

Institutes of the Christian Religion

In 2009, we are celebrating not only the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth but also the 450th anniversary of the final publication of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* during Calvin's lifetime.

First published in 1536, the *Institutes* express Calvin's views of Christian and reformed theology and thoughts. The original work was a short introduction to reformed thinking for lay people and in 6 chapters addressed law, the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the sacraments, false sacraments, and Christian liturgy. Calvin would continue to expand and refine the *Institutes* until the work became a treatise for students of theology. His final version, published in Latin in 1559, consisted of 4 books and 104 chapters.

This 1858 statement is still true today: "During his lifetime, Jean Calvin lectured, preached, corresponded, and wrote, influencing those who sought change in the political and religious world around them. This influence continues today directly through his published writings and their numerous translations. Biblical commentaries, pamphlets, letters, and *Institutes of the Christian Religion* provide current day grounding for reformed denominations around the world."

Jules Bonnet, comp. *Letters of John Calvin: Compiled from the Original Manuscripts and Edited with Historical Notes*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication [1858].



Illustration:
*Institutio Christianae Religionis Nunc Nere
Demun Suo Titulo Respondens*. Strasbourg:
Vuendelinus Rihelius, March 1545.

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