra de Dios, se conviertan de las tinieblas á la luz para que reziban por la fé en Jesu Cristo remision de pecados, i la vida i bienaventuranza eterna.”