

# THE REFORMATION



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## *The Reformation in Spain in the Sixteenth Century (Part I)*<sup>1</sup>

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I am interested in history, not in and of itself, but as an expression of the glory of God. We are not contemplating events in a neutral, secular setting. We are in the holy of holies. We have arrived at it through the new and living way of the very flesh of our Redeemer; that is the fundamental meaning of all that has happened in the past and what may come in the future.

I invite you to join me as we transport ourselves together to the sixteenth century and to see what happens in Seville, one of the most important cities in Europe in that epoch. From there we will see the Reformation in Spain. Because we do not have a lot of time, the visit will be for only one day, 22 December 1560.

That day, very early in the morning, an entourage leaves, made up of members of the Inquisition Tribunal, the nobility of the city, functionaries, friars, and the prisoners from the castle of Triana. That Castle of San Jorge, erected near river Guadalquivir that divides the city, was a fortress for the defense of the city, now the headquarters and principal jail of the Spanish Inquisition. It represents a visible symbol of power. One cannot walk in the city without its silhouette projecting a feeling of fear. No one knows what happens inside (those who had been interrogated or jailed had orders upon leaving not to say anything of what had happened there). There is no noise, because arriving there is a symbol of perpetual misery. The prisoners do not know why they are imprisoned or who accuses them. They have to defend themselves against accusations that are unknown to them. They cannot speak in a loud voice. They cannot sing. They do not know who shares the jail with them. It would be difficult to find a better picture of the devil and his works. All of this is guided by his favorite one: the perverted church.

The people, informed the day before, lend themselves to participate in the feast that has been prepared, because a feast is what the civil authorities

<sup>1</sup>This 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).

and the Inquisition seek to have. It was a feast to demonstrate the “triumph” of the Christian faith against its enemies. That is the nature of the *autos de fe* (public execution). It was not a popular feast in terms of the participation of the people, because they could only participate as spectators. Everything was in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities. The people were learning that same day who the accused were and what penalties would be imposed. Furthermore, as evidence of the vast tyranny accepted by the people, they had to give a public verdict of being in agreement and supporting the inquisitors (without knowing anything about the matter).

Before we continue accompanying the entourage, it is helpful for us to have a clear understanding of what the Inquisition is. The term “inquisition” also has a connotation of something valuable. The apostle Paul himself exhorts us to “inquire” to see if we are in the faith. In an institution such as a seminary there is an “inquisitor” committee to investigate and analyze the competency of the candidates. There is, therefore, an investigation (inquisition) that is appropriate and wise. In the very beginning of the eighth century, the Inquisition was a simple mechanism of the bishops to investigate the religious practices of their dioceses with the collaboration of the secular power. Then the Dominicans, who depended directly on Rome, were charged with the function of investigating and judging. Not long afterwards it degenerated and transformed itself into a mechanism of the “crusade,” not then against the Saracens to re-conquer Jerusalem, but against the “heretics” in French and Italian lands. With this it acquired its connotation of something perverse and tyrannical.

The secular sword was put at the service of religion—a predetermined form of religion.<sup>2</sup> It will not be useless to remember that the Inquisition continues to be alive. In 1542 Pope Paul III founded the Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition, to defend the Church of Rome against the Protestant heretics. (Although his most famous trial was not against a Protestant, but against Galileo.) In 1908 Pope Pius X changed the name to the Holy Congregation of the Holy Office, and in 1965 Pope Paul VI changed it to the current Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Inquisition, therefore, even though it is in a different social context from that of its birth, continues to live. However, the Inquisition that is going to celebrate the Public Punishment, the festival of the triumph of religion which we attended in our day in the visit to Seville, is another one. It is the most powerful one. Its verdict cannot be appealed; not even the Pope can change it. It is the Spanish Inquisition, the worst possible example of the union of the church and the state. It was an instrument of the state that the Church of Rome used, as well as an instrument of the Church that the state used. Its use was always to oppress and bury truth and liberty. The Inquisition possessed

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps on another occasion we can make an historical visit to see the ruin that resulted when some of the churches of the Reformation followed the same method of Rome.

a façade of Christianity on the part of both church and state, but it also possessed all the marks of the works of the flesh as its pillars. The Inquisition was created by the Catholic Kings in 1478 as a means to unify Spain after the re-conquest of the Muslims. In 1480 a Tribunal of the Holy Office was constituted in Seville. It was not definitely eliminated until 1834. It was a Tribunal with jurisdiction over all legal matters in the various territories of Spain. As such it constituted itself a fundamental column of the State.

Surely, as we observe the entourage leave that sinister building, we would be astonished to know that the place that was most associated with justice was precisely the headquarters of the Tribunal of the Supreme Inquisition. It was perceived by the people as something somber, where any sentiment would be possible except that of trust. How miserable is a people that has to see its Supreme Tribunal in this manner. We would find out that the church and the state that use that tribunal are united in their pedagogy of fear. Both do not care about justice, only about the control that they can exercise over the society by means of terror. Both fear freedom.

Any mature person could have pointed out to us the change that had been produced in the activities of that institution. At first, it was intended principally to investigate and punish the possible false conversions of Jews and Muslims. Having decreed the expulsion of both communities from Spain, the possibility was offered to them to stay only if they would agree to convert to Christianity. Many agreed, but they continued to practice their rituals in secret. It was the mission of the Inquisition to find and punish them. In Spain the figure of the *cristiano viejo* (old Christian) was created to indicate that one came from a family without religious mixture. The *cristianos nuevos* (new Christians) were those who came from converted Jewish and Muslim families. Laws of “purity of blood” were established in which the status of the *cristiano viejo* was essential for the attainment of positions of importance. However, in 1560 the desire was to discover and punish *luteranos*, or Lutherans (because with that name they classified the religious dissenters). All of its machinery functioned to the fullest to exterminate Protestantism.

This new situation could be remembered by the public punishment, similar to the one we are attending, that was celebrated less than a year before on the 24th of September. It was the first tribunal against the *luteranos*. There is something that we can remember as we walk together with the entourage. Crossing the river by a pontoon bridge, we only have to walk half a kilometer until we arrive at the Plaza of San Francisco, the place where the public “theater” is held for the administration of justice to the offenders.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there is little we could learn on the way, because the condemned had wooden muzzles in their mouths so they could not communicate anything along the trajectory. They cannot say anything to us, and the Inquisition is already

<sup>3</sup>The jail—although only a portion remains—as well as the Plaza are still in the city today. The Plaza of San Francisco is precisely where city hall is found today.

telling us with this ceremony what its nature is: it is a power that bases its efficacy on secrecy, but when it comes out to the public light, it does it with the maximum symbols of power (power over life and death, over estate, over honor and over the memory of its victims). It does not need to come out many times, nor does it need to kill many people. It is sufficient for it to come out from time to time and kill a few, for it does it in front of many, as in a public theater. In that way it fulfills its commitment to terrorize the people.

In that public punishment they burned about twenty persons and eighty were condemned to diverse punishments. The people were surprised to see who the condemned were. There were some monks from the monastery close to Seville, a nun, high society persons, and all were condemned because they were "Lutheran." Several women were among them. One of the main ones was Señora Doña Isabel de Baena, who was not only accused of following those doctrines but of hosting in her house the community of "heretics." It was there that the evangelical church of Seville met. The author through whom much is known of what we can now remember says the following about this place: "This house was a school of perpetual piety and a holy place where the holy meetings were held and there day and night the perpetual praises resounded to God and His Christ."<sup>4</sup> It was a community for whom some of its pastors had written a strange a text which the inquisition had detected: "Dialogue of consolation between the Lord Jesus Christ and his very small church in Seville." In the charge against this lady was included the decree not only that she be burned but that her house be razed.<sup>5</sup> Other women accompanied her to be burned at the stake. Among them stands out a young maiden twenty years old, María Bohorques, of great erudition and superior piety, knowledgeable of the Scripture, and servant of the Lord. In addition to this, because of the sentencing of some of its friars, the people found out that in the monastery of San Isidro del Campo (which is close to Seville) practically the entire community had converted to the new doctrine. Some, when the situation was discovered, were able to flee, but others were captured.<sup>6</sup>

Many questions remain before us. How had these groups of *luteranos* been formed (because there were news of the existence of others in the city of Valladolid)? Why was it that the reading and the inquiry of the Bible that at the beginning of the century was considered so favorable, was now the cause for condemning the *luteranos*? But as we have already arrived at the public trial, we are going to draw near to one of the very special condemned

<sup>4</sup>Reinaldo González Montes, *Artes De La Santa Inquisición Española* (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2008), 256–57. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Spanish texts to English have been translated by Dr. Sanchez: "Esta casa fue escuela de perpetua piedad y lugar sagrado en donde se celebraban las reuniones sagradas y resonaban día y noche las perpetuas alabanzas de Dios y de su Cristo."

<sup>5</sup>Today we do not know where her house was located.

<sup>6</sup>Rome tried to "cleanse" the monastery with other friars and to establish it in the ornamentation and the Roman doctrines. The monastery, with a great part in ruins, today continues to be present in history.

persons in whom we will find an answer. These persons are now in “effigy,” that is to say we have their straw effigies. The Inquisition was in charge of condemning and burning the heretics even if they were not present. Some simply because they had died, others because they were in other places. On this occasion they have brought out four effigies to the public triumph: Doctor Egidio, Doctor Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, Maestro Francisco de Vargas, and Juan Pérez de Pineda. The first three had died, and they brought out their remains from the grave to burn them. The fourth was free in Geneva. In these straw effigies we can see the story of the Reformation in Spain.

### Doctors Egidio, Constantino, and Maestro Vargas

Dr. Juan Gil (Latinized Egidio) and Dr. Constantino Ponce de la Fuente were graduates of the University of Alcalá (Madrid). Francisco de Vargas had occupied the professorship of scholastic theology and then the one of moral theology in that university as well. This university was a focal point for the reception of renewal ideas from the beginning of the sixteenth century. Here, Erasmus had an ample field where his ideals of the reformation, of the customs, and of the priests received impetus. In this university special attention was given to biblical studies with the intent to revise and establish the text that resulted in the edition of the *Complutensian Polyglot Bible* (1514–17). It was here, also, that the first “Protestant” text was published in Spain in 1529: *Diálogo de Doctrina* (*Dialogue on Doctrine*) by Juan de Valdés.<sup>7</sup> Juan de Valdés provides for us the configuration of the Spanish Reformation: introduction to the studies of the Bible, discovery of the person and work of Christ, conversion, vocation to transmit the new doctrine, interest in translating the text of the Bible into a vernacular language, emphasis on the study and textual explication of the Scripture (and all of this with an autochthonous character, through contact with the Scripture, not as a result of propaganda coming from Protestant Europe, even though later these came together with a common purpose). Because of his difficulties with the Inquisition, Juan de Valdés had to leave Spain and settle in Naples. It is there that he carried out his ministry. In his case, he did not form what we would call a “church,” but he surrounded himself with a circle of intellectuals and priests for the study of the Bible. In Naples he writes several commentaries on the New Testament.<sup>8</sup> At his death in 1541 (he was just over thirty years old), his writings were prohibited and persecuted. Some of

<sup>7</sup>Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de Doctrina*, volume 3 of *Obras de los Reformadores Españoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2008). Even though it was published with the appropriate permission, shortly afterwards the Inquisition persecuted this book with such efficacy that it was almost lost from memory, and it was not until 1925 that a copy of it was found.

<sup>8</sup>So his Italian friends could read his books in Spanish, he wrote a method for learning Spanish: *Diálogo de la Lengua* (*Dialogue of the Language*), which is considered a basic pillar in the structure of our language. Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de la Lengua*, ed. Cristina Barbolani (Madrid: Cátedra, 1998).

them were reintroduced into Spain and formed a part of the literature that nourished the clandestine church.

The three friends, Constantino in 1533 and Egidio and Vargas a year later, arrived at the city that now “honors” them with those statues of ignominy. They came invited by a group of Erasmian followers, within the very Cathedral Council, interested in the reformation of the customs of Christianity. They themselves still did not yet know of the Reformation. The first two were installed as preachers, the third as a teacher of the sacred Scriptures. If they had remained as such, then what the historians affirm would have been true—that the Spanish Reformation was nothing more than the existence of some circles of followers of Erasmus. Very little, moreover, would have been achieved, because the years were passing and not even external reforms were being produced. However, they were to encounter a key character in our history: Rodrigo de Valer.

If, as has already been indicated, Juan de Valdés is fundamental as a pioneer (in its most academic aspect), Rodrigo is in his facet of public testimony in the streets and plazas. He acknowledged and proclaimed his *conversion* through the direct reading of the Bible (he could read Latin). With that he abandoned his previous life (which was only a search for pleasures) and focused on being a witness for Christ. He would debate with friars and priests in his sermons, criticizing the superstitions and idolatries of the Roman Church. Without having academic theological training but with his knowledge of the Scriptures, he had enough to destroy the arguments of the clerics. How did the Inquisition permit the rejection of the teaching of Rome in its own territory? We must keep in mind that at first, before the definitions of the Council of Trent, not all the clerics knew the limits and forms of their doctrines. This produced a time of indecision in the persecutions. The theological experts of the Inquisition knew the characteristics of Muslims and Jews very well, but for the new ideas they were not prepared. In addition to this, they considered de Valer to be a “little crazy.” What was very important in that era was that he was a *cristiano viejo*, that is to say he did not come from a family of Muslim or Jewish converts. Permit me to emphasize this fact, because it provides an adequate perception of the masses. If the Spanish Reformation has this person as an important “popular” pillar, it is also due to the fact that he did not come from a Jewish family. However, the other more “academic” pillar, Juan de Valdés, did come from a Jewish family (he was a *cristiano nuevo*). This mixture is found throughout all of our Reformation. Nonetheless, Rodrigo de Valer was also taken prisoner by the Inquisition in the end. He was castigated through diverse punishments, among them his banishment from the city (he would later die away from Seville). However, compared with the punishments imposed upon other Protestants (who in addition to this were *cristianos nuevos*), his punishment was lighter. Above all, the contact with Rodrigo de Valer brought about a radical change in Egidio. The doctor was guided by the testimony of this fervent believer in the fountain of true knowledge: the Scriptures.

Now we have one of the preachers in Seville that preach from a living faith. This is the nature of our Reformation: It was born from the Scriptures in an autochthonous manner. Only afterwards will the contact and benefits of the works of the European reformers take place. These preachers realize that they belong to the church whose head is Christ, even though formally they find themselves in the midst of the Roman Church that denies the lordship of Christ. The preaching produces fruit. A living, clandestine church is formed. In Seville, headquarters of the powerful Inquisition Tribunal, the Lord has raised his people through the Scriptures.

The power of the Spirit is manifested in the conversion of a good number of people. The situation is amazing: the preachers of the cathedral of Seville, one of the greatest and most powerful of the Catholic orb, are also the pastors of the “very small” church that Christ has in the midst of wolves. At the very heart of the earthly Jerusalem, Christ has caused to bud a part of his celestial Jerusalem. In the city there is a college, named the Colegio de la Doctrina (College of the Doctrine) where Egidio and Constantino teach. While teaching there, Dr. Constantino explained the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Songs of Solomon, and half of the book of Job.<sup>9</sup> These preferences for teaching from the sacred text show our Reformation as a nucleus where *sola scriptura* which is accompanied (as in the *Calvinist* Reformation) by *tota scriptura*. The use of what we call the Old Testament to edify the Church as a means of “evangelization” is an important symbol of identity of our Spanish Reformation. To this, without doubt, contributed the providential presence in its bosom of many descendents of Jewish families (as was the case with Egidio and Constantino).

But this did not occur only in the city of Seville. Not more than three kilometers away, in the town of Santiponce, is the monastery of San Isidro del Campo.<sup>10</sup> What happened in the city occurred in the monastery. Especially through the ministry of Egidio, practically all of the monks were converted, with their director leading the way.<sup>11</sup> There was, therefore, a clandestine church in Seville (with a number of members similar to what there is today totaling all denominations) and another church behind the walls of the monastery also clandestine.<sup>12</sup>

Since the conversion of Egidio, ten more years go by in which the church is edified and grows. Our preachers continue to expound the truths

<sup>9</sup>These works were never published. Neither were the manuscripts of the commentary of Genesis, some Psalms, Songs of Solomon, and Colossians that Dr. Egidio had written.

<sup>10</sup>This is also where the ruins of the Roman city of Italica are located.

<sup>11</sup>Their director was the great teacher of the Scriptures, García Arias, called the White Teacher because he was an albino. He also was later burned by the Inquisition.

<sup>12</sup>Among its monks are two whose last names are in the hands of many Latin Americans: Casiodoro de Reina, who translated the first complete Bible into Castilian, and Cipriano de Valera, who revised and published that first edition. From there comes that version Reina-Valera that has been the linguistic vehicle through which many believers have come to know Christ.



of the evangelical faith in the cathedral, without doubt with the use of exceptional language so as not to be discovered. A common theme of their teachings is the nature of the church (confirming time and again its “catholic” nature, but rejecting that it has to be “Roman”). They propose a Christian life separated from external ceremonies in favor of a life that comes from the heart and with conviction. In contrast to meritorious works, they present the perfect work of Christ whose benefits of his cross we have by the grace and the will of God. The foundation of their reflections and exhortations is Scripture itself. The fame of the preachers, especially Constantino, reaches Emperor Charles, who asks him to accompany him as chaplain and royal preacher, which requires him to leave Seville for a season. Moreover, some of his writings were published in Seville. It is difficult to imagine the complexity and difficulty of the situation, but the church continues to move forward. Later it would be said with reference to this time that the Lord kept his congregation hidden until it reached maturity for persecution and martyrdom. Then he unleashed the hour of darkness.

In 1546 a new archbishop was installed in Seville who was also Inquisitor General and was one of the most effective in the persecution against the Reformation. Even so, they took three years before attacking openly. In 1549 Egidio was imprisoned and the inquisitorial process against him was initiated. (Vargas died in jail before suffering this type of trial.) No one in the church was superior to Egidio and in some the weakness of the flesh began to show. Egidio himself weakened in the clear defense of the faith that he had taught others. That was the wound in his soul that accompanied him to the grave. If before the situation of the church was difficult, now it was much more so with its pastor condemned by the Inquisition. All of them had to reinforce their vigilance so they would not be discovered, including Constantino. Can we imagine the feelings of that community when it met secretly? The trial of Egidio, after retractions and agreements, did not end with his being burned at the stake. They imposed upon him minor punishments and he died in 1555, but when they found out later about his involvement in the establishment and growth of the church in Seville (and that he had actually died professing his Protestant faith) the Inquisition decided to condemn him to be burned. That is why they took his remains from the grave and brought a straw statue to the public execution that we are contemplating.

In 1557 the situation became definitely complicated. Due to some errors in distributing prohibited literature, the person in charge of its distribution was imprisoned and the church was discovered. The same was occurring in the monastery of San Isidro del Campo. Some were able to escape, but the jails of the Inquisition had to be expanded to make room for so many prisoners. Curiously, Constantino continued to preach in the cathedral, but he knew that the end was near. He did not even attempt to flee the city. We can imagine the commotion when the size of the evangelical congregation became known. Emperor Charles himself, who had abdicated in favor of his son Philip and was retired in Yuste, was terrified before the possibility

that in Spain would be reproduced what for him had been the cause of the dismemberment of his empire in Europe: Protestantism. In addition to this, in those groups also in Valladolid were people who had been very close to him. He advised, therefore, that that danger be done away with by all means possible. All of the power of the two empires, enemies of the cross of Christ, the state and the Roman Church, are united to crush that “very little church” of Seville. For a moment it appears that they achieved it; finally Dr. Constantino also fell in the hands of the inquisitors. His health did not hold up against the torments and he died in the jail of Triana in 1559. Today we have before everyone the bones to be burned and a straw effigy as a demonstration of the “triumph” of the two empires. Such was the fame of this preacher. Emperor Charles in his retirement, as he found out that his chaplain had been condemned by the Inquisition, declared: “If Constantino is a heretic, he is a great heretic.”<sup>13</sup>

### Juan Pérez de Pineda

The person whose name is in the other straw effigy that we have seen is alive in Geneva. He is a pastor who is highly trusted by John Calvin, and will continue to work for the edification of the kingdom of God until he dies in Paris in 1567. He was responsible for the publication of one of the works—*Imagen del Anticristo y carta a Felipe II (Image of the Antichrist and Letter to Philip II)*—that being delivered mistakenly in Seville resulted in the discovery of the clandestine church.<sup>14</sup> His also was the translation of the New Testament into Spanish which was sent from Geneva to Seville to edify the saints. Juan Pérez de Pineda was a monk in the monastery of San Isidro del Campo and was able to escape to Geneva when the persecution started. Other monks left with him and continued to develop their labor of witnessing in Europe. We have another factor of our Spanish Reformation with them. After a first “interior” phase (about which we have already made some comments), this Reformation is lived outside of Spain because of the persecution and is now united with the European reformers and churches. However, it can be confirmed that the group of Spaniards always lived “as a Spanish church in exile,” even though they were far from one another, and their desire and work was oriented (in most cases) to defend and edify that church. That is to say, even though they lived in a profound way the *catholicity* of the church, they never forgot its locality as part of the body of Christ.

From the hand of Pérez we can see some facts that give us an abbreviated idea of the Spanish Reformation in exile (it could also be said, of the Spaniards in the European Reformation). But let us allow the Inquisition itself to give us a panoramic view of the situation. In a document toward

<sup>13</sup>C.F. Hodgson, “The Spanish Reformers” in *The Christian Observer* (London: Hatchard and Co, 1862), 457.

<sup>14</sup>Juan Pérez de Pineda, *Imagen del Anticristo y carta a Felipe II*, volume 3 of *Reformistas antiguos españoles*, ed. Luis Usoz y Río (n.p.: I.R. Baroja, 1849), 1–172.

the end of 1557 (the year in which the hour of darkness is totally unleashed) we can read:

The inquisitors of Seville write us that they have received information against some friars from the monastery of San Isidro [they have captured some and others have fled; the names of some of them are given, not all of them] and they have information that they are in Geneva, and they have a warning that in that city there are many people marked with the same crimes [of heresy] ... Also they write us that they have brought to that city [Seville] a great number of books that contain many heresies, which are found in the possession of important persons in that city and outside of it; and that they have relationships with a Dr. Juan Pérez [de Pineda] who resides in Frankfort (a great friend of Dr. Egidio), and that he left that city when Egidio was captured. He composed these books and sent them with a Spanish Lutheran who is imprisoned, Julián Hernández, called “Julianillo” because he is very small in stature. He was in charge of introducing these books into Spain. [He will die burned at the stake in the public execution that we attend], and with these books came some letters from the doctor to these persons ... Also they write us that they have information that Dr. Juan Pérez has sent many books to that court [this document is a letter sent to King Philip II] ... To His Majesty we supplicate that you give orders that the persons who have these books be captured and punished because the shamelessness and astuteness of the heretics is so great that with great difficulty this could be done by the ministries of the Holy Office. It is very important that in these matters His Majesty order that there be a great demonstration so that these heretics will refrain from committing these crimes with so much boldness.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup>José Luis González Novalín, *El inquisidor general Fernando de Valdés (1483–1568): Cartas y documentos*, vol. 2 (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1971), 181–82. “Los inquisidores de Sevilla nos escriben que han recibido información contra algunos frailes del monasterio de San Isidro [tienen a algunos presos y otros han huido, se dan los nombres de algunos de ellos, no todos] y tienen relación que están en Géneve, y que tienen aviso de que en aquella cibdad hay muchas personas notadas de los mismos delitos [de herejía] ... También nos escriben que han traído a aquella cibdad [Sevilla] muy gran número de libros que contienen muchas herejías, los cuales se ha hallado en poder de personas principales de aquella cibdad y de fuera de ella; y que tienen relación con un doctor, Juan Pérez [de Pineda], que reside en Francafort; gran amigo del Dr. Egidio, que se fue de aquella cibdad cuando a éste prendieron los compuso y envió con un español luterano, que está preso [Julián Hernández, llamado “Julianillo” por ser muy pequeño. Era el encargado de introducir los libros en España. Morirá en la hoguera en el auto de fe al que asistimos.]; y con los dichos libros venía algunas cartas del doctor para las dichas personas ... También nos escriben que tienen aviso de que el doctor Juan Pérez ha enviado muchos de los libros a esa corte [este documento es una carta enviada al rey Felipe II] ... A V.Md. suplicamos sea servido de mandar proveer que luego se recojan, y las personas que los tienen sean castigadas, porque la desvergüenza y estucia destos herejes es tan grande que

As can be seen, Dr. Juan Pérez de Pineda was a key part in the *organization* of the evangelical witness. We know from what he did that he considered three things fundamental: personal counsel, having good books, and above all having the Bible in the vernacular language.

Concerning the Bible in the vernacular, the evangelical church in Spain, as in Europe, made an effort from the first moment to offer to the public the sacred text in its own language. Juan de Valdés already included in his book in 1529 the translation of three chapters of the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>16</sup> Then he translated from the Hebrew Psalter, with commentaries and explanations about the way to translate the sacred text. Francisco de Encina, another one of our reformers who died in 1552, translated the New Testament in 1543. With this in sight, Juan Pérez de Pineda made another translation, published in Geneva in 1556. He translated and published Psalms the following year.<sup>17</sup> The complete Bible in Spanish was published in 1569. This was the work of one of the two monks who fled from the Monastery of San Isidro, Casiodoro de Reina. We have already mentioned that with this edition of the Bible another monk was made with Cipriano de Valera in 1602 in Amsterdam. It was produced as the version known as Reina-Valera, which is the most used one in the Hispanic world. In our Reformation, therefore, the principle of the importance of knowing and distributing the sacred text was maintained from the beginning to the end.

The work of translation by Casiodoro de Reina is a perfect example of constancy in the midst of difficulties. Casiodoro arrived in Geneva with other friars from Seville. There a church was organized for the Spanish refugees which at first united with the Italian church. Juan Pérez de Pineda was their pastor. However, de Reina as well as his companion de Valera moved to England where, with the ascension of Queen Elisabeth to the throne, there were favorable conditions for religious freedom for strangers. In London Casiodoro formed a church of Spanish exiles, for whom he composed a Confession of Faith. We underscored this before: the Spanish Reformation considered it fundamental to have good books. Among the books to study and define the faith, there was not a scarcity of catechisms and confessions. This one in London (1560) constitutes a mature document of Protestant faith. It is evident that it was not the fruit of what was “learned” in Europe, but that its content had already been established in Seville. It expresses pastoral care so the church can have at its reach the clear definition of the faith. But for

con gran dificultad se puede proveer por los ministros del santo oficio ... importa mucho que en estos negocios V. Md. mande se haga gran demostración para que estos herejes se refrenen en no cometer semejantes delitos con tanta osadía.”

<sup>16</sup> “Faithfully translated from the Greek into Spanish, and expounded according to the literal sense,” he tells us. Juan de Valdés, *Juan de Valdés’ commentary upon the Gospel of st. Matthew: Now for the First Time Translated from the Spanish, and Never Before published in English*, ed. Edward Boehmer, trans. John T. Betts (London: Trübner, 1882), 15.

<sup>17</sup> A little bit prior to this, a Spanish Jew and another one, surely Portuguese, had published in Ferrara the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Spanish. As Jews, they would never have called it the Old Testament!

the explication of that faith he did not resort only to the documents of theology, above all he expressed himself through textual commentaries of books of the Bible. Casiodoro himself does this with the Gospel of John. Juan Pérez published the commentaries of Romans and 1 Corinthians written by Juan de Valdés, as well as the explications of Psalms. In Seville, as we have mentioned, preaching was based on the complete books of the Bible, the Old as well as the New Testament. The desire to provide good literature was the basis of their work of translation. Luther's fundamental doctrinal texts were translated into Spanish. But above all Cipriano de Valera, in addition to the important works that were his own creation, translated other valuable works, the most notable being John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* which he published in London in 1596.<sup>18</sup>

When we speak of the contribution of good books to the church, we cannot forget a monk from Seville: Antonio del Corro. He also ended up in England (at the end, as a member of their church) after going through Geneva and other places in the continent. In him is reflected the conviction of the Spanish Reformation with regard to its freedom of thought and speech: a church that had been born free by the action of the Scripture and maintained itself free with the Scripture also in its European exile. Our author, therefore, had conflicts with those who in the European Reformation were beginning to require the acceptance of formal models of religion as a requirement of orthodoxy. Those models of human authorities he called an attempted "fifth gospel."<sup>19</sup> In his work to provide good books he included the elaboration of a method (which he wrote and published in English) to learn Spanish and French. He published in Latin a commentary of Romans (with a model pedagogical method) with an appendix of a Confession of Faith in 1574, also a commentary on Ecclesiastes, translated into English.<sup>20</sup>

Along with providing the Scriptures and good books, we have pointed out that our Reformation considered the matter of counsel and personal exhortation fundamental. That is evident in the "interior" phase, that is to say before the persecution was unleashed—above all starting in 1557—against the church. The initial work of Juan de Valdés (a "lad" about twenty years old when he wrote his *Diálogo de Doctrina*) has a focus precisely on counseling

<sup>18</sup>Juan Calvino, *Institución de la Religión Cristiana*, trans. Cipriano de Valera (Países Bajos: Fundación Editorial de Literatura Reformada, 1967). This work, with an emotional and edifying dedication by the author to the Spanish nation, is distributed today throughout Latin America thanks to the grant of a Dutch foundation.

<sup>19</sup>Edward Boehmer, *Spanish Reformers of Two Centuries from 1520: Their Lives and Writings, According to the Late Benjamin B. Wiffen's Plan and with the Use of His Materials*, vol. 3 (Strassburg: Trübner, 1904), 22.

<sup>20</sup>The following year a translation into English was published. See Antonio del Corro, *A theological dialogue Wherin the Epistle of S. Paul the Apostle to the Romanes is expounded. Gathered and set together out of the readings of Antonie Corranus of Siuille, professor of Diuinitie*. [London], 1575. It has now been translated into Spanish. See also Antonio del Corro, *Diálogo teológico en el que expone la epístola del apóstol San Pablo a los romanos*, volume 8 of *Obras de los Reformadores Españoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2010).

some priests on how to reform the church and build the Kingdom of God. It is totally a practical work. Constantino Ponce de la Fuente dedicated all of his work in Seville to the task of guiding the people to follow a living faith. His commentary in six sermons on Psalm 1 is a complete tract of practical theology. His “Confession of a Sinner before Jesus Christ, Redeemer and Judge of Men” is one of the best texts for guidance on the experience of conversion.<sup>21</sup> If we understand by “evangelize” something more than the current evangelical frivolities, then this booklet would be evangelistic of the first order. Written in the midst of darkness in Seville! Counsel and exhortations were given by Cipriano de Valera from England to the faithful Spaniards to warn them of the papal superstitions; to the captives in the hands of the Saracens, or in the presentation to the Spanish nation of his translation of Calvin’s *Institutes*. We have cautions and counsel in Antonio del Corro. He wrote a letter (a book) giving advice to King Philip II where he indicates the way proposed by the Scripture to serve the Lord as a magistrate.<sup>22</sup> In this work he advocates—getting ahead of his time—religious liberty, in such a way that no one is persecuted for his beliefs, and that the Church should use prayer, persuasion, and patience, never the sword to convert infidels. Exhortation and counsel is what we have in the letter which he wrote to the “Lutheran pastors in Ambers,” urging them to hold the doctrinal documents that some have elaborated as the measure of faith and holiness.<sup>23</sup> It is evident that our reformers also address to themselves such reproaches and warnings. Always within a framework of respect and Christian liberty.

Dr. Juan Pérez de Pineda is not left behind when it comes to giving counsel. Precisely, he is recognized as a teacher in that ministry. He also wrote a fourth letter to Philip II that he should distance himself from the tutelage of the Roman Church.<sup>24</sup> But we are going to take as our guide a text that de Pineda wrote to guide and comfort the prisoners in the jail in Seville. With this we find ourselves again close to the straw effigy, almost at the end the day of the public punishments, where some will be burned at the stake in a nearby place and others will be sentenced to diverse penalties. This work is entitled *Epistola Consolatoria (Comforting Epistle)*.<sup>25</sup> He wrote it as soon as

<sup>21</sup>Constantino Ponce de la Fuente, “Confesión de un pecador,” in *Constantino Ponce de la Fuente*, volume 5 of *Obras de los Reformadores Españoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2009).

<sup>22</sup>It is a text of indescribable doctrine and exhortation. Antonio 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), 99–213.

<sup>23</sup>Antonio del Corro, “Carta a 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), 49–98.

<sup>24</sup>This was a useless task by then. Philip had decided that the identity and reason for being Spanish should be the battle against everything that was taught by the Reformation. Our nation has still not been healed from that wound. Edward Boehmer, *Spanish Reformers of Two Centuries from 1520. Their Lives and Writings, according to the late Benjamin B. Wiffen’s Plan and with the Use of His Materials. Second Volume* (London: Trübner, 1883), 63–64.

<sup>25</sup>Juan Pérez de Pineda, *Epistola Consolatoria*, volume 2 of *Obras de los Reformadores*

he found out about the imprisonment of his collaborator in the distribution of literature to the church of Seville and how they had imprisoned other brothers. Surely none of the ones for whom it was intended could read it, but it remains as a model of sound theology and of the life of faith in the midst of adverse circumstances.<sup>26</sup>

We have seen as the condemned were coming out of the castle of Triana with muzzles in their mouths, they would agree to take them out when someone, before being burned, agreed to retract himself in order to obtain “clemency” that he might be strangled before being burned. In the height of this evilness, sometimes the Inquisition would take out the muzzles of those who in no way had retracted themselves, but with that action, in the confusion of the trial and the masses, it could appear to others of their brothers that they had faltered in the faith at the end. Of those muzzles, Juan Pérez de Pineda, comforting the Christians who have them on says:

As until this day the cross and passion of the Lord announce to us his glory and power, in the same manner yours and those of the ones who are his own, are and will always be proclaimers of the same glory. The enemies of the Gospel, instructed by the spirit of Satan, when they take you to kill you tie your tongues ... so that you will not talk and they will not hear the praises to Jesus Christ our Lord. The same cords will be tongues against them ... and they, whom he has ordained to salvation, will speak a new language through which they understand and know the virtue and power of God ... That because the adversaries impede them from speaking with their own tongues the praises and virtues of their justifier Christ, he himself, in place of a tongue which they tie, turns loose many others that do not cease to glorify him and

*Espanoles del Siglo XVI* (Alcalá de Guadaíra, Seville: MAD, 2007).

<sup>26</sup>It will be helpful for us to see the titles of the short chapters into which it is divided: Nuestro estado antes de la conversión; Origen de nuestra salvación; Cristo, causa de nuestra elección; La fe y las obras; La causa de la aflicción de los fieles; La cruz de Cristo y de los suyos: ordenación de Dios; Providencia de Dios con los suyos; La unión de los fieles con Cristo mediante la persecución; La riquezas de los fieles; Por qué los fieles son los más afligidos; Los que padecen por el Evangelio; La palabra de la promesa es el refugio de los fieles; La verdad no depende de los hombres; La verdadera religión; Dios, fuente de todo bien; Los fieles, conocidos de Dios y desconocidos del mundo; Los fieles afligidos en Cristo; Los fieles, herederos del mundo; Mísero el poder tiránico; Amonestación de las Escrituras; Vana es la prosperidad de los malos; Reinan y viven para siempre los justos. In English: Our condition before conversion; The origin of our salvation; Christ, the cause of our election; Faith and Works; The cause of the affliction of the faithful; The cross of Christ and of those who belong to him: ordination of God; The providence of God for his own; The union of the faithful with Christ through persecution; The riches of the faithful; Why are the faithful the most afflicted?; Those who suffer for the Gospel; The Word of promise is the refuge of the faithful; The truth that does not depend upon men; The true religion; God, the source of all good; The faithful afflicted in Christ; The faithful, the inheritors of the world; Tyrannical power is miserable; Warning from the Scriptures; Vain is the prosperity of the evil ones; The just reign and live forever.

to invite all to glorify and know him ... Your beards long and entangled, your vestments dirty and torn by the filthiness of the jails, the muzzles that they put on you, the ropes and cords with which they tie you and the cudgels with which they constrict you, all of these things, God converts in tongues that with a great harmony sing the praises of Christ and reveal that only He is Lord and Redeemer, and that you are faithful witnesses of his truth and justice ... [This music] is heard by those who are sanctified by Jesus Christ and those who will be and are awakened by it to the desire to be companions and consorts of your affronts, to be instruments of so much good and witnesses of such a divine and beautiful justice and sanctification.<sup>27</sup>

In effect, here today, after so many years, we unite our souls and our voice with those who that afternoon, with their tongues tied, with their faithfulness proclaim the glories of our redeemer.

What about the ones who have weakened and yielded before the trial of persecution? For them, for those who bring this afternoon before the plaza not the physical wounds, but the wounds of their souls by the memory of their past weaknesses, Juan Pérez counsels them and their brothers:

Just as our faith does not come from men, neither does our firmness [He has in mind, among others, the case of Dr. Egidio, the teacher that at one moment faltered] ... The fact that men are weak and stumble, does not mean that the truth of God which they have taught is feeble and weak. Because they faint, the truth does not faint nor fail. If there has been weakness now in many that we did not expect, the weakness is not of the truth, but of man ... [Christ] there where he now is, seated at the right hand of the Father, has not changed his condition and his love for the

<sup>27</sup>Pérez, *Epistola Consolatoria*, 119–20. “Como hasta el día de hoy la cruz y la pasión del Señor nos anuncian su gloria y potencia, así las vuestras y la de todos los suyos son y serán siempre pregoneras de la misma gloria. Los enemigos del Evangelio, avisados por el espíritu de Satanás, cuando os llevan a dar la muerte os atan las lenguas ... para que no habléis vosotros y oigan ellos las alabanzas de Jesucristo nuestro Señor. Las mismas ataduras serán lenguas contra ellos ... y hablaran nuevo lenguaje por el cual entienden y conocen la virtud y poder de Dios los que él tiene ordenados para salvación ... Que porque los adversarios impiden que no hablen con sus propias lenguas los loores y virtudes de su justificador Cristo, él mismo, en lugar de una lengua que les atan, suelta otras muchas que no cesan de glorificarle y convidar a todos a que le glorifiquen y le conozcan ... Vuestras barbas largas y enmarañadas, vuestras vestiduras inmundas y rotas de las inmundicias de las cárceles, las mordazas que os echan, las sogas y cordeles con que os atan, y los garrotes con que os aprietan, todas esas cosas las convierte Dios en lenguas que con una grande armonía cantan alabanzas de Jesucristo y descubren que sólo él es el Señor y Redentor, y que vosotros sois fieles testigos de su verdad y de su justicia ... [Esta música] la oyen los que son santificados por Jesucristo, y los que lo han de ser, y son despertados por ella al deseo de ser compañeros y consortes de vuestras afrentas, para ser instrumentos de tanto bien y testigos de tan divina y hermosa justicia y santificación.”



fallen and weak, that with the weight of the cross kneel and faint on the way, but He makes them participants of his mercy by forgiving them and giving them strength, overcoming in them all of their weaknesses ... Therefore, in the stumbles and weaknesses of others let us look at ourselves as in a mirror to know our own weakness, and let us humble ourselves before God, for we are not but faintness for good ... Let no one judge in a sinister manner those who have fallen, but he who is standing watch that he not fall ... Because God does not reject them because they have fallen, for they are his children, and he wants to do his work in a more illustrious way through such means ... and that his mercy and goodness toward them may become brighter.<sup>28</sup>

Who really triumphs in this so called “triumph” of the *autos de fe*? Let us hear our author once again:

The demon, the ancient dragon, wants and desires to totally destroy and devastate the Church of Christ, but he cannot, because God with the hand of his might pulls the reins and makes him retreat so he will not go beyond where he wants him to go ... In the same manner now the persecutors do not have the power over the faithful members, to kill them, nor even to touch them with a finger ... So from the hour in which the light of the Gospel entered our Spain and began to shine, it was met with mortal hatred by those who persecute and kill the faithful who are enlightened and vivified by Christ. They always wanted to do what they do today, because they are enemies and adversaries, because they have not been able to achieve their desire until now that God has unleashed the powers of darkness, so that in that way the faithful can be examined and purified and taken to the eternal glory that is reserved for them ... Then when the world counts us as totally lost because they have killed us and have separated us from our

<sup>28</sup>Pérez, *Epistola Consolatoria*, 91–93. “Así como nuestra fe no viene de hombres, nuestra firmeza tampoco [Tiene en mente, entre otros, el caso del Dr. Egidio, el maestro que en algún momento flaqueó] ... Porque los hombres sean flacos y tropiecen, no por eso es flaca ni débil la verdad de Dios que han enseñado. Porque ellos desmayen, ella no desmaya ni falta ... Si ha habido ahora flaqueza en muchos que no pensábamos, la flaqueza no es de la verdad, sino del hombre ... [Cristo] Allá donde ahora está sentado a la diestra del Padre, no ha mudado su condición y su amor para con los caedizos y flacos, que con el peso de la cruz arrodillan y desfallecen en el camino, sino que los hace partícipes de su misericordia con perdonarlos y darles esfuerzo, venciendo en ellos todas sus flaquezas ... Por tanto, en las caídas y flaquezas de los otros, mirémonos como en espejo para conocer en ellos nuestra propia flaqueza, y humillémonos delante de Dios, pues nosotros no somos sino desfallecimiento para el bien ... Ninguno juzgue siniestramente de los caídos, mas el que está en pie, mire también que no caiga ... Porque Dios no los menosprecia por estar caídos, pues son sus hijos, sino que quiere hacer su obra más ilustre por tales medios ... y sea más esclarecida su misericordia y bondad para con ellos.”

body, and the banners for our dishonor have been lifted (as is being done today in this public execution) ... God will wipe away the tears from our faces and of those who belong to him, and will take away all of the dishonors. In such a way that the dishonors and affronts will remain with those who dishonor; the infamies with those who defame, possessed by their hatred; condemnation will remain with those who condemn, wrath, curse and death with the killers. But the faithful, liberated from all adversity, the obstacles of their holiness and justice having been destroyed, and taken out completely from the power of their enemies, will be taken to the place where there will be no more death, there will be no more weeping nor clamoring, nor pain, where the throne of God and of the Lamb will be.<sup>29</sup>

We have arrived at the end. I have shown you a simple sketch of the Spanish Reformation—of something that is alive because the Word that sustained it is alive. I would like for your gaze, which can focus on so many episodes and characters, not to get distracted from him whose fervent testimony in the streets and plazas started the work: Rodrigo de Valer. The great theologians, preachers, and translators that we have remembered (Egidio, Constantino, Vargas, Casiodoro, Cipriano, Antonio del Corro, Juan Pérez) all started their walk in the faith because of his testimony. The smoke and ashes that remain in Seville are seen by many as the symbols of the triumph of the enemies of the faith. We know that they are symbols of the triumph of the Redeemer, who continues today saving his people and putting their enemies as their footstool. To Him be the glory.

<sup>29</sup>Pérez, *Epistola Consolatoria*, 132–34. “Quiere y desea el demonio, dragón antiguo, destruir y asolar totalmente la Iglesia de Cristo, pero no puede, porque Dios con la mano de su poder le tira de las riendas y lo hace retroceder para que no llegue más de hasta donde él quisiere y que de allí no pueda pasar ... Así tampoco ahora los perseguidores tienen poder sobre los miembros fieles, no sólo de matarlos, ni aun de tocarlos con el dedo ... Así desde la hora que entró la luz del Evangelio en nuestra España y comenzó a resplandecer, lo aborrecieron mortalmente los que ahora persiguen y matan a los fieles que son alumbrados y vivificados por él. Siempre quisieron lo que ahora hacen, porque siempre le son enemigos y contrarios, pero no han podido concluir su deseo hasta ahora que Dios ha soltado la potestad de las tinieblas, para que así sean examinados y purificados los fieles y llevados a la gloria eterna que les está guardada ... Entonces, cuando el mundo nos diere por perdidos del todo por habernos muerto y echado de sí, y hubiere levantado insignias de nuestra deshonra [como hay en este auto de fe] ... limpiará Dios las lágrimas de nuestras caras y de las de todos los suyos, y quitará todas sus deshonras. De suerte que se quedarán las deshonras y denuestos con los deshonradores; las infamias con los infamadores, y los aborrecedores poseídos de su odio; quedará la condenación con los condenadores; la ira, la maldición y la muerte con los matadores. Mas los fieles, librados de toda adversidad, destruidas las coberturas de su santidad y justicia, y sacados enteramente del poder de sus enemigos, serán llevados donde no habrá más muerte, y no habrá más llanto ni clamor ni dolor, donde estará el trono de Dios y del Cordero.”