

The Tracts

As impressive as the Institutes is Calvin's tract "On Shunning the Unlawful Rights of the Ungodly and Preserving the Purity of the Christian Religion" which speaks clearly and forcibly on our subject. This tract deals with the association that a man may have with ecclesiastical unbelief, and Calvin enunciates clearly that if one insists on association with ecclesiastical unbelief, his action and deeds are tantamount to idol worship. His discussion on 2 Corinthians 6:14-16 in this tract is particularly impressive. Speaking of the teaching of the apostle in this passage Calvin says,

"Thus he enjoins us not to keep at a remote distance from unbelievers in respective space, but to stand far aloof from their polluted rights."

Calvin interprets the apostle as meaning that there is no fellowship between believers and unbelievers, and particularly is this true in the Church. Contact with unbelievers is necessary in the world but one should make sure that he stands aloof from polluted rights and from that which is immoral before God. The whole thrust of the tract is the evil of participation in that which is wrong. The association of the people of God with that which is not of God, is like the association of God with idols. Calvin says,

"Wherefore it behooves every man who possesses a pure zeal for piety, not only to refrain his tongue from impious words, but keep every part of his body untainted by any sacrilegious rites."

Calvin

Calvin is looking back on the rites of the Roman Catholic Church and pronouncing them as sacrilegious. The word sacrilegious would require