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The authority of Holy Scripture in the 'Institution
de la Religion Chrétienne' of Jean Calvin, and in
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Dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts,

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I. The Doctrine

1. The Contents of Scripture

At the time of the Reformation, the authority of Holy Scripture in religious matters was tacitly accepted by all, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, but this acceptance, although universal, was far from uniform. Views varied, for example, upon the extent of the canon and the nature of its inspiration, so that there existed, even among the Reformers, differing conceptions of the authoritative value and scope of Scripture.

Calvin's distinctive view of the nature and source of the authority which Scripture possessed for him can be inferred from a preliminary survey of his statements upon the canon and its inspiration - especially if we ask how Calvin ascertains canonicity and what he understands by inspiration.

The Canon

The practical circumstances of Calvin's historical and theological situation did not require him to elaborate upon the doctrinal foundations and presuppositions which render Scripture authoritative for him, and explicit assertions upon the canon of Scripture occur only infrequently in his works. The best known occurs in the eighth chapter of book IV of his 'Institution Chrétienne', where after paraphrasing several New Testament passages in which he shows that God's message to man has been finally and perfectly expressed in the

personal revelation of Jesus Christ, Calvin then says that divine truth is now located in the canonical books of the Bible:

'Que ce nous soit donc une conclusion résolue, que nous ne devons tenir en l'Eglise pour Parole de Dieu, que ce qui est contenu en la Loi et aux Prophètes, puis aux écrits des Apôtres, et qu'il n'y a nulle autre façon de bien et dûment enseigner en l'Eglise, que de rapporter toute doctrine à cette règle'. (I.C. IV. 8:8).

The context of this passage reveals that Calvin holds spoken and written revelation to have ceased with Christ and the Apostles, and that the Old and New Testaments now form a complete and definitive body of divine truth.

Calvin's position in the dispute with Sébastien Castellion confirms his rigorous orthodoxy in the matter of the canon. In 1543 Castellion was refused permission to preach or hold office in Genevan territory, because of his denial of the divine authorship of the Song of Solomon, which he had declared 'carmen lascivium et obscaenum'. Though Castellion did not dispute the canonicity of the remaining books of the Bible, Calvin drew up a document condemning Castellion as

'... un homme qui déclare ouvertement rejeter et condamner un livre que toutes les Eglises ont porté au canon des livres sacrés: ensuite ce serait ouvrir la porte aux adversaires, aux détracteurs qui cherchent l'occasion de calomnier l'évangile et de déchirer notre église; enfin

nous nous condamnerions par là pour l'avenir à n'avoir rien à objecter à un autre s'il s'en présentait un qui voulût répudier de même l'Ecclésiaste ou les Proverbes ou tout autre livre de la Bible, à moins qu'on ne voulût en venir à discuter si le livre est digne du Saint-Esprit (1).

Calvin's concern goes far beyond defending the inspiration of a single book of the Bible. For him, not only the Song of Solomon, but Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and 'tout autre livre de la Bible' compose an inviolate body of truth, singly and collectively possessing a uniform canonical status.

The New Testament Commentaries offer further glimpses of Calvin's view of the canon. He says that God's sure providence so guided the Apostles that we require no more for our guidance than what they wrote; we need not be burdened with an infinite mass of writings, for therein God has given us all that is good and expedient (Comm. Jean 21:25; cp. I.C. I. 8:1). Similarly, Calvin is content that we should remain in ignorance of the eighteen years of Christ's life unrecorded in the Gospels, for

'Quant à la première partie de sa vie, Dieu a voulu qu'elle demeurast cachée et incognue, afin que le reste de l'histoire qui nous donne cognoissance des choses qui édifient nostre foy eust plus de lustre et nous fust en plus grande recommandation'. (Comm. Actes 1:1).

As for the writings of Paul, Calvin is not so naïve as to claim that

(1) Quoted in E. Doumergue: 'Jean Calvin', VI. 13-14.

no other letters were written than those preserved in the New Testament; he admits that Paul

'...a escrit beaucoup d'Escritures çà et là, tant en général, qu'en particulier. Mais le Seigneur par sa providence a consacré en mémoire perpétuelle celles qu'il cognoissoit estre nécessaires à son Eglise. Sçachons donc que ce qui a esté laissé nous suffit: et ce qu'il y en a si peu, n'est point advenu par cas fortuit, mais que par un conseil admirable de Dieu, le corps de l'Ecriture a esté ainsi compassé tel que nous l'avons'.

(Comm. Eph. 3:3: cp. I.C. I. 8:10).

For Calvin there can be nothing accidental about the composition of the Bible; its contents are wholly sufficient and expedient for our guidance, its extent limited and safeguarded by divine wisdom and providence. (Cp. I.C. I. 8:9).

It follows therefore quite automatically that Calvin will not countenance any addition to the inspired totality of Scripture. In his 'Préface mise en tête des Livres Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament', he carefully explains how the Ancient Church drew up the canon of those books 'qui pour certain estoient procedez du saint Esprit' and thereby excluded those which were not inspired. He admits that the Apocryphal books contain good and useful teaching, but precisely because they are not inspired, and because of their fallible human element, Calvin too refuses them.

'Toutefois c'est bien raison que tout ce qui nous a esté donné par le saint Esprit ait preeminence par

dessus tout ce qui est venu des hommes'. (C.R. 8:827).

Canonicity

This quotation raises the further problem of how, and for what reasons, Calvin arrives at the conclusion that a book or books of the Bible are inspired by the Holy Spirit. What, in other words, is his criterion of canonicity? Because of the long explanation of the canon's compilation given in his 'Préface', it could appear that Calvin attaches primary importance to the role of the early Church. Indeed, R.E. Davies has claimed that at this point, Calvin's first criterion is the decision of the early Church (1). However if Calvin's account is looked at closely, it can be seen that he regards the action of the early Church as little more than a formal acquiescence in the existence of inspired Scriptures, but in no way an authentication or endorsement of them.

'Car les Anciens, voulans prevenir ce dangier, qu'aucuns livres profanes ne fussent entremeslez avec ceux qui pour certain estoient procedez du Saint Esprit, en out fait un rolle qu'ils ont nommé Canon...' (C.R. 8:827; cp. I.C. I. 7:1).

In other words, Calvin does not accept the inspiration of Scripture because the early Church decreed it to be inspired, for he is aware that inspiration antedated canonicity, and this means that his

(1) R.E. Davies: 'Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers',

criterion of canonicity concurs with, but does not in any sense derive from the consensus and action of the early Church.

What this criterion is becomes evident upon turning to the 'Arguments' which precede the later New Testament commentaries. Here Calvin quotes and alludes to the opinion of the Fathers, but on occasion can ignore and even contradict it.

'Ce que dit Eusèbe, qu'anciennement on a douté de ceste Epistre, ne nous doit point destourner de la lecture d'icelle. Car s'il est question de s'arrester a la simple autorité des hommes...' etc.

Then Calvin puts forward the fundamental reason for accepting the book as canonical:

'...puis qu'en toutes les parties de l'Epistre, la majesté de l'Esprit de Christ se manifeste clairement, je feroye conscience de la rejeter entièrement, combien que je ne reconnoisse point, en icelle la vraye et naturelle phrase de saint Pierre.

(Deuxième Epistre de S. Pierre. Argument).

For other Epistles, the same criterion stands out. Grammatical, historical and patristic data all enter into Calvin's considerations, but at the most are only employed to corroborate this intrinsic spiritual evidence of the book's divine origin.

'Combien qu'entre les anciens il y ait eu diverses opinions touchant ceste Epistre, aussi toutesfois pource qu'elle ne contient rien qui ne soit accordant

à la pureté de la doctrine Apostolique...'

(Epistre catholique de Saint Jude. Argument.)

'Car il n'y a pas livre en l'Escriture sainte, qui parle plus clairement et nayvement de la sacrificature de Christ. Au reste de sçavoir qui, l'a composée, il ne s'en faut pas soucier grandement'.

(Epistre aux Hébreux. Argument.)

There certainly exists an element of hesitation at points in Calvin's deliberations, and as R.E. Davies remarks (1), Calvin's language suggests that he will accept the Epistle of James more because of the absence of contrary indications than for its intrinsic merits:

'... pource que je ne voy cause qui soit suffisante pour la rejeter, je la recoy volontiers'.

(Epistre catholique de Saint Jacques. Argument.)

The fact remains that in these classic cases where canonical status may be in doubt, Calvin deliberately rests his decision upon 'la majesté de l'Esprit de Christ', 'la pureté de la doctrine Apostolique', that is to say upon the sole criterion of the book's own evidence as to its own divine inspiration.

From this rapid survey, Calvin's conception of the canon can be outlined. The sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, singly and as a whole, neither more nor less inspired by the Holy

(1) Davies, op. cit., ch. 3.

Spirit, and preserved by divine providence, constitute God's written word. Their divine origin is clearly and adequately attested by their intrinsic character as divine truth.

This outline provides some indications of how and why Calvin considers Scripture to be authoritative. First, he appears to have in mind features of Scripture which connote unique status - its divine origin, the unity and sufficiency of its inspired truth. On the other hand, Calvin also dwells upon aspects of Scripture which contribute to its definitive function - its preservation in a permanent and accessible objective form. The uniqueness of Scripture suggests that Calvin will accord to it a supremacy over other forms of authority; its definitiveness will mean that he uses Scripture as the norm of religious truth. The two concepts are basic to all that Calvin has to say upon the nature of Scripture's authority.

An important pointer to the source of this authority as Calvin sees it can be found in his reliance upon Scripture's own self-evident inspiration as the mark of canonicity. This should mean that within the broader context of Biblical authority, Calvin may be expected similarly to locate its source not in any extrinsic proof, but within the inspired Scriptures themselves.

Inspiration

Examination of Calvin's statements upon the inspiration of Scripture ought therefore to reveal where he considers the source

of Scripture's authority to lie: in the text itself, in the writers of the text, or possibly elsewhere. His doctrine of inspiration has for long been the focal point of discussion upon Calvin's doctrine of the authority of Scripture. Unfortunately, his statements can hardly be said to yield a clear exposition of any one line of teaching, and at times a duality of thought and expression makes him appear almost to contradict himself.

'il me semble plutost que l'Apostre commande à Timothée de garder fermement la doctrine qu'il avoyt apprinse non-seulement quant à la substance, mais aussi quant au style et à la manière de parler... Non pas qu'il y ait si grand scrupule aux mots mais pource que tant peu qu'on viene à défigurer la doctrine, voilà une chose fort dommageable'. (Comm. II. Tim., 1:3).

R. Seeberg seems to have been, towards the close of the last century, the chief proponent of the view that Calvin's conception of Biblical authority rested, in greater part, upon the notion of a mechanical dictation of the sacred writers by the Holy Spirit (1). Many of Calvin's own statements lend themselves to such an interpretation, especially where he speaks of the writer as an almost passive agent in the process of inspiration. Moses, for example

'...n'a point parlé comme un homme, mais comme un

(1) R. Seeberg: Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, IV. 2. Quoted by

ange par l'instruction du Saint-Esprit, étant pur de toute affection charnelle'. (Comm. Gen. 49:5).

'Saint Jehan a donc bien esté l'instrument et l'organe de Dieu comme une plume escriera en la main de l'homme'.

(Evangile de S. Jehan. Argument).

'...il est certain que le Saint Esprit a gouverné la langue de Saint Paul, qu'il ne luy a point eschappé un mot superflu'. (Sermon sur II Tim., C.R. 54:298).

Seeberg was taken to task by Doumergue in his 'magnum opus' (1), and subsequently by other Continental scholars. His view was also strongly contested by B.B. Warfield who claimed convincingly that Calvin's use of the dictation theory only serves to show that 'what Calvin has in mind is not to insist that the mode of inspiration is by dictation, but that the result of inspiration is as if it were by dictation, viz. the production of a pure Word of God free from all human admixtures' (2).

More recently still, however, E.A. Dowey Jr. has shown (3) how in at least one passage, Calvin's words can only be understood as his belief in some form of verbally dictated inspiration.

'Ici le prophète raconte qu'il a dicté au serviteur de Dieu Baruch toutes les choses qu'il avait auparavant

(1) Doumergue, op. cit., IV. 71 f.

(2) B.B. Warfield, 'Calvin and Augustine', p. 62-3.

(3) E.A. Dowey, Jr., 'Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology', p. 92.

enseignées. Il n'y a aucun doute que, Dieu à ce moment lui suggéra les choses qui pouvaient d'autre part avoir été effacées de la mémoire du prophète. En effet toutes les choses que nous avons parfois dites ne nous reviennent pas toujours. Donc de tant de paroles la plus grande partie aurait fui le prophète, si Dieu à nouveau ne les lui avait dictées. Donc Jérémie fut au milieu entre Dieu et Baruch, parce que Dieu par son esprit lui dicta et gouverna l'esprit et la langue du prophète. En effet le prophète, l'esprit étant son guide et maître, récita ce que Dieu lui ordonnait. Baruch donc l'écrivit et ensuite publia toute la somme de la doctrine du prophète. Il dit donc "qu'il appela Baruch, le fils de Neria, pour qu'il écrivit de sa bouche" mais qu'il écrivit toutes les paroles de l'Eternel. A nouveau, Jérémias redit que rien n'est sorti de son propre sens. Nous voyons donc qu'il a dicté non par sa volonté les choses qui lui venaient à l'esprit, mais que Dieu lui a suggéré les choses qu'il voulait être écrites par la main de Baruch'.

(Comm. Jer. 36:4-6).

Though one can only agree that here Calvin propounds a theory of mechanical dictation, it will be quite another thing to show from the passage that he is attempting to rest his conception of Scripture's authority upon the mode of the writer's inspiration. Calvin's ostensible aim goes no further than an illustration of how the Holy Spirit preserved the record of Jeremiah's message, and not how the

authority of the record may thereby have been acquired. The passage, particularly the second half, can be much more easily construed as confirmation of Warfield's claim (1). It therefore seems likely that whatever Calvin may say about the mode of inspiration, he does not rely upon the mode of the sacred writers' inspiration to define the source of Scripture's authority.

The role of the writers and the mode of their inspiration really form part of the wider problem of whether Calvin believes in the inerrancy of the original text of Scripture. Could he be said, in other words, to locate the authority of Scripture within the written text itself? Here, many claim with A.M. Hunter that Calvin is a 'vehement champion of verbal infallibility', (2) whereas others side with W. Niesel who asserts that 'there is nothing in Calvin's exegesis to suggest literal inerrancy' (3).

Doumergue and Niesel, adopting the distinction between the 'contenu' and the 'contenant' of Scripture, maintain that Calvin refuses to equate written Scripture with the truth it contains, an identification which could imply Calvin's adherence to a notion of verbal inerrancy. This kind of distinction indeed often enters into Calvin's exegesis.

'A ceste mesme consideration se rapporte l'antithèse
et l'opposition que Christ fait yci entre les escrits

(1) Warfield, op. cit., p. 62-3, quoted p.10 supra.

(2) A.M. Hunter, 'Teaching of Calvin', p. 76 f.

(3) W. Niesel, 'Theology of Calvin', ch. 2 ii.

et les paroles, car il aggrave leur infidélité en ce que la vérité de Dieu enregistrée en forme authentique n'ha nulle autorité envers eux'. (Comm. Jean 5:47; cp. Comm. II Tim 1:3, supra)

Doumergue and F. Wendel (1), claim that Calvin's use of metaphors to describe the function of Scripture - mirror (Comm. II Cor. 5:7), candle (Comm. I Pierre 1:9), spectacles (Comm. Gen. Arg.) - shows that Calvin considers Scripture to be an instrument in the perception of truth, and thus something other than that truth. A phrase in Calvin's first edition of the 'Institutio Religionis Christianae' (1536) similarly suggests that 'dictare' has a metaphorical usage: '... verba quodammodo dictante Christi spiritu', (C.R. 29:632). Doumergue further contends that Calvin's interest in the doctrinal content of Scripture overrides any concern for a verbally inerrant text. He rests his case upon Calvin's acknowledgement of the presence in Scripture of mistakes in numbers and chronology, of misquotations and contradictions. (See Comms. Matt. 8:27 and 9:18; Luc. 4:5 and Matt. 27:51; Deut. 30:12 Rom. 10:6; Actes 7:14-6).

A recent attempt has been made to refute these claims by J. Murray (2) who examines some of the passages Doumergue relies upon (Comms. Eph. 2:5, Heb. 9:1, I Tim. 1:3, Jac. 4:7), and demonstrates from their context that in fact Calvin's aim is less to acknowledge than to harmonise the discrepancies and to explain away any suspicion of error in the sacred writers. If this is true, then it means that

(1) F. Wendel, 'Jean Calvin', p. 160.

(2) J. Murray, 'Calvin's Doctrine of Scripture, p.

after all Calvin wishes in his exegesis to maintain belief in the inerrancy of the text. The same conclusion is encouraged by Calvin's unwillingness in commenting upon a verse in Jude to admit that there might exist an alien element in the inspired text.

'Je pense plutost que ceste prophétie s'est gardée et continuée de main en main entre les Juifs sans estre escrite, que non pas de dire qu'elle ait esté prise de quelque livre apocryphe, car il se peut bien faire que les Anciens ayent donné ceste sentence notable en mémoire perpétuelle à leurs successeurs'. (Comm. Jude 14).

There are moreover a number of other passages where literal inerrancy is strongly suggested by Calvin's readiness almost to attribute divinity to the very words of Scripture:

'Car il signifie que l'Evangile que nous avons maintenant est procédée de Dieu, et que Christ a dicté les Prophéties anciennes'.

'Ainsi faut-il entendre que Dieu a voulu parler à nous par les apostres et prophètes, et que leurs bouches ne sont autre chose que la bouche d'un seul Dieu'.

(Comms. I Pierre 1:11, 25).

In these and even more central passages, (cp. I.C. I. 7:1, IV. 8:6-9; Comms. II Tim. 3:16, I Pierre 1:20, *infra*), Calvin does in fact closely assimilate and equate Scripture with the truth it contains.

Recent writers have tended to agree with these weightier and more numerous indications that Calvin accepted the inerrancy of the

original text of Scripture. As we saw, he attaches some importance to the written form of Scripture in which God has preserved his truth through the ages (cp. I C. I. 6:2-3). His exegetical technique, with its verse by verse and word by word procedure, the constant exoneration of the Biblical writers from factual error, his readiness to ascribe textual discrepancies to copyists' errors in transmission, these all point too to Calvin's belief in the inerrancy of the original text. 'A hypothetical original document inerrantly inspired', concludes Dowey (1); '... nothing less than an inerrant autograph', repeats J. Murray (2).

Even if Calvin holds the original text to be inerrant, it need not automatically follow that the authority of Scripture must reside in its verbal form. The authority could be located behind and beyond both inspired words and inspired writers, that is, in the inspired message which they convey. In this respect, Doumergue's case, allowing for J. Murray's disproof of part of it, is not without value in that he brings out this concern of Calvin with Scripture's inspired message, as distinct from its inspired verbal form.

Since it does not appear likely that Calvin locates the source of Scripture's authority in its inspired writers, that source must reside either in the inerrant text, or in the inspired truth the text contains. There remain finally the two classic New Testament passages where in his comments Calvin explicitly connects the authority of Scripture with the fact of its inspiration, and whence it should be

(1) Dowey, op. cit., p. 105.

(2) J. Murray, op. cit., p. 28.

possible to discern whether he places his reliance upon the inspired text or upon its inspired message.

II Timothée 3:16

Calvin here employs a choice of vocabulary to explain the inspiration of the Biblical writers: 'organes et instrumens' (line 11) 'une doctrine...dictée' (lines 15-16) 'poussez de Dieu' (line 22) which denoted an acceptance of something like a theory of divine dictation. On the other hand, it must be noted that at these points Calvin's comments merely serve to underline the resultant perfection of divine inspiration without claiming that in the process authority was somehow transferred to the text. Where Calvin speaks of Scripture's written form (lines 20-24) his words convey strongly that this text is not only inerrant, but partakes almost of divinity (line 24). However Calvin devoted no special attention to the term $\theta\epsilon\omicron\tau\tau\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ which he translates in two words (lines 5-6) without trying to construct from it any theory of plenary or 'theopneustic' inspiration. Although too Calvin does intimately associate the fact of divine inspiration with the authority of Scripture in this one simple sentence (lines 5-6), yet he omits to say whether he has in mind the inspiration of the writers, their words, or their message. Calvin's exegesis thus retains that duality of thought and vocabulary which suggests both proof and denial of his reliance upon verbal inerrancy. However, the drift of the whole passage: a desire to minimise the human factor in inspiration, to

emphasise not the words, but the "doctrine dictée par le Saint Esprit" (line 16), to bring the relation of Scripture's authority to its inspiration into the context of certain and reliable knowledge (lines 24-27), making this knowledge dependent upon the witness of the Spirit in the heart of the believer - this all points to the fact that ultimately Calvin is not concerned with infallible writers or an inerrant text as the foundation of Scripture's authority. His interest lies in what they convey, an inerrant and infallible divine message, rendered authoritative by the Spirit's own activity. The passage runs as follows:

- 1 '16 Toute Escriure: ou Toute l'Escriure, combien qu'il
n'y a point de différence quant aux sens. Il poursuit ceste
louange qu'il avoyt touché en peu de paroles. Et premièrement
il loue l'Escriure à cause de l'autorité, puis apres de
5 l'utilite qui en revient. Pour monstrier l'autorité, il dit
qu'elle est inspirée Divinement. Car si ainsi est, sans aucun
contredit, les hommes la doyvent recevoir en révérence. Et c'est
le principe qui discerne nostre religion de toutes autres:
asçavoir que nous sçavons que Dieu a parlé à nous, et nous sommes
10 certainement asseurez que les prophetes n'ont pas parlé de
leur propre sens: mais comme organes et instrumens du S. Esprit
qu'ils ont seulement annoncé qu'ils avoyent receu d'en haut.
Quiconque donc voudra profiter és saintes Escriures, qu'il
arreste premierement ceci en soy-mesme, que la Loy et les
15 Prophètes ne sont point une doctrine qui ait esté donnée a

16 l'appetit ou volonté des hommes, mais dictée par le saint
 Esprit. Si on objecte, d'où c'est qu'on pourra sçavoir cela.
 Je respon que Dieu déclare et manifeste qu'il est autheur
 d'icelle tant aux disciples qu'aux docteurs par la révélation
 20 de ce mesme Esprit. Car Moyse et les Prophètes n'ont point à
 la volée mis en lumière, ce que nous avons par escrit à leur
 main, mais d'autant qu'ils parloyent estans poussez de Dieu, ils
 ont tesmoigné hardiment et sans aucune crainte ce qui estoit
 véritable, que c'estoit la bouche de Dieu qui avoyt parlé. Ce
 25 mesme Esprit donc, qui a rendu Moyse et les Prophètes certains
 de leur vocation, rend aussi maintenant tesmoignage à nos coeurs,
 qu'il s'est servi de leur ministère pour nous enseigner. Parquoy
 il ne se faut point esbahir si plusieurs doutent de l'autheur
 de l'Escriture. Car quoy que la majesté de Dieu se manifeste
 30 en icelle, toutes fois il n'y a que ceux qui ayent des yeux pour
 voir ce qui devoit bien estre clair et visible à tous, et toute
 fois n'est visible qu'aux élus. Voyla le premier membre, que
 telle révérence que nous portons à Dieu, est deue aussi à l'Escri-
 ture, pource qu'elle est procédée de luy seul, et n'ha rien de
 35 l'homme meslé avec soy'.

II Pierre 1:20

Here Calvin's comments follow quite closely the vocabulary and thought of II Tim. 3:16. He explains rather more precisely how the writers of Scripture were 'poussez' to produce a flawless Word of God,

but it is interesting to see that he stresses their conscious participation (lines 20-24) and that he makes no mention of any form of literal dictation, or even of the verbal form of Scripture. Calvin insists however upon the intimate relation between God's truth and the prophets' message which conveys it (lines 10-12). It seems then that in this passage too, and despite the very theme he is expounding, Calvin shows little interest in the inerrancy of the text, speaks of the writers' inspiration almost entirely in terms of the perfection of the Spirits⁽¹⁾ activity (his explanation of the mode of their inspiration is relegated to a footnote, (lines 31-32), and thus reveals a concern with the infallibility of Scripture that ultimately does not repose upon the details of verbal or prophetic inspiration. Here too Calvin connects the fact of inspiration with the authority Scripture possesses, and with the obedience due to God himself (lines 21-23). When finally Calvin can be seen maintaining that inspiration should arouse reverence and obedience to God himself in his Word, (lines 7-12) one is left with the conclusion that in the last analysis it is neither the words nor the writers for Calvin, but the inspired message of Scripture which constitutes the infallible source of its authority. Omitting a lengthy diatribe against the Roman Catholic Church, the passage runs thus:

- 1 'Et presque tous prenent le passage en ce sens, que nous ne devons point fourrer témérairement a lire l'Escriture, estans appuyez sur nostre propre sens. Et pensent que ce qui s'ensuit est la confirmation du propos: Asçavoir, le

5 saint Esprit qui a parlé par les Prophètes, est luy-mesme
seul expositeur de soy-mesme. Ceste exposition contient
une doctrine vraye, sainte et simple: asçavoir: que lors
nous proufitions vrayement en la lecture des prophéties,
quand renonçans à toute prudence de la chair, nous nous
10 assujétissons à la maîtrise du saint Esprit... Or la vraye
révérence procède de là, quand nous nous proposons que c'est
Dieu qui parle à nous et non point des hommes mortels.
Saint Pierre, donc veut principalement qu'on adjouste foy
aux prophéties, comme à oracles de Dieu indubitables: d'autant
15 qu'elles ne sont point procédées du propre mouvement des hommes.
Et à cela tend ce qu'il adjouste incontinent après, asçavoir
que les Saints hommes de Dieu ont parlé, estans poussez du
S. Esprit: et n'ont point prononcé d'eux-mesmes et à leur
fantaisie quelques inventions de leur cerveau. Brief, il vent
20 dire que le commencement de droite intelligence, est, quand nous
attribuons aux saints Prophetes l'autorité qui est deue à
Dieu: pource qu'exécutans fidèlement l'office qui leur estoit
enjoint, ils représentoyent la personne de Dieu en leur ministère.
Il dit qu'ils ont esté poussez: non pas qu'ils ayent esté trans-
25 portez de leur entendement (1): mais pource qu'ils n'ont osé ni
entrepris de rien mettre en avant d'eux-mesmes, et ont seulement
suyvi en toute obéissance la conduite du saint Esprit, lequel
régnoit en leur bouche comme en son sanctuaire. Quand il dit,
prophétie de l'Escriture: il faut entendre celle qui est contenue

30 es sainte Escritures'.

(1) (comme les Payens ont dit de leur prophètes et devins, qu'ils estoyent eschauffez de je ne sçay quelle fureur et phrénésie).

Calvin then does not rely upon literal inerrancy as the source of Scripture's authority. These two passages show that in spite of his use of the vocabulary of dictation and despite his faith in the inerrant text, Calvin derives the authority of Scripture from its inspired message. 'Though the letter does not escape from the control of the Spirit, it is for its content alone, for its spiritual content, that infallibility is claimed' (1). This means that ultimately Calvin rests his doctrine of Biblical authority upon neither the human writers nor their human words, but solely upon their divine Author himself. The divergencies of this particular 'complexio oppositorum' can perhaps best be reconciled by saying that Calvin shows an interest in the inerrancy of the original text as far as textual inerrancy can ensure the permanence of the truth it contains, and in the infallibility of its writers only in that their infallibility will guarantee the absence of error in that truth.

Finally, these two passages afford additional pointers to the nature of Scripture's authority as Calvin sees it. His explanation of the function of the 'témoignage intérieur' in his comments on II Tim. 3:16 confirms that he does not espouse a static impersonal kind of Biblical authority, such as reliance upon literal inerrancy might imply. Rather, Calvin grounds the authority of Scripture in

(1) H. Clavier: 'Etudes sur le Calvinisme', p. 27, quoted Wendel op.

the dynamic spiritual activity of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration and acceptance of Scripture's divine message. There are indications too that Calvin seems to consider two kinds of authoritative value in Scripture, one an inherent perfection as a repository or vehicle of divine truth, the other a spiritual authentication of this truth of Scripture, which is experienced by the believer.

The insistence, common to the exegesis of both II Tim. 3:16 and II Pi. 1:20, that the authority of Scripture for Calvin is related to certainty and obedience and faith locates the authority of Scripture within the epistemological framework which opens the 'Institution Chretienne'. In these nine chapters Calvin's account of the origin and function of Scripture more fully illustrates these preliminary indications of the nature of its authority.

2. The Origin of Scripture

Its Uniqueness: 'Institution Chrétienne' I: 1-6

The formal use of Scripture in the first five chapters of the 'Institution' as the grounds of 'la connaissance de Dieu et de nous-mêmes' confirms the unique authoritative place which Scripture occupies for Calvin, but its use is far more than a logical or tactical requirement. The knowledge which Calvin posits is not merely intellectual or propositional, but one which is certain and practical. Dowey has examined the 'accommodative, correlative, existensial and comprehensible' principles involved in Calvin's doctrine of the knowledge of God (1). The adjectives which Calvin employs to describe this knowledge are 'vraie... entière' (ch. 1:1) and 'utile...expédient' (ch. 2:1). It is a knowledge of God

'...non pas telle que plusieurs imaginent, à savoir qui voltige seulement au cerveau en spéculant, mais laquelle ait une droite fermeté et produise son fruit, voire quant elle est dûment comprise et enracinée au coeur.

(I.C. I. 5:9).

These chapters amount to a demonstration of the necessity for Scriptural revelation, which alone can supply the basis of this kind of existensial religious knowledge.

(1) Dowey, op. cit., ch. 1.

Although Scripture is not formally presented until chapter 6: 'Pour parvenir à Dieu le Créateur, il faut que l'Écriture nous soit guide et maîtresse', it is a constant and gradually more explicit postulate of Calvin's argument in the previous five chapters. The reference on the very first page to 'la révolte du premier homme' is the kind of Biblical datum constantly presupposed throughout the prefatory discussion of chapters 1 and 2. Certain statements, which ought in their context to apply to divine revelation in any of its forms, appear expressly to suggest the objective prescriptions of Scriptural revelation.

'...un service tel que Dieu l'ordonne en sa Loi'. (ch. 2:2). In these chapters, Calvin frequently quotes and alludes to Scripture, but in quite another way to what is customary later in the 'Institution'. He restricts himself here to a corroborative use of Scripture, that is, without according to it any more weight than to any of the other sources - Cicero, Plutarch, etc. - which he also cites. Thus at the end of chapter 1, the nine Old Testament references serve merely to substantiate his previous remarks, without yet implying that the use of Scripture is in any way a superior kind of proof.

The proportion of Biblical corroboration increases through chapters 3, 4 and 5 as Calvin summons and then dismisses other sources of the knowledge of God. Though naturally implanted by God in the minds of men, that awareness of God which all possess is wholly nullified by human sin and ignorance (ch. 4 title). The revelation of God in the visible universe (ch. 5:1-2), within man himself (5:4-5),

in natural creation (5:6), and in the history and society of mankind (5:7-8), the evident revelation of his majesty and eternity (5:9-10), all are rendered ineffective by human error and superstition (5:11-12), and men are all thereby inexcusable (5:13-15). Calvin has now reached a position where, for the first time in these chapters, he can advance Scripture authoritatively.

It is the sole criterion by which human attempts at religion are adjudged to be useless; it is the sole basis of true revealed religion.

'Par conséquent, l'Écriture, afin de donner lieu au Dieu vrai et unique, insiste fort à condamner tout ce qui a été renommé de divinité entre les païens... il ne se faut donc émerveiller si le Saint-Esprit a rejeté tout service de Dieu inventé à la fantaisie des hommes... Or tous ceux qui ne sont point enseignés par l'Écriture Sainte quel dieu il faut servir, sont condamnés de telle témérité par Jésus-Christ... il reste que Dieu parle lui-même du ciel pour témoigner de soi'. (ch. 5:12).

Thus by the end of chapter 5, Calvin has already anticipated his conclusion in chapter 6, by discounting all other modes of revelation as possible means of knowing God. Though still valid and extant, their function can be no more than a negative one. Only a more effective and reliable form of divine revelation can truly make God known to men, and in chapter 6, Calvin supplies the positive solution: Holy Scripture, the unique and superior source of man's proper knowledge of his Creator,

'... un autre remède et meilleur... pour nous faire bien et dûment venir à lui'. (ch. 6:1).

Calvin now briefly restates the prior modes of revelation - the internal consciousness of divinity, and the external evidence of creation. Scripture does far more than to supplement them; because of their ineffectiveness, Scripture provides that necessary source of revealed truth which is otherwise lacking. Its superiority lies in a quality which now overcomes the problem of man's spiritual blindness - its clarity. (Cp. Comms. I. Cor. 13:12, II Pi. 1:19). The interesting metaphor which Calvin now uses is that of spectacles; these other forms of revelation can only assume their true function as vehicles of knowledge about the Creator through the medium of Scripture.

'Or comme les vieilles gens ou larmeux, ou ayant comment que ce soit les yeux débiles, quand on leur présentera un beau livre et de caractères bien formés, bien qu'ils voient l'écriture, toutesfois à peine pourront - ils lire deux mots de suite sans lunettes, mais les ayant prises en seront aidés pour lire distinctement, ainsi l'Ecriture recueillant en nos esprits la connaissance de Dieu, qui autrement serait confuse et éparse, abolit l'obscurité, pour nous montrer clairement quel est le vrai Dieu'. (ch. 6:1; cp. Comm. Gen. Argument).

Previously, (ch. 5:13) Calvin has referred to the creation as a mirror in which God might be perceived; his change of metaphor to that of spectacles is not only an extension of the first idea, but

suggests too a greater effectiveness and comprehensibility in the reception of revealed truth. Calvin has thus far implied that if the special Scriptural revelation is to be of value to men, it must be not only accessible to them but also perspicuous and capable of being understood by them; a hint which he takes up in Chapter 7.

Calvin next adds one more explanation of the kind of truth afforded by Scripture. Not only is God the Creator to be clearly seen by means of these 'spectacles', but the faithful may, just as the Patriarchs, thereby also attain '*la connaissance plus certaine et familière*'. Although Calvin here expresses his intention to postpone exposition of the saving knowledge of God the Redeemer to books 2 to 4 of the 'Institution', he is careful at this point to attribute saving knowledge of God also to the superior revelation of Scripture.

'Car pour passer de mort à vie, il n'a pas fallu seulement qu'ils (les Patriarches) connussent Dieu pour leur créateur, mais aussi pour rédempteur: comme aussi ils ont obtenu tous les deux par la Parole'. (ch. 6:1).

The remainder of chapter 6 is taken up with Calvin's account of the formation and transmission of the Scriptural record. As in his account of Scripture as a mode of revelation, here too there are certain qualities of Scripture, often explicitly stated, at other times to be observed in his choice of words, which contribute to Calvin's conception of the nature of Scripture's authority.

He sets out two preliminary stages. Firstly, God has revealed

himself by theophany: 'visions ou oracles comme on les appelle, c'est-à-dire témoignages célestes'. Then by a succession of human agents, the message was handed on 'de main en main'. (Cp. Comms. Gen. 26:24, 46:2). Thus far, in the oral transmission of his truth, God always confirmed its divine certainty in the hearts of the patriarchs and their successors - one more hint of the 'témoignage intérieur du St.-Esprit' in chapter 7 - 'afin qu'on y ajoutât foi par-dessus toute opinion humaine'. Then finally, by God's express intention, the oral message was committed to written form. Calvin clearly states the reason for this:

'Finalement, afin que d'un train continuel la vérité demeurât toujours en vigueur d'âge en âge, et fort connue en la terre, il a voulu que les révélations qu'il avait commises ^{en} main des Pères comme en dépôt, fussent enregistrées'.

(ch. 6:2, cp. Comm. Gen. Argument).

Calvin thus sees the committal of divine truth to writing as the climax of a historical process of revelation, and in his account of this process he sees as a safeguard of Scripture certain of its static, objective properties: its permanence, its immutability and accessibility, each of which is implied in by Scripture's written form. Elsewhere, Calvin mentions the same reasons for the two stone tablets of the Decalogue (Serm. Deut. 10:1-8, C.R. 55. 8-9) and to account for the Apostles' writings (Preface: Bible de R. Olivétan, C.R. 37, 801, n.2).

The fact of these objective values of Scripture next prompt

Calvin to add some practical remarks, in which he underlines its function at the unique source and test of all religious knowledge.

'Voici donc un point résolu, que pour être éclairés et adressés en la vraie religion, il nous faut commencer par la doctrine céleste, et que nul ne peut avoir seulement un petit gout de saine doctrine jusqu'à ce qu'il ait été à cette école pour être enseigné par l'Écriture Sainte, car de là procède le commencement de toute droite intelligence, quand nous recevons révéremment tout ce que Dieu y a voulu testifier de soi'.

(ch. 6:2).

In his third paragraph Calvin develops further the reasons for the importance of Scripture's written form. It is human fallibility which has led God to couch his truth in 'registres authentiques',

'...afin qu'elle ne perît point par oubli, ou ne s'évanouît point par erreur, ou ne fût corrompue par l'audace des hommes'.

(ch. 6:3).

Since these are some of the very faults in which Calvin finds men incapable of perceiving God's truth in creation, he now repeats his assertion of Scripture's unique normative role, affording 'la vérité immuable' and 'une vraie connaissance de Dieu'. To support these remarks, Calvin concludes with a final paragraph where he accumulates, chiefly from the Psalms, Biblical quotations which assert once more the uniqueness of Scripture in the knowledge of God.

'Car d'autant que l'entendement humain, selon sa faiblesse, ne peut en aucune façon parvenir à Dieu sinon étant élevé

par sa Parole Sacrée, il ne se pouvait faire que toutes créatures mortelles, excepté les Juifs, ne fussent égarées en erreur et vanité, en cherchant Dieu sans cette aide nécessaire'.

(ch. 6:4).

This summary of Calvin's thought in chapters 1 to 6 reveals four distinct features in the nature of Scripture which contribute to its unique status. As a mode of revelation, Scripture is both superior and necessary if the obstacle of human sin and ignorance is to be overcome. As the record of that revelation, Scripture is comprehensible and objective, as this is the means whereby its truth is preserved and transmitted. This can perhaps be further summarised in Doumergue's phrase to the effect that Calvin finds Scripture to be clear in its teaching, sufficient for our needs, and necessary for our saving knowledge of God (1).

A parallel account of the origins of Scripture occurs briefly in Calvin's preamble to the exposition of the Moral Law (I.C. II. 8:1 f). The same features recur as in book 1. He first reveals how man's ignorance and pride prevent him from confessing his misery and need of God, and then Scripture is advanced as the solution to this human incapacity. Here too the clarity and effectiveness of the objective record are shown to be of importance.

'Par conséquent, selon qu'il était nécessaire à la grosseur de notre esprit et à notre arrogance le Seigneur nous a baillé sa Loi écrite, pour nous rendre plus certain témoignage

(1) Doumergue, op. cit., IV. 82.

de ce qui était trop obscur en la loi naturelle, et en chassant la nonchalance, toucher plus vivement notre esprit et notre mémoire'. (I.C. II. 8:1).

It ought also to be pointed out that in this context, where an obvious opportunity appears for Calvin to expound some theory of verbal inspiration, his remarks are very circumspect. A similar opportunity is avoided in his exposition of the Lord's Prayer (I.C. III. 20:34). The obvious conclusion to be drawn is that the verbal inspiration of Scripture for Calvin has little to do with its inherent authority. This will be the reason why the Latin 'dictante spiritu sancto' of chapter 8, para. 2 in book 4 is translated in the French version of 1560 quite simply as 'l'Esprit les inspirant et dressant à cela'.

Its Definitiveness. 'Institution Chrétienne', IV. 8:1-9.

This chapter contains an even fuller account of the origin and purpose of Scripture; as part of his analysis of the Church's spiritual powers, Calvin brings out even more positively Scripture's definitive function. He repeats how the patriarchs were granted intimate revelations from God, together with signs to confirm their validity. This spoken word, says Calvin, was transmitted to successive generations 'afin qu'elle fut toujours entretenue' (ch. 8:5). When Calvin again comes to the committal of this word to writing, he once more stresses the permanence and immutability of written

Scripture, and this time he adds a comment which shows the practical implications of this finality of Scripture.

'Or quand il a plu à Dieu à ordonner et dresser une forme d'Eglise plus apparente, il a en même temps voulu que sa Parole fût couchée par écrit, afin que les prêtres prissent de là ce qu'ils voulaient enseigner au peuple, et que toute doctrine qu'on prêcherait fut compassée et examinée à cette règle. (ch. 8:6).

Calvin next adds an account of the growth and unity of the remainder of the Old Testament, and now the theme of Scripture's finality becomes emphatic. Nothing was to be added to, or subtracted from the Law; the prophets added to it nothing new, but only a pure exposition of its claims; to make their teaching the more evident, their prophetic and historical utterances were similarly put into writing. This whole corpus of Law, prophecy and psalm was Word of God to Israel.

'... il a fallu que les prêtres et les docteurs aient réduit et compassé à cette règle tout ce qu'ils ont enseigné jusqu'à l'avènement de Christ, sans qu'il fût licite de décliner ou à droite ou à gauche'. (ch. 8:6).

By this last remark Calvin continues to dwell upon the full finality of Scripture.

This too remains his intention in the following paragraph where he shows how the process of Scriptural revelation reached its peak in the supreme revelation of Jesus Christ, in whom God has so perfectly

disclosed himself, that his Son is the final and eternal testimony that men can have of God's truth. This declaration ushers in Calvin's most comprehensive statement of the canonical Scriptures (ch. 8:8, quoted supra p. 1), and this statement in turn is basically a statement of the normative value to the Church of the finality of God's written Word.

Calvin intends quite obviously throughout this passage not merely to outline the stages by which Scripture comes to be a complete and permanent record of divine truth, but to show how these features necessarily imply its authoritative status and use in the Church. The ninth paragraph enumerates these uses: to give to ministers in the Church their true authority, by which they teach and rule, to serve as a criterion of doctrinal truth, to maintain a proper discipline, to provide a sure foundation of belief, and above all, to ensure that by his own Word, God may retain his own authority in the Church.

'... c'est que Dieu ôte aux hommes la faculté de forger aucun article nouveau, afin que lui seul nous soit pour Maître et Docteur en la doctrine spirituelle, car lui seul est véritable, ne pouvant mentir ni tromper'. (ch. 8:9; cp. Comms. Jean 16:12, 21:25).

Its Validity

These accounts of Scripture's origin involve certain theological assumptions and deductions. For Calvin, mankind is so wholly

incapable of attaining a proper knowledge of God, that the very fact of divine revelation must mean the impossibility of knowing God unless he reveals himself. Consequently there must always exist for Calvin a divine accommodation to human weakness within Scriptural revelation, (cp. Comms. Jn. 3:12, 5:47) and the priority and initiative in this special revelation must be entirely divine. Calvin can only conceive of God as both willing and being fully capable of revealing himself effectively and sufficiently. Thus there can be no revelation except that found in Scripture, and the revelation of Scripture must be a clear, sufficient and necessary revelation of God.

Though it has appeared that Calvin places no reliance upon the inspired writers and the inerrant text to supply the basis of his doctrine of Biblical authority, this does not mean to say that he attaches no importance at all to its written record. In fact these accounts of Scripture show that in its origin and by its very nature, Scripture has acquired objective values: comprehensibility, permanence, finality which entail its function as authority. Calvin therefore affirms the uniqueness and definitiveness of canonical Scripture, which as the objective source of truth includes all that is necessary, and as normative test of truth, excludes that which is erroneous.

At this point it becomes important to underline the terminology of chapter 6 of Book I. In spite of his exposition of the objective superiority of Scripture and its contribution to the authoritative

value of Scripture, Calvin takes care not to equate this objective validity of Scripture with what he considers to be its authority proper. Although Calvin speaks of 'registres authentiques', 'la vérité immuable' and 'cette aide nécessaire' in chapter 6, he postpones use of the word 'autorité', with respect to Scripture, until chapter 7, where he intends to show how it attains its full and proper authority. When therefore J. Murray tries to distinguish between 'the authority that is intrinsic to Scripture, and our persuasion or conviction that it is authoritative' (1) he is introducing terms which contradict Calvin's intention, though he expresses a distinction Calvin himself is well aware of. Dowey's use of the phrase 'intrinsically valid' is altogether more helpful (2).

The entire problem of establishing religious knowledge is thus presented by Calvin as a problem of the communication and reliability of divine truth, and the position so far can be stated thus: prior modes of revelation, in themselves valid and extant, are rendered ineffective by man's sinful incapacity. The special revelation of Scripture would, of itself, despite its superior objective validity, also partake of the same ineffectiveness, unless somehow rendered credible and efficacious. Calvin now offers a solution in terms of Scripture's superior objective revelation, made reliable and authentic by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

(1) J. Murray, op. cit., p. 44.

(2) Dowey, op. cit., ch. 3.

3. The Authentication of Scripture. 'Institution Chrétienne' I:7-8

The title of chapter 7 announces this solution: 'Par quels témoignages il faut que l'Écriture nous soit approuvée, pour que nous tenions son autorité certaine, à savoir du Saint-Esprit...' This chapter is in effect the answer to Calvin's search for 'une vraie et entière sagesse' (I.C. I. 1:1) and the justification of an authority of Scripture which derives from God himself, and which consists of a divinely inspired certainty which can be personally experienced.

'Le Témoignage Intérieur du Saint-Esprit'. (Chapter 7)

Calvin opens his classic exposition of this doctrine by pointing out the need for a subjective and yet spiritual verification of Scripture. Of itself, Scripture may well constitute a valid body of truth about God, but for Calvin this truth will be powerless and irrelevant if the heart and mind of the believer cannot be fully convinced of Scripture's divine origin and character.

'Mais parce que Dieu ne parle point journellement du ciel, et qu'il n'y a que les seules Écritures où il a voulu que sa vérité fût publiée pour être connue jusqu'à la fin, elles ne peuvent avoir pleine certitude envers les fidèles à autre titre, sinon quand ils tiennent pour arrêté et conclu qu'elles sont venues du ciel, comme s'ils oyaient là

Dieu parler de sa propre bouche'. (ch. 7:1).

If he is to underline the importance of Scripture's subjective certainty, Calvin's first move must be to dispel the current notion that in some way Scripture's authority arises from the formal decree of the Church. This, he states in his title, is no less than 'une impiété maudite', and he reacts now with a fierce rejoinder:

'Comme si la vérité éternelle et invisible de Dieu était appuyée sur la fantaisie des hommes'. (ch. 7:1).

It is absurdity propounded by those who would claim an infallible Church, he continues, but without any satisfaction for those seeking assurance - 'une fermeté de vie éternelle' - since the promises enclosed in Scripture would thus be founded on no more than 'le bon plaisir des hommes'.

He then brings forward the statement of Ephesians 2:20 to show that in order and in operation it is Scripture, 'la doctrine que les Prophètes et Apôtres nous ont laissée', which precedes the Church 'comme le fondement va devant l'édifice'. Thus it is the Church, on the contrary, which reveres, honours and abides by the Word, but still 'ne la rend pas authentique comme si auparavant elle eût été douteuse ou en différend' (ch. 7:2). The Church, as already noted in Calvin's comments upon the canon, indeed has a certain part to play in the ratification of Scripture, but for Calvin, even that part is neither essential nor decisive, and he relegates mention of it to the next chapter (ch. 8:11).

The following paragraph (7:3) added only after the 1550 edition,

expounds a statement of Augustine in a way that confirms Calvin's position. The point of his rather tortuous exposition of Augustine is that he ought not to be interpreted in a manner which could seem to place the Church in a superior position to the Bible. This shows that Calvin is not merely concerned to attack the Roman Catholic stand, which he of course considered erroneous, but he is also intending to remove the proof of Scripture's authority wholly outside the sphere of external verification. The category of required cannot be natural or rational proof, for this would mean that faith in Scripture must be a fallible natural or rational faculty. Temporal or institutional proof of Scripture is therefore excluded; the verification of Scripture's authority is not in these ways at all external:

'... c'est autant comme si quelqu'un s'enquérât d'où nous apprendrons à discerner la clarté des ténèbres, le blanc du noir, le doux de l'amer. Car l'Écriture a de quoi se faire connaître, voire d'un sentiment aussi notoire et infaillible comme ont les choses blanches et noires de montrer leur couleur et les choses douces et amères de montrer leur saveur'. (ch. 7:2; cp. Comms. Jn. 14:25-6, I. Cor. 2:15 infra.).

The believer thus knows Scripture to be of divine origin and reliability by a direct intuitive perception of this divinity, independently of external proof and logical processes. For Calvin to leave matters at this point would be to invite the charge that in divesting the Church of any formal power to accredit Scripture, he is

himself guilty of basing Scripture's authority upon some equally fallible basis of his own invention. The fourth paragraph therefore shows how this authentication of Scripture derives entirely from a source which is superior because it is divine and, by definition, infallible.

'... il est requis que la persuasion que nous avons dite soit prise plus haut que de raisons humaines, ou jugements, ou conjectures; à savoir du témoignage secret du Saint-Esprit'.

(ch. 7:4).

At this point, Calvin once more makes clear that although there are abundant reasons to prove Scripture's divine character, he cannot rest content with a proof or certainty based upon human argument. Having thus established the category of proof and certainty required, Calvin now reverts to his exposition of Scripture's authentication. The 'témoignage secret' of the Spirit is not only independent of human verification, but far superior to it.

'... parce que les gens profanes (afin de rien croire follement à la légère) pensent que la religion consiste en opinion seulement ils veulent et demandent qu'on prouve par raison que Moïse et les Prophètes ont été inspirés de Dieu à parler. A quoi je réponds que le témoignage du Saint-Esprit est plus excellent que toute raison, car bien que Dieu seul soit témoin suffisant de soi en sa Parole, toutefois cette Parole n'obtiendra point foi aux coeurs des hommes, si elle n'y est scellée par le témoignage intérieur du Saint-Esprit'. (ch. 7:4).

Calvin cannot conceive of this operation taking place apart from the Written Word; rather, it transcends the limited verbal efficacy inherent in the written Word, and avails to render that Word credible. The testimony of the Spirit cannot be an independent revelation which subsequently confirms that of Scripture, but in inspiration and in authentication too, the Spirit acts in the believer's heart by one concurrent divine action. To use Reid's simile (1) the Spirit's testimony acts not as a rubber stamp, but as a witness in court.

'C'est pourquoi il est nécessaire que le même Esprit qui a parlé par la bouche des Prophètes entre en nos coeurs, et les touche à vif, pour les persuader que les Prophètes ont fidelement mis en avant ce qui leur a été commandé d'en haut'. (ch. 7:4).

By thus placing the origin of Scripture's authentication entirely within the sphere of divine initiative, Calvin intends to display the impregnable reliability of Scripture. Though the process must take place within the religious experience of the believer, its source and guarantor must be none other than God himself in his Word.

The final paragraph describes the nature of the certainty imparted by the Spirit's witness. Although Scripture exhibits intrinsic proof - *αὐτοπιιστος* says the Latin text (1560) -

(1) J.S. Reid, 'Authority of Scripture', ch. 2, p. 50.

of its divine character, the testimony of the Spirit conveys something far more than intellectual assent

'Etant donc illuminés par sa vertu, déjà nous ne croyons pas à notre jugement, ou à celui des autres, que l'Écriture est de Dieu, mais par-dessus tout jugement humain, nous arrêtons indubitablement qu'elle nous a été donnée de la propre bouche de Dieu par le ministère des hommes, comme si nous contemplions à l'oeil l'essence de Dieu en elle. Nous ne cherchons point ou arguments ou vraisemblances auxquels notre jugement repose, mais nous lui soumettons notre jugement et intelligence comme à une chose élevée par-dessus la nécessité d'être jugée'. (ch. 7:5; cp. Comm. Luc. 24:45).

This last bold statement received careful explanation. Belief in Scripture's divine nature is no superstitions or irrational act, but by the Spirit's activity, we are induced to believe both 'sciemment et volontairement'. Together with an awareness of the divine truth and origin of Scripture, the witness of the Spirit also imparts the ability to assent and respond to Scripture's authority. The conviction prompting this response comprises a volitional element: 'une persuasion telle qu'elle ne requiert point de raisons', an intellectual element: 'une connaissance telle, qu'elle est appuyée sur une très bonne raison, c'est à savoir, d'autant que notre esprit a plus certain et plus assuré repos qu'en aucunes raisons', and an emotional element: 'c'est un tel sentiment, qu'il ne se peut engendrer que de révélation céleste'. (all ch. 7:5).

In this admirably written chapter of the 'Institution', Calvin has set out his argument with precision and insight. First he establishes the category of proof; formal, temporal, institutional proofs are all reducible to fallible human opinion, and because they lack the ultimate reliability of a divine source of truth, Calvin repeatedly and emphatically discards them. In the same way, he interprets Paul's words in I Cor. 2:15:

'Après qu'il a osté l'autorité au jugement charnel de l'homme, il enseigne maintenant qu'il n'y a que les spirituels qui soyent juges capables de ceste cause, pource que le seul Esprit de Dieu se recognoist soy-mesme: et c'est son propre office de discerner ce qui est sien d'avec ce qui est d'autrui: d'approuver ce qui est sien, et mettre à néant toutes autres choses'. (Comm. I Cor. 2:15).

Calvin therefore takes care to make the conviction of Scripture's authority an infallible conviction by basing it upon the Spirit's own initiative and activity. An effective authentication of Scripture as God's Word must therefore consist of a direct apprehension of its divine origin and truth.

Calvin's exposition is carefully supported at every level. He maintains the objective aspect by locating the work of the Spirit in and through the written Word. At the same time the subjective aspect of the believer's assurance and response is fully worked out and safeguarded. Human inability to apprehend divine truth is thus resolved for Calvin by the immediate and unilateral witness of the

Spirit to his own inspired Word. An infallible divine source, an effective divine intervention, and an adequate response of faith and certainty, these factors of the Spirit's inner witness guarantee the trustworthiness of Scripture. 'La divinité de la Bible, directement sensible au coeur du fidèle, la plus certaine et la plus suffisante des certitudes!' Such is Doumergue's enthusiastic appraisal (1). In other words, Calvin is demonstrating that in the last analysis the Bible has the innate and ultimate authority of divine utterance. No other proof is necessary, no further proof is possible than that which God himself supplied: 'Dieu seul... témoin suffisant de soi dans sa Parole! (Cp. Comm. I Jn. 2:27).

Calvin can thus say that it is possible to be completely and correctly convinced of the divine origin and truth of Scripture, and in turn this means that Scripture possesses more than an intrinsic validity; it has an authority that theologically and experimentally is reliable and trustworthy.

'Les Témoignages Humains'. (Chapter 8)

Having already stated in chapter 7 that he would be content to prove by ordinary methods of reasoning that Scripture is of divine origin and importance, - '... il y a toujours de quoi rembarrer les ennemis, etc.' (ch. 7:4) - Calvin now turns to some of these very proofs.

(1) Doumergue, op. cit., IV, 59.

The title of chapter 8 however bears a qualification illustrating their purely secondary status: 'Qu'il y a des preuves assez certaines, en tant que la raison humaine le porte, pour rendre l'Écriture indubitable'. The testimony of the Spirit thus retains its priority in the authentication of Scripture, but now other confirmatory proof can be added. In effect, Calvin is now stating explicitly what in chapter 6 was mostly latent in his account of Scripture; there exist in the written Word certain qualities which cannot create a proper belief in its divine origin, but which spring from its divine origin, and serve to confirm that belief:

'... comment Dieu a en elle bien disposé et ordonné la dispensation de sa sagesse... combien sa doctrine se montre partout céleste... combien il y a une bonne convenance entre les parties, et les autres choses qui sont propres pour donner autorité à quelques écrits'. (ch. 8:1).

To expound further these 'autres choses', Calvin next concentrates, as one might expect of a humanist scholar of his generation and standing, upon the literary and historical qualities of the Bible. The simplicity of its language, he says, he needs no artifice of rhetoric to persuade men; it surpasses the thought and writings of antiquity:

'Car la vérité est exemple de tout doute, puisque sans autres aides, elle est de soi-même suffisante pour se soutenir'. (ch. 8:1).

The eloquent language of certain parts of Scripture (8:2), its antiquity (8:3; cp. Comm. Rom. 1:2), the veracity of the books of Moses

(8:4), the miracles and prophecies mentioned throughout the Old Testament (8:5-7) similarly testify, according to Calvin, to the divine origin of Scripture. In this way, the enumeration of its objective excellencies, interrupted at the end of chapter 6, continued, albeit with a slightly different emphasis: the reliability of the Bible as Word of God is further borne out by the facts of its own antiquity and truthfulness.

Next, Calvin also proceeds further with his account of the transmission of Scripture. The Law, miraculously preserved in the time of Josiah, and under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes (8:8-9) is proof of God's intention to preserve the written record of Scripture for posterity. The New Testament period furnishes even fuller proof of divine guidance and inspiration. Calvin mentions each New Testament writer; their simple style, their occasional eloquence, the majesty of their message, their conversions even, all testify to the divine character of their teaching (8:10).

Some of these statements about Scripture appear rather naive today when the traditional dating and authorship of many Biblical books is seriously questioned. More adequate proof for many may be found in the subject-matter of the closing paragraphs: the perpetual consent of the Church, and even of its enemies to the divine message of Scripture (8:11), and also the deaths of the many martyrs who have contended for its truth (8:12). Even so, a recent writer considers the whole chapter 'a blemish upon Calvin's Biblical doctrine⁽¹⁾.

(1) T.H.L. Parker, 'Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God', p. 43.

Calvin himself says that the validity of these arguments does not of itself lead to the conviction that Scripture comes from God. Only God himself can confirm this, he repeats, closing his exposition as he began it.

'Ces raisons néanmoins ne sont point de soi suffisantes pour fonder droitement sa certitude jusqu'à ce que le Père céleste, faisant là reluire sa divinité, l'exempte de tout doute et question, lui donnant ferme révérence. Par suite lors finalement l'Écriture nous satisfera à une connaissance de Dieu qui nous apporte salut, quand la certitude en sera appuyée sur la persuasion intérieure du Saint-Esprit. Les témoignages humains, qui servent pour la confirmer, lors ne seront point vains, quand ils suivront ce témoignage principal et souverain, comme aides et moyens seconds pour subvenir à notre imbécillité'.

(8:12).

Some Conclusions

Warfield has attempted to show how these 'indicia', or subordinate proofs, have a part 'in forming faith under the testimony of the Spirit' (1), and has been taken to task by Dowey for thereby elevating the 'indicia' to a position on a level with Scripture itself and the Spirit's witness (2). The quotation from the end

(1) Warfield, op. cit., p. 89f.

(2) Dowey, op. cit., p. 116f.

of chapter 8 suffices to show that this is far from Calvin's intention. He also shows elsewhere that the written Word alone possesses no efficacy.

'Je confesse que toutes doctrines doyvent estre esprouvées par la parole de Dieu: toutesfois s'il n'y a quant et quant esprit de prudence, il ne servira de rien, ou bien peu, d'avoir la parole de Dieu en main, et ne la pouvoir interpréter. Comme par forme d'exemple, l'or sera bien esprouvé par le feu, ou par la pierre de touche, mais ce sera par ceux qui entendent l'art. Car de quoy servira la pierre de touche ou le feu à ceux qui n'entendent pas l'art? Parquoy avant que nous soyons juges competens, il faut nécessairement que l'Esprit de discrétion nous soit donné...' (Comm. I Jn. 4:1).

Only in combination with the testimony of the Spirit can the written Word attain its proper authority.

J.S. Reid has suggested a more relevant deduction to be drawn from these chapters (1), that is, to confirm that Scripture's authority does not, with Calvin, reside in its inerrant written form. If this had been the case, then Calvin would have seen the need to introduce this teaching clearly and explicitly into these fundamental chapters. What one does in fact find are, in chapter 6, an account of the writing of Old Testament Scripture without a single use of the word 'inspiration', in chapter 7, a spiritual authentication of the

(1) Reid, op. cit., p. 48.

Bible's message, but not of its words, and in chapter 8, a relegation of the importance of the words and language of Scripture to the level of secondary proof.

This all confirms that the source of Scripture's authority must lie in the spiritual character of its divine teaching. However this statement is too imprecise. Scripture's authority indeed resides, independently of extrinsic proof, within its own testimony to its own truth, but this too is inadequate as a complete statement. For Calvin, the source of Scripture's authority resides ultimately in the Holy Spirit alone, who inspires and authenticates his own Word.

'C'est pourquoi la souveraine preuve de l'Écriture se tire communément de la personne de Dieu qui parle en elle'.

(ch. 7:4).

To sum up: by its divine origin and nature, Scripture possesses important objective attributes which denote its revelatory validity and normative status, but neither as the unique and necessary mode of revelation, neither as the final repository of that revelation, can Scripture be termed properly authoritative. With Calvin, the essential nature of this Biblical authority consists of an immediate and infallible authentication of Scripture as God's Word, within the believer, by the 'témoignage intérieur du Saint-Esprit'.

This doctrine has been represented as setting up a purely external authority - the Bible - in place of the Pope, and alternatively as maintaining a purely subjective authority - the right of individual judgement. Both positions may be partially present in

Calvin's teaching, and both certainly developed out of it.

Nevertheless, the heart of his doctrine lies in neither one nor the other, but in the realisation that God's self-revelation possesses its own intrinsic authority, derived from God himself.

4. The Function of Scripture

Though the fundamentals of Calvin's doctrine have now been stated, the outline can hardly be said to be complete without some fuller reference to what he has to say about the operation of Scripture within the entire process of saving revelation. The authority of Scripture must be considered in relation to the work of the Spirit, the nature of faith and the centrality of Christ. Three passages of the 'Institution' cover these functions, which have recently been brought to the fore in discussion of Calvin's Biblical usage.

The Word and the Spirit. 'Institution Chrétienne' I:9.

In chapter 7 Calvin assails the Roman Catholic claim to authenticate Scripture by a superior ecclesiastical decree, and he combats this institutional priority by a more dynamic and more subjective doctrine. In chapter 9 he turns to face, from the other extreme, what he considers to be the spurious subjective position of the Anabaptists:

'Comment certains esprits écervelés pervertissent tous les principes de la religion en quittant l'Écriture pour voltiger après leurs fantaisies sous ombre de révélations du Saint-Esprit'. (I.C. I:9 title; cp. Comm. I Jn. 4:6 infra).

Here Calvin's task is to present the objective side of his doctrine,

yet without contradicting anything in his previous exposition, and without laying himself open to the charge of obeying 'la lettre morte et meurtrissante' (9:1). First, he insists more strongly than before upon the ²definitive status and the indispensability of the Bible against those who would claim the leading of the Spirit whilst despising that of Scripture.

The contents of chapter 9 thus provide a more complete exposition of the interaction of Word and Spirit in the conveyance of religious truth. Calvin will not countenance any separation between Word and Spirit, as he has already shown and taking a verse of the Old Testament (Isa. 59:21) which conjoins Word and Spirit, he stresses in his comments neither one at the expense of the other, but the two in their correlation:

'...le plus grand bien que nous puissions souhaiter sous le règne de Christ est d'être aussi bien gouvernés par la Parole de Dieu que par son Esprit. D'où je conclus que ces trompeurs démembrant par leur sacrilège détestable ces deux choses que le Prophète a conjointes d'un bien inviolable'. (9:1).

It is the Spirit himself, Calvin continues, who states (II Tim. 3:16) that Scripture is intended to bring the children of God to their final perfection. Similarly, Christ has promised that his Spirit would reach his disciples by means of Christ's own words (Jn. 16:13).

'Ce n'est donc pas l'office du Saint-Esprit (tel qu'il nous est promis) de songer nouvelles révélations et inconnues auparavant, ou forger nouvelle espèce de doctrine pour nous retirer de la

doctrine de l'Évangile après l'avoir une fois reçue; mais plutôt de sceller et confirmer en nos cœurs la doctrine qui nous y est dispensée'. (9:1).

Calvin returns then to the objective qualities of Scripture, but whereas in chapter 6 he has in mind its inherent validity, now he stresses its finality and indispensability. Yet it is not written Scripture alone, but placing the passage fully in its context, it is Scripture, inspired by the Spirit and accredited by his witness, which is the unique source and criterion of divine truth.

Safeguarded by this declaration of the functional unity of Word of Spirit, and continuing to deduce and illustrate his remarks from Biblical texts, Calvin next underlines the practical indispensability of Scripture. It must be read and heeded with diligence if we are to receive any profit from the Spirit's guidance. Moreover, Scripture is the one and only test of doctrinal correctness, the very sign - 'marque' - of the Spirit's own authority.

'Au contraire, si quelque esprit délaissant la sagesse contenue en la Parole de Dieu, nous apporte une doctrine différente, il nous doit être à bon droit suspect de vanité et mensonge: car autrement que serait-ce, puisque Satan se transforme en Ange de lumière? Quelle autorité aura l'esprit envers nous, s'il n'est discerné par une marque très certaine?' (9:2).

Instead of admitting that it seems a rather bold statement, that the Spirit himself should be subject to Scripture, Calvin asserts

that since the Spirit inspires Scripture, and cannot contradict himself, then 'il faut qu'il demeure tel qu'il s'est une fois déclaré'. The indispensability of Scripture then, results from its finality and its normative status. Positively and inclusively, Scripture comprises the sole repository of Spirit - inspired truth, negatively and exclusively, Scripture tests and accredits truth which would claim to be of the Spirit.

The third and last paragraph, which examines the terms 'la lettre qui tue' and 'l'esprit qui vivifie', shows one more aspect of the unity of Word and Spirit: their interdependence. The Word, he says, will indeed be a dead letter if not medicated by the Holy Spirit, to reveal Jesus Christ. The Word can only attain any certainty for us as it is illuminated by the Spirit; the Spirit in turn can only be received in and through the Word of God.

'Car le Seigneur a assemblé et accouplé, comme d'un lien naturel, la certitude de son Esprit et de sa Parole, afin que notre entendement reçoive cette Parole en obéissance, y voyant reluire l'Esprit, qui lui est comme une clarté pour lui faire contempler la face de Dieu; afin aussi que sans crainte de tromperie ou erreur, nous recevions l'Esprit de Dieu, le reconnaissant en son image, c'est-à-dire en sa Parole'. (9:3).

Calvin's correlation of Word and Spirit as an authoritative whole provides, as Dowey has pointed out (1), his criterion of canonicity.

(1) Dowey, op. cit., p. 118.

His references to 'la pure doctrine Apostolique', 'la majesté de l'Esprit de Christ' can now be understood as the presence of the combination of Word and Spirit in the book's doctrinal content which confirms its canonical status, and invalidates that of the Apocryphal books. In chapters 6 and 7 of the 'Institution' book I, Calvin in effect expounds something quite similar: the written Word of God has an intrinsic validity, but its proper authority depends upon the authentication of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 9, he analyses the mutual indispensability and corroboration of Word and Spirit; the second and third paragraphs are obverse and reverse of his teaching - the Spirit accredits the Word, the Word attests the Spirit.

In operation, Scripture thus composes one functional entity with the Spirit. This correlation recurs at each stage of Calvin's account of Biblical authority, and as the centre of his doctrine of special revelation, thereby constitutes the basic principle of that authority:

'Toutes fois et quantes donc que les esprits abuseurs mettent en avant le nom de Dieu, il nous faut enquérir des Escritures si la vérité est telle. Moyennant que nous y apportions un saint zèle et pure affection avec une humilité et modestie, l'Esprit de discrétion surviendra, qui sera comme fidèle expositeur, pour se déclarer soy-mesme parlant és Escritures'.

(Comm. 1 Jn. 4:6).

The Word and Faith. 'Institution Chrétienne', III:2.

In the first chapter of book III, Calvin shows how all that he has expounded in book II of the saving revelation of Jesus Christ becomes ours by the work of the Spirit. The means of this appropriation is faith (1:4) which is generated by the Spirit. In chapter 2 - 'De la foi' - the function of Scripture is therefore only incidental to Calvin's theme, yet a further dimension of its authoritative importance soon appears:

'En premier lieu, soyons avertis qu'il y a une correspondance de la foi avec la Parole, dont elle ne peut être séparée ni distraite, non plus que les rayons du soleil qui les produit'.

(2:6).

The definition of faith, given in the following paragraph (2:7) contains four distinct elements, in each of which Scripture plays an indispensable part. Faith, first of all is 'une ferme et certaine connaissance de la bonne volonté de Dieu envers nous...' From Calvin's subsequent explanation, it becomes apparent that the quality of certainty in this knowledge derives from a supernatural conviction imparted by the Spirit through God's Word.

'Ainsi non sans cause le Saint-Esprit pour magnifier l'autorité de la Parole de Dieu, lui attribue des titres d'excellence: c'est pour remédier à la maladie dont je parle, et afin que nous ajoutions pleine foi à Dieu en ses promesses', (2:15).

The second element of the definition of faith - '...fondée sur la promesse gratuite donnée en Jesus-Christ...' shows that the basis of saving faith is not so much the whole of Scripture, but the promises of the Gospel.

'Quand donc nous disons que la foi doit être appuyée sur la promesse gratuite, nous ne nions pas que les fidèles ne reçoivent et reverent la Parole de Dieu en tous endroits: mais nous destinons à la foi la promesse de miséricorde pour son propre but'. (2:29).

This certain saving knowledge '...révélée à notre entendement par le Saint-Esprit'... is an impossibility without the intervention of the Spirit revealing and confirming it in God's Word.

'La Parole de Dieu est semblable au soleil: car elle reluit à tous ceux auxquels elle est annoncée, mais c'est sans efficace au milieu des aveugles. Or nous sommes tous aveugles de nature en cet endroit: par conséquent, elle ne peut entrer en notre esprit, sinon que l'Esprit de Dieu, qui est le Maître intérieur, lui donne accès par son illumination'. (2:34).

Finally, the certain saving knowledge of God's gracious promise is shown to be '...scellée en notre coeur par le Saint-Esprit'. Again, however, this seal does not exist independently of the Word; rather it is the promises of the Word which the Spirit seals.

'Car si la Parole de Dieu voltige seulement au cerveau elle n'est point encore reçue par la foi... C'est pourquoi le Saint-Esprit sert comme d'un sceau, pour sceller en nos

coeurs les mêmes promesses qu'il a premièrement imprimées en notre entendement, et comme d'un arrhe, pour les confirmer et ratifier. (2:36).

These four quotations summarise what this lengthy and central chapter has to say about Scripture's authority. Scripture functions as the indispensable foundation upon which faith rests when generated by the Spirit. In conjunction with the Spirit, Scripture supplies faith with a sureness of conviction. Though Jesus Christ himself remains for Calvin the object of this faith, yet through the Spirit's activity, Scripture is the one and only reliable source of the saving truth about Him. This interplay of faith and the Word of God, their mutual dependence and necessity, are frequently brought out in the 'Commentaires'.

'Je di qu'elles sont un, pourautant que la parole est l'object de la foy: et ne peut estre autrement appliquée à nostre usage que par la foy. Comme aussi de l'autre costé la foy n'est rien et n'ha nulle vertu sans la parole...'

(Comm. Eph. 6:16; cp. Comms. Jn. 20:29, Heb. 11:11).

Two recent writers have dealt in some detail with this second chapter of book III of the 'Institution', and have been able to point out a duality of thought and vocabulary in Calvin's treatment of the knowledge of God conveyed by Scripture.

Dowey (1), following Calvin's own distinction between the knowledge

(1) Dowey, op. cit., ch. 2.

of God as Creator (book I) and as Redeemer (book II-IV), claims that Calvin tries to make Scripture in I.7 the epistemological basis of the knowledge of God in its entirety, whereas the whole trend of his argument in I.6-9 really places Scripture within the 'cognitio creatoris' of book I. Dowey's examination of II.2 reveals that Calvin has not fully worked out a proper epistemological basis for the 'cognition redemptoris', and he finds a hiatus in Calvin's thought between the special revelation of Scripture, and the saving revelation of Christ.

H.J. Forstman (1), taking this bivalence in Calvin's teaching rather further, finds an 'Implied Distinction' which he draws out of a comparison between I:7 and III:1-2: two epistemologies, the one propositional and cognitive, the other personal and intuitive, which though separable are not separate in Calvin's mind, for each arises from his central correlation of Word and Spirit. Each too is authoritative therefore; the former presumes an intellectual certainty of the existence of God, the other a dynamic saving faith in Jesus Christ.

The relevance of these studies to Calvin's doctrine of Biblical authority resides partly in showing from his exposition in III:2 the importance of Scripture as the source of saving truth, and partly in illustrating Calvin's concern that the whole of Scripture should be the basis of the whole of man's knowledge of God. This last consideration affords a possible explanation of Calvin's eagerness to turn to proof texts and verbal exegesis in an attempt to impress upon his contemporaries the unique claims of the entire Bible.

(1) H.J. Forstman, 'Word and Spirit', ch. 3.

The Word and Christ. 'Institution Chrétienne', IV:8.

The same chapter of book III broaches another aspect of Scripture's function as authority in the revelation of saving truth. At the very outset Calvin states that Jesus Christ is the supreme object of faith (I.C. III. 2:1) and in paragraphs 6 and 7 he illustrates this declaration by a deduction 'du général au spécial' in which he gradually moves from the Word of God - 'Qu'on ôte donc la Parole, et il ne restera plus nulle foi', to knowledge of God's gracious will - '...il nous est donc besoin d'avoir promesse de sa grâce', and thus of his Son - '...il a ordonné son Fils pour le seul gage de son amour'.

Dowey (1) pursues this 'series of concentric circles' through the entire chapter, and is able to show how Calvin, whilst working towards a narrower definition of faith with Christ alone as its object, maintains throughout his argument that the whole of the Bible is necessary for faith. (e.g. 2:29 supra). Hence, for Dowey, Calvin has failed to harmonise the formal principle of Scripture's authority with the theological necessity of Christ alone the proper object of saving faith.

The imperfect co-ordination of the special and the saving revelation at this point may well be an unfortunate lapse, but it reveals at least two things of far greater moment to Calvin himself, that without Scripture there can be no true faith, and without Scripture no saving knowledge of Christ.

'Voici donc la vraie connaissance de Jésus-Christ: que nous le recevions tel qu'il nous est offert du Père, à savoir vêtu de

(1) Dowey, op. cit., p. 157 f.

son Evangile. Car comme il nous est destiné pour le but de notre foi, ainsi d'autre part nous ne tendrons jamais droit à lui, qu'en étant guidés par l'Evangile'. (I.C. III.2:6).

It is now necessary to return to the section in the last book of the 'Institution' in which Calvin most fully expounds the relation between Christ the Eternal Word, and Scripture the written Word. (I.C. IV. 8:8). There are many points in Calvin's other writings where he makes Jesus Christ the centre of Scripture's message, and the Interpreter of its teachings, for example, his Preface to Olivétan's Bible, and his comments upon Christ's Emmaus discourse (Comm. Luc 24:27, 32, 46). The same intention predominates his discussion of the Old and New Testaments in book II of the 'Institution' (II. 6-11), but here in the fourth book, where his aim is to stress the finality of Christ's words, Calvin betrays no awareness of any contrast or tension between the special and the saving revelation. The particular aspect of Christ's ministry which he has in mind is his role as Teacher - 'Docteur et Précepteur', that is, his function as revealer of truth.

Here then Calvin shows revelation at its highest point, and Jesus Christ himself is that supreme revelation of God's truth:

'...tout ce qui peut entrer de Dieu en un esprit humain et tout ce qui peut s'en penser... celui-ci est le dernier et éternel témoignage que nous aurons de lui'. (8:7).

His teaching is perfect, clear, true and final; it is unique and exclusive since only in Christ may saving truth be found, and no further revelation can be given or ought to be expected,

'... afin que nous contentant de la perfection de la doctrine de Jésus-Christ, nous apprenions à ne pas nous en forger d'autre nouvelle, ni en recevoir de forgée par les hommes ... il a parlé de telle manière qu'il n'a rien laissé à dire aux autres après soi'. (8:7).

The next paragraph opens immediately with Calvin's declaration of the canonical Scriptures, and their function in the Church, which in this striking position furnishes more proof that Calvin sees no incongruity or distinction between the finality that belongs to Christ and his teaching, and the finality belonging to the written Word of God. Nor ought Calvin's position to be construed as a subordination of Christ to the Bible, for he next remarks that Apostles and Prophets alike are doing no more than testify to Jesus Christ, and are inspired by his Spirit. As Christ's teachings are unique and final for all time, so consequently are those of his Apostles, says Calvin, adding quotations from the Gospels which speak of Christ's gift of the Spirit (8:8).

Thus, in this important context, Calvin may well have rescued his doctrine of revelation from disparities which occur elsewhere by underlining the Christological centre of his biblicism. He manages at once to distinguish and to combine the written Word, and Christ the Eternal Word in an exposition which by no means detracts from the centrality of Christ as the focal point of revelation, and yet maintains the indispensability and finality of Scripture. His doctrine of Biblical authority, with its tendency to textual inerrancy and propositional religious knowledge, remains Christocentric.

From this outline of the function of Scripture within the process of revelation, it can be seen that Scripture for Calvin is one element of a complex totality involving the interaction and interdependence of several indispensable factors. The centre of both the special and the saving revelation is Jesus Christ, who is known through the medium of faith, which is produced by the Spirit's agency. At each one of these points in his account of the revelatory process, Calvin introduces Scripture in a way that reveals its indispensability to the process. Christ may only be known 'vêtu de son Evangile'; faith emanates from God's promises in his Word as sun beams from the sun; the Spirit restricts himself to his inspired Word, and may only be known with certainty by his Word. Since, in turn, the Word itself derives its full authority from the Spirit's inner witness, this mutual correlation of Word and Spirit constitutes the fundamental principle of Calvin's Biblical authority. Though Calvin takes care not to suggest that Scripture might be the original source from which revelation issues, nor that it is the essential content or the ultimate object of revelation, still Scripture remains for Calvin the definitive source and criterion by which the whole of man's knowledge of God may truly and authoritatively be known.

II. The Application

5. The Supremacy of Scripture

We are now in a position to summarise the main aspects of Calvin's doctrine.

The source of Scripture's authority resides in its inspired message, and thus in its divine Author, rather than the inerrant text or the infallible writers.

The nature of Scripture's authority is twofold: a unique definitive status as a written record, requiring a reliable and certain authentication of its truth, wrought by the Spirit in the believer.

The principle of Scripture's authority is the correlation of Word and Spirit.

The function of Scripture's authority lies in its finality and indispensability in the saving revelation of Jesus Christ.

Within the entire context of revealed religious knowledge, as set forth by Calvin in his 'Institution', Scripture, by virtue of this finality and indispensability, possesses a theological superiority as source and test of all religious truth. Because of the existential character of religious knowledge for Calvin, Scripture must therefore be urgently and universally relevant in all matters of religious faith and conduct. Consequently it remains now to assess the practical extent of this relevance, that is to say, the scope and limits which Calvin will assign to the finality and indispensability of Scripture.

This can most easily be judged by comparing his attitude to other spheres of authority: rational, ecclesiastical and civil - which encounter that of Scripture.

Human reason and experience as authority

The opening lines of the 'Institution' stress two things: first, that man must subject himself to God's self-revelation, and therefore next to what God reveals about man himself:

'... l'homme ne parvient jamais à la pure connaissance de soi-même, jusqu'à ce qu'il ait contemplé la face de Dieu, et que, du regard de celle-ci, il descende à regarder à soi'. (I.C. I.1:2).

This is Calvin's warrant for basing his doctrine of man, and his estimate of human capacity, upon the data he finds in Scripture. Reliable and correct knowledge of ourselves can only originate from a source superior to us, and to Calvin this means from God's evaluation of mankind in his Word. No other source is valid, for any human opinion will be vitiated by man's sinful misconception of his own status and importance.

Thus Calvin's descriptions of man are built around a collation of Biblical extracts. In chapter 15 of book I of the 'Institution', he shows man as the image of God, with an immortal soul (Eccl. 12:7, Lk. 23.46, Acts 7:59 etc.), and created in God's own resemblance (Gen. 1:27, Matt. 22:3). The fuller account of his fallen estate in

chapter 3 of book II entails deductions from Romans 8, John 3, and Ephesians 4 to illustrate man's carnal nature (3:1). Old Testament quotations are next employed to show his incapacity of good (Jer. 17:19, Psa. 14:1-3, Isa. 59:7-8), and after a detailed repetition of Paul's analysis of human motives in Romans 3, Calvin then returns to quotations from Jeremiah (31:18, 32:39, 11:19) to show human depravity and the need for regeneration.

With this low estimate of man's unaided capacity for true religion, it is not surprising that Calvin refuses to entertain even the most acceptable contributions of non-Christian religion and culture. Erasmus and Melanchthon may welcome the philosophy of Greece and Rome, and seek to incorporate it in their doctrinal system, by Calvin refuses it outright, on the grounds that Scripture too rejects it. Speculative philosophy and idolatry, in the light of the Bible, are one and the same:

'...il n'est pas question de juger selon ce qu'ils proposent ou ce qu'ils se persuadent, vu que le Saint-Esprit prononce que tous sont apostats, d'autant qu'en leur obscurité et ténèbres ils supposent des diables au lieu de Dieu. Pour cette raison, S. Paul dit que les Ephesiens ont été sans Dieu, jusqu'à ce qu'ils eussent appris par l'Évangile quel Dieu il fallait adorer. (Eph. 2:12)'. (I.C. I. 5:12).

However, in the same paragraph Calvin quotes from Xenophon the admonition that one should worship according to local usage, and though Calvin will not accept the suggestion, the fact of its

quotation reveals he is not unsympathetic to classical thought and literature. Elsewhere he actually employs Cicero's definition of religion in the argument of the passage (I.C. I. 12:1), and whilst in chapter 15 he refuses to accept the philosophers' definition of the soul, he allows some value to their analysis of its faculties (15:6). As one would expect of a scholar who at the age of twenty-three had already published his own critical edition of Seneca's 'De Clementia', Calvin has a considerable acquaintance and sympathy with the culture of antiquity.

Nevertheless, though the best of human thought and experience may be of some interest and profit to him, Calvin cannot allow to it any final authority in religion. Whether in the matter of free will (I.C. II. 2:4) or in the analysis of vice and virtue (I.C. III. 6:1), the Biblical method, he claims, is far superior, 'beaucoup meilleure et plus certaine' than the speculations of philosophers and Church fathers alike. A passage from his 'Commentaires' sums up pithily his attitude.

'De la volonté de Dieu. Par ce mot il repousse toutes les inventions des hommes et toutes sortes de spéculations extravagantes à la parole de Dieu. Car il ne faut point chercher sa volonté ailleurs qu'en sa parole... la seule règle de vraye science. Car celui qui désire simplement sçavoir ce qu'il a pleu à Dieu révéler, cestuy-là adonc cognoist que c'est que du vray sçavoir. Si nous appétons quelque chose outre cela, ce ne sera que radoter'.

(Comm. Col. 1:9; cp. Comm. II Pi. 1:19).

Ecclesiastical authority

Calvin allows rather more scope to patristic authority than Luther and older Reformers, but although he appears to quote with frequent approval the Fathers of the Church, he does so only with considerable reservations, which are often made explicit. Against the earliest Fathers he has little to object, for he shows they were subject to Scripture, did not exempt themselves from its commands, recognised they had no right to interfere with its contents, and that they were inferior in status to the Apostles. ('Epître au Roi' XXVIII-XXX). Augustine, followed by Chrysostom, is the most exempt from Calvin's criticism, and his exegesis of a passage of Scripture is often quoted to substantiate Calvin's. (cp. I.C. III. 3:8, 13). His great virtue, says Calvin, is that he eschews 'toute rigueur de commander ou exiger les choses où Dieu nous laisse en liberté par sa Parole'. (I.C. IV. 12:10). However, all of them - including Augustine - are fallible, as Calvin points out in the Epître au Roi (XXVIII). Some, for example, have weakened the Scriptural teaching on free will (I.C. IV. 4:10). Later theologians invariably decrease in Calvin's estimation as they approach him in time, and as they diverge further from his Biblical norm. The vast amount of references to patristic and medieval theology (1) will not allow that Calvin was a rash or unknowledgeable opponent. Of these

(1) 'Institution Chretienne', ed. Cadier, Marcel, vol. IV, p. 493-508.

'sorbonnards', 'scolastiques', 'sophistes', it is perhaps Peter Lombard who receives the most frequent and most scathing attacks in the 'Institution'. Calvin finds that Paul and Augustine have refuted him, in advance, as it were.

'Ce n'est pas si grande merveille, vu que ledit Lombard n'ait point été éclairé par la lumière de l'Écriture d'autant qu'il n'y était guère exercé'. (I.C. III, 15:7).

The same reservations can be observed in Calvin's approach to the Councils of the early Church. Only the decisions of the most ancient - Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus (I) and Chalcedon - will he show any readiness to accept.

'Car ces Conciles ne contiennent rien qu'une pure et naturelle interprétation de l'Écriture, que les saints Pères par bonne prudence ont accommodée pour renverser les ennemis de la chrétienté'. (I.C. IV. 9:8).

For similar reasons, Calvin will agree to the historical Creeds because of their harmony with his Scriptural criterion (I.C. II. 16:18) and goes so far in later editions of the 'Institution' as to reshape it parallel to the four sections of the Apostle's Creed.

The ninth chapter of book IV makes quite plain the primacy of Scripture over Church tradition and dogma. He admits that Councils of the Church derive an authority from Christ's own words in Matt. 18:20, but this authority does not allow them to add to, or contradict the Bible (9:2) and is of course itself based upon a Scriptural decree. On occasions where one Council may contradict another, the sole

arbiter remains 'La Parole de Dieu, qui est la balance à laquelle sont sujets non seulement les hommes mais aussi les anges' (9:9). Where a correct decision has been obtained, it must be obeyed not because of any authority inherent in the Council's decision, but by virtue of that authority conferred upon them by Scripture (9:10). Calvin agrees that a gathering of 'vrais évêques' should meet, but this gathering, though authorised by the Bible (I Cor. 14:29) cannot override or add to Scripture's teachings (9:14).

Calvin's attacks upon the Roman Catholic Church of his day afford the best examples of the the inclusive and exclusive functions of his principle of Biblical authority. As well as the many incidental passages like the authentication of Scripture in I. 7:1, and the refutation of 'la foi implicite' in III. 2:2-5, most of book IV of the Institution is cast in the form of a systematic assault upon the Roman Catholic position: its primacy (IV. 5-7), its discipline (IV. 8-12) and its practices (IV. 13-20). Its canon laws are a violation of 'la seule voix de Dieu' (5:2); its hierarchy has no place in the spiritual government 'ordonné par la bouche même de Dieu' (5:10). In chapter 6 Calvin refutes, first from the New Testament (6:2-10), and then by historical deduction (6:11-17) the supremacy of the Roman Church. The Bible, he says, has never required all christendom to be subject to one man in one place (6:2), the Acts and the Epistles show that Peter enjoyed no formal precedence over the other Apostles, and therefore the 'apostolic succession' from Peter to the Popes is a fallacy (6:7-8). In paragraph 14, examination of passages in Romans and

and Galatians leads Calvin to conclude that Peter had never been to Rome at all.

In succeeding chapters Calvin similarly attacks every point in the Roman Catholic edifice, and his argument in each case turns upon the supremacy of Scripture. He strenuously denies the Church's claim to approve and interpret Scripture (9:14); rightly interpreted, the power of the keys (Matt.¹⁸) applies not to the Church's discipline, but to its preaching of the Word (11:1-2). The Vigour of his attack brings him to utter his most forceful statements of Biblical Supremacy. The Roman Church is a 'tyrannie profane contre la Parole de Dieu' (11:8). The authority of the Word cannot be extinguished by unworthy ministers (1:5); it is the Word by which Christ reigns in the Church, his sceptre (2:4). If the Word is not honoured, then the Church has no true existence (2:3). Men and angels, he twice says, are all subject to God's Word (7:31 and 9:9). Calvin claims (in 8:13) to summarise the heart of the matter. Statements of the Church's infallibility he says usually presume that the Church can act independently of the Bible; he maintains however that the Church will be inerrant when it submits to the Spirit's teaching in the Word of God.

'Voici donc le différend qui est entre nous: ils attribuent autorité à l'Eglise hors de la Parole; nous au contraire conjoignons l'une avec l'autre inséparablement'. (8:13).

And Calvin goes on to expound how the Church can rely truly upon nothing but Scripture, whence it derives its certainty so that far

from approving and interpreting Scripture, the converse is true for Calvin; it is Scripture which imparts true authority to the Church.

Into this attack on the Roman Church, Calvin weaves an exposition of his Biblical conception of the true Church. As with Luther and Melancthon in the Augsburg Confession (Articles VII, VIII), Calvin has two objective criteria to determine the true Church

'Car partout où nous voyons la Parole de Dieu être purement prêchée et écoutée, les sacrements être administrés selon l'institution de Christ, là il ne faut nullement douter qu'il n'y ait Eglise (Eph. 2:20)' (I.C. IV. 1:11).

Calvin's conception therefore rests firmly upon Scripture as the foundation of the Church's existence and function. Its officers (3:4-9), its ministry (8:2-9), its discipline (12:6-13) and its two sacraments (15, 17) are prescribed in detail by the Bible, and only retain their validity as they remain true to the Biblical institution. With Calvin, it is the Word of God alone that guarantees the Church's existence, and empowers its functions.

Thus, where the authority of Scripture impinges upon that of the Church, for Calvin it must prevail. Indeed any authority the Church possesses must derive immediately from Scripture. The complete indispensability and finality of Scripture in the life of the Church can be felt in the repeated 'tout' of Calvin's summary of the Church's spiritual authority:

'En voici la somme; puisque Dieu a fidèlement compris en sa Parole, et nous a pleinement déclaré quelle est toute la

vraie règle de justice, toute la façon de bien le servir, et tout ce qui est nécessaire pour notre salut, il faut l'avoir pour notre seul maître en cela'. (I.C. IV. 10:30).

Civil Authority

The relatively brief treatment of this topic in the 'Institution' (IV. 20) hardly reveals Calvin's involvement at municipal and international level in matters of political and civil order. Yet it is obviously these urgent practical needs which lead him to attempt an outline of the State and its authority. The arrangement of his material owes little to the Bible; he deals in order with the magistrate, the laws and the people (20:4-13: 14-16, 17-32), but in this exposition references abound to every part of the Bible. However, compared with the rest of Book IV, a shift of emphasis is now evident; here the purpose of the Biblical material is chiefly to illustrate, and not to authorise the power and functions of the State.

Unlike the authority of the Church and its ministers, that of the State and its rulers does not, for Calvin, derive from Scripture. He finds no decree or institution within the Bible upon which to base his concept of the State; the State derives its authority directly from God himself, and not from his Word. Calvin however does not hesitate to explain this act of providence in Scriptural terms:

'...le fait que tous ceux qui sont constitués en prééminence sont appelés dieux (Ex. 22:8-9; Psa. 82:1 and 6) est un

titre qu'il ne faut pas estimer de légère importance: par lequel il est démontré qu'ils ont commandement de Dieu, qu'ils reçoivent leur autorité de lui, et qu'ils représentent pleinement sa personne, étant en quelque sorte ses vicaires' (20:4).

This independent and direct institution of their authority does not absolve rulers from obedience to Scripture, for as Psalm 2:2 and I Timothy 2:2 demonstrate for Calvin, their duty is to protect the Church and its teachings, and themselves to submit to Christ's authority (20:5). In particular, their duty lies in enforcing obedience to the two tables of the Law; this point Calvin embroiders with some ten Old Testament passages (20:9). The legitimacy of capital punishment is discussed as a problem of Biblical exegesis (20:10), although this element diminishes in the discussion of just wars and of taxation (20:11-12).

Laws (20:16 f) are also seen by Calvin as originating independently of Scripture, in the moral concepts placed within men by God himself:

'Or puisque la Loi de Dieu, que nous appelons morale, n'est rien d'autre qu'un témoignage de la loi naturelle et de la conscience que notre Seigneur a imprimée au cœur de tous les hommes, il n'y a nulle doute que cette équité dont nous parlons maintenant, ne soit en celle-ci parfaitement déclarée: il convient donc que cette équité seule soit le but, la règle et la fin de toutes lois'. (20:16).

In his short analysis of these laws, Calvin utilises 'la Loi de Dieu baillée par Moïse' and shows how it perfectly exemplifies all equitable civil laws.

The people, finally, owe their obedience to their laws and rulers, because this has been commanded by Scripture (20:23 - Rom. 13:1-2; Tite 3:1; I Pi. 2:13-4; I Tim. 2:1-2). The only exception that Calvin allows, is the possibility of disobeying a ruler whose commands oppose those of God. Then, says Calvin, after references to Daniel and Jeroboam in the Old Testament, and with quotations from Peter and Paul in the New,

'...vraiment alors nous rendons à Dieu l'obéissance qu'il demande, quand nous souffrons toutes choses, plutôt que nous ne nous écartions de sa sainte Parole'. (20:32).

In spite of the abundance of Biblical reference, Scripture in this chapter is used with restraint. Calvin refrains from using it to justify any particular political (20:8) or legal system (20:14) for this would contradict the limited scope of its authority in these matters. However he does seek to bring Scripture's teachings into contact with the framework of the State at as many points as possible. Though the State, its rulers and laws are instituted by God alone, yet in practice they cannot remain independent of Scripture. Rulers must uphold Scriptural doctrine, their duties are defined by Scripture, and Scripture can justify disobedience to them. Moreover as individuals, rulers are personally subject to Scripture (1). The

(1) Doumergue quotes Comms. Mic. 3:10, Hos. 5:1.

laws of a State are not authorised by Scripture, but it is in the Bible that they find their most perfect exemplification.

Calvin clearly distinguishes the sources of Church and State authority - explicitly in Institution IV. 11:3,5- yet at the same time makes them complementary. Contrary to popular belief, in Geneva itself, Calvin was never in a position to dictate to the City Council, nor did he ever seek to, for Scripture taught him that the religious and civil powers had their respective demains.

This shows that Calvin stopped short of pushing Scripture to a last extreme of totalitarian authority, and reveals his awareness too that the ultimate source of all authority must be God himself. Amongst all derived sources of authority the Bible reigns supreme, for it is God's Word. All human sources of knowledge and experience are valueless as authoritative contributions to saving knowledge. Even within the Church human tradition only acquires importance for Calvin insofar as it remains true to his Biblical standard. At no time can the Church contradict Scripture; any authority it possesses is in fact inspired by Scripture. By his Word, Christ distinguishes the true Church from the false, rules his people, commissions his ministers, empowers its teaching and sacraments. The Church exists for the Word, and without it cannot be said to exist. Even civil authority, though not governed by Scripture, cannot be divorced from it, indirectly has a duty to maintain its teachings, and in theory at least can, if contravening its truth, be opposed by Scripture.

The finality of Scripture thus means that its teachings cannot be contradicted, altered or increased by any individual or institution,

and those teachings constitute the only source and criterion of all religious doctrine and practice. In practical terms too, the indispensability of Scripture for Calvin means that without it there can be no saving knowledge of God, the Church will fail in its true vocation, and the State cannot perform its proper functions.

6. The Exegesis of Scripture

Calvin's achievements in the administrative and doctrinal spheres are deeply rooted in his principle of Biblical supremacy. An essential part of his programme therefore consisted of making the written Word of God yield its original meaning and actual relevance in the clearest and most forceful manner. His 'Commentaires' show patently by what means he drew from the Bible the principles of his religious statement and activity. They constitute the largest part of his total writings; all the books of the Bible are covered, except for the books of Solomon, the two minor Epistles of John, and the Apocalypse. The first to be published was Romans (1540) and the last was Ezekiel (posthumously 1565). Most were taken down in Latin by amanuenses from his lectures at the Genevan Academy.

The Theologian as Exegete

Two of the attributes of Scripture which receive systematic treatment in the 'Institution' - its unity (II. 10-11) and its clarity (I. 6-7) - are fundamental to his exegetical method. Calvin's beliefs that God has accommodated himself in Scripture to finite human intelligence, that Scripture's superiority as a mode of revelation lies in its comprehensibility, and that the very written form of Scripture contributes to its effectiveness and reliability, this all means that he constantly expects the meaning and application of

Scripture to be basically simple and obvious, without the need of isogesis and allegorisation to interpret its truth. In a word, the Bible means what it says, and not what commentators can make it say. Calvin therefore repudiates constantly those who attempt to impose arbitrary meanings upon Scripture, Roman Catholic theologians with their 'naseum cereum', Origen and his many imitators. By these perverse imitations, says Calvin in a comment upon II Cor.3:6, heretics have gained a foothold, false doctrines have obtained credence, the faithful have been led astray, and the true and natural sense of Scripture corrupted and hidden. Similar comments upon Gen. 2:8 bring out further his emphasis on Scripture's clarity, and his concern for the literal meaning of its written text.

'Quant aux allégories d'ORIGENE et de ses semblables, il les faut entièrement rejeter, car Satan par une méchante astuce s'est efforcé de les introduire en l'Eglise, afin que la doctrine de l'Ecriture fût ambiguë et n'eût rien de ferme ni de certain. Il se peut bien faire que d'aucuns, contraints par la nécessité, ait eu recours à l'allégorie, parce qu'ils ne trouvaient ce lieu tel qu'il est décrit par Moïse en aucune partie du monde. Mais nous voyons que beaucoup, en affectant sottement des sens aigus et subtils, se sont par trop adonnés aux allégories. Quant au présent passage, c'est en vain et sans propos, qu'ils philosophent hors de la lettre. Car Moïse n'a d'autre but que d'enseigner que l'homme a été créé de Dieu à cette condition qu'il eût

seigneurie sur la terre, en cueillit les fruits, et apprît de jour en jour par expérience que le monde lui est sujet'.

(Com. Gen. 2:8; cp. 1:16, 3:1, 35:7, 49:27; II. Cor. 3:6).

That Scripture's teaching cannot be ambiguous but on the contrary firm and certain, is theological result of Calvin's belief in its fundamental unity. This unity rests in turn upon the infallibility of the Holy Spirit, who in inspiring Scripture, cannot contradict himself in it. Hence, both Testaments, in their different ways, testify to the same truth, and that one fundamental truth, Calvin never tires of saying, is Jesus Christ himself (Cp., Comms. Jn. 5:39 infra, Luc 24:27, 32, 36 etc.). The unity of all the Bible thus has great importance for Calvin, enabling him to use one passage or text to explain another, and moreover he can quote indiscriminately from any book of the Bible to illustrate or support his points. This exegetical device occurs both frequently and at some length. Thus at one point, Calvin finds that Paul appears to have misquoted the prophet Isaiah and after considering several possible renderings of the text, he chooses the one which best seems to harmonise the two authors.

'Mais le Prophète ha ainsi de mot a mot, on n'a point ouy des le temps jadis, ni entendu des oreilles, oeil n'a point veu Dieu, (ou ô Dieu) fors que toy, fera (ou préparera) a celuy qui l'attend. Si nous prenons en l'accusatif le mot que nous traduisons Dieu, ou Seigneur, il faudra suppléer un relatif, Qui. Et de prime face, il semble que ceste exposition conviende

mieux au texte du Prophète, à cause de la tierce personne du verbe qui s'ensuit, asçavoir Fera, ou Préparera: mais elle est un peu eslongnée du sens de saint Paul, auquel il se faut plutost fier, qu'à toutes raisons. Car qui sera plus certain ou plus fidèle expositeur de cest oracle, que l'Esprit de Dieu mesme, lequel l'a dicté luy-mesme à Isaïe: comme il l'a exposé par la bouche de saint Paul? Toutefois, pour venir au-devant des calomnies des malins: je dis que la propriété de la langue Hébraïque souffre que ce soit yci le vray sens du Prophète, O Dieu, oeil n'a veu, ni oreille ouy: mais toy seul as cognu les choses que tu as accoustumé de faire à ceux qui t'attendent'. (Comm. I. Cor. 2:9).

This principle of the 'analogie de la foi' is the hermeneutical counterpart of the Word-Spirit correlation, and provides him too with a powerful polemical weapon, as in the 'Epître au Roi' (p. XXVI), where he uses the very text (Rom. 12:6) to show the conformity of the Reformed faith to the truth of Scripture. The seventeenth chapter of book III of the 'Institution' contains a long demonstration of the same principle in action. Paul and James do not in fact contradict each other, Law and Gospel testify to the same promises, the whole Bible unitedly supports the Reformers' emphasis on justification by faith.

'Et comme S. Paul affirme que l'homme est justifié sans aide de ses oeuvres, aussi S. Jacques ne concède pas que celui qui se dit juste soit dépourvu de bonnes oeuvres'. (I.C. III. 17:12).

The Humanist as Exegete

Despite Calvin's confident tone, some uneasiness is evident in the last quotations; he has to resort to lengthy explanation and tortuous syntax to explain how James cannot contradict Paul, nor Paul Isaiah. Though he maintains that Scripture is perspicuous and its meaning sufficiently manifest, Calvin is well aware that with the text of Scripture there exist difficulties both numerous and of some importance.

To the task of clarifying these difficulties Calvin brings a superbly endowed and trained mind. Having learned his Greek under Wolmar at Orleans, and Hebrew from Vatable at Paris, Calvin was in his own right a true Renaissance 'homme trilingue'. At his lectures he would read and refer to the passed under study in the original Hebrew or Greek, supplying an impromptu paraphrase of his own in Latin. Yet in his commentaries, the reformer never stifles the scholar, but cooperates with him in order to bring into his exegesis a precision in the understanding of the text and its meaning that clarifies and intensifies its relevance.

'In fontibus versetur oportet, qui vellet esse theologus'. As a skilled textual commentator Calvin has well learned the lessons of Erasmus, Bude and Valla. As a humanist might seek to appropriate the wisdom of antiquity for his own times, so too Calvin seeks the original meaning of the Biblical writers to apply it to his own age. The venerable notion of the four layers of meaning in Scripture (1) he

(1) 'Litera gesta docet, quid credas Allegoria
Tropologia quid agas, quid speres Anagogia'.

completely abandons; the only true and necessary sense to be drawn from the text is the one expressed by its inspired writer, and it is to that literal and spiritual sense alone that Calvin addresses himself.

To this end, he does not hesitate to summon any possible source of useful information. As in the 'Institution', Augustine, Chrysostom, Jerome, his favourite patristic sources, and as well Josephus, Herodotus, Pliny, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Horace and Seneca, to mention but the most frequent, are constantly laid under contribution to illuminate the language and background of the Biblical text. Of his contemporaries, the most obvious technical influence is that of Erasmus, with his appreciation of the historical and grammatical study of Scripture. In doctrinal comments Calvin reveals a constant awareness and some dependence upon the work of fellow Reformers, Luther in particular, but also Melancthon, Bucer and later Bullinger too. For his sources of the Biblical text, not content with the Vulgate and the Textus Receptus, Calvin goes back often to the Septuagint and the Masoretic text. His Old Testament work shows no small familiarity with 'synonymous parallelism', the stylistic considerations and linguistic roots of Hebrew. This acquaintance appears on the first page of his commentary on Gen. 1:1.

'DIEU. Parce que Moïse use du mot Elohim, qui est du nombre pluriel, on recueille qu'il parle de Dieu en trois personnes, mais comme la preuve d'une chose si grande me semble peu ferme, je n'insisterai point sur le mot. Plutôt j'avertirai les lecteurs de se donner garde de telles gloses si violentes. Ils pensent

avoir témoignage contre les ariens pour prouver la divinité du Fils et du Saint-Esprit, et cependant ils s'enveloppent en l'erreur des sabelliens car Moïse ajoutera après qu'Elohim a parlé et que l'Esprit d'Elohim était répandu par-dessus les eaux. S'il faut noter de cela trois personnes, il n'y en aura nulle distinction. Car il s'ensuivra que le Fils est engendré de soi-même et que l'Esprit ne sera pas du Père mais de soi-même. Quant à moi, ce m'est assez que le nombre pluriel signifie les vertus que Dieu a montrées pour créer le monde'. (Comm. Gen. 1:1; cp. I. Cor. 2:6 supra).

Calvin's refusal in this context to adopt the traditional use of the verse to prove the doctrine of the Trinity reveals a discrimination in the use of proof-texts. Similarly his comments on the first verse of John's Gospel bring out his close attention to the original language, his intention to clarify the literal meaning, and the fluency with which complicated linguistic and theological matters are concisely rendered.

'Au surplus, je suis esbahi qui a meü les Latins de translater le mot Grec Logos, Verbum: car il eust plutost falu traduire Verbum, s'il y eust eu Rhema. Mais encore que nous leur accordions qu'ils ont suyvi quelque raison probable, si est-ce toutefois qu'on ne peut nier que ce mot Sermo, ne conviène mieux. Dont appert quelle barbare tyrannie ont exercé les théologiens Sorbonnistes, lesquels ont tant tormenté Erasme, et tempesté contre luy, pour un seul mot changé en

mieux. Toutefois les anciens Docteurs de l'Eglise sont excusables, lesquels ne pouvans autrement maintenir la droite et pure doctrine contre les propos ambigus et entortillez des hérétiques, ont été contraints d'inventer quelques mots, qui toutefois ne signifie autre chose que ce qui est desjà enseigné es saintes Escritures. Ils ont dit qu'il y a trois Hypostases, subsistances, ou personnes en l'essence de Dieu une et simple. Or le mot Grec Hypostase, se trouve en ce sens au premier chapitre des Hébreux, auquel est correspondant le mot Latin Substance, comme saint Hilaire le prend'. (Comm. Jn. 1:1).

Exegetical Inconsistencies

This combination in Calvin of theologian and humanist explains the excellence of his achievement as a Biblical exegete, but it has also entailed at a deeper level certain inconsistencies which have been unearthed by recent writers (1). More often than not Calvin's conception of the unity of the Bible proves a source of striking truths, but at times it appears suspiciously like a facile solution to some textual discrepancy. The inner coherence of Scripture thus becomes on occasion an end in itself, to be justified by hermeneutical juggling.

This is the problem which Calvin, as it were, sets himself in his

(1) Dowey, op. cit., ch. 3. Forstman, op. cit., ch. 7.

Harmony of the Synoptic Gospels. In the 'Argument' he acknowledges the existence of a 'diversité' between the three accounts sufficient to prove to him that the accounts are independent in authorship, yet which cannot be permitted to suggest any fundamental disunity.

'... car nous ne scaurions pas dire que la diversité qui se voit entre eux trois, soit une chose faite tout exprès. Mais ayans proposé de mettre par escrit fidèlement les choses desquelles ils estoient bien certains et resolu, un chacun d'iceux y a tenu la façon de procéder qui luy sembloit la meilleure. Or comme cela n'est point advenu par cas fortuit, mais selon que la providence de Dieu conduisit le tout, ainsi le S. Esprit en ceste diversité de procéder leur a néantmoins suggéré un bon accord, quant à la chose principale. Et cela seul suffiroit bien pour donner approbation à leurs livres, s'il n'y avoit d'autre part de plus grans moyens pour les authorizer'.

(Arg. Harm. Evang.).

Numerous contexts in the following pages bear witness to Calvin's skill at reconciling contradictory details. When Mark says that Bartimaeus met Jesus leaving Jericho, where Matthew has two beggars, and Luke situates the event at the entrance to the city, Calvin admits no contradiction. The beggar began to call upon Jesus as he entered, but was not able to encounter him for the crowd until his exit some time later (Comm. Matt. 20:29; cp. 21:10 etc.). Harmonisation of the Resurrection accounts similarly requires the use of several 'peut-être' and 'vraisemblable' as well as the introduction

of 'synecdoche' (the part for the whole) in order to explain how Matthew and Luke can appear to disagree over the number of women present at the tomb of Jesus (Matt. 28:1, 8 etc.). Even the Fourth Gospel can occasionally be subjected to the same technique, and brought into line with the first two Gospels:

'... Tous les trois Evangelistes s'accordent bien en ceci, que Marie n'épargna pas l'onguent pour oindre Jésus-Christ, ains espendit sur luy une abondance fort grande d'onguent. Quant à ce que donc saint Jehan parle des pieds, c'est autant comme s'il eust dit que tout le corps de Christ a esté oint jusques aux pieds'. (Comm. Jn. 12:1-2).

Similar devices occur elsewhere. A difficulty in a reprobatory Psalm can be smoothed over as an accommodation to the imperfection of human understanding (Comm. Psa. 69:25). Synecdoche is used to explain how Joshua was not really omitted at all from Moses' promise that only Caleb would inherit the Land. (Comm. Num. 14:24). Calvin also tries to moderate the violence of language in other Old Testament passages; upon Ezekiel's bitterness he remarks that the prophets were of a sedate and composed mind (Comm. Ez. 3:14) and where Jeremiah protests that God has deceived him, the language is said to be merely ironical (Comm. Jer. 20:7).

In such cases, Calvin is obviously over-reaching himself in his anxiety to assert the entire unity of all Scripture. This inconsistency in his exegesis can perhaps be seen as another manifestation of the 'Implied Distinction' in Calvin's thought between redemptive and

theological knowledge. At the very least, this tendency to elevate the minor details of the Biblical text to the status of indispensable saving truth brings out the tension between the scholar who sees textual difficulties and the theologian who cannot visualise any imperfection in the inerrant text, and has therefore to account for the difficulties. This is so important a task for Calvin that he allows himself upon occasion to look beyond the obvious literal meaning of his passage, and thus break with one of his own canons of exegesis. Theological necessity then takes precedence over humanist insight wherever they may be at variance, as may well be the case in a passage where the theological implications of the word 'tous' are quite considerable, i.e. I Tim. 2:4.

'Par ceci il appert combien fortement s'abusent ceux qui opposent ce passage à la prédestination. Si Dieu, disent-ils, veut que tous soyent indifféremment sauvez, cela demeurera faux, qu'aucuns par son conseil éternel prédestinez à salut, et les autres à damnation. Ce seroit bien quelque chose qu'ils disent, si S. Paul parloit yci d'un chacun en particulier: jà soit encore qu'en ce cas nous n'aurions point faute de solution. Car combien que la volonté de Dieu ne doive estre estimée par ses jugemens cachez quand il nous la manifeste par signes extérieurs: il ne s'ensuit pas pourtant qu'il n'ait déterminé en soy-mesme ce qu'il veut estre fait de chacune personne particulièrement. Mais je laisse à parler de ceci, pource qu'il ne sert de rien au passage sur lequel nous sommes. Car l'Apostre entend simplement,

qu'il n'y a peuple, ni estat au monde quel qu'il soit, qui soit exclus de salut, d'autant que Dieu veut que l'Evangile soit proposé à tous indifféremment, et sans exception'.

(Comm. I Tim. 2:4).

Assessment

Calvin the scholar is thus the servant of Calvin the theologian. In the interpretation of Scripture the one aim must be religious edification, and the one aim of religious edification, he repeats endlessly, is to know Jesus Christ.

'Nous sommes enseignés par ce passage que si nous voulons avoir connoissance de Christ, il le faut chercher és Escritures. Car ceux qui imaginent de Christ ce que bon leur semble n'auront a la fin qu'un fantosme en lieu de luy. Il faut donc entendre en premier lieu, que Christ ne peut estre deusément cogneu autrement que par les Escritures. Que si ainsi est, il s'ensuit qu'il faut lire les Escritures à cette intention, que là nous trouvions Christ.... Au reste, tout ainsi que il nous est commande de chercher Christ es Escritures, aussi prononce-il en ce passage que nous ne travaillerons pas en vain. Car le Pere rend en icelles tel tesmoignage de son Fils, qu'il nous le manifeste sans doute quelconque'. (Comm. Jn. 5:39).

Secondly, this supreme aim of Biblical exegesis can best be attained by seeking and explaining the literal sense of the original text, as it

might be most certainly ascertained. Calvin's own definition of the ideal expositor can be found in the 'Epistre a Simon Orinee' prefacing his Romans commentary. Bullinger, he says, has shown a pleasant facility in his Commentary, Melanchthon has dealt with the principal points, Bucer is too long to be read in a hurry. On the other hand,

'...la principale vertu d'un expositeur consiste en une briefve facile, et qui n'emporte point d'obscurité. Et de faict, comme ainsi soit que quasi tout son office est comprins en ce seul point, asçavoir de bien déclarer et decouvrir l'intention de l'auteur lequel il a entrepris d'exposer'.

All legitimate sources and techniques are permissible to this end, but ultimately Calvin believes that the unified, inspired truth of the Bible speaks for itself without error or contradiction. The Bible can also interpret itself; the simpler passages will enlighten the more difficult, and the analogy of faith will guarantee the correct interpretation.

A third characteristic of Calvin's exegesis consists of his skill in expressing complicated material in a clear, concise and direct manner. Needless subtlety and over-elaboration would detract from the simplicity he believes Scripture to possess. He is at times guilty of these faults, but pedantry he always avoids, and his greatest mistake could well be his eagerness to over-simplify textual difficulties. At his best he combines theological depth with critical acuity in an admirable blend of clarity and succinctness.

'Selon mon jugement les expositeurs ont mal tourné et exposé ce passage jusques aujourd'huy. Car ils ont aussi la distinction, que Jésus-Christ a esté vie à saint Paul, et la mort luy a esté gain. Quant à moy, je fais Christ le sujet de ceste sentence en tous les deux membres, en sorte qu'il soit dit de luy, qu'il est gain tant en la vie qu'en la mort. Or outre que ce sens n'est point contraint, il y a encore ceci davantage, qu'il s'entretient mieux avec la sentence précédente, et contient une doctrine plus ample. Il proteste que ce luy est tout un de vivre ou de mourir, pour autant qu'ayant Christ en soy, il estime et l'un et l'autre à gain. Et certes il n'y a que Christ qui nous face bien-heureux tant en la mort qu'en la vie. Autrement, si la mort est misérable, la vie n'est de rien plus heureuse, en sorte qu'il est bien difficile de résoudre lequel est le plus utile de vivre ou de mourir hors Jésus-Christ. Au contraire, que Christ soit avec nous, il bénira tant nostre vie que nostre mort, en sorte que l'une et l'autre nous seront heureuses et désirables'.

(Comm. Phil. 1:21).

Certain failures in Calvin's exegetical achievement can probably be explained by too emphatic an assertion of the Bible's unity: the denial of the existence of obvious textual difficulties, the tendency to force the less relevant parts of Scripture, especially from the Old Testament, into use as convenient dogmatic proofs. Yet even in his use of proof-texts Calvin provides a useful lesson for his contemporaries; not just in the first verse of Genesis, but elsewhere (e.g. Comms.

Jn. 8:46, 10:30) he shows a dislike for superficial appeals to the traditional texts, in favour of straightforward explanation.

In this way, and despite the occasional subordination of his own canons of exegesis to theological necessity, Calvin's work can be best seen as a break with the past, and an example for posterity. More clearly and forcefully than any before, he declares that the Bible means what it says, and not what it can be made to say, and he thus leads the way out of the medieval forest of allegory and ~~iso~~esis. Nor is the static scholastic approach replaced merely by an arid Erasmian technique. Calvin combines his humanistic skill with an insight into the nature of Scripture and its message, and his especial contribution to a more modern Biblical interpretation is the 'analogie de la foi', that is to say, the function of the Word-Spirit combination in exegesis.

The authority of Scripture thus rests for Calvin not upon the arbitrary glosses and venerable traditions of medieval scholasticism, not again upon skilled scientific investigation alone, but upon its own evident truth. Despite certain inconsistencies, Calvin's Commentaires' provide massive proof of his intention and ability to bring to bear this authoritative truth of the whole of the Bible upon all matters of faith.

7. The Authority of Scripture in Calvin's Writings for the Reformed Church.

The publication in 1535 of the first edition of Calvin's Latin 'Institutio', and the beginning of his Genevan ministry in 1536 denote the start of a new phase of the Reformation, a phase of consolidation and controversy. By the time of his death in 1564 Calvin had attained international recognition and influence as the leader of Reformed Protestantism, and what is more, had bequeathed to it both a powerful, coherent body of doctrine, and in the shape of the Genevan Church, a lasting pattern of ecclesiastical structure and discipline. His numerous writings over these thirty years illustrate the varied and comprehensive application of his principle of Biblical supremacy: the conviction that careful Biblical exegesis will resolve doctrinal problems, that Biblical principles alone should govern Church organisation and worship, that the Bible provides full justification of the beliefs and practices of the Reformed faith. This principle remains a factor common to even his minor works, and of such predominance that analysis of a number of them can seem almost as much an assertion of the unity and relevance of the Bible's teaching as an exposition of distinct doctrinal topics.

Ecclesiastical Writings

To John Knox, and indeed to many another reformer and refugee,

Geneva was 'a very perfect school of Christ', a church created and constructed upon principles derived straight from the New Testament. In the early years of the century however, Geneva had been renowned as much for its low morals and unsettled politics as for its prosperous commerce, and even after the advent of Farel a tense situation which required surer guidance than he could give. To his credit, he perceived that ability in Calvin who installed as Professeur des saintes lettres dans l'Eglise à Genève' (1) eventually persuaded the city to adopt a programme of ecclesiastical reorganisation patently based upon the conviction that the Bible alone supplies the true model of the Christian Church.

During his first brief stay at Geneva, Calvin quickly put into effect this very intention. In November 1536 he and his fellow-ministers presented to the City Council a series of 'Articles concernant l'organisation de l'Eglise et du culte', together with a brief catechism abridged from the Latin 'Institutio' and a concise 'Confession de la Foy' (2).

Perhaps more explicitly even than the First Helvetic Confession (1536) of Bullinger and Myconius, with which it has many affinities, the Genevan Confession is fully and unequivocally based from first to last upon 'sola scriptura', and opens with a particularly forceful assertion of the primacy of Scripture.

(1) In epistles to Duchemin and Roussel, C.R. 5:233.

(2) C.R. 9:693-700.

'I. La Parolle de Dieu. Premièrement nous protestons que pour la reigle de nostre foy et religion nous voullons suyvre la seule Escripiture, sans y mesler aucune chose qui ayt esté controuuee du sens des hommes sans la Parolle de Dieu: et ne prétendons pour nostre gouvernement spirituel recevoir aucune doctrine que celle qui nous est enseignee par icelle parolle, sans y adiouster, ne diminuer, ainsi que nostre Seigneur le commande'. (p. 693).

Calvin thus confers upon the Bible a formal priority over even the statement of belief in God in Article II, which moreover is qualified by a prefatory reference again to Scripture:

'II. Ung seul Dieu. Suyvant doncques l'institution qui est contenue aux saintes Escripures, nous recognoissons.....'

The 'Confession' was not by any means a unique compilation, although it acquired a longer life and influence than those of the Zwinglian churches. It seems probable too that Farel had some part in its composition, despite Beza and Colladan who championed Calvin's exclusive authorship. The novelty of the 'Confession' lies rather in Calvin's attempt to secure the signed assent of the citizens of Geneva to its prescriptions. Thus, albeit indirectly, some indication of the importance of Biblical priority to Calvin can be gained from this optimistic venture. The task proved impossible, and has soon to contribute to the Reformers' downfall, but on the other hand, the 'Articles' which had been submitted to the Magistracy were adopted in March 1537.

In the 'Articles' ⁽¹⁾ Calvin and his colleagues advanced a constitution for the Genevan Church and included a number of practical details, some of which Farel had already attempted, which also imply a fuller exercise of Scripture within the Church: a more frequent and stricter celebration of Communion, the introduction of psalms and prayers into the order of worship, the practice of excommunication from Communion as a form of discipline and the catechetical instruction of the young in religion. The insistence upon Biblical warrants for these measures finds most explicit expression in the opening appeal to the Council.

'Cest que si vous voyes nostre advertissement estre de la sainte parolle de leuangille, mettez bonne diligence que ces observations soient recues et maintenues en vostre ville, puisque le Seigneur par sa bonte vous az donne ceste cognoyssance, Que les ordonnances par lesquelles son eglise est entretenue sont que elle soyt vrayement et le plus prest que fere se peult confermee a sa parolle qui est la certayne reigle de tout gouvernement et administration mays principalement du gouvernement ecclesiastique'. (p. 7).

The 'Articles' never reached fruition; opposition obliged the Reformers to leave the city in March 1538, and eventually Calvin settled in Strasbourg where he spent three years with Bucer, teaching Scripture at Sturm's Academy, writing several important works, engaging in the

(1) C.R. 10a:5-14.

great Colloquies of Hagenau, Worms, Frankfurt. His main task however was to organise and direct the little 'paroisse' of French refugees, in which he was able to implement his Genevan proposals: a compulsory catechism, a Scriptural form of discipline, a rudimentary Psalter.

When recalled to Geneva in September 1541 Calvin then had the experience to add to his theoretical pattern of ecclesiastical structure which he had drawn from the New Testament account of the Apostolic Church. His position in 1541 was far more stable than in 1537; a 'Projet d'Ordonnances Ecclésiastiques' (1) was rapidly presented and promptly ratified by the Council. In whole or in part all of Calvin's demands were accorded and carried into effect, and the 'Ordonnances' were eventually to become the classic expression of the constitution of the later Reformed Churches of Europe.

Once again the text is prefaced by an appeal to Scripture.

À ceste cause il nous a semble advis bon que le gouvernement spirituel tel que nostre Seigneur le demonstre et institue par sa parole fust reduict en bonne forme pour avoir lieu et estre observe entre nous. Et ainsi avons ordonne et estably de suyvre et garder en nostre ville et territoire la police Ecclesiastique qui sensuit, comme voyons quelle est prise de levangile de Iesuchrist!. (p. 16).

The presence of this prefatory appeal to the Bible is of some importance,

(1) C.R. 10a:15-30.

for though other influences are apparent in both 'Articles' and 'Ordonnances' - Bucer's 1534 Ordinances, Farel's innovations, Swiss politics - yet Calvin avows an anxiety to rest both principles and practice upon the warrant of the divine institution in Scripture.

The provisions of the 'Ordonnances' draw more heavily upon the Bible than did the 'Articles' of 1537. Thus, in the most important matter dealt with, the Ministers of the Church, Calvin rejects any notion of an episcopal hierarchy, and advances the New Testament division into 'pasteurs, docteurs, anciens et diacres' as the Biblical sanction for presbyterianism. They must, as in the Acts, be appointed by their colleagues, must meet each week for joint Bible study, the time place and number of their sermons are prescribed. The composition and duties of the Consistory of Elders is also set out, together finally with the oath by which the ministers must pledge first and foremost to abide by the Word of God:

'Je promectz et jure que au ministere auquelt je suis apelle je serviray fidedlement a dieu, pourtant purement sa parolle pour ediffier ceste eglise a laquelle jlz (sic) ma oblige, et que je nhabuseray point de sa doctrine pour servir a mes affections charnelles.....' (p. 31-2).

In the other matters dealt with more briefly, a concern for the use and respect of Scripture re-appears: baptism was to be administered at preaching services, and near the pulpit, at funerals superstitions contrary to the Word of God are to be excluded, visitation of the sick and of prisoners by ministers of the Word is prescribed. A heavy

schedule of sermons and religious instruction for the young was also laid down.

Further ordinances in later years catered for lesser matters and for rural parishes, but in 1561, with Calvin firmly in the ascendancy, a revision of the 'Ordonnances' appeared, providing for even more frequent sermons and catechistic instruction, a sign of Calvin's unabated zeal in later years for Biblical indoctrination.

The Catechism proper appeared in 1542 (1). Written, like Bucer's, in dialogue form, and destined for the young, the formal treatment of Scripture is much less emphatic. Calvin's biblicism remains strongly in evidence by the sustained treatment of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. As much as their elders the Genevan young had to be grounded upon the Bible, and therefore this passage is to be found:

'Le Ministre Quel est le moyen de parvenir à un tel bien?

L'Enfant Pour ce faire il nous a laissé sa sainte
Parolle, laquelle nous est comme une entrée
en son Royaume céleste.

Le Ministre Ou prens-tu ceste Parolle?

L'Enfant Comme elle nous est comprise és saintes
Escritures.

Le Ministre Comment faut-il que nous en usions pour en
avoir le profit?

(1) C.R. 6:1-160.

L'Enfant En la recevant en pleine certitude de conscience, comme vérité procédée du Ciel, nous submettant a icelle en droicte obeissance, l'aymant de vraye affection, et entiere, l'ayant imprimée en noz cueurs, pour la suyvre, et nous conformer à icelle.

Le Ministre Tout cela est-il en nostre puissance?

L'Enfant Il n'y en a du tout rien: mais c'est Dieu qui besongne en nous de telle sorte par son Saint Esprit'. (p. 107-9).

The same year (1542) also saw the publication of Calvin's 'Forme des prières et chantz ecclesiastiques avec la maniere d'administrer les Sacremens, et consacrer le mariage selon la coustume de l'Eglise ancienne (1). This adaptation of the analogous compilation of Bucer preserves the principle of Biblical priority. Opening remarks 'Au Lecteur' explain the last phrase of the title.

'Pourquoi quand nous aurons bien circuy partout pour chercher ça et là nous ne trouverons meilleures chansons, ne plus propres pour ce faire que les Psaulmes de David, lesquels le Saint Esprit lui a dictez et faictz'. (p. 170-1).

Calvin had himself while at Strasbourg brought out a little Psalter for the use of his 'ecclesiola Gallicana', and attempted to render several Psalms into French verse. It is of note however that although

(1) C.R. 6:161-210.

he welcomes the use of music in worship, he insists that the melody serve to stress the majesty of the words, and that only the words of Scripture be used to worship. As to the Genevan liturgy - again modelled upon Bucer's - opens with the words of Psa. 124:7 and proceeds to the singing of the two Tables of the Decalogue. The sermon follows, and a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer. In the celebration of Communion there are set prayers and exhortations of Calvin's own composition, whilst the elements are distributed after the words of institution from and to the congregational singing of Psa. 138. The service closes with the 'Nunc dimittis' and the benediction of Num. 6:24-6.

In spite of the rapid composition of these half-dozen ecclesiastical writings, no correction of them was needed during Calvin's life-time. An even greater mark of their success is their incorporation into the Confessions and Catechisms and orders of worship of the Reformed Churches of Europe. The principle of Scriptural authority which Calvin himself had first formulated for Geneva, thus attained a recognition and expansion which he could himself hardly have conceived, with the Gallican and Scotch Confessions of Faith (1559 and 1560), the 'Livre de Discipline Ecclésiastique' and Knox's 'Book of Discipline' (both 1560), the Heidelberg Catechism (1566), the Second Helvetic (1566), Belgic (1572) and Westminster (1647) Confessions. Strasbourg, Zurich, Basel and other cities before Geneva had been won over to the Reformation and continued to maintain its cause by the impetus of a powerful Biblical presentation; none however succeeded

to such a degree as Calvin at Geneva in the integration of the New Testament pattern into the life and framework of the Reformed Church. By 1543 the foundations of the Genevan Church had been firmly laid in a series of enactments drawn up by Calvin and approved by the City Council, in which the beliefs and worship, the ministry and discipline of the Church are comprehensively justified and explained by reference to the Bible. The whole achievement testified to Calvin's confidence in the capacity of Scripture to dictate what was not merely a convenient plan for the situation at Geneva, but the divine pattern for the ideal visible Church.

Preaching

Calvin's determination to maintain and purify the spiritual life of the Genevan Church can be clearly seen in his emphasis upon preaching. By means of various 'Ordonnances Ecclésiastiques', he was eventually able to secure daily sermons of an hour's duration in each of the city's three parishes, with a considerable number of extra sermons on Sundays, and during the week at the Cathedrale de St. Pierre. A. Dakin⁽¹⁾ quotes an estimate of seventeen sermons per week in this city of thirteen thousand inhabitants. In addition, penalties were exacted by the civil authorities upon those who were

(1) A. Dakin, 'Calvinism', p. 142.

unruly during the sermon, or who were too frequently absent from it. Calvin himself, though ceaselessly engaged in other activity, never failed to keep up an exacting programme of preaching to within three months of his death in 1664, delivering a yearly average of over two hundred and eighty sermons.

The remarkable feature of Calvin's 'Sermons' (1) is their close correspondence in content and form to his commentaries. Not only are they based upon books of the Bible, but they similarly proceed in verse by verse order, and cover the same topics (though with a minimum of academic disquisition), but even the occasional sermons 'Sur la Divinité de Christ', 'Sur la Passion' are little more than a sustained exposition of relevant passages of Scripture. We have on the homiletic level the same determination to expound thoroughly and exhaustively, for the non-theological minds of a lay audience, the all-sufficient teachings of the Bible. Only time prevented Calvin from thus covering not half of the Biblical books, and even he attained the total of nigh on two hundred sermons on Job, and over one hundred and seventy on Deuteronomy.

These latter, delivered in 1555-6 (2), bring out perhaps more than any others, his increasing emphasis in later years upon the power and necessity of the Word of God, especially in preaching. Usually, with his congregation in mind, Calvin exhortations abound with plain language and simple metaphor in order to stress the need of hearing

(1) C.R. 23-65 passim. A further series of sermons (see C.R. 56:iii) - 'Supplementa Calviniana' - is under preparation.

(2) C.R. 27-9.

and obeying the Word. One sermon in particular (no. CLXXI upon Deut. 30:11-14; C.R. 56:571-84) deals with the written Word, and Calvin can be seen urging his hearers to study and obey the Bible for themselves.

In this sermon familiar aspects and emphases of his view of Scripture and its authority recur. Moses' words, he says, imply that in God's Word there exists 'une clarté pour nous guider en toute nostre vie'. The Papists ought not to be trusted who claim that it is obscure. God himself testifies that his Word in no 'jargon qui soit incogneu'. The clarity of its message applies not just to Moses' day but to ours:

'Or si ceci a esté dit du temps de la Loy, aujourd'huy il nous convient encores plus. Car nous savons que Dieu s'est déclaré plus familiarément à nous qu'à ceux auxquels Moyse a parlé. Ils ont eu seulement ce qu'aujourd'huy nous reste. Or Dieu a envoyé depuis ses Prophetes qui ont exposé plus amplement ce qui pouvoit estre bref et obscur en la Loy. Cela fait, nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ est venu au monde, et alors il a accompli ce que dit l'Apostre en l'Epistre aux Hébreux, que Dieu ayant parlé en plusieurs sortes à nos peres, finalement il s'est déclaré par la bouche de son Fils unique, voire en nous donnant une conclusion finale à toutes propheties et à toute doctrine'. (p. 572).

The concept of accommodation also appears. God speaks to us in his Word with 'un langage rude et grossier' so that men might comprehend

him; he stammers as it were, 'il begaye avec nous', so that we might understand and humble ourselves before his Word (p. 574).

Whilst repeating these many injunctions to heed the Bible, Calvin does not omit the deeper implications of his text. The central part of the sermon (p. 575-83) is a painstakingly simplified demonstration by the 'analogie de la foi' of Paul's exegesis of this passage in Rom. 10. The favourite remark that to profit from Scripture 'il faut nous adresser à nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ...' is lovingly expanded (p. 578-9). So too, in unsophisticated terms, the interaction of Word and Spirit is unfolded. His illumination is needed to understand the Bible:

'...comme le soleil est aussi clair pour les aveugles que pour les autres, mais ils n'ont pas la capacite de recevoir la clarté que le soleil leur apporte. Ainsi donc en est-il de nous. Voila pour un item. Tellement que quand Dieu parle seulement par la bouche des hommes c'est temps perdu. Et pourquoy? Car nous sommes sourds, nous sommes aveugles, nous sommes stupides, et ce n'est point assez que nous oyons que le commandement nous est mis devant les yeux, qu'il ne nous faut plus aller par dessus les nues, qu'il ne nous faut point entrer au profond des abysmes: car il faut qu'il soit en nostre bouche et en nostre coeur. Et comment l'aurons-nous et en nostre coeur et en nostre bouche? Ce sera quand Dieu l'y aura mis par la grace de son S. Esprit'. (p. 576).

Evidently, for Calvin the authority of God's Word remains the same,

whether preached or written. Nor is it by any accident that the Sermons cover the same ground, in the same manner, and with the same conclusions as the 'Commentaires'. All this is only the practical outworking of the provisions of the 'Ordonnances' and the aim of the 'Confession de la Foy'.

'...repaissans les brebis de Iesuchrist par icelle (la Parolle de Dieu) en instructions, admonitions, consolations, exhortations, reprehensions... de conduire, regir et gouverner le peuple de Dieu a eulx (les ministres) commis par icelle Parolle...' (p. 695.).

8. The Authority of Scripture in Calvin's Writings on the Reformed Faith

Doctrinal Writings

Calvin's 1542 Catechism was foreshadowed by an earlier 'Instruction' of 1537 (1), which, issued in conjunction with the Confession of Faith, fulfilled the purposes of a catechism, but in fact consists of a summary in French of his first 'Institutio Religionis Christianae' (1536). The doctrinal topics occur in much the same order, and Calvin evidently intends to maintain the same emphasis, and at the same points, upon the supremacy of Scripture. Thus the first three short sections resume in effect the argument of chapters 1-6 of book I in subsequent editions of the 'Institution', concluding more simply but very similarly:

'Il faut donc en venir à la Parole de Dieu où Dieu nous est très bien décrit par ses oeuvres. Là, ses oeuvres sont estimées non pas selon la perversité de notre jugement, mais selon la règle de l'éternelle vérité'. (p. 12).

At this point, a description of the 'témoignage intérieur de Saint-Esprit' does not immediately follow, but too important a matter to be omitted, Calvin introduces it, together with his usual remarks about the certainty and superiority of man's knowledge of God in the Bible, into his exposition of faith in part III.

'Si la vérité de Dieu vacille en nous, même quand il s'agit

(1) 'Brève Instruction Chrétienne', ed. Courthial.

de ces choses que notre oeil voit, comment serait-elle ferme et stable quand le Seigneur promet des choses que notre oeil ne voit pas et que notre intelligence ne comprend pas?

Il apparaît donc que la foi est une illumination du Saint-Esprit, qui éclaire nos intelligences et affermit nos coeurs. Elle nous convainc avec certitude; elle établit en nous cette assurance que la vérité de Dieu est si certaine qu'il accomplira tout ce que sa Parole sainte a promis qu'il fera', (p. 35).

Just as emphatically as in the 'Institution', Calvin brings in at every vital point the finality and supremacy of Scripture: the nature and purpose of faith (III.3), the authority of ministers of the Word (VI.1), the functions of the Church (VI.2). In addition, Parts II ('De la Loi du Seigneur') and IV.3 ('La prière du Seigneur') are in their entirety a plain explanation of Exodus 20 and Matthew 6.

Thus in a bare eighty pages, and without the copious Biblical references of the 'Institution', Calvin manages to supply a minimum outline of Christian doctrine together with its indispensable Scriptural foundations. The inclusion of this basis even in so compendious a work establishes that the Bible was for Calvin something far more important than a convenient handbook of theological proof-texts.

The 'Institution Chrétienne' itself bears out massively and uniformly the same basic and universal relevance of Scripture to the whole of Calvin's teaching. As well as being grounded formally in its opening chapters upon the Biblical revelation, as well as its abundant

Biblical illustration and citation, the 'Institution' eventually claimed to be a digest of its teachings and a guide to its study. In his 1541 Argument (1) he intends to provide 'la somme de ce que Dieu nous a voulu enseigner par sa Parole', and by means of which all believers may have a key - 'une clef et ouverture' to the right understanding of Scripture. In 1560 ('Au Lecteur') he further claims to have so well accomplished this task, that his work will serve as text-book to theological students and will complement his commentaries on the Bible:

'...celui qui aura bien compris la forme d'enseigner que j'ai suivie pourra aisément juger et se résoudre de ce qu'il doit chercher dans l'Écriture et à quel but il faut en rapporter le contenu' (2).

One of the chief strengths of the 'Institution' is this solid Biblical foundation; one example must suffice. The exposition of the Trinity (I.13) is dominated by Calvin's preoccupation with Scriptural authorisation; in fact the doctrinal material is preceded by a lengthy discussion of the propriety of terms like 'Trinité, personnes, subsistence', which do not occur in the text of Scripture, and a justification of their theology utility (I. 13:1-7). It was upon his statement of Trinitarian doctrine that Calvin had been assailed by Caroli in 1537, and to clear himself of imputations of Arianism his chief defence is a

(1) 'Institution Chrétienne', ed. Cadier, Marcel; vol. I, p. XVII f.

(2) idem p. XIX.

proliferation of Biblical proofs and texts. The remaining paragraphs alone contain over a hundred and thirty-three quotations and allusions from twelve Old and seventeen New Testament books. In this instance Calvin is enabled by the super-abundant use of Biblical material to produce a much fuller account of Trinitarian doctrine than Luther, Zwingli or even Melancthon. There are occasions however where his preoccupation with Biblical sanction and exegesis lead him into difficulties. Wendel (1) has shown how Calvin in his exposition of infant baptism (I.C. IV. 16) proposes at the outset to ignore all argument or proof not based upon Scripture.

'Ainsi cherchons l'origine première du baptême des petits enfants. Car s'il apparaît qu'il ait été controuvé par la témérité des hommes, je confesse qu'il le faut laisser là, pour en prendre la vraie règle de ce que le Seigneur en a ordonné, d'autant que les sacrements ne tiendraient, qu'à un fil, s'ils n'étaient fondés en la Parole de Dieu'. (16:1).

The ensuing paragraphs reveal Calvin, with an eye upon Servetus and the Anabaptists, taxing his ingenuity to find adequate Biblical material, invoking in turn his previous discussion of the sacraments (IV. 15), the analogy of circumcision, the baptismal promises, and even the example of the early Church. Calvin must eventually admit that he cannot give one clear New Testament example of infant baptism, and has to revert to an 'argumentum ex silentia'.

(1) Wendel, op. cit., p. 323-4.

'Car bien que nous confessions que cela n'est point expressément montré, toutefois ce n'est pas à dire qu'ils ne les aient baptisés, vu que jamais ils n'en sont exclus quand il est fait mention que quelque famille a été baptisée (Actes 16:15,33)' (16:8).

One further example from Calvin's doctrinal writings, and on a subject usually associated more than any other with his name, will confirm this entire conscious reliance upon Scripture. His 'Congrégation sur l'Election Eternelle de Dieu' (1) of 1551, a discourse delivered before his Genevan colleagues on the occasion of the dispute with Jérôme Bolsec, displays by its exegetical character and by its reiterated invocation of Scripture. Calvin's conviction of the value of the unadorned exposition of Scripture's authoritative teaching.

Of the three parts of the discourse, the first consists of little more than exegesis of passages dealing with the theme of election: Eph. 1:4, Rom. 8:27-9, Gal. 4:9 and at greater length, Rom. 9. In the final pages, where he refutes objections and clarified difficult texts (1 Tim. 2:4; Ez. 18:32), Calvin offers further quotation and analysis of passages like II Tim. 2:25-6, Acts 13:48 and once more Rom. 9. As for the theme of the remainder, Calvin presupposes two things: that God's dealings with men, however incomprehensible, must inevitably be just, and that whatever God has stated must inevitably be true. This second point in particular accounts for the almost complete

(1) C.R. 8:85-118

lack of metaphysical discussion and for the way in which the whole of the doctrine of election is bound up in Calvin's mind with the finality and sufficiency of the Bible's teachings.

'Nous voyons aussi qu'il nous faut demeurer en crainte et humilité, sans presumer de nous vouloir enquerir de ce que Dieu auroit ordonné devant la creation du monde, mais que nous suivions ce qui est dit par les Escritures saintes, et que nous tenions le chemin que nous avons desia tenu touchant l'election de Dieu... la volonté de Dieu est la regle des regles, la Loy des loiz, la iustice de toute iustice, equité de toute equité, droicture de toute droicture. Bref, c'est la fontaine de tout bien'. (p. 115).

Calvin's repeated assertion that Scripture is the unique basis and criterion of faith is no trite academic device. His conviction manifests itself even in the technique of doctrinal exposition; to define terms, to corroborate statements, to clarify difficulties, and not least to refute error, Calvin constantly falls back upon the quotation and exegesis of Scripture. Wendel concludes (1) that rather than trying to conceive of Calvin's teachings as a closed system elaborated around some one central idea, we should see it as a drawing together, one after another of a whole series of Biblical ideas. Inconsistencies can certainly be detected in his confident utilisation of Scripture as a basis for dogmatic theology. One would question the desirability

(1) Wendel, op. cit., p. 358.

and relevance of texts from the Pentateuch or the Minor Prophets to demonstrate the doctrine of the Trinity, the manipulation of inadequate proof-texts to justify doctrinal bias. It remains still that the continued appeal of Calvinism owes as much to the explicitly Biblical content and presentation of its doctrines as to its vaunted logical systematisation.

Pastoral Writings

Just as his Sermons embody the declared Scriptural of the Genevan Church, so Calvin shows on the personal and practical level in his pastoralia and correspondence an equal zeal in commending obedience to the Bible and a close study of its contents to his readers. This zeal manifests itself soon after his conversion in his Preface to his relative Robert Olivetan's translation of the Bible, and later in his 'Préface des anciennes Bibles Genevoises' (1). Here Calvin elaborates upon a striking accumulation of metaphors to depict the virtues and value of Scripture. It is a treasure and a key to the kingdom of heaven; it is 'la voye certaine', 'la vraye reigle', 'la lumière qui nous adresse'; it is the mirror in which to see God, his sceptre and his staff ('houlette'), the testimony of his good will and the only pasture of our souls.

'Brief, c'est le seul moyen en quoy nous différons d'avec les

(1) C.R. 9:823-4.

Payens et infideles: en tant que nous avons une Religion
 assurée et fondée en la verité infallible de Dieu, au lieu
 que tous les autres se laissent mener par opinions douteuses:...

In 1545, five chapters of the 'Institution' (III. 6-10) were published separately as a 'Traité très excellent de la vie Chrétienne'. It is hardly necessary to enumerate the many practical directions drawn from Scriptural example and precept which it contains; the title alone of chapter 6 will suffice: 'De la Vie de l'homme chrétien. Et premièrement quels sont les arguments de l'Ecriture pour nous y exhorter'.

The preponderance of Biblical exhortation should not be allowed to obscure an aspect of Calvin which is usually unsuspected: his moderation. In the tenth chapter he says that there have been many good and saintly persons who with the best of motives have prescribed rules of living which are too strict; they have bound consciences more strictly, adds Calvin, than they were bound by God's Word. Others have gone to the extremes of intemperance and carnality, but it is the Bible which affords, as it were, Calvin's golden mean.

'Je confesse bien que nous ne devons ni pouvons astreindre les consciences en cet endroit à des formules et préceptes fixes et brefs: mais puisque l'Ecriture baille les règles générales de l'usage légitime, pourquoi ne sera-t-il réglé et comme borné selon elles'. (I.C. III. 10:1).

Taken in conjunction with Calvin's teaching upon the use of the Moral Law (II:8) and upon Christian liberty (III. 19) we have an indication

of the extent to which he would have Scripture inspire and regulate the spiritual life.

The same pastoral intentions recur in Calvin's vast and influential correspondence (1). J.D. Benoit considers him as great a pastor as theologian, and situates his pastoral authority in his reliance upon that of Scripture (2). His readers are frequently referred to the Bible, often with striking images and expressions to describe its value and effect. It is God's standard, '...son drapeau auquel il convient de nous ranger...' (I. 292), '...le sceptre par lequel Jésus Christ veut régner sur nous...' ('I. 415), '...la vraie clef pour nous donner entrée au royaume éternel...' ('II. 227). Its promises '...nous doivent être comme des échelles afin de nous élever au ciel' (I. 393).

Calvin will give no counsel or guidance that he cannot draw from the Bible. Very often his advice upon some practical matter issues in a Biblical text or quotation, or in an injunction to study it for oneself. He realises that Scripture is superior to any spiritual adviser and that any authority he may appear himself to possess must defer to that of Scripture. So he writes to the Reformed Church at Angers:

'Vous n'avez pas grand besoin de mes lettres... Ce que vous pourrez attendre et désirer de moi, vous le trouverez plus près en le cherchant soigneusement, c'est que si vous êtes diligents

(1) 'Lettres', ed. Bonnet, vols. I, II. C.R. 106-20.

(2) J.D. Benoit: 'Calvin, Directeur d'Ames, p. 90 f.

à lire la sainte Parole de Dieu et vous exercer en la doctrine d'icelle et exhortations qui en sont tirées, il y aura assez pour vous confirmer en la crainte de Dieu, vous édifier en la foi de notre Seigneur Jésus, et vous retenir en telle constance que rien ne vous fasse décliner du bon chemin'. (II. 111).

The direction to read and obey the Bible is if anything even firmer when Calvin writes to those of high rank and influence. The Duc de Longueville is exhorted to 'appliquer (son) étude à s'avancer toujours, de plus en plus, en la sainte Parole de Dieu, à lire journallement les saintes Ecritures qui le peuvent édifier en tout bien et vertu'. (II. 269).

The King of Navarre - later Henri IV of France, is sternly warned 'Jamais vous ne pourrez résoudre Sire, à marcher où Dieu vous appelle jusqu'à ce que vous ayez appris du tout à vous appuyer sur ses promesses'. (II. 445). The same promises are brought before the Amiral de Coligny: 'Quelques difficultés que nous voyons, la promesse qui nous est donnée que Dieu pourvoira à tout et nous donnera remède, nous doit bien suffire pour ne point fléchir en nulle tentation'. (II. 264).

Similarly the conventional dedicatory Epistle to a New Testament 'Commentaire' gives Calvin an opening to impress the importance of Scripture upon Protestant rulers abroad: the First Epistle to Timothy is ascribed to the Protector Somerset, and the 'Epîtres Canoniques' to his ward, Edward VI.

'Or, tout ainsi que les Expositeurs de l'Escriture fourmissent, selon leur puissance, armes pour combattre l'Antechrist, souvenez-vous aussi, Sire, que c'est le devoir de votre majesté, de

maintenir la vraye et pure interprétation de l'Ecriture contre toutes meschantes calomnies, afin que la vraye religion fleurisse, et demeure en son entier. Ce n'est point sans cause que Dieu commande par Moyse qu'aussi tost qu'il y aura un Roy créé sur son peuple, il donnast ordre qu'on leur ecrivist un livre de la Loy. Voire, mais si estant encore homme privé il s'est diligemment exercé en la lecture d'icelle'. (Pref. Epistres Canoniques).

9. The Authority of Scripture in Calvin's Controversial Writings

At the same time as Calvin was shaping Geneva into a Church which exemplified his Biblical ideal and elaborating, in the 'Institution' primarily, the sum and epitome of Reformed Protestant belief, so his views were strenuously advanced by a great variety of controversial writings upon every front of the religious and civil contest which gradually was to affect all Western Europe. Whether in assailing the Roman Catholic edifice or in condemning Anabaptist excesses, or even in seeking the reconciliation of Wittenburg and Zurich, by the exertion of his unequalled powers of clear thinking and unambiguous language, his efforts immeasurably clarified and consolidated the Protestant position. More consistently and more deliberately than earlier Reformers he takes his stand foursquare upon the primacy of the Scriptures.

Apologetical Writings

Calvin was very soon drawn into formal theological debate and controversy by his association with Farel and Geneva. From Strasbourg in 1538 he championed the cause of Geneva and of Reform in his Epistle to Sadolet (1). Even earlier in 1536 he shared in vindicating the Biblical principles of the Protestant cause at the Lausanne disputation,

(1) C.R. 5:385 f.

and in the powerful formulation of those principles in the Lausanne Articles (1).

Calvin's most celebrated 'apologia' preceded both of these performances. Much more than in confessional formulation of the Biblical principles of Reformed belief, Calvin's 'forte' lay in displaying a wide and subtle variety of logical appeals to the Bible. The *Epitre au Roi* (2) which prefaces the earliest edition (1535) of the 'Institution', at once an eloquent defence of the Reformed faith of persecuted Huguenots and a vehement attack on the Roman Catholic position rests upon his constant and deliberate assumption that the Reformed Protestant faith is equivalent to the faith which Scripture teaches. The opening section, intended as a defence of the persecuted Huguenots becomes gradually bolder with Calvin lecturing Francois I upon his duty to govern by God's sceptre, 'c'est-à-dire, sa sainte Parole', until a climax is reached with a claim that the Reformed faith will remain insuperable because of its divine origin: 'Car elle n'est pas nôtre, mais de Dieu vivant et de son Christ' (p. XXIII). This majestic assertion is in fact yet another appeal to Scripture, as Calvin's next passage shows. Admitting that adversaries claim that the Reformers pervert and corrupt the Word of God, Calvin makes his entire argument turn upon the problem of interpreting Scripture, and is quite content to rest his case upon

(1) C.R. 9:701-2.

(2) 'Institution Chretienne', ed. Cadier, Marcel; I, p. XXI-XXXVIII.

'...l'analogie et similitude de la foi (Rom. 12:6),...
une très certaine règle pour approuver toute interpretation
de l'Ecriture. Or si notre doctrine est examinée à cette
règle de foi nous avons la victoire en main'. (p. XXIV).

In other words, Calvin is confident that the superiority of the Reformed faith rests in its acknowledgement of what the Bible says about human need and divine grace.

Next Calvin turns to examine more closely the points which he says his adversaries employ to attack his position. He first claims that they neglect and despise the true faith as taught by Scripture, and which ought to be universally accepted. He cannot understand their zeal for practices condemned by Scripture:

'Pourquoi combattent-ils d'une telle rigueur et rudesse pour la messe, le purgatoire, les pèlerinages et tels fatras, tellement qu'ils nient la vraie piété pouvoir subsister, si toutes choses ne sont crues et tenues par foi très explicite, bien qu'ils n'en prouvent rien par la parole de Dieu'. (p. XXV).

On the other hand, their contention that Reformed belief is a schismatic and seditious novelty, Calvin cannot admit, as this amounts to an attack upon Scripture itself.

'Premièrement, en ce qu'ils l'appellent nouvelle, ils font fort grande injure à Dieu, duquel la sacrée Parole ne méritait point d'être notée de nouveauté. Certes je ne doute point que, touchant d'eux, elle ne leur soit nouvelle, vu que Christ même, et son Evangile leur sont nouveaux'. (p. XXVI).

Reservations are similarly expressed about his adversaries' reliance upon miracles to justify their case; a number of Biblical texts are used to build up an argument about the rightful place of miracles (p. XXVI-XXVIII). Further discussion about Church tradition and the Fathers' teachings only prompts Calvin to show the close correspondence between their doctrine and the Bible (p. XXVIII-XXXI); he concludes:

'Tous les Pères d'un même courage ont eu en abomination, et d'une même bouche ont détesté que la sainte Parole de Dieu fût contaminée par subtilités sophistique, et enveloppée de combats et contentions philosophiques'. (p. XXX).

The charge that he opposes the Church and its claims Calvin next refutes by repeating the classic statement that the church is to be known by its faithful preaching of the Word of God, and its correct observance of the Sacraments. (p. XXXII).

In the penultimate section Calvin defends the Reformed cause against imputations of sedition, partly by disowning the Anabaptist movement, but chiefly by once more identifying his cause with the teachings of Scripture:

'C'est quasi le propre de la Parole de Dieu, que jamais elle ne vient en avant, que Satan ne s'éveille et escarmouche... Au reste, combien grande perversité est-ce de charger la Parole de Dieu de haine ou des séditions qu'érneuvent à son encontre les fous et écervelés, ou des sectes que sèment les abuseurs? Toutefois ce n'est pas nouvel exemple'. (p. XXXV).

He continues by quoting Biblical 'exemples' - Elijah, Christ, the Apostles, all accused also of sedition - and with quotations from twelve different contexts in Scripture aptly rounds off this last appeal to Scripture.

The first and most distinguished of his controversial writings, the 'Epitre au Roi' exemplifies Calvin's entire reliance upon Scripture. By quotation, allusion, exposition he insistently brings the Bible into play as the source and test of religious belief. Most of all it is the constant identification of the Reformed faith with that enshrined in the Bible which ideally characterises his doctrinal position.

Polemical Writings

The bulk of Calvin's polemical writings are marred by that unnecessary tone of personal denunciation which was a commonplace of theological debate, but vituperation never distracts him from the real issue. Writing against Servetus, Pighius, Castellio, Westphal or Heshusius, the 'Libertins' or the 'Nicodémites', his concern remains the same: to assert by clear exegesis and logical deduction, often with vehement emphasis, the superiority of teaching exclusively drawn from and based upon Scripture.

An unexpectedly light-hearted approach can be found in the 'Traicté des Reliques' of 1543 (1). Here despite the appeal to a more popular

(1) G.R. 6:408-52.

level of debate and the laboured jocularity, Calvin's reliance upon Scripture's authority still finds explicit statement.

'Or le premier vice, et comme la racine du mal, a esté, qu'au lieu de chercher Iesus Christ en sa Parolle, en ses Sacremens, et en ses graces spirituelles, le monde, selon sa coustume, s'est amusé à ses robes, chemises et drapeaux; et en ce faisant a laissé le principal, pour suivre l'accessoire'.

(p. 409).

Strictly speaking, the 'Traicté' is an 'Inventoire', and in order to catalogue his medieval relics, Calvin often has cause to refer to the factual details of the Biblical record.

'L'Evangile testifie que la croix pouvoit estre portée d'un homme. Quelle audace donc a ce esté de remplir la terre de pieces de boys en telle quantité que troys cens hommes ne le sauroyent porter?' (p. 420).

'Qui plus est, s'ilz veulent qu'on adiouste foy à leur dire, il est requis en premier lieu, qu'ilz s'accordent avec les Evangelistes. Or est il ainsi que cette robe, sur laquelle le sort fut iecté, estoit un saye ou hocqueton, que les grecz appellent choeton et les latins tunica. Qu'on regarde si la robe d'Argenteuil ou celle de Trier ont telle forme, on trouvera que c'est comme une chasuble pliée'. (p. 423).

Calvin's 'Excuse a Messieurs les Nicodémistes (1) posseses a rather

(1) C.R. 6:408-52.

special interest in that for once he writes solely to justify his personal stand-point in religious matters, which some had characterised as too rigorous. In other words, what Calvin considers in the 'Excuse' are the implications and effect of his constant reliance upon Scripture, and his determination to enforce its pre-eminence in all Christian belief and behaviour. Of course, he betrays no misgivings; he simply re-affirms, as elsewhere, that his own approach to doctrine and his doctrine itself are those which Scripture teaches. This tacit identification of his own teachings with those of the Bible can easily be considered as yet another example of question-begging. Probably it will be truer to say that Calvin firmly and honestly believed that, so long as he relied wholly upon Scripture, and faithfully expounded what it taught him, then he occupied in matters of doctrine a position that was impregnable.

'Il n'est pas icy question de leur opinion ou de la mienne. Le monstre ce que ien trouve en l'escriture. Et ne me suis pas hasté d'en faire une resolution, sans y bien penser plus de trois fois. Qui plus est, ce que ie dy estant notoire, que nul ne peut dire le contraire, sans nier pleinement la parolle de Dieu. Car ie ne dy rien de moy: mais ie parle comme par la bouche du maistre, alleguant tesmoignages exprès pour approuver toute ma doctrine depuis un bout iusqu'a l'autre'. (p. 602).

There is probably no plainer statement than this of what is at issue in the whole of his writings: to demonstrate emphatically Scripture's unique authority in doctrine and practice, and his own determination to

fulfil this conviction honestly and powerfully. He repeats forcibly that because he abides by God's Word, and others do not, then he cannot fail to be right, and the fault must lie with his detractors.

'Je croy que tous ceux qui ont une goutte de sain iugement voyent bien qu'ilz n'ont aucune raison de m'accuser, comme si i'estois trop rude et aspre en exigeant des Chrestiens ce que nostre Seigneur leur commande expressement par sa parole et non plus. A ceux qui ont les oreilles tant douillettes, qu'ilz ne peuvent porter cela, ie respons que ma doctrine n'est pas dure: mais c'est la dureté de leur cueur, qui la leur faict trouver telle'. (p. 610).

Calvin termed 'Nicodémites' those Protestants who were reluctant to show their true allegiance. A similar desire to compromise, abhorrent to Calvin seems to have imbued the 'moyenneurs' whom he attacks in the 'Vraie Façon de Réformer l'Eglise' of 1548 (1). Here, as in 1535, again at the turn of the decade, and as in the 'De Necessitate Reformandae Ecclesia', of 1543 Calvin becomes the 'porte-drapeau de la Réforme entière' (2). Not only does he attack the unfavourable terms of the 'Interim of Augsburg' which the Emperor Charles V had imposed upon German Protestants, but he views with equal distaste those Protestants who ~~indecisive~~ approach he considers an equal danger.

The work examines point by point the items of the 'Interim',

(1) 'La Vraie Façon de Réformer l'Eglise', ed. E. Fuchs.

(2) Fuchs, op. cit., Preface p. 6.

beginning with justification by faith and building up into a sustained attack upon the claims and practices of the Roman Church. Calvin advances no special method for reforming the Church, nor does he rest content even with a bare theoretical expression of Scriptural primacy. His technique, to quote his recent editor, is to bring all concerned to '... cette simple prise de conscience: la vraie façon de réformer l'Eglise chrétienne, c'est de prendre au sérieux la Parole de Dieu, et quoi qu'il en coûte' (1).

The fundamental opposition of Rome and Reform is crystallised in a central passage into a problem of authority. The section entitled 'L'Authorité de l'Eglise' (III B) amounts in fact to an affirmation of the supreme authority of the Scriptures. Ecclesiastical authority is considered under three aspects: the Church's right to authenticate Scripture, to interpret Scripture, and to require obedience to traditional dogma. The first claim Calvin qualifies (as in I.C. I. 7) as 'une impiété exécrable', and he appeals to Eph. 2 :8. The second turns upon the correct exegesis of II Pet. 1:20, which he maintains cannot possibly mean that the church has acquired the exclusive right to pronounce upon the Bible. The third point appears to Calvin an attempt to tyrannise the individual conscience, and so he affirms that the only authority of souls is God himself and his Word.

'Or Dieu, au contraire, se réserve à lui seul et à sa Parole le gouvernement spirituel des âmes, afin qu'étant hors de la

(1) idem p. 7.

sujétion des hommes, elles ne regardent qu'à sa volonté' (p. 36).

As always, Calvin identifies the Reformed position with the teaching of Scripture, and seeks justification for this action in further reference to Scripture. This approach is entirely consistent with Calvin's view of the finality of the Bible. Such indeed is its ultimate finality for him, that he wishes for no further and no better reasons to justify the Reformed faith than those he can find in the Bible.

This insistence throughout the entire range of Calvin's writings upon the primacy of Scripture, and the demonstration of its priority and proof at all levels of faith and conduct can doubtless account for much of the logical consistency and moral rigour usually associated with his name and that of Geneva. A recent writer has said of him that 'The true source of Calvin's authority was in himself', that he knew what he wanted and where he was going', and that 'he pursued with a single mind what he believed to be the truth' (1). These remarks gain far more meaning in the light of Calvin's doctrine and application of Biblical authority, for it was from the Bible that he learned the truth he pursued, it was the Bible which directed and inspired him, and from his reliance upon the authority he found in the Bible that he drew his own unshakable convictions and his own remarkable authority as administrator, expositor, preacher, controversialist and dogmatic theologian.

(1) O. Chadwick, 'The Reformation', p. 91.

To say therefore with A.M. Hunter that his doctrine of Scripture is 'a hypothesis necessitated by the exigencies of the situation, a presupposition requisite to the stability of his whole theological situation' (1) is to ignore the force of Calvin's conviction of Scripture's authority, and its deliberate and comprehensive implementation throughout his work'. The authority of Scripture could never be for Calvin only an academic theorem, a tactical device in debate and exegesis, a source of propositional proof-texts. In a technical sense, the Bible fulfilled all these functions for him, but only as a corollary of his belief in its supreme relevance. As the unique source of revealed truth, and the exclusive criterion of all faith and practice, the Bible was the 'sine qua non' of all Calvin's thought and work.

(1) Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

III. Conclusion

Summary of Parts I and II

It is now possible to assess as a whole both the theological conception and the practical outworking of Calvin's principle of Scripture's authority.

The Holy Spirit has inspired a unique revelation of divine truth, by human agency and in human language, which for Calvin is coextensive with the books of the Old and New Testaments. This may appear to imply reliance upon a notion of literal inspiration and this mechanical form of authority, but whilst these elements can be seen in Calvin's teachings, his entire conception is orientated towards a dynamic authority derived from the Holy Spirit and mediated through the inspired Word. The clear and objective Scriptural record of divine truth supersedes general modes of divine revelation, but must still itself be rendered credible, and thereby apprehended as authoritative knowledge by the activity of the Holy Spirit in the believer. The heart of Calvin's doctrine of Biblical authority thus lies, not in its inspired words nor in its inspired writers but in the concurrent revelation of the Spirit and the Word. Holy Scripture therefore ranks as an indispensable factor at all stages of the saving revelation of Jesus Christ, and as the final criterion and sole basis of all religious truth and practice.

With this lofty view of its supreme importance, Calvin must elevate

Scripture far above even the best of human wisdom and experience. To it must be subordinated the teachings of the Fathers and Councils of the Church; the Church's very existence and entire activity are governed by Scripture. The State may own an existence of its own, not subject to the Bible, but must uphold its truths, without being ever able to countermand them. The authority of Scripture extends into all departments of religious life and thought; the basis and test of all religious doctrines and practices is their consonance with the self-evident spiritual meaning of Scripture. The whole of Calvin's writings provide a comprehensive exposition in depth, of Scripture's normative truth and function. The 'Institution', the 'Commentaires' and the 'Sermons' overlay each other as complementary expositions of Scripture; at the ecclesiastical polemical and pastoral levels Calvin asserts equally dogmatically the truth he was convinced Scripture taught, and asserts it with the authority he saw Scripture itself claimed. This authority is not merely a theological necessity to his doctrine, not merely a tactical device in controversy, but an imperative necessity to be worked out in every dimension of religious life.

Weaknesses exist in this achievement. Because Calvin wishes to remain faithful to his 'a priori' Biblical basis, he resorts to occasional exegetical contortions. At other times his hermeneutical principles are sacrificed to theological necessity. Nor has Calvin always remained free of the medieval proof-text mentality, and Wendel (1)

(1) Wendel, op. cit., p. 359.

must admit that Calvin 'seems to have been searching the Scriptures more frequently for texts to support a doctrine accepted in advance, than to derive doctrine from the Scriptures'. Nevertheless, the existential cast of Calvin's thought ensures that his doctrine of Biblical authority remains free of excessively rigid formulation, and retains a relevance and urgency which responded to the contemporary exigencies of the Reformed faith and its position.

Historical Context

Well before the Reformation proper, both Wyclif in his 'De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae' and Huss in his 'De Ecclesia' has opposed the Bible to the existing authority of the medieval Church. During and before Calvin's time, the fact that Scripture possessed authority was hardly ever contested, but anti- and ultra-protestants diminished or nullified its priority by reference to ecclesiastical tradition or personal illumination so that the Bible was accorded no greater status than any other form of religious authority. Thus, the Council of Trent recognised all the books of the Bible as 'holy and authentic', but added to this the books of the Apocrypha, prescribed the Vulgate, and incorporated also the traditional dogma, 'preserved in the Catholic Church, by an unbroken succession of the ministry, and to which is due the same loving adhesion' (1). Anabaptists were equally reluctant to allow entire authority to Scripture; Sebastian Franck for one protested

(1) H. Jedin, 'History of the Council of Trent (London 1961), vol. 2, p.64.

that '...many are now making an idol of Scripture, not even asking God to explain his secret to us' (1).

For Calvin however, the Scriptures are the first and the only authority in religion, and this fundamentally different view will explain his violent apathy both to Rome and to Munster. This belief was common to the early Reformers too, and there are many examples in their work of what Calvin was later to say and perform. To some extent Melancthon codified the Protestant position, though neither his 'Loci Communes', nor the Confession of Augsburg contain any formulation of Scripture's authority.

A much more satisfactory formulation can be seen in the first five articles of the First Helvetic Confession of 1536, and its 'locus classicus' is Bullinger's Second Helvetic Confession of 1566. It has been claimed too (2) that the Arian F. Socinus was the first fully to enunciate the Biblical basis of Protestantism in his 'De Sacrae Scripturae Auctoritate' of 1570. Formal codification of this nature finds little place in Calvin's writings, though the Word of God occupies pride of place in his formulations of belief for the Genevan and French Reformed Churches.

In this way Calvin's conception of Scripture's authority improves upon those of Luther and Zwingli. To them must belong the credit of installing Scripture as a 'totalitarian, omnicompetent Word of God in

(1) C. Beard, 'Reformation of the Sixteenth Century', (London 1927), p.221.

(2) idem., p. 278.

place of the catholic church of the Middle Ages' (1). There remains however the remarkable failure of the German-speaking Reformation to elaborate further upon the formal priority of the Bible as grounds of Protestant belief and action. On the score of consistency too, his view of Scripture improves on Luther's. Doumergue (2) and R.H. Bainton (3) quote phrases from Luther which suggest far more indulgence in a notion of literal inspiration than Calvin ever permitted himself. Again, because of his criterion of 'was treibet Christum', are of inferior status to other Biblical books. Where Luther allows his own experience of the Bible to evaluate its various parts, Calvin will allow only the Bible's own 'αὐτοπιιστοῦν' to testify to its uniform authenticity. In Luther's works there are allusions which suggest Calvin's 'témoignage du St.-Esprit', but nothing approaching his realisation of the doctrine. Despite Calvin's confessed antipathy to Zwingli's teaching (4), on this point the Zurich Reformer more nearly approaches him than Luther. Passages in his 'Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God' (5) of 1522 sound very like Calvin, but here the similarity stops. Neither in his 'Commentarius de vera et falsa religionis' (1525) nor in the 'Brevis

(1) Davies, op. cit. ch. 3.

(2) Doumergue, op. cit., IV, 3.

(3) In 'Cambridge History of the Bible', ed. Greenslade (Cambridge, 1963) ch. 1.

(4) C.R. 9:51.

(5) S.C.M. Christian Classics, ed. Bromiley (London 1953), esp. p.75-78.

et clara fidei expositio' is there anything approaching Calvin's treatment of Biblical authority in the 'Institution'.

A striking parallel does exist between the Reformers' achievements in the Reformed Churches of Geneva and Zurich. Whereas Luther had not hesitated to use Scripture, beginning with the 'sola fides' of Rom. 1:17, to call into question the entire dogma and supremacy of the Pope and the Roman Church, he retained liturgical vestments, confession as a sacrament, elevation of the Host and consubstantiation. Zwingli, like Calvin later, would have none of this; his 67 Articles of 1523 say that Scripture must sanction every aspect of worship. At least a decade before Calvin came to Geneva, Zurich was already a city converted to the Reformation by Zwingli's own strenuous preaching, and its Church possessed in the vernacular both metrical Psalms and a Scriptural order for the Lord's Supper (1525).

The generations succeeding Calvin also offer a useful contrast. Whilst elements in his teaching clearly suggest verbal inspirationism and he must bear some responsibility for later 'theopneustic' doctrines of inspiration, the very exaggeration of the 'Formula Consensus Helvetica' (1675) insisting upon the plenary inspiration of the pointing of the Hebrew text, testifies to Calvin's restraint at this point, and exculpates him from the charge of a mechanical biblicism. Calvin himself resists this tendency by his emphasis upon the 'temoignage interieur' of the Spirit. That classical exposition of Calvinism, the Gallican Confession of 1559 was based upon a draft 'Confession de Foy des Eglises de France' of Calvin's own authorship, and whose first

article may be taken as his definitive expression of Scripture and its authority (1).

'Pource que le fondement de croire comme dit S. Paul, est par la parole de Dieu, nous croyons que le Dieu vivant est manifeste en sa Loy et par ses Prophetes, et finalement en l'Evangile et y a rendu tesmoignage de sa volunté autant qu'il est expedient pour le salut des hommes. Ainsi nous tenons les livres de la sainte Escripiture du vieil et nouveau Testament comme la somme de la seule vérité infallible procedee de Dieu à laquelle il n'est licite de contredire. Mesmes pource que là est contenue la reigle parfaicte de toute sagesse, nous croyons qu'il n'est licite de n'y rien adiouster ne diminuer mais qu'il y faut acquiescer en tout et par tout. Or comme ceste doctrine ne prend son autorité des hommes ne des anges, mais de Dieu seul, aussi nous croyons (d'autant que c'est chose surmontant tous sens humains, de discerner, que c'est Dieu qui parle) que luy seul donne la certitude d'icelle à ses eleus, et la seelle en leurs coeurs par son Esprit'.

Assessment

Calvin's particular genius lay not in creative thought, for the

(1) C.R. 9:740-1.

testimony of the Spirit can be found in Le febvre d'Etaples (1) and even in Occam (2), whilst Luther and Zwingli had shown how the Bible could be wielded as a doctrinal weapon and rule of life. Calvin's gift lay rather in formulation and demonstration, in gathering together the various threads of Reformation doctrine and practice and weaving them into a comprehensive structure of Biblical authority which perfectly justified and substantiated all that the Reformation maintained, '...la conclusion directe, logique et consciente de la vraie pensée réformatrice du seizième siècle' (3). More logically consistent than Luther, more theologically profound than Zwingli, thrust into a historical situation which called for the assertion of an absolute religious authority, Calvin realised the necessity of an energetic and exhaustive application of the formal principle of Reform - 'sola scriptura'.

If originality can be said to figure in his treatment of Scripture's authority, then it must lie in his clear insight into its theological nature, and in his ability to express and expound its religious functions. The discovery of 'complexio oppositorum' and 'implied distinctions' in this conception cannot detract from the importance of the 'analogie de la foi' in exegesis, the masterly formulation of the 'témoignage intérieur', the vital insight into the Word-Spirit

(1) Propositiones VII et VIII, condemned 6.11. 1525 by the Sorbonne.

(2) Doumergue, op. cit., IV. 73.

(3) idem, p. 56.

correlation, in a phrase, the realisation of 'Dieu seul témoin suffisant de soi en sa Parole'.

This formula, which Calvin himself borrowed from Hilarius (1) recurs so frequently at salient points in his account of Scripture (1.C. I. 5:12, 7:4, 8:1, 11:1, 13:21; Comms. I. Cor. 2:15, I. Jn. 2:27, 4:6) as to suggest its use as an epitome of his conception of the authority of Scripture. The truth and authority of Scripture originate in the will of God himself; he alone is its Author, Guarantor and Interpreter. God alone, eo ipso, possesses infallibility; his Word then can be relied upon when he testifies himself to its truth and authority. In the Bible, therefore, Calvin sees God witnessing to his own truth, in his own way and in his own right. Calvin can trust the Bible to interpret itself, to say clearly what it means, and to mean unequivocally what it says. The authority which the Bible exerts is the authority it claims for itself - God's own authority, imperative, exclusive and unique.

'Il dit que les fideles estans desjà instruits par la maîtrise du S. Esprit entendent les choses qu'il enseigne: en sorte qu'ils n'ont pas besoin de les apprendre comme choses incogneues. Il dit ceci afin d'autoriser mieux sa doctrine, d'autant qu'un chacun trouve en son coeur une approbation d'icelle engravée du doigt de Dieu.... En somme, il ne regarde autre chose qu'à confermer leur foy, en les ramenant à l'examen du S. Esprit,

(1) 'De Trinitate', lib. I, cap. 19, (some editions cap. 18).

qui est seul suffisant approbateur et juge de la doctrine, quand il la ~~se~~lle en nos coeurs, afin que nous soyons certains que c'est Dieu qui parle. Car comme ainsi soit que la foy doit regarder en Dieu, il peut luy seul estre tesmoin à soy-mesme pour persuader à nos coeurs que ce que nos aureilles oyent, est procédé de luy'. (Comm. I. Jn. 2:27).

A Note on Quotations

Quotations are given in French without any modification from the sources referred to. This accounts for orthographic variants and archaisms recurring in passages from C.R. and New Testament Comms.

In addition I am grateful to Prof. Jean Cadier, Doyen de la Faculté Protestante de Montpellier for kindly furnishing me with his own rendering of Calvin's Latin Commentary on Jer. 36:4-6.

C.R. = 'Corpus Reformatorum'; I.C. = 'Institution Chrétienne';
Serm. = 'Sermon'; Comm. = 'Commentaire'.

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Reference to sources of isolated quotations is made in footnotes in the text.

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