

The Inquisition

A time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.—John 16:2

The Holy Inquisition was instituted by Pope Innocent III in Europe. This was a church court for finding and punishing heretics (those whose beliefs differed from those in power).

This court was terrible in its power. It required everyone to inform against any person the least bit suspect. It became the most devilish thing in human history. Horrible forms of cruel and inhuman torture were inflicted on those unfortunate enough to be caught. The pope was determined to crush the Reformation. This dreadful work went on for five hundred years.

Eventually the church's power began to decline. Many scholars and thinkers realized that errors were being taught, so they spoke out against them. Although they were usually killed for their beliefs, they influenced the thinking of many others and brought about the Reformation.

Both Catholics and Protestants now realize the Inquisition was unholy. We need to remember that those were times of widespread ignorance and superstition. However, with the invention of the printing press and as education became available to more and more people, the light of a better day began to shine.

The commandment given to Moses in Leviticus 19:18 and later to the disciples in Mark 12:33, "Love your neighbor as yourself," had been completely neglected. Thus there was no love or sympathy, and justice was either violated or non-existent.

John Calvin, a French Reformer, studied hard and drove him-

self to learn all the religious knowledge then available. When in his twenties, Calvin converted to Protestantism. He wrote a book about Bible truths as he saw them. Later he imposed his strict beliefs on those to whom he preached. He felt it was his duty to punish anyone who held other views. When Michael Servetus published a book attacking the doctrine of the trinity, he was tried, found guilty, and burned at the stake. Calvin, too, forgot the commandment of love.

Calvin thought God selected only a few to have a spiritual resurrection and all others would suffer the pains of “hell fire” forever. What an extremely narrow and erroneous view of the Scriptures with no acknowledgment of a kind and loving God!

The reforms started by Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland were continued by Calvin. These reforms were more sweeping than those of Luther.



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The Inquisition was a religious court that persecuted true Christians as heretics.