

John Calvin's Use and Hermeneutics
of the Old Testament

Anthony G. Baxter

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SUMMARY

of

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John Calvin's use of the Old Testament reveals his deep commitment to it. Calvin made use of the Old Testament in all areas of his life and work as a Reformer. However, the continued use of the Old Testament within the Christian Church of the 16th Century was not without its problems. Calvin discerned in the approach to the Old Testament taken by the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics what he saw as a 'Judaizing' tendency. Calvin's own approach and understanding of the Old Testament was shaped by his confrontation with these groups and his perception of their 'Judaizing' of the Old Testament. His Old Testament hermeneutics were in part an attempt to appropriate the Old Testament for the Christian Church. For Calvin the Old Testament belongs to the Christian Church because Christ is present in it. Hence Calvin's fundamental hermeneutical goal is to read the Old Testament with the aim of finding Christ. This goal, however, does not lead Calvin into an allegorical method of Old Testament exegesis. On the contrary, Calvin repudiates allegory and adheres tenaciously to the literal meaning of the Old Testament as discovered by a grammatical-historical form of exegesis. Calvin's historical-grammatical exegesis, however, seems to be in tension with his hermeneutical presupposition of reading the Old Testament with the aim of finding Christ there. This tension is overcome by the twin ideas of accommodation and typology which in Calvin's Old Testament Hermeneutics form a bridge between his christological hermeneutical goal and his exegetical method. Calvin's doctrine of the unity of the two Testaments can be seen to be in full harmony with his Old Testament hermeneutics and is in fact their quintessence. Thus for Calvin the Old Testament is emphatically Scripture for the Church of Christ.

Preface

The aim of the present study is, as its title suggests, to explore Calvin's Old Testament Hermeneutics. Hence, there are many aspects of his general Hermeneutics of Scripture which are not dealt with here.

I would like here to record my debt to H. Bornkamm's Luther and the Old Testament. The reader who is familiar with this book will perceive that the present study owes much in its plan and structure to Bornkamm. The reading of Bornkamm provided a great stimulus for my own research into Calvin and helped to clarify what was and what was not important.

A word about the footnotes. Where the bibliographical details of an article or book are given in the Bibliography itself I have not always given the full reference in the footnotes. Where this is the case the reader should consult the Bibliography for the full reference.

I have used the Corpus Reformatorum edition of the Calvini Opera and the Opera Selecta of Barth and Niesel. References to these are given in the following forms: (1). For the Corpus Reformatorum, for example, CO 36:123, where 36 refers to the Calvini Opera volume number and 123 to the page or column number. (2). For the Opera Selecta the form is OS III.123.10, where III refers to the volume number, 123 refers to the page number and 10 refers to the line number. References to Calvin's sermons in the Supplementa Calviniana series at present being published follow the same format as those to the Opera Selecta. Thus, for example, one might find SC II.68.22, where the II refers to the volume number, the 68 to the page number and the 22 to the line.

For English texts of Calvin's Commentaries I have used, for the Old Testament, the Calvin Translation Society edition, and for the New Testament the edition edited by D. W. and T. F. Torrance. I have used the Battles-McNeill edition of Calvin's Institutes. The name Institutes is retained, in spite of its inaccuracy. Where I have followed my own translation of the original this is indicated in the footnote.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	[i]
Contents	[ii]
Abbreviations	[iii]
 <u>Part One</u> - Calvin's Use of the Old Testament	
Chapter 1 Calvin's Use of the Old Testament: The Old Testament as a Mirror.	[1]
1. Calvin's use of the Old Testament	[2]
2. The Old Testament as a Mirror of the Church	[23]
3. The Old Testament as a Mirror of the Christian Life	[42]
4. The Old Testament as a Mirror of the Political Realm	[58]
 <u>Part Two</u> - Calvin's Old Testament Hermeneutics	
Chapter 2 The Problem of the Old Testament: The Judaizing of the Old Testament.	[66]
1. The Jews	[72]
2. The Anabaptists	[85]
a. Servetus	[86]
b. The Anabaptists	[100]
3. The Roman Catholics	[110]
Chapter 3 The Old Testament as Gospel: Christ as the <u>scopus</u> of Scripture.	[123]
Chapter 4 Calvin's Rejection of Allegory.	[144]
Chapter 5 Calvin's Exegetical Method.	[170]
1. Historical	[178]
2. Grammatical	[192]
Chapter 6 Finding Christ in the Old Testament: Accommodation and Typology.	[221]
1. Accommodation	[228]
2. Typology	[243]
3. Calvin's Christological Typology	[264]
 <u>Part Three</u> - Conclusion	
Chapter 7 Calvin's Doctrine of the Old Testament: The Unity of the Covenant.	[285]
Chapter 8 The Old Testament as Scripture.	[297]
 <u>Notes</u>	 [305]
<u>Bibliographies</u>	[433]

Abbreviations

<u>ARG</u>	<u>Archiv für Reformationgeschichte</u>
<u>BCPE</u>	<u>Bulletin du Centre Protestant d'Etudes</u>
<u>BLE</u>	<u>Bulletin de Literature Ecclesiastique</u>
<u>BS</u>	<u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u>
<u>CH</u>	<u>Church History</u>
<u>CO</u>	<u>Calvini Opera, (Corpus Reformatorum edn.)</u>
<u>CTJ</u>	<u>Calvin Theological Journal</u>
<u>CTS</u>	<u>Calvin Translation Society,</u>
<u>EQ</u>	<u>The Evangelical Quarterly</u>
<u>ETR</u>	<u>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</u>
<u>GR</u>	<u>The Gordon Review</u>
<u>GTT</u>	<u>Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift</u>
<u>HQ</u>	<u>The Hartford Quarterly</u>
<u>HTR</u>	<u>The Harvard Theological Review</u>
<u>IBS</u>	<u>Irish Biblical Studies</u>
<u>Interp</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
<u>JBR</u>	<u>The Journal of Bible and Religion</u>
<u>JHI</u>	<u>Journal of the History of Ideas</u>
<u>JR</u>	<u>The Journal of Religion</u>
<u>JSL</u>	<u>The Journal of Sacred Literature</u>
<u>MLAA</u>	<u>Modern Language Association of America</u>
<u>MQR</u>	<u>The Mennonite Quarterly Review</u>
<u>NGTT</u>	<u>Nederduitse Gereformeerde Theologiese Tydskrif</u>
<u>OS</u>	<u>Opera Selecta, (ed. P. Barth and W. Niesel)</u>
<u>PRR</u>	<u>The Presbyterian and Reformed Review</u>
<u>PTR</u>	<u>The Princeton Theological Review</u>
<u>RefCRev</u>	<u>The Reformed Church Review</u>
<u>RefR</u>	<u>The Reformed Review</u>
<u>RevTh</u>	<u>Revue de Theologie</u>

<u>RevEA</u>	<u>Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes</u>
<u>RevRef</u>	<u>La Revue Réformé</u>
<u>RThPh</u>	<u>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</u>
<u>SBET</u>	<u>The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</u>
<u>SC</u>	<u>Supplementa Calviniana</u>
<u>SCJ</u>	<u>The Sixteenth Century Journal</u>
<u>SJT</u>	<u>The Scottish Journal of Theology</u>
<u>StR</u>	<u>Studies in the Renaissance</u>
<u>ThRef</u>	<u>Theologia Reformata</u>
<u>ThTo</u>	<u>Theology Today</u>
<u>ThZ</u>	<u>Theologische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>VoxTh</u>	<u>Vox ^hTeologica</u>
<u>VS</u>	<u>Vermischte Schriften</u>
<u>WTJ</u>	<u>Westminster Theological Journal</u>
<u>ZKG</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte</u>
<u>ZTK</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</u>

Transliteration of Hebrew Scripta. Consonants

'	. . . . .	א
b	. . . . .	ב
g	. . . . .	ג
d	. . . . .	ד
h	. . . . .	ה
w	. . . . .	ו
z	. . . . .	ז
ḥ	. . . . .	ח
t	. . . . .	ט
y	. . . . .	י
k	. . . . .	כך
l	. . . . .	ל
m	. . . . .	מם
n	. . . . .	נן
ṣ	. . . . .	ס
ʾ	. . . . .	ע
p	. . . . .	פף
ṣ	. . . . .	צץ
q	. . . . .	ק
r	. . . . .	ר
š	. . . . .	שׁ/שׂ
t	. . . . .	ת

b. Long Vowels

e	. . . . .	הַ
i	. . . . .	הִ
o	. . . . .	הוֹ
a	. . . . .	הָ

Chapter 1

Calvin's Use of the Old Testament: the Old Testament as a Mirror¹

The aim of the present chapter, preparatory to examining Calvin's principles of interpreting the Old Testament and his Old Testament hermeneutics, is to give some account of the way in which Calvin used the Old Testament and applied it to his own situation.

For Calvin the Old Testament was not some dry, dusty book full of ancient histories which are of little interest or relevance to the Christian Church. On the contrary, for him it was a living book filled with vital instruction for the Church and for believers in their pilgrimage to the heavenly inheritance. Calvin saw its pages as peopled with living models and examples of Christian character and experience. In the Old Testament were displayed in the vivid pictures of historical narrative - 'living images' as Calvin calls them - the trials and difficulties of the Christian's pilgrimage, the battles and warfares that the Church must wage with its enemies and persecutors as well as with itself, dangers facing the Church from within as well as without: lukewarmness, idolatry, heresy, and apostasy. All this was to be found in the Old Testament written in the living colours of history and the lives of real people who sought to serve God in their own times. These people, though distant in both time and place, for Calvin, faced the same realities that the people of God in all ages must face.

Moreover, in the Old Testament Calvin found the great central themes of his theology clearly set forth: themes such as the sovereignty of God and his providential control over history, the sinful condition of man in rebellion against God and the sovereign ^{grace} of an electing God.

1. Calvin's Use of the Old Testament

Calvin's love and appreciation of the Old Testament is reflected in his profound engagement with it, an engagement which involved every sphere of his life, thought and work as a Reformer. Not only did Calvin, the Biblical scholar, write extensive commentaries on parts of the Old Testament,² but for a period of 17 years or so, first as a lecturer in the school of Geneva then later, after it was founded, in the Academy, he gave thrice weekly lectures on it, systematically expounding his way through book after book.³ Moreover, as a preacher for much of his career he preached on the Old Testament every weekday, including Saturday, of alternate weeks.⁴ Here too, he worked systematically through each book, never skipping or omitting a passage.⁵ This is not all. As a spiritual counsellor and advisor which he was in his vast correspondence, he turned to the Old Testament to give comfort and consolation to distressed and harassed Christians in lands where the Gospel was not welcomed, and to give reproof and warning to those who were backsliding or weakening in their resolve under persecution.⁶ As a liturgist it was to the Psalms of the Old Testament that he turned when he sought a 'Hymn-book' for the Reformed Churches.⁷ As an ecclesiastical organizer and statesman the Old Testament provided him with guidelines and examples for

forming the constitution and laws of a Christian state.⁹ Finally, but perhaps most importantly, Calvin as a devout earnest Christian, a shy retiring scholar whose natural bent was for the seclusion of the study and the company of his books, but who, in spite of his natural desires and inclinations, found himself thrust into the forefront of public life, having to deal with endless strifes and conflicts which he by nature loathed, found his greatest help and stay in the pages of the Old Testament. Amidst his own conflicts and trials it was from the life and experience of David the 'sweet Psalmist of Israel', in particular, that Calvin drew strength and courage to carry on.⁷

Let us look at this engagement with the Old Testament in a little more detail. It is, of course, through his Old Testament commentaries that most people are familiar with Calvin's involvement with the Old Testament. These commentaries cover most of the Old Testament, including the Pentateuch, Joshua, the Psalms and the whole of the Prophetic corpus. However, a large part⁸ of what we usually refer to as Calvin's Old Testament 'commentaries' are, in fact, simply direct transcriptions of his biblical lectures. This is true of all the Old Testament 'commentaries' except The Commentary on the Book of Psalms (1557), The Harmony on the last Four Books of Moses (1563), and The Commentary on the Book of Joshua (1563).¹⁰

Calvin was one of two Professors or Lecturers in the Academy at Geneva responsible for the exegesis of the Old Testament. Calvin's particular area of responsibility was the

interpretation and exposition of the text, whereas the other was responsible for the study of Hebrew and dealing with textual questions in the Hebrew text itself.¹¹ The 'schola publica' in which Calvin gave his lectures was composed largely of foreign students who were either drawn to the Reformation there by the presence of Calvin and his theology or who were driven there by persecution. The major aim of the Academy was to prepare and train men for the ministry of the Gospel in Churches throughout Europe.¹² Calvin carried on his lecturing activity up until shortly before his death in May 1564. He was finally prevented from lecturing any longer by ill health in February of the same year. Calvin's intention it would seem, had he been spared, was to lecture his way through the whole of the Old Testament.¹³ Because of the situation in which they were delivered, Calvin's lectures on the Old Testament bear a distinctly practical and pastoral emphasis. This probably goes some way towards explaining the continuing popularity of what have become known as 'Calvin's commentaries' amongst clergymen and preachers even in our own day.¹⁴

Second to Calvin's commentaries, in terms of his engagement with the Old Testament, are his sermons. His preaching on the Old Testament was even more extensive than his commentating and lecturing. Records of Calvin's preaching activity date only from 1549. However, even the records we have impress on us Calvin's monumental labours in the proclamation of the Old Testament. Having completed, in his week day sermons, a series on Jeremiah and Lamentations he began on the Minor Prophets on Nov. 12th. 1550, dealing with

eight of the Minor Prophets and finishing in Feb. 1552. After this he preached on Daniel, which took him up to Nov. 21st. of the same year, at which time he commenced on Ezekiel. Ezekiel was finished on Feb. 21st. of 1554. On Feb. 26th. he began to preach on Job covering it in 159 sermons. He covered Deuteronomy in 200 sermons from Mar. 20th. 1555 to June 15th. 1556. The day after finishing Deuteronomy he began what was to be a monumental series on Isaiah, lasting for over three years, finishing in Sept. 1559 and involving some 342 sermons! Genesis was started immediately after, and it was covered in 123 sermons between Sept. 4th. 1559 and Feb. 3rd. 1561. Next he turned to the book of Judges, then to 1 Samuel between Aug. 8th. 1561 and May 23rd. 1562, and immediately after this he began on 2 Samuel covering it in 87 sermons and finishing on the 3rd. Feb. 1563. He began 1 Kings in the same month and had finished 2 Kings by Feb. 2nd. 1564. In addition to his week day sermons he frequently preached on the Psalms on Sunday afternoons. There is, for example, a series of 22 sermons on Psalm 119.¹⁵

This preaching activity is staggering. Each of these books was covered passage by passage verse by verse and even word by word. Calvin's preaching method was to start at the beginning of a book and to preach his way systematically through it to the end. In this respect it was similar to his lecturing method. However, his sermons, as we would expect, are less technical than his lectures; fewer Hebrew words are expounded and there is less discussion of the different interpretations given to a passage. There are no 'points' as in modern day sermons, instead his sermons are simply

running expositions of the text as he encountered it. Hence their only structure is the particular text he was dealing with.¹⁶ According to the catalogue drawn up by Nicholas Colladon, a colleague of Calvin in Geneva and one of his early biographers, during the period from August 1549 to the 6th. Feb 1564 when he was finally forced to give up preaching due to chronic ill health, Calvin preached some 2042 sermons.¹⁷ Of these only 605 were on New Testament texts, which means that in a period of 15 years Calvin preached some 1437 sermons on the Old Testament. Unfortunately many of these sermons, though carefully recorded and collected at the time, have since been lost.¹⁸

How did Calvin manage to preach so many sermons? The answer to this question lies partly in the constitution of the Church which Calvin served in Geneva. The 1541 constitution of the Church, drawn up by Calvin himself and after some delay accepted by the city council, laid it down that preaching was to take place in the Churches of Geneva twice on Sundays and once on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 6 a.m. in the morning before work.¹⁹ In 1549 the latter were increased to every day of the week including Saturdays. Calvin, therefore, until 1549, preached twice on Sundays and three times in the week, a total of five sermons every week. In 1549 and after, Calvin preached twice every Sunday and every weekday of alternate weeks, a total of eight sermons a fortnight.²⁰ Calvin's rule was to preach from the New Testament on Sunday mornings and from the New Testament or Psalms on Sunday afternoons. On the weekdays he always preached on the Old Testament.²¹ This explains the great

volume of Calvin's Old Testament sermons.

It is not simply in his commentaries and sermons that Calvin is engaged with the Old Testament. In his other writings too the Old Testament also plays a vital role. We have already alluded to the use he makes of it in his vast correspondence. Here we find him appealing to the Old Testament to admonish Princes,²² to encourage the faint hearted,²³ and to steel the persecuted.²⁴

In the Institutes we find him frequently appealing to the Old Testament to support his doctrinal arguments and statements.²⁵ In his polemical works, especially those dealing with the themes of election and predestination, we find Calvin constantly returning to the Old Testament.²⁶ In both the Institutes and his other dogmatic and polemical writings Calvin calls on the Old Testament not only in proof of his theological points, but more often than not to illustrate them with the concreteness of historical examples. His use of the Old Testament in such writings as these is, therefore, not merely doctrinal, but also as a sound pedagogic device.

Moreover, in the Old Testament Calvin also found a deep well of devotional material. This is indicated, in the first place, by the important role played by the Old Testament in the various liturgies produced by Calvin. The book of Psalms was paramount here and, as we shall see, was especially significant in the experience of Calvin himself. He calls it, 'the anatomy of all the parts of the soul'.²⁷ The great

love of Calvin for the Psalms is embodied in his Genevan liturgy. He was instrumental in bringing about the production of the metrical translation of the Psalms in his native French.²⁸ In fact it was Calvin himself who began the work of translation, but recognizing that there were others with much greater poetical gifts - Calvin not being of a very poetic bent - he was eager to pass on the work to them.²⁹ There would, therefore, seem to be some justification for the statement made by one scholar that, 'Calvin taught the reformed Churches to sing.'³⁰

Already in 1537, during his first period in Geneva, Calvin, in his Articles on the Organization of the Church and its Worship at Geneva, had proposed that the Church's worship should include the congregational singing of Psalms.³¹ His aim, he states, is to give warmth and fervour to the prayers which were otherwise lukewarm.³² Calvin was well aware of the power of music and song to influence men's hearts, to stir their souls in praise and adoration, to move them to action and service and to strengthen their spirits in the face of opposition and persecution. Recognizing as well the evil potential of music, he intended to enlist this powerful force for good.³³ The best songs for this, he felt, were the Psalms since the Holy Spirit himself had composed them for this purpose; moreover, he wrote, 'we have the example of the ancient Church' and St. Paul himself.³⁴ Thus he could state that,

When we sing the Psalms we are certain that God is putting words in our mouth and they are singing in us to exalt his glory.³⁵

In the course of a worship service two Psalms would be sung;

the first immediately before the sermon and the second at the end of the service before the final blessing and dismissal.³⁶ In the final blessing itself the Old Testament was used, for the blessing pronounced by the minister was the Aaronic blessing drawn from Numbers 6.23-7. We might wonder why Calvin dismissed the people in this way, with a blessing drawn from the Old Testament. A glance at Calvin's comments on these verses in his Pentateuchal Harmony will, perhaps, explain his usage. On this passage Calvin writes,

... this rite was an efficacious testimony of God's grace, as if the priest bore from his own mouth the commandment to bless. But Luke shows that this was truly fulfilled in Christ, when he relates that, "He lifted up His hands," according to the solemn rite of the Law, to bless His disciples. In these words, then, the priests were appointed ambassadors to reconcile God to the people; and this in the person of Christ, who is the only sufficient surety of God's grace and blessing. Inasmuch, therefore, as they then were types of Christ, they were commanded to bless the people.³⁷

From these comments it is clear that this blessing, though drawn from the Old Testament, is for Calvin a truly Gospel blessing. Is it surprising, then, to find him using an Old Testament blessing such as this after a sermon in which the Gospel of Christ would be proclaimed? As Calvin himself puts it at the end of his comments on Numbers 6.23, '... hence we gather that they [the Priests] preached God's grace, which the people might apprehend by faith.'³⁸

Perhaps a more startling use of the Old Testament, in a liturgical context, is the place occupied by the decalogue in Calvin's Strasbourg liturgy. While pastor of the congregation of French refugees in Strasbourg during the period of his banishment from Geneva in the years 1538-41, Calvin had the opportunity and the time to produce a number

of documents reforming the Church's worship. It was during this time that he produced his Forme des Prieres, probably in 1539.³⁹ The use of the decalogue in this liturgy is rather innovative.

Following the Mediaeval tradition, all the Reformed Church leaders had retained the ten commandments in their orders of service. However, they were usually indifferent as to its place in the liturgical order. Bucer, under whose influence Calvin came whilst at Strasbourg, seems to have been the first of the Reformers seriously to reconsider where the decalogue properly belonged in the worship of the Reformed Churches. Eventually, Bucer used it as a kind of call to confession and inserted it early on in the order of service, before the prayer of confession. Bucer thus used the decalogue in a somewhat Lutheran way.⁴⁰

If the position and usage of the decalogue in Calvin's liturgy is compared with Bucer's, it will be seen to imply a very different conception of the use and place of the law. Calvin too placed it early on in the order of service. However the following table shows important differences over Bucer's order.⁴¹

Calvin	Bucer
Votum	Votum
Confession of Sin	Reading of Law
Words of Absolution	Confession of sin
Singing first four Commandments	Words of Absolution
Collect	
Singing remaining six Commandments	

It can be seen from the above that Calvin makes two important changes over Bucer's liturgy. Firstly, in Calvin's liturgy the whole congregation was to sing the law. A metrical translation of the decalogue was prepared for this purpose. Secondly, the law now occurs after the prayers of confession and the words of absolution not before as it had done in Bucer's liturgy. This repositioning of the law reflects Calvin's distinctive idea of the decalogue, which differs fundamentally from that of Luther. Calvin, in contrast to Luther held that the law was still normative for Christian behaviour.⁴² Bucer too held that the Law was still normative, but it would seem, at least in 1539, that he had not thought out the implications of this in the context of liturgy. Calvin, building on Bucer's liturgy, corrected this theological ambiguity. For him the Christian does not keep the law in order to make himself acceptable to God, but, on the contrary, he keeps it out of love and gratitude to the God who has already accepted him freely and graciously in Christ. Thus by keeping the law the Christian seeks to express his grateful obedience to God for his redemptive act in Christ. Keeping the law for Calvin is itself already an expression of worship.⁴³ Placing the decalogue after the prayer of confession and absolution, thus means that it now becomes a corporate act of praise and gratitude for the divine forgiveness, rather than a means of convincing of sin as it functioned in Bucer's liturgy. Moreover, the change from reading the decalogue to singing it was meant to provide an act of thanksgiving and dedication to the service of God in which the whole congregation could join.⁴⁴

It is clear, even from this brief survey which has by no means exhausted every sphere of Calvin's use of the Old Testament, that he was deeply engaged with it on all levels and made extensive use of it in every sphere of his activity as a Reformer and man of affairs. Not only did he use it in his professional capacity as a teacher, preacher and dogmatician, but he also drew great strength and comfort from it as an individual Christian and it thus played an important role in his own personal experience. What is the explanation for this? Perhaps his lecturing and preaching could be partly explained by reference to the constraints of his professional calling. However, this would by no means account for the depth of his engagement with the Old Testament and his wider usage of it. Moreover, it would be wrong to give the impression that Calvin was forced reluctantly into an involvement with the Old Testament as a preacher and teacher. Rather, we must turn primarily to Calvin's evaluation of the Old Testament if we are to understand his usage of it adequately.

Firstly, it must be noticed, that the Old Testament was particularly suited to Calvin's conception of theology. Because of the importance of this point it will be worthwhile, briefly, to outline the way in which Calvin conceived of theology and its purpose. For him theology was an intensely practical affair since it was concerned with the great questions of human meaning and destiny. Calvin never conceived nor wrote theology as a merely academic discipline. He was strongly averse to all forms of speculation and disdained knowledge for its own sake.⁴⁸ His

greatest work, the Institutes (Latin Institutio), as its name suggests, was intended to be a practical handbook to Christian faith and practice.⁴⁶ Calvin's conviction was that a right understanding of Christian teaching was necessary in order to lead a good Christian life. Sound theology was productive of sound living, whereas error or heresy would lead to immorality of various kinds. This practical orientation made him critical of the whole scholastic tradition of theology. Knowledge of God was not meant merely to be speculative, something that 'fluttered in the brain' as he put it, but was meant to result in a godly lifestyle and service to God and ones fellow creatures.⁴⁷

This practical orientation in Calvin's theology is brought out by his frequent use of the word 'doctrina'. By it he means not, as is frequently the case today, abstract statements of theological knowledge, but theological instruction that would result in godliness.⁴⁸ This emphasis in Calvin's use of the word 'doctrina' is further brought out in a most striking way in his Old Testament exegetical works, through his definition of the Hebrew word 'torah'. 'Torah' is often translated into English by the word 'law', but its semantic range is much broader than this. It can be translated 'direction', 'instruction' or even 'teaching'. Calvin seems to have picked up on this for, significantly, he defines the word 'torah' in terms of the Latin word 'doctrina'. Commenting on Isaiah 2.3 he writes,

He calls it 'the Law', but we have spoken elsewhere concerning the etymology of this word. For 'torah' means doctrine (doctrina), which is most perfectly contained in the Law.⁴⁹

Even more clear are his comments on Micah 4.2, '... for the

Law (torah) shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' Calvin understands the second clause as 'a repetition of the same idea' and so concludes that,

By 'torah', then, the Prophet means nothing else than doctrine.⁵⁰

It is this 'doctrina' that Calvin seeks to bring out in his exegesis of the Old Testament. Contrary to what we may expect, this 'doctrina' is found not only in those parts of Scripture which are often thought of as being 'doctrinal', but is found throughout the Old Testament as a whole. In fact 'doctrina' is to be found in two forms in the Old Testament. This is brought out clearly in the preface to Calvin's Harmony of the Last Four Books of Moses.

Here, Calvin divides the contents of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy into two broad categories; 'historia' and 'doctrina'. By 'historia' Calvin means the stories and historical narratives contained in these books, 'doctrina' refers to the remainder, that is, the non-narrative parts.⁵¹ This basic distinction Calvin could equally well have applied to the Old Testament in its entirety and, indeed, the Bible as a whole. For it sums up his approach to the rest of the Old Testament. 'Historia' and 'doctrina' are the fundamental elements of all Scripture as Calvin sees it.⁵²

However, by 'historia' in this context, Calvin is, in fact, only thinking of 'doctrina' in another form. This is clear from the Harmony Preface itself.⁵³ It is also made clear by Calvin when, commenting on Romans 4.23, he writes,

If, therefore, we would make a right and proper use of the sacred histories, we must remember that we ought to use them in such a way as to draw from them the fruit of sound

doctrine. They instruct us how to form our life, how to strengthen our faith, and how we are to arouse the fear of the Lord.⁵⁴

Thus, for Calvin 'historia' does not simply mean the knowledge of what has happened or what God has done in the past. 'Historia' is only useful in so far as it is a means of conveying 'doctrina'. Calvin is thus not interested in history for its own sake. It is a means to this other end. That is, to conveying 'doctrina', which, as we have seen, is to be understood as instruction in godliness and Christian living. In fact, in the same passage from his Romans Commentary as that quoted above, Calvin calls history, 'the instructress of life'.

We are reminded in this passage of the duty of seeking profit from scriptural examples. The pagan writers have truly said that history is the teacher of life (*historiam esse vitae magistram*), but there is no one who makes sound progress in it as it is handed down to us by them.

So much for pagan history; it fails because 'no one makes sound progress in it'. But the history contained in Scripture is very different. Calvin continues,

Scripture alone lays claim to an office of this kind. In the first place it prescribes general rules by which we may test all other history, so as to make it serve our advantage. In the second place it clearly distinguishes what actions we ought to follow, and what to avoid.⁵⁵

This is important for it combines the two categories that we have seen Calvin finds in Scripture; 'historia' and 'doctrina'. The pagans, though they knew full well the utility of history for regulating conduct, did not profit from it. This was because they had no 'rules by which we may test all other history', that is, they had no 'doctrina'. Only 'doctrina', which is given in Scripture alongside the 'historia', can help us distinguish between the good and bad examples that history affords us, thus enabling us to know

'what actions we ought to follow and what to avoid'. In other words, 'historia', since its ultimate value lies in its ability to convey 'doctrina', is to be held subordinate to 'doctrina' in the proper sense. Applied to Scripture this will mean that the 'historia' of Scripture can only be correctly understood and judged in the light of its didactic passages. Only in so far as we are imbued with correct teaching or 'doctrina' can we 'make' the historical or narrative passages of Scripture 'serve our advantage'. Sound 'doctrina' can only be drawn from the 'historia' of the Old Testament if we are well instructed in 'doctrina' in the first place. History by itself, without doctrina, even Scripture history, can be misleading, since we have no criteria for judging right and wrong, true and false. However, once we have correct 'doctrina' we can understand the histories contained in Scripture aright and draw the correct 'doctrina' from them.

In fact it was primarily for this purpose that Calvin wrote the second (1539) and subsequent editions of his Institutes. He himself states his aim in writing the Institutes in the following words drawn from the notice to the reader,

Moreover, it has been my purpose in this labour to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling. For I believe I have so embraced the sum of religion in all of its parts, and have arranged it in such an order that if anyone rightly grasps it, it will not be difficult for him to determine what he ought especially to seek in Scripture, and to what he ought to relate its contents.⁸⁴

This notice was first included in the 2nd. (1539) edition and remained in all subsequent editions. In the preface to the French edition of 1560, Calvin adds, concerning the

usefulness of the Institution, as it is called in French, that,

It can be a key to open a way for the children of God unto a good and right understanding of Holy Scripture.⁵⁷

Hence it is the 'doctrina' of the Old Testament that Calvin seeks to draw out in his expositions. This is found primarily in the didactic passages of the Old Testament such as the Law, especially the decalogue, and the Prophets, who, in Calvin's understanding, added nothing to the Law, but were interpreters of it.⁵⁸ However, in the historical or narrative passages of Holy Scripture too we are to seek this 'doctrina', in fact, the function of Old Testament narrative is to convey 'doctrina' to us. Similar ideas are expressed in a sermon on Deuteronomy 1.3-8. Commenting on verse 5, which Calvin translated, 'Moses began to expound (French, exposer) the Law', Calvin, first of all, defines the term 'Law' here as meaning 'teaching and instruction (doctrine et instructione)', but then he points out that Moses goes on to 'narrate histories (raconte des histoires)'. He then meets the objection of an imaginary interlocutor who asks, '... what instruction there is in the narrating of histories'? He replies by recounting the value of Scriptural history by giving a list of the doctrines that can be derived from parts of it. At the end of this list he concludes,

We see, then, that it is not without cause that Moses calls the recital of past events Law or doctrine, because the people by means of it ought to have been led to God, and to have been edified all the more. Thus, let us note, when we read the sacred histories (les histoires saintes), that it is not merely so that we may know what has happened, in order that we may chatter about it, rather in them we should gaze on the grace of God towards his faithful, when he delivered them ...⁵⁹

Calvin, then, turned to the Old Testament as a source of 'doctrina', instruction in godliness, which includes not only

how to live the Christian life, but the knowledge of God's ways of dealing with men in judgment, grace and mercy.

As we shall see this in no way implies that the narrative and historical parts of Scripture are not taken seriously as such by Calvin. Rather, it gives us an insight into the fact that for Calvin history, and especially that contained in Scripture, has as its goal an edifying purpose. This is important in helping us to understand why Calvin found the Old Testament so congenial. The the goal of his theology too was to edify by conveying 'doctrina', and he recognized the value of history and stories to convey this 'doctrina'. It was in this way that God had chosen to reveal himself, especially in the Old Testament. There is two way traffic here. Not only did Calvin find 'doctrina' in the 'historia' of the Old Testament, but the 'historia' itself provided him with a vehicle for conveying 'doctrina' in a way that was vivid and concrete. The bare bones of 'doctrina' are given flesh by 'historia'. Hence the 'historia' found in the Old Testament provided Calvin with a vivid means of conveying his 'doctrina' to his auditors. Writing on 1 Corinthians 10.11, Calvin has this to say about the power of Old Testament narratives to convey theological truths,

He again repeats that all these things happened to the Israelites so that they may be 'types' to us, in other words examples by which God sets His judgments before our eyes. I know very well that others make more ingenious theories about these words, but I think that I have grasped what was in the apostle's mind when I say that these examples bring home to us, as if they were pictures painted by an artist, what sort of judgment threatens idolaters, fornicators, and others who despise God; for these are living pictures revealing God to us in his anger with sins like those.⁶⁰

Thus we see that Calvin's engagement with the Old Testament

is to be explained not merely by reference to the constraints of his professional calling. Rather, his commitment to the Old Testament can be seen as arising out of his concept of theology itself and his aims as a teacher of theology.

The 'Mirror' Image

This power of Old Testament history to convey 'doctrina' is brought out very clearly in an image, frequently used by Calvin throughout his writings, the image of a 'mirror'. The same image will also bring us to consider the way in which Calvin applies the Old Testament to his own time and situation.

The frequency and variety with which Calvin uses this image would tend to indicate its importance to him. Both the Latin word 'speculum' and its French equivalent 'miroir' mean 'a looking glass' or 'mirror'. Both terms are used very frequently by Calvin both in his sermons and commentaries as well as in the Institutes. The image is used in such a great variety of contexts and the scope of Calvin's usage of the word is so wide that it is difficult to pin down any one overarching idea. However, broadly speaking, it would seem that the 'mirror' theme is related to Calvin's doctrine of accommodation, a doctrine to which we shall give detailed consideration later on in this study. For the moment, however, it will be sufficient to point out the basic concepts behind Calvin's usage of this image in so far as it relates to his idea of accommodation.

These are summed up very well in a short - two page - article by W. F. Keesecker entitled 'John Calvin's Mirror' which deals with the mirror theme in the Institutes. Keesecker

writes,

Calvin did not believe that man with his narrow human capacity could understand the Infinite. With Paul he held that, "We know in part and we prophesy in part ... and see through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13: 9,12). Yet Calvin did hold that man is able to catch fleeting glimpses of the Eternal in indirect ways. These glimpses are similar to the image one sees when looking into a mirror.⁴¹

Here we have, in essence, Calvin's doctrine of accommodation. Calvin gives full weight to the theological dictum finitum non capax infiniti. Man, with his finite capacity can never hope to comprehend God whose essence is infinite. Man can only know God in so far as God himself 'stoops down' to man's level or capacity. This God does in the historical events recorded in Scripture.⁴²

With reference to the Old Testament it means that the acts of God recorded there, the institutions found there, and indeed the whole Old Testament economy, were acts of divine accommodation. God reveals himself not as he is in himself; man can never hope to know the essence of God, but as he is towards us.⁴³ This helps to explain Calvin's usage of the 'mirror' image here. On the one hand, God's works are a 'mirror' of what he himself is. On the other, his dealings with the nation of Israel and the other nations as well as his dealings with the great men of faith in the Old Testament are a mirror of his dealings with mankind in all ages. It is with this latter sense that we are most concerned.

There is, however, another sense in which the Old Testament acts as a mirror for us. It is not only the divine acts as recorded in the Old Testament which act as a mirror for us, but in Calvin's Old Testament exegetical work human acts too

function in this way. Calvin uses the term very frequently in both these ways. Thus, the term provides us with a useful means of exploring Calvin's appreciation of the Old Testament's relevance and his application of it to his contemporary situation.

For ease of treatment we will explore Calvin's usage of the mirror image with reference to the Old Testament in three major areas: (1). The Old Testament as a mirror of the Church. (2). The Old Testament as a mirror of the individual Christian. And (3). The Old Testament as a mirror of the Secular or Political realm.

2. The Old Testament as a Mirror of the Church.

As we have seen, Calvin's Old Testament exegetical work falls into three main categories: Commentaries, Lectures and Sermons. Each of these were, originally, directed towards different audiences. This factor influences the way that Calvin applies the Old Testament text since he always seeks to apply it to the needs of his audience. His commentaries, for example, were written for the Church universal. Thus the applications are fewer and tend to be very generalized.⁶⁴ The lectures were delivered to those training for pastoral ministry or those with some experience of it and who had fled to Geneva for refuge and edification. In the Lectures, therefore, we tend to find more application, much of it relevant to the pastoral office, and more frequent allusions to contemporary events of the Reformation in Europe.⁶⁵ In the Sermons, which were addressed almost exclusively to the Church in Geneva with no thought of their wider circulation, the application is of a more personal kind and there are more frequent allusions to events within Geneva itself than to the international situation.⁶⁶ That is not to say that the Sermons do not address issues which concerned the Church at large.

As an introduction to Calvin's use of the Old Testament as a mirror of the Church, it will be helpful, first of all, to say something about his doctrine of the Church itself.

Calvin as is well known, following Luther, distinguished between the visible and the invisible Church. The visible

Church is comprised of all those who make an outward profession, whether genuine or not, of faith in Christ and who, consequently, adhere to the Church. Thus the visible Church encompasses within itself both true and false believers, both the elect and the non-elect. The invisible Church, on the other hand, comprises the totality of the elect in all ages. In other words, the invisible Church is made up of all those who are true believers in Christ, who make not only an outward profession of faith, but have a genuine faith inwardly. It is invisible because no human has the ability to distinguish infallibly between true and false professors. It is known only to God. The invisible Church thus coincides with the body of Christ. Needless to say, it is the invisible Church which is the true Church.⁴⁷

In view of the fact that the true Church comprises the totality of the elect in all ages, Calvin speaks of the Church in the Old Testament, as we find him doing throughout his Old Testament Commentaries. From as early as the time of Adam Calvin can speak of the existence of the Church. It would seem that he thought of the Church as first originating immediately after the fall of man.⁴⁸ The Church continues in the elect line traced in Genesis, through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then through the Nation of Israel itself. In the Old Testament too, Calvin distinguishes between the visible and the invisible Church. Not all of the descendants of Abraham and Isaac, for instance, were members of the true/invisible Church, though they belonged to the visible Church. Nevertheless, those Old Testament fathers who were elect are as much a part of the body of Christ and

thus of the true Church, as are believers in the New Testament.⁶⁹ Thus, Calvin's doctrine of election unites the Church in all ages.

In addition, there are two more factors which not only unite the Church of the Old Testament and the New, but which allow the Old Testament Church to be a 'mirror' for the Church in his own day. In the first place, there is God's immutability which ensures that his dealings with man and the Church are always the same. Secondly, there is the fact that God has never been gracious towards man outside of Christ. The first of these two points is brought out in Calvin's commentary on 1 Corinthians 10.11. There he writes,

Besides this sentence of Paul's conflicts with the popular idea that God was more unyielding under the Old Covenant, and was always equipped and ready to punish offences, but that now He he has begun to be easy to move, and much more willing to excuse us. And, in similar vein, they make out that we are under a law of grace, because we have a God who is much more easily appeased than the men of old found Him. But what is Paul actually saying? If God inflicted punishments, no more will He let us off with anything. No more, then, of the mistaken view, that God is now more lax about punishing sins!⁷⁰

The second point is summed up by Calvin when, in Institutes II.vi.2, he writes,

From this it is now clear enough that, since God cannot without a mediator be propitious toward the human race, under the law Christ was always set before the holy fathers as the end to which they should direct their faith.⁷¹

We shall have occasion to draw out this second point at greater length in a later chapter. For the moment though, it is enough to note that Calvin can unite the Church of the Old Testament with that of the New because they were already united in Christ, the one head of the Church in all ages.⁷²

Thus it is that Calvin can speak of God's dealings with his people in the Old Testament as a 'mirror' of his dealings with the Church of his own day. The condition of the Old Testament Church 'mirrors' that of the Church in his own day. Hence, Commenting on Zechariah 1.18-21, Calvin writes,

Although the Prophet wished to encourage and animate his own nation to patience by this prophecy, as the Spirit of God had given him these tasks, yet here, as in a mirror (quasi in speculo), God also shows us what the condition of the Church is today.⁷³

Then after lengthy applications and encouragements to the Church of his day Calvin continues,

We see, then, that this prophecy was useful not only to Zechariah's era, but moreover to all ages, nor ought it to be restricted to the ancient people, it should be applied to the whole body of the Church.⁷⁴

In a remarkable passage in the dedicatory epistle to the Commentary on Genesis Calvin clearly sets this out for us.

Indeed, in it Calvin's entire interpretation of the book of Genesis is set under the theme of the Old Testament as a mirror of the Church. The 'Church' of God, as it is traced through the lineage of Noah's and especially Abraham's descendants, becomes a mirror of the Church in Calvin's own day and God's care over it. He writes,

We see how vehemently the Papists alarm the simple by their false claim of the title of The Church. Moses so delineates the genuine features of the Church as to take away this absurd fear, by dissipating these illusions. It is by an ostentatious display of splendour and of pomp that they carry away the less informed to a foolish admiration of themselves, and even render them stupid and infatuated. But if we turn our eyes to those marks by which Moses designates the Church, these vain phantoms will have no more power to deceive.⁷⁵

Later in the same passage we read,

... it is now enough for me briefly to apprise my pious readers how well it would repay their labour, if they would learn prudently to apply to their own use the example of the Ancient Church, as it is described by Moses. And, in fact, God has associated us with the holy Patriarchs in the hope of the same inheritance, in order

that we, disregarding the distance of time which separates us from them, may, in the mutual agreement of faith and patience, endure the same conflicts.⁷⁶

In the Argumentum to his Commentary on Genesis, Calvin tells us that, 'The end to which the whole scope of the history tends is to this point, that the human race has been preserved by God in such a manner as to manifest his special care for his Church.'⁷⁷ He closes the Argumentum with the following words,

Here [in the book of Genesis], in fact, the characteristic (*propria*) trials of the Church present themselves to view, or rather, the race track is set as in a mirror before our eyes (*imo tanquam in speculo nobis stadium ob oculos statuitur*), on which we, with the holy fathers, must struggle to the goal of blessed immortality.⁷⁸

It is this emphasis upon the Old Testament as a mirror of the Church which is predominant in Calvin's Old Testament exegetical works. This is not surprising when we consider the background against which Calvin's work as a reformer was carried out. Throughout his ministry Calvin had to battle on a number of different fronts. First, and most serious from the point of view of the Protestant Reformation, was the resurgence of Catholicism in the so called Counter Reformation. This threatened the very survival of the Protestant Church.⁷⁹ But the Reformed Church was troubled not only from without but also from within. Calvin, in his situation, was particularly troubled by various factions and individuals at Geneva. Among the most troublesome with whom he had to deal were the Libertines, who resented his leadership and his strong emphasis on the control of morals. Others, such as Bolsec and Castellio, objected to his doctrine.⁸⁰ Apart from such outright opposition Calvin also had to contend with the city councils and indeed the Genevan citizens themselves who at different

times were influenced against him by his opponents. Calvin was far from being the dictatorial ruler of Geneva that he is often portrayed as.⁸¹

It was such internal struggles as these which resulted in Calvin's banishment from Geneva in 1538, but even after his return in 1541 they continued, just as fiercely, so that on a number of occasions Calvin was ready to leave. His eventual triumph came in 1555, some 14 years later.⁸² All this helped to shape his exegesis of the Old Testament and his application of it to his own situation.

Throughout his lifetime Calvin saw himself as involved in a struggle for the establishment and maintenance of what he considered the 'true Church'. This struggle he saw as being prophetic in nature. Thus he associates himself in it with the Prophets of the Old Testament and identifies his struggle with theirs. As they stood out often alone, faithful above all else to God, bearers of his message, their one task, whatever the cost, being to deliver his word, whether it be against the establishment and the ruling class or against false teachers and prophets, so Calvin saw his own calling and task.

This is brought out very clearly in a passage from Calvin's Reply to Cardinal Sadolet's Letter to the Senate and People of Geneva. In 1539, during Calvin's banishment, Cardinal James Sadolet wrote a long letter to the 'Senate and People of Geneva' in an attempt to turn them from the Reformation and bring them back to Rome. Calvin's reply has been called

the most able defence of the Reformation ever written.⁸³ Sadolet had drawn on the image of a court room scene, placing a Catholic and a Protestant in the dock to give an account of their religion before God the Judge. It is unnecessary to say which of the two was acquitted in Sadolet's mock trial! One of the 'charges' brought against the Protestant was that he had forsaken the true Church in breaking with the Roman communion. In a magnificent passage which plays on Sadolet's courtroom image, Calvin answers the charge by representing the Protestant defendant - really himself? - pleading in his own defence the examples of God's Prophets. He writes,

As to the charge of forsaking the Church, which they were wont to bring against me, there is nothing of which my conscience accuses me, unless, indeed, he is to be considered a deserter, who, seeing the soldiers routed and scattered, and abandoning the ranks, raises the leader's standard, and recalls them to their posts. ... I had before my eyes the examples of thy prophets, who I saw had a similar contest with the priests and prophets of their own day, though these were undoubtedly the rulers of the Church among the Israelitish people. But thy prophets are not regarded as schismatics, because when they wished to revive religion which had fallen into decay, they desisted not, although opposed with the utmost violence. They still remained in the unity of the Church, though they were doomed to perdition by wicked priests, and deemed unworthy of a place among men, not to say saints. Confirmed by their example, I too persisted. Though denounced as a deserter of the Church, and threatened, I was in no respect deterred, or induced to proceed less firmly and boldly in opposing those who, in the character of pastors, wasted thy Church with a more than impious tyranny.⁸⁴

This passage, not drawn from one of Calvin's Old Testament commentaries or sermons, shows us how profound his self identification with the figures of the Old Testament could be. Perhaps even more remarkable is a passage drawn from his Sermons on the Last Eight Chapters of the Book of Daniel, in which Calvin says,

Now if anyone objects that I am not the prophet Jeremiah,

I agree! However, I bear the selfsame word (ie porte une mesme parole) that he proclaimed, moreover, I swear before God that I serve it faithfully according to the measure of his Spirit which he has given me. Those who disparage this word, and who truly blaspheme against God, let them say what they will ...^{es}

This self identification with the Old Testament Prophets is shown also in the way in which he draws upon other themes from their 'reforming' work as we shall go on to see.

In face of the threat from the resurgence and militancy of Catholicism the overwhelming note in Calvin's commentaries is on the smallness and weakness of the true Church in an hostile world. The Church's being kept and maintained by a sovereign and almighty God is also a prominent theme. This keeping assures its eventual triumph over its enemies. These ideas Calvin found reflected in the mirror of the Old Testament.

The smallness of the true Church and its helplessness in face of its foes is never far from Calvin's mind. In this respect Isaac, who in Calvin's exegesis represents the true Church, over against Ishmael, who represents the false, is a mirror of the Church in all ages,

Now, therefore, in Isaac we have to contemplate, as in a mirror (comme en un mirror), the condition of the Church of God, how it begins, how God upholds and multiplies it. ... the house of Abraham was at that time the only true Church in the world ...^{es}

But what do we find in the case of Isaac? Isaac, was the child of promise, he was elect, while Ishmael was 'reprobate', being cut off from the Church, yet Isaac goes childless, but Ishmael has numerous offspring. This, Calvin says mirrors the situation of the Church in his own day.

For while the children of this world cut a fine figure and

and one sees them increase rapidly, the Church is hidden in obscurity. One sees the earth full of unbelievers, despisers of God and profane people, but where can one find the faithful? They are very thinly scattered, one would hardly notice them. They are despised, trampled under foot, hence people imagine that God cares nothing for his Church, but that on the contrary, he is pleased with triumphs of the wicked and their pompous parades and shows. Now this is shown us in the persons of Isaac and Ishmael ... Now this doctrine is very necessary for us today. For how does God work in our time? When he decided to restore his Gospel once again where did he begin? What nations did he call? 87

Calvin, it would seem, appears to have been acutely conscious of this question of the smallness of the true Church. It is its smallness that becomes the chief target for the Church's enemies' attacks. This was true of the elect people in the Old Testament, it was true of them, Calvin believed, in his own day.

It is once again in the Prophets that Calvin finds particular help and comfort against this attack on the smallness of the Church frequently made by the Roman Catholics. The Prophets themselves had to face the same jibe from their fellow countrymen in their own day. Again, it is with the Prophets that Calvin particularly identifies himself. In his commentary on Joel he writes,

We see, at this day, how dishonest is the boasting of the Papists; for they think that the Church of God dwells among them, and they scorn us because we are few. When we say that the Church of God is to be known by the word and the pure administration of the sacraments, "Indeed", they say, "could God have forsaken so many people among whom the gospel has been preached?" ... Since the Papists so shamefully lay claim to the name of Church, because they are many in number, it is no wonder that the Prophet, who had the same contest with the Jews and Israelites, had here expressly mentioned a remnant ... 88

Here Calvin, as elsewhere⁸⁹, appeals to the prophetic idea of the remnant in order to rebut the claims of the Roman Catholic Church that theirs was the true Church because of

its size and antiquity.

Thus it was that in the Prophets of the Old Testament that Calvin found companions and compatriots in his struggles for the true Church. He clearly felt that the Prophets were on his side in the battle and that his battle was essentially the same as theirs. One of the greatest obstacles faced by the prophetic reformers in the Old Testament was the complacency of the people. The people rested in their possession of the Temple, the Land, the Covenant and other outward forms, yet lacked all true inward religion. The Prophets could not bring the Jews to see that they were under the judgment of God. They refused to accept the idea that God could be angry with them and rescind the covenant. Their religious leaders reproached the Prophets for daring to express such an idea. In their false security they boasted in their possession of the Temple and the promises. So the people were hardened against the message of the Prophets and refused to acknowledge their error and guilt. Calvin saw reflected in all of this the Church of his day and frequently alludes to it in his Old Testament exegesis.☞

This boasting in the outward forms of the Church, whilst lacking its inner reality, Calvin applied to the Catholic Church in his day. In fact Calvin felt that he found there an exact parallel. In the Institutes we find the following,

The Romanists, therefore, today make no other pretension than what the Jews once apparently claimed when they were reproved for blindness, ungodliness, and idolatry by the Lord's prophets. For like the Romanists, they boasted gloriously of Temple, ceremonies, and priestly functions, and measured the church very convincingly, as it seemed

to them, by these. So in place of the church the Romanists display certain outward appearances which are often far removed from the church and without which the church can very well stand. Accordingly, we are to refute them by the very argument with which Jeremiah combatted the stupid confidence of the Jews. That is, 'Let them not boast in lying words, saying, "This is the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord"' [Jer. 7.4]. For the Lord nowhere recognizes any Temple as his save where his word is heard and scrupulously observed. ¶¹

The Papal claim to infallibility is likened to the objection that the Jews raised against Jeremiah, 'The Law shall not depart from the priests nor counsel and wisdom from the elders'. Referring to this text in his Lectures on the Prophecy of Malachi, Calvin says,

These are the weapons by which the Papists at this day defend themselves. When we allege against them plain proofs from Scripture, they find themselves clearly reprov'd and convicted by God's word; but here is their Ajax's shield, under which they hide all wickedness, retailing as it were from the ungodly and wicked priests what is related by Jeremiah, "The Law shall not depart from the priests;" we are the Church, can it err? is not the Holy Spirit dwelling in the midst of us? ¶²

And, in his commentary on Jeremiah 18.18 itself, he writes,

This reason, which they added, shews whence that security [arose], through which they did not hesitate to reject the words of the prophet: there were priests and prophets who occupied a place in the Church, and who boasted in their titles, though they were nothing but mere masks, having no care to possess what their calling required. ... This is seen most clearly under the Papacy. For doubtless when all things are well examined, we find that the Pope and all his party mainly rely on these weapons; for when they are a hundred times conquered by proofs from Scripture, they still strenuously defend themselves with this one shield, - That the Church cannot err, that the Church is represented by the Pope ... ¶³

The opposition of the spurious Church to the true is often, in the Old Testament, concentrated in a single individual. Calvin notes this in his commentary on Amos 7. In Calvin's hands the priest of Bethel, Amaziah, becomes a picture of the worldly opposition of the 'Papal Priests' to reform in

his own day. As Amaziah 'stirred up Jeroboam' against Amos so 'Kings are in our day stirred on in like manner.' The 'Papists' are such 'stirrers'. They exhort and constrain kings and rulers to take up the sword against the Reformation Churches. Calvin pictures them as speaking,

'Why do you delay? Your subjects desire nothing so much as to extinguish this evil, and all of them will eagerly assist you: you are in the meantime idle and the people complain of your tardiness. They think the princes in power are unworthy of their station, since they thus suffer the ancient rites and ordinances of holy Mother Church to fall into decay.' So they speak: and we may imagine the words of Amaziah to have been in the same strain ...⁷⁴

Amaziah's words, 'Never again prophesy in Bethel for it is the King's sanctuary ...', are to Calvin a perfect paradigm of what the Papacy in his own day were saying.

Amaziah wished here to prove by the king's authority that the received worship at Bethel was legitimate. How so? 'The king has established it; it is not then lawful for anyone to say a word to the contrary; the king could do this by his own right; for his majesty is sacred.' We see the object in view. And how many are there at this day under the Papacy, who accumulate on kings all the authority and power they can, in order that no dispute may be made about religion; but power is to be vested in one king to determine according to his own will whatever he pleases, and this is to remain fixed without any dispute.⁷⁵

Amaziah sought to silence the word of God by claiming that Bethel was the 'King's sanctuary', so, Calvin thought, do the Catholics. He continues by making an historical allusion to a specific figure involved in the struggle of the Reformation outside of his own sphere, something which is rare in his Old Testament exegetical works.

They who at first extolled Henry, King of England, were certainly inconsiderate men; they gave him the supreme power in all things: and this always vexed me grievously; for they were guilty of blasphemy when they called him the chief Head of the Church under Christ (summum caput ecclesiae sub Christo). ... But when that imposter, who afterwards became the chancellor of that Proserpina, who at this day surpasses all devils in that kingdom - when he was at Ratisbon, he contended not by using any reasons, (I

speaking of the last chancellor, who was the Bishop of Winchester) and as I have just said, he cared not much about the testimonies of Scripture, but said that it was in the power of the king to abrogate statutes and to institute new rites ... How so? Because supreme power is vested in the king. The same was the gloss of this Amaziah of whom the prophet now speaks.⁹⁶

It is interesting to note in this passage how he moves directly from the 8th. Century B.C. to the 16th. Century A.D., making the leap across some 2,200 years. This shows how vividly he saw the events of his own day reflected in the 'mirror' of the Old Testament. As Karl Barth put it, writing with reference to Calvin's New Testament commentaries, 'How energetically Calvin, having first established what stands in the text, sets himself to re-think the whole material and to wrestle with it, till the walls which separate the sixteenth century from the first become transparent! Paul speaks, and the man of the sixteenth century hears.'⁹⁷ We might as well add, in place of 'Paul', Amos, Isaiah or any of the other Old Testament writers.

Although Calvin felt an affinity with all of the Old Testament Prophets, it is clear from his lectures that he felt that there existed a special affinity between his own times and those of the Post-exilic Prophets. These Prophets and the task they had to face, with the condition of the returned exiles: their small numbers, their lack of resources and the number of their enemies, Calvin felt, 'mirrored' most perfectly the Reformed Churches and the progress of the Reformation.

Thus it was particularly in the post-exilic Prophets that

Calvin found comfort for the present state of the Church. He found and drew many parallels between the state of the people of God after the return from exile and the condition of the Church in his own day. The Gospel of free grace had been rediscovered, it was making progress, but how slowly and feebly! The Church had been delivered from the bondage of Catholicism. It had been in a state of total ruin, now it was being rebuilt, but with great opposition from its enemies and with great sluggishness on the part of the 'returnees'. This is 'mirrored' in the post-exilic community in the Old Testament. Therefore, speaking on Zechariah 4.11-14, Calvin could say, 'Indeed the state of things in our time is nearly the same with that of his time',[¶] he then goes on to give an account of the progress of reform, comparing it with the progress of the post-exilic Church.

For Christ now renews by the power of his Spirit that spiritual temple which had been pulled down and wholly demolished; for what has been the dignity of the Church for many ages? Doubtless it has been for a long time in a dilapidated state; and now when God begins to give some hope of a new building, Satan collects together many forces from all parts to prevent the progress of the work. We are also tender and soft, and even faint hearted, so that hardly one in a hundred labours so courageously as he ought.^{¶¶}

As to the smallness of the Reformed Church and the slowness of the spread of the Gospel, in answer to doubters, Calvin asks with Zechariah, 'Who has despised the day of small things?' He comments,

This doctrine may be also applied to us: for God, to exhibit the more of his power, begins with small things in building his spiritual temple; nothing grand is seen which attracts the eyes and thoughts of men, but everything is almost contemptible. ... The same thing has also been accomplished in our age, and continues still at this day to be accomplished. If we consider what is and has been the beginning of the growing gospel, we shall find nothing illustrious according to the perceptions of the flesh; and on this account the adversaries confidently despise us; they regard us as off-scourings of men, and hope to be

able to cast us down and scatter us by a single breath.

There are many at this day who despise the day of paucity, who grow faint in their minds, or even deride our efforts, as though our labour were ridiculous, when they see us sedulously engaged in promoting the truth of the gospel; and we ourselves are also touched with this feeling: there is no one who becomes not sometimes frigid, when he sees the beginning of the church so mean before the world and so destitute of any dignity.¹⁰⁰

Like the post-exilic community under the leadership of Ezra, Nehemiah and the Prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the Reformed Church is beset on every side by enemies whose one aim seems to be to prevent the rebuilding of the 'Temple'. This opposition comes mostly from the spurious Church, the 'Samaritans', who for Calvin parallel the Catholics. However, the world too opposes the Church, hating anything of God and godliness. By the world the Church is despised and trodden under foot, it is reckoned of no account and is therefore persecuted.¹⁰¹

Why does God, who is sovereign over all, allow this? The condition of the Church in the world constitutes a stumbling block to faith and provides a powerful weapon to the Church's enemies.¹⁰² It is a mystery, why God thus allows his Church to be subject to the ungodly or to secular powers to be troubled and persecuted by them. Jacob's prostrating himself before his brother Esau is, in this respect, a mirror of the condition of the Church in the world. Jacob, of course, is elect and therefore the true Church, while Esau is reprobate and therefore excluded from the Church,

Moreover, the Holy Spirit here places a mirror before us, in which we may contemplate the state of the Church as it appears in the world. For though many tokens of the divine favour are manifest in the family of Jacob; nevertheless we perceive no dignity in him while lying with unmerited contempt in the presence of a profane man. ... Therefore let us bear it patiently, if at this day also, the glory

of the Church, being covered with a sordid veil, is an object of derision to the wicked.¹⁰³

In spite of all the Church's enemies its eventual triumph and victory is secured. Nothing can harm the elect of God, since God, the almighty, watches over and protects them. According to Isaiah 49.7, 'The Holy one of Israel is faithful'. This was said by Isaiah to comfort the faithful of his day in Israel, that is, the Church in the Old Testament. Calvin, however, applies it directly to the Church of his own day.

Hence also it ought to be observed, how splendid and astonishing a work of God is the deliverance of the Church, which compels kings, though proud, and deeming hardly anything so valuable as to be worthy of their notice, to behold, admire, and be amazed, and even in spite of themselves to reverence the Lord. This strange and extraordinary work, therefore, is highly commended to us. How great and how excellent it is, we may learn from ourselves; for to say nothing about ancient histories, in what manner have we been redeemed from the wicked tyranny of Antichrist? Truly we shall consider it to be 'a dream' as the Psalmist says, (Ps. 126.1) if we ponder it carefully for a short time; so strange and incredible is the work which God hath performed in us who have possessed the name of Christ.¹⁰⁴

This 'splendid and astonishing', 'strange and incredible' way in which God often delivers his Church in 'unexpected ways', is, for Calvin, illustrated time and time again in the Old Testament. The pages of which reflect, 'as in a mirror', the way God delivers his Church in all ages. Thus, commenting on Isaiah 10.26 he writes,

By means and in ways that are unexpected he often delivers his Church, as he did by the hands of Gideon and Moses. We ought always, therefore, to call to remembrance those benefits, that we might be excited more and more to confidence and perseverance.¹⁰⁵

Indeed, all the sufferings and difficulties that afflict the Church come ultimately from the hand of a loving father - God - who intends them for her good. This was true of Israel in the Old Testament. God employed other nations, such as

the Assyrians and the Babylonians, to carry out his disciplinary purposes with his people. The wicked are merely God's instruments. This discipline was an expression of God's love and care for the nation. It was not so much punitive as corrective, intended to turn the nation from its unfaithfulness back to God. God has not changed and so God's discipline of Israel is a mirror for the Church in Calvin's time. In the same passage from that just quoted (Isa. 10.26) Calvin goes on to write,

Hence we ought also to infer that all the afflictions which we endure are the Lord's rods with which he chastises us; and yet he does not permit Satan or his agents to inflict deadly chastisements upon us.¹⁰⁶

Because the Church was in the hands of a sovereign God, Calvin was confident that, in spite of how things may appear to the natural eye, the enemies of God's Church will be destroyed and their works confounded and brought to nothing. Such was God's promise to Israel of old, if they remained faithful to God, and the same promise, Calvin believed, applied to the Church of his own day.¹⁰⁷ Sometimes the Church's enemies, as we can see from the Old Testament, are brought to account in the present life. The Old Testament in this too is a mirror of the Church of his own day. Hence, in a remarkable section of his commentary on Isa. 22.17, Calvin holds up the example of Shebna, Hezekiah's secretary or treasurer. Isaiah denounced Shebna for preparing himself a splendid tomb hewn out of rock to serve as a monument to his fame after his death. Calvin feels that the prophecy of Isaiah against Shebna also finds fulfilment in one of the great enemies of the Reformation.

Whenever I read this passage, I am forcibly reminded of a similar instance, resembling it indeed more closely than any other, that of Thomas More, who held the same office

as Shebna; for it is well known that he was Lord Chancellor to the king of England. Having been a very bitter enemy of the gospel, and having persecuted good men by fire and sword, he wished that on this account his reputation should be extensive, and his wickedness and cruelty permanently recorded. He therefore ordered the praises of his virtue to be inscribed on a tomb which he had caused to be built with great cost and splendour, and sent his epitaph, which he had drawn up, to Basle, to Erasmus, along with a palfrey which he gave him as a present, to get it printed. He was so desirous of renown, that he wished to obtain during his life the reputation and praises which he hoped to enjoy after his death. ... What happened? He was accused of treason, condemned, and beheaded; and thus he had a gibbet for his tomb. Do we ask more manifest judgments of God, by which he punishes the pride, the unbounded eagerness for renown, and the blasphemous vaunting, of wicked men? In this inveterate enemy of the people of God, not less than in Shebna, we ought undoubtedly to acknowledge and adore God's overruling providence.¹⁰⁸

Although the Church may enjoy some victories in this world, and although her enemies may sometimes be confounded here, her real victory and the ultimate defeat of her enemies are reserved for another world and time. The Church in this world can never expect to be more than a despised minority; hated and persecuted by the wicked without and filled with hypocrites, deadness and corruption within. But on the day of judgment the Church will emerge victorious over her enemies and will be made pure and spotless within. Again this is reflected in the mirror of the Old Testament. The temporal victories of Israel, the Church in the Old Testament, are reflections or foreshadowings and therefore 'mirrors' of the eternal victory that awaits the Church hereafter.

... an awful destruction awaits our enemies, as we see in the Midianites and Egyptians. It is therefore no small consolation that, when we compare our condition with theirs, we see them, for a time indeed, in all the madness of joy and of wickedness insulting the children of God, but at the same time learn what a dreadful sentence has been pronounced against them; for they are devoted to deadly and everlasting destruction.¹⁰⁹

Hence, we get some idea of the way in which Calvin, in his

exegesis of the Old Testament looks upon the people of God in the Old Testament as a mirror of the Church in his own day. So much more could be said upon this theme and so many more illustrations could be given from Calvin's writings. However, space forbids it. It is hoped that what has been said provides a 'taste' of Calvin's usage of the Old Testament as a 'mirror of the Church'. We will now pass on to our second area in Calvin's usage of the mirror image; the Old Testament as a mirror of the Christian life.

3. The Old Testament as a Mirror of the Individual

For Calvin, the Old Testament was not only a mirror of the Church, it not only belonged to the Church as a body, but it belonged to the individual Christian too. It was a mirror of Christian life and experience. Hence, we come to another important theme in Calvin's use of the mirror image with respect to the Old Testament, the Old Testament as a mirror of the Christian's life and experience.

Here Calvin draws on Old Testament figures to serve as models of Christian faith, behaviour and experience. They provide him with mirrors, by looking into which an individual can come to know himself better, gain an insight into the life of faith or come to understand the motives and behaviour of those around him in his own world. He uses them, in his sermons especially, to lay bare the inner workings of the human heart, to help people to understand the motives and behaviour of their fellows in spiritual terms, and to make plain to simple believers the often perplexing ways of God's dealings with men.

Thus, for example, Job, in his terrible, almost blasphemous, outcry against God, is a 'mirror' for us of how (good) men often act under severe trials. He desires to obey God but his emotions and sufferings get the better of him; how like us! He bursts out in a terrible tirade against God's providence. Job, under Calvin's hand, becomes a mirror of our own weakness. We too, like Job, are prone to question God's

providential dealings with us and under extreme suffering we too may burst out as he did. Yet, in spite of all this weakness, God still loved Job. Therefore, this 'mirror' brings us great comfort in our weakness.¹¹⁰ Hezekiah, in his illness, is a 'mirror' of how we must endure 'great temptations'.¹¹¹ The history of Joseph as recorded in Genesis provides us, Calvin tells us, with probably the most 'illustrious picture of divine providence (divinae providentiae illustrior pictura)', which would otherwise be 'in itself a labyrinth'.¹¹² There are stories of wicked men in the Old Testament too. These also provide Calvin with 'mirrors'. Pharaoh is the arch example of the reprobate.¹¹³ Abimelech in driving Isaac away (Gen. 26.11-21) is a picture of the unregenerate and how they despise the regenerate.¹¹⁴ Such examples could be multiplied.

In the stories of the men and women related in the Old Testament, Calvin, thus, found tangible illustrations and demonstrations of the great central themes of his theology as well as the everyday experience of ordinary believers. We sometimes feel, as we read Calvin's commentaries and sermons, that these figures have stepped out of the pages of the Old Testament and are standing there before us addressing us and reflecting our own world and our own feelings and motives.

These figures, however, act not only as 'object lessons', they are also fellow participants in the great struggle of faith. For him those simple men and women of faith took part in the same spiritual pilgrimage as he and his fellow

Genevan believers. They faced the same spiritual trials and temptations - inwardly, from the flesh, outwardly from Satan and the world. Most importantly, they knew and trusted in the same God as he and, what is more, looked to the same Saviour in the same hope of grace and salvation. Because of this similarity of experience Calvin can draw on Old Testament stories to inspire, instruct and invigorate the Christians of his own time. Thus he can write of David, for whom, as we shall see, he had a special regard, that, 'God has chosen to make him a mirror for all the faithful'.¹¹⁵ David's life and spiritual experience, as recorded in the Old Testament, somehow reflects the life and experience of the Christian in the sixteenth century, and indeed in all centuries. Under Calvin's hand these figures of faith become vital for the contemporary believer reflecting and mirroring as they do the life of faith in all its varied aspects. A life which, because it originates and is centred on the same God, is essentially the same in all ages. They were as up to date and relevant as the events of his own day.

Calvin shows great discrimination, however, in his use of Old Testament figures as models of Christian behaviour. In his Commentary on the Gospel of John he lays down three rules. Firstly, the Old Testament has within it not only good examples, but also bad ones. Or, to put it another way, in the Old Testament there are both elect and non-elect persons. These must be distinguished and only the former may serve as examples which we should follow. Calvin writes,

We should therefore keep carefully to the distinction that none are to be reckoned fathers but those who were certainly the sons of God; and then those who by their outstanding piety deserved this honourable title.¹¹⁶

These are fairly easy to differentiate. Even the elect, however, those Old Testament fathers who are 'certainly the sons of God', sometimes provide bad examples. They are far from perfect and often do not act in conformity with their faith and their status as God's children. Hence, we must make use of any example in the Old Testament with caution. We must always come to them with a critical mind to distinguish the good from the bad in their actions. Calvin, therefore, continues,

Men also frequently err in that they rashly establish a common law from the actions of the fathers. For the multitude thinks it is not conferring sufficient honour on the fathers unless it makes them superhuman. And when we forget that they were fallible men we uncritically mix up their vices with their virtues and rise to the worst confusion in the conduct of life.¹¹⁶

In such cases the Christian is, of course, not to follow their example. However, it is not always easy, Calvin recognizes, to separate their good actions from their bad ones. Moreover, it may be that they do something lawfully or rightly which it would be wrong for us to imitate. How are we to discriminate? Calvin believes that God himself has provided us with a rule or standard for doing so. Thus, in the second place, Calvin lays down the general rule that all the actions of the Old Testament fathers are to be judged by the standard of the Law as summed up in the decalogue. He continues,

... all human deeds ought to be tried by the rule of the Law (ad legis regulam examinanda sint omnia hominum facta)...¹¹⁷

Where this is not done everything is turned upside down and thrown into confusion.

... we subordinate the scales themselves to what is weighed. In short, where the imitation of the fathers is all-important, the world thinks it can sin guiltlessly in

following their example.¹¹⁸

Some things that the fathers did, though they were lawful for them, would not be lawful for us. As he puts it elsewhere, the fathers '... may piously do things which cannot lawfully be drawn into a precedent'.¹¹⁹ Indeed the fathers sometimes had direct commandments from God to do things which, if judged by the normal standard of the Law, would be considered wrong. The imitation of such actions Calvin calls 'perverted imitation (prava aemulatio)'. Thus, there is a third rule. He writes,

A third fault is perverted imitation; as for example, when we who are not endowed with the same Spirit or supplied with the same command, drag in as a precedent for us what any of the fathers did.¹²⁰

The fathers Calvin believes at times had direct commands from God to do what otherwise would be unlawful for them to do. If God commanded them to do something, even though it was against some point of the law, it was right for them to do because God had commanded it. Thus by the direct command of God they may be lifted above the normal requirements of the law. This was Calvin's solution to a problem which has bothered interpreters of the Old Testament from very early times. Its adequacy is no doubt open to question!¹²¹ In such cases, Calvin strongly insists - probably in opposition to some of the Radicals who thought the contrary - we are not permitted to copy the fathers since we have neither 'the same Spirit' nor 'the same command'. The examples that Calvin goes on to give are significant in that they would seem to reflect the 'holy war' idea of the Mūnsterites.

For instance, if any private person wanted to avenge with the sword the injuries done to his brothers because Moses did so (Ex. 2.12), or if anyone were to execute fornicators because this was done by Phineas (Num. 25.7).¹²²

Many of the things that God commanded the patriarchs to do and many of the tests that he put them through were '... just a unique testing of one man' and not in any way 'general'. Such, for example, was God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. Those who seek to copy the fathers in such things are not 'true imitators (*recti imitatores*)' of them, but 'apes (*simiae*)'. We shall have occasion later in this study to draw out the significance of the latter phrase (apes) for Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics. Calvin draws this third rule to a close as follows,

And therefore, unless we want to err deliberately, we must always pay attention to the spirit each father was given, what his calling demanded of him, what was individually proper to him and what he was individually commanded to do.¹²³

The fourth rule laid down by Calvin here, brings us to the very heart of his Old Testament hermeneutics. He continues,

Closely allied to this third fault is another, the confusing of different ages (*confusio temporum*). Later generations devote themselves to the examples of the fathers, not thinking that a different law of action has been enjoined on them by the Lord (*diversam agendi legem sibi a Domino praescriptam esse non cogitant*). We can ascribe to this ignorance the huge mass of ceremonies with which the Church under the Papacy has been buried. Immediately after the beginning of the Church they began to sin in this way from a foolish and undue affectation of Judaism (*quia plus valuit stulta Iudaismi affectatio quam decebat*).¹²⁴

Here we begin to touch on a theme that runs throughout Calvin's approach to the Old Testament and which shall be developed at length later in the present study. Suffice it to say for now that, as Calvin saw it, a wrong approach to the Old Testament, in other words a faulty Old Testament hermeneutic, could have disastrous consequences. In fact, as the above passage makes clear (what he goes on to say makes it clearer still),¹²⁵ Calvin attributed a large part of what he considered the errors of Roman Catholicism to such a

faulty Old Testament hermeneutic.

Thus, we see that Calvin's use of Old Testament figures as examples for Christian behaviour was in no way simplistic. On the contrary, it is based on a definite Old Testament hermeneutic. Therefore, it takes us to the heart of his whole approach to the Old Testament involving as it does important hermeneutical principles.

In spite of this cautious approach, Calvin nevertheless does make frequent use of the Old Testament in terms of 'character studies' and examples. Calvin's love for the stories of the Old Testament is, as we have said, also demonstrated by the fact that again and again in his dogmatic writings he uses them to illustrate his theology.¹²⁶ This usage is probably best explained ^{by} the distinct practical emphasis that we have seen characterizes his theology and pervades his writings. Closely associated with this, is his great concern to communicate the great truths of Christianity in simple terms to even the lowliest believer which is particularly evident in his sermons. Probably, too, we can trace here, once again, the influence of Calvin's humanist background.¹²⁷

It is precisely at this point, then, that we begin to understand Calvin's great love and extensive use of the Old Testament stories. They harmonize with his whole concept of theology and theological method. It is not, therefore, surprising to find him making the following comment in the first book of the Institutes,

In short, let us remember that that invisible God, whose wisdom, power and righteousness are incomprehensible, sets

before us Moses' history as a mirror in which his living likeness glows.¹²⁸

This subject is such a vast one, covering as it does a large part of Calvin's writings, that to give an adequate account of how Calvin used the various 'heroes of faith' as well as the 'villains' we should have to transcribe a large part of his commentaries and other writings. Hence one can only gain an adequate idea of Calvin's use of Old Testament stories as a mirror of the Christian life, by reading his writings themselves and especially his Old Testament commentaries, lectures and sermons themselves. However, we are seeking here merely to give an introduction to Calvin's usage. The best procedure would seem to be to concentrate on one particular example which it is hoped will give an adequate illustration of Calvin's approach.

In this we are greatly aided by Calvin himself. Of all the figures in the Old Testament it was David with whom Calvin identified himself as an individual most closely and intimately and with whom he felt the most empathy.¹²⁹ Whilst it was in the Prophets that Calvin found particular instruction for the Church of his day, it was in David's life and spiritual experience, which, as Calvin saw it, was laid bare in the Psalms, that he found a mirror for the individual's Christian experience. It was here, in the Psalms, that Calvin himself discovered particular help and guidance for his own life and the struggles of his own faith. Hence his interest was not simply pastoral, it was also deeply personal.

In fact Calvin saw a two-fold relationship between himself

and David. In the first place, he believed that the life and experience of David formed a close parallel with his own, especially in terms of his struggles and conflicts in Geneva. In this respect he viewed his life in the light of David's. He compared his calling to Geneva and his experiences in the pursuance of that calling with David's calling to be king and the trials and sufferings he underwent both before receiving the crown and after. By such a comparison Calvin believed that he was brought to a better understanding of his experiences and moreover he found from it strength and support to endure the conflict. Hence, he writes as follows,

For although I follow David at a great distance, and come far short of equalling him ... yet if I have many things in common with him, I have no hesitation in comparing myself with him.¹³⁰

In David, Calvin felt, he could see 'as in a mirror' his own calling and the afflictions it brought upon him. By such a sight he was strengthened in the knowledge that his afflictions and the oppositions he met with were not inconsistent with the divine call, but were all a part of its outworking. Thus he writes,

... it has been of very great advantage to me to behold in him as in a mirror, both the commencement of my calling, and the continued course of my function; so that I know the more assuredly, that whatever that most illustrious king and prophet suffered, was exhibited to me by God as an example for imitation. My condition, no doubt, is much inferior to his, and it is unnecessary for me to stay to show this. But as he was taken from the sheepfold, and elevated to the rank of supreme authority; so God having taken me from my originally obscure and humble condition, has reckoned me worthy of being invested with the honourable office of preacher and minister of the Gospel.¹³¹

He continues by giving us an autobiographical account,¹³²

starting with his childhood, and the career his father had chosen for him. He goes on to narrate how God, against all his natural ambitions and inclinations, had laid hold of him

in his conversion and through Farel called him to the work of reform in Geneva. He had wanted to lead the quiet life of a scholar, but he was thrust into the forefront of public affairs where he suffered much opposition which vexed his shy character. His experience he believes is similar to David's. Hence, he concludes with the following words,

... in considering the whole course of the life of David, it seemed to me that by his own footsteps he showed me the way, and from this I have experienced no small consolation. As that holy king was harassed by the Philistines and other foreign enemies with continual wars, while he was much more grievously afflicted by the malice and wickedness of some perfidious men amongst his own people, so I can say as to myself, that I have been assailed on all sides, and have scarcely been able to enjoy repose for a single moment, but have always had to sustain some conflict either from enemies without or within the Church.¹³³

He goes on to give a list of the trials by which he had been harassed and the various conflicts with his opponents in which he had been engaged, making frequent comparisons with those who opposed David. Thus Calvin looked at David's life and calling and saw his own mirrored there.

In the second place, Calvin felt that his own experience, being so similar to David's, gave him a deeper insight into David's experience as expressed in the Psalms and thus into the meaning of Scripture itself.

... the small measure of experience which I have had by the conflicts with which the Lord has exercised me, has in no ordinary degree assisted me, not only in applying to present use whatever instruction could be gathered from these divine compositions, but also in more easily comprehending the design of each of the writers (*consilium scriptoris cuiusque psalorum*). And as David holds the principal place among them, it has greatly aided me in understanding more fully the complaints made by him of the internal afflictions which the Church had to sustain through those who gave themselves out to be her members, that I had suffered the same or similar things from the domestic enemies of the Church.¹³⁴

Finally, he draws the preface to his Commentary on the Psalms to a close with the following words,

My readers, too, if I mistake not, will observe, that in unfolding the internal affections both of David and of the others, I discourse upon them as matters of which I have familiar experience.¹³⁵

Thus, by looking into the 'mirror' of the Psalms, Calvin believed that a man might come to know and understand the events of his own life, the ways of divine providence in it and the inner workings of his own heart.

In addition, the book of Psalms also provided Calvin with a model for Christian prayer both public and private. We have already looked at Calvin's use of the Psalms in the liturgy. But as well as providing material for the corporate act of praise, David and the Psalmists also provided a model for individual Christian prayer. Thus Calvin saw the Psalms, in particular, as a rich treasury of Christian spirituality and devotion. Hence he writes,

In short, as calling upon God is one of the principal means of securing our safety, and as a better and more unerring rule for guiding us in this exercise cannot be found elsewhere than in the Psalms, it follows, that in proportion to the proficiency which a man shall have obtained in understanding them, will be his knowledge of the most intimate part of celestial doctrine.¹³⁶

Later in the same passage, he writes,

In a word, whatever may serve to encourage us when we are about to pray to God, is taught in this book.¹³⁷

The Psalms not only encourage us to prayer, but, more than any other book, they also 'stir us up' to praise God.

... in short, there is no other book in which we are more perfectly taught the right manner of praising God, or in which we are more powerfully stirred up to the performance of this duty.¹³⁸

Finally, the Psalms teach us not only how to pray and how to praise God, they teach us not only the ways of divine providence, but they 'teach and train us to bear the cross (nos ad crucis tolerantiam instituet)'.¹³⁹ The verb instituo

used here is significant in that it calls to mind the title of the Institutes (Latin - Institutio), being derived from the same Latin root. Indeed, the Psalms do not merely 'train' us in cross bearing as secondary to other things. This is what they 'principally' (praecipue) train us in. Calvin writes,

Moreover, although the Psalms are replete with all the precepts which serve to frame our life to every part of holiness, piety, and righteousness, yet they will principally teach and train us to bear the cross; and the bearing of the cross is a genuine proof of our obedience, since by doing this, we renounce the guidance of our own affections, and submit ourselves entirely to God, leaving him to govern us, and to dispose of our life according to his will, so that the afflictions which are the bitterest and most severe to our nature, become sweet to us, because they proceed from him.¹⁴⁰

Here, in the latter part of this passage, we find echoes not only of Calvin's own experiences, but also some of the most distinctive aspects of Calvin's and, it might be added, Calvinist spirituality. In particular, the absolute, humble submission to the divine will which is all-powerful and all-sovereign. It is no wonder then that Calvin was so powerfully drawn to the Psalms, not only did he find there a deep well of Christian spirituality, but he found also the distinctive emphases of that form of spirituality peculiar to his own augustinian type of theology.

It was for such reasons as those described above, he tells us, that he wrote his commentary on the Psalms. He wanted to share the 'treasures' he had found there with others. He writes, in the preface,

... for a long time I had been thinking ... to write something on the subject in the French language, that my countrymen might not be without the means of being enabled to understand so useful a book when perusing it.¹⁴¹

Later in the same context he writes,

The varied and splendid riches which are contained in this treasury it is no easy matter to express in words; so much so, that I well know that whatever I shall be able to say will be far from approaching the excellence of the subject. But as it is better to give my readers some taste, however small, of the wonderful advantages they will derive from the study of this book, than to be entirely silent on the point, I may be permitted briefly to advert to a matter, the greatness of which does not admit of being fully unfolded.¹⁴²

That Calvin should think so highly of David and set him up as a model of the most intimate aspects of Christian experience and spirituality might seem somewhat strange to us. However, we must recall that Calvin regarded David, along with other Old Testament figures, as belonging to the same spiritual stock as the elect in all ages. David, knew and believed in Christ.¹⁴³ From Christ he drew his spiritual life.¹⁴⁴ He was, therefore, as much part of the body of Christ and so united to him as any of the elect in the New Testament were. David was 'regenerated', he writes in the Institutes.¹⁴⁵ Elsewhere Calvin affirms that he regards him as, 'the most advanced of all, according to the measure of grace he had received.'¹⁴⁶ True he had not the same grace or light as Christians under the Gospel have;¹⁴⁷ but for all that Calvin felt himself unworthy to be compared with him in terms of spiritual stature, hence he feels he must add a disclaimer when he does compare himself with David.¹⁴⁸ David's faith and knowledge of God, Calvin felt, would put most Christians to shame.

In view of Calvin's high regard for David's spiritual life it is, perhaps, not surprising that Calvin should regard him as having been especially appointed by God to be a teacher and 'spiritual doctor' of the whole Church. This is brought

out in Calvin's commentary on Psalm 38, where he writes,

... he was appointed master and teacher 'over the whole Church (toti ecclesiae praefectus esset magister et doctor), it was necessary that whatever he had himself learned in particular by divine teaching should be made known, and appropriated to the use of all, that all might profit thereby.¹⁴⁹

Calvin's high regard for David and the Book of Psalms is perhaps best summed up in the title that he tells us he was accustomed to give it. In order to express his understanding of the Psalms and their function, Calvin draws on medical imagery. The book of Psalms he says, he is wont to call 'an anatomy of all the parts of the soul (omnium animae partium)'.¹⁵⁰ The reason for this, he continues, is that,

...there is not an emotion of which anyone can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror.

Even here the mirror imagery is not far from Calvin's mind. Thus the Psalms are a mirror of the inward motions of the heart. 'Or', as he goes on to say,

... the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be troubled.¹⁵¹

In other parts of Scripture we find the 'commandments which God enjoined his servants to announce to us', that is, we see only the outward dealings of God with his servants and find only the bare command. Here, however, in the Psalms, we enter into the most intimate recesses of the lives of their authors, we enter into the inner sanctum of the prophets' personal life with God.

... the prophets themselves, seeing they are exhibited to us as speaking to God, and laying open all their inmost thoughts and affections, call, or rather draw, each of us to the examination of himself in particular, in order that none of the many infirmities to which we are

subject, and of the many vices with which we abound, may remain concealed.¹⁵²

Similar ideas are expressed, oddly enough, in the argumentum to his Commentary on the Epistle of James. He is seeking to answer the question, as he expresses it, why 'James seems rather more reluctant to preach the grace of Christ than an apostle should be'. We must not expect everyone 'to go over the same ground' he says and he illustrates this by comparing the 'writings of Solomon' with 'the style of David' which 'differ widely' from each other. He continues,

The former [Solomon] was concerned with the training of the outward man, and with handing down rules of social behaviour, while the latter [David] is noted for his profound attention to the spiritual worship of God, peace of mind, God's loving kindness, and the free promise of salvation.¹⁵³

'Solomon', that is the writings in the Old Testament traditionally attributed to him, is concerned with the outward life of man. Whereas David (= the Psalms?) is concerned with the inner life of man. The contrast is between man as a socio-political being and thus in relation to other men, and man as a spiritual being and thus in relation to God.

The Psalms, more than other parts of Scripture, are, therefore, concerned with the inner, spiritual life of man. They provide medicine for the soul. First there must be a diagnosis. In the 'mirror' of the Psalms 'the heart is brought into the light', and particularly its illnesses and 'infection'. Like all good physicians, however, the Psalmist does not merely diagnose and expose the illness, he also seeks to prescribe a cure. Thus in the Psalms we find not only the diagnosis, in terms of an exposure of our sin and

therefore our need, but also its cure in terms of the promise of God's grace and mercy.

Genuine and earnest prayer proceeds first from a sense of our own need, and next, from faith in the promises of God. It is by perusing these inspired compositions, that men will be most effectually awakened to a sense of their maladies, and, at the same time, instructed in seeking remedies for their cure. ¹⁵⁴

From what Calvin has told us it is clear that this was no mere theoretical view, but that he himself had stood before this same mirror. He had himself looked long into the 'mirror' of the Psalms and had had his own 'maladies' exposed. Moreover, he too had found something of the cure for these maladies there.

Thus we can see from Calvin's treatment of the Psalms and his profound self identification with the life and experience of David, that for him the Old Testament is a mirror of Christian life and experience. David is, of course, only one example from the Old Testament that Calvin uses in this way. However, as we have sought to indicate, he holds a special place in Calvin's Old Testament exegesis and provides us with a good example of Calvin's application of the Old Testament in this way. We will now go on to examine the third and final area that we have singled out in Calvin's use of the mirror image in his exegesis of the Old Testament. The Old Testament as a mirror of the Political realm.

4. The Old Testament as a Mirror of the Political Realm

Calvin's application of the Old Testament in his expositions is not primarily concerned with political issues. Rather his concern is, in the first place, pastoral and therefore spiritual. At the same time it must be recognized that Calvin did not draw the same distinction between the secular and the sacred that we so often do today.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, the Old Testament contains within it many stories of a political nature. We read of the rise and fall of kings, their social and religious policies, the affairs of court and so on. Commenting as he did on a large part of the Old Testament, it was impossible for Calvin to avoid its political aspects. Finally, the 16th. Century Reformation was everywhere inextricably linked up with political affairs. This was true of Calvin's Geneva; the Reformation, due to the position occupied by the Church in the middle ages, was an unavoidably political affair. Thus Calvin as a Reformer was forced to keep an eye on the political affairs of the day. This is reflected in his Old Testament exegetical works for he often makes comment upon contemporary political affairs in the course of expounding the Old Testament. In this respect too he found the Old Testament a good vehicle of expression with its vivid portrayal of the political affairs of Israel and other ancient near eastern states. In other words he found in the Old Testament a mirror of the political events of his own day. The stories of the rise of nations the behaviour of monarchs and their subjects acted as 'mirrors' of the

parallel events of his own day.

Here again it is important that we do not forget that the times in which Calvin lived were times when the survival of Protestantism was seriously under threat. We have seen that this situation has a bearing on Calvin's use of the Old Testament as a mirror of the Church. It is also reflected in Calvin's use of the Old Testament as a mirror of the Political Realm.

Calvin's political ideas have received a fair bit of attention from scholars, and are fairly familiar.¹⁵⁶ In view of this, it is necessary only to give a brief outline of his ideas here. Calvin differed significantly from Luther and the German reformers on his concept of the relationship between Church and State. Briefly, for Calvin Church and State were complementary; though the Church is not independent of the State, it should nevertheless be totally free from the intervention of the State in terms of its own sphere. The State, however, should enforce the teachings and decisions of the Church.¹⁵⁷ Hence, though Church and State have separate areas of authority each should support and help the other. The notion that Geneva under Calvin was a theocracy, if that is taken to mean that the Church controlled the State, is erroneous, as is the idea that Calvin was some sort of dictator.¹⁵⁸ Calvin's concept of the Church came into sharp conflict with the position taken by the German Lutheran Churches which were heavily dependent on the State.¹⁵⁹

When Calvin expounds the Old Testament stories relating to

kings and potentates he seems to see in them the portraits of the kings and princes of his own day. Human nature he believed has changed little. It is corrupt. The same temptations that faced those with power and authority in the times of the Old Testament still faced the rulers of his day. He would have heartily agreed with our modern saying that power corrupts. Hence he usually takes a rather black view of those who hold political power of any kind, and this black view tended to find support in the portraits he found in the Old Testament itself. The argumentum to his commentary on Psalm 82 begins with the following statement,

As kings, and such as are invested with authority, through the blindness which is produced by pride, generally take to themselves a boundless liberty of action, the Psalmist warns them that they must render an account at the bar of the Supreme Judge, who is exalted above the highest of the world.¹⁴⁰

This, in Calvin's eyes, is the characteristic temptation of those who hold positions of earthly power. They feel that they are above the laws that govern 'ordinary' men, that they are answerable to no one and therefore can do as they please. Calvin's fundamental concern is to cure them of this 'drunken madness' and bring them back to their senses by reminding them that they are after all but mortals, and must one day answer to a higher court.

Throughout his commentary on Psalm 82 he takes occasion to describe the characteristics of princes and kings. In fact in his commentary on this Psalm we find many of Calvin's distinctive ideas on the nature and duty of secular powers expressed. Thus on verse one he affirms that, '... God has been pleased to invest [kings] with the government of mankind for the common good ...'. However, such rarely 'acknowledge

the end for which they have been exalted above others'. Instead 'contemning every principle of equity' they 'rule just as their own unbridled passions dictate'.¹⁶¹ Those in power are,

So infatuated by their own splendour and magnificence, as to imagine that the whole world was made only for them.¹⁶² Such rulers seek to surround themselves with 'flatterers to soothe and applaud them in their vices' even though 'their own folly is more than enough to urge them on in their reckless career'. Some of them 'may admit that they owe their elevation to royal power to the favour of God'. Yet, 'their greatness so infatuates them that they are chargeable with expelling and casting him to a distance from their assembly, by their own imaginations; for they cannot bear to be subject to reason and laws'. Kings seek to place themselves above law. 'Kings may lift up their heads above the clouds, but they, as well as the rest of mankind, are under the government of God...'.¹⁶³ And we might add, the same government.

Overweening pride is the great snare into which kings are most liable to fall. The Old Testament provided Calvin with many 'mirrors' in which this character of kings and those in power could be clearly seen. Among the most illustrious is that of the stories surrounding Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel. Thus in his Lectures on Daniel he writes,

Hence in the character of king Nebuchadnezzar we have set before us, as in a mirror, the drunken confidence of all kings, in supposing themselves to stand by their own power, and to free themselves from the authority of God, as if he were not seated as a judge in heaven.¹⁶⁴

Kings, if they could, would pluck God from his throne, and exercise an absolute tyranny over their fellow men. Rather

than being the servants of God and of mankind that they should be, they would make all men and even God himself their servants.¹⁴⁵ With great insight and in an almost tolstoyan fashion Calvin recognizes the paradoxical truth that those with most power, who seem to be most at liberty and to have all men as their slaves, are in fact themselves the greatest slaves of all. Thus commenting on Darius's impotency to save Daniel from being thrown into the lions' den, Calvin observes,

The king, as we have said, frightened by the denunciation of the nobles, condemns Daniel to death. And hence we gather the reward which kings deserve in reference to their pride, when they are compelled to submit with servility to their flatterers. How was Darius deceived by the cunning of his nobles! For he thought his authority would be strengthened, by putting the obedience of all men to this test of refusing all prayer to any god or man for a whole month. He thought he should become superior to both gods and men, if all his subjects really manifested obedience of this kind. We now see how obstinately the nobles rise against him, and denounce ultimate revolt, unless he obey them. We see that when kings take too much upon themselves, how they are exposed to infamy, and become the veriest slaves of their own servants!¹⁴⁶

'This', he goes on to say, 'is common enough with earthly princes ...'.

Lastly, if they are compared with the wretches who are confined in the closest dungeon, not one who is thrust down into the deepest pit, and watched by three or four guards, is not freer than kings themselves! But, as I have said, this is God's most just vengeance; since when they cannot contain themselves in the ordinary rank and station of men, but wish to penetrate the clouds and become on a level with God, they necessarily become a laughingstock. Hence they become slaves of all their attendants, and dare not utter anything with freedom, and are without friends, and are afraid to summon their subjects to their presence, and to intrust either one or another with their wishes.

And he concludes with profound insight,

Thus slaves rule the kingdoms of the world, because kings assume superiority to mortals.¹⁴⁷

However, as well as this picture of wicked and tyrannical

kingship Calvin also found in the Old Testament a mirror of what true kingship should be. Once again he turned to ^{the} person of David as portrayed on the pages of the Old Testament to find this ideal of what he believed a righteous king should be.

Calvin views Psalm 101 as '... containing the substance of his [David's] meditations with himself, as to what kind of king he would be whenever he should be put in possession of the sovereign power which had been promised him.'¹⁶⁸ In the argumentum to his commentary on this Psalm, Calvin writes,

David was not as yet put in possession of the kingdom, but having been already created king by the appointment of God, he prepares himself for exercising the government in the best manner (se comparat et accingit ad optimum gubernandi modum).¹⁶⁹

In the first verse of this Psalm, David declares that he 'will sing of mercy and judgment'. Calvin translates this in Latin as 'Clementiam et iudicium cantabo'.¹⁷⁰ The vulgate translation has 'Misericordiam et iudicium'. It can be seen that Calvin has replaced 'misericordia' of the vulgate with 'clementia'. This use of the word 'clementia' in Calvin's translation is significant in that it reminds us of his Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia in which clemency (clementia) was extolled as one of the chief virtues of a ruler.¹⁷¹ Although he is writing some 25 years later (Calvin's L. Annaei Senecae libri de Clementia cum commentario, was published in Paris in 1532. His Commentarius in librum Psalmorum, was first published in 1557.) Calvin's views had not changed. Clemency, he still believes is one of the chief virtues of a ruler. Thus he comments on this verse,

He very properly comprehends all princely virtues under these two particulars, mercy (clementia) and judgment; for

as it is the principal duty of a king (praecipuum regis munus) to yield to every man his own right, so he is also required to possess a considerate love and compassion towards his subjects (ita sollicitus erga suos amor et humanitas in eo requiritur).¹⁷²

He continues by quoting Proverbs 16.12. The CTS translation of Calvin's commentaries follows the King James version in quoting this verse from Proverbs, but in so doing it is unfaithful to Calvin's rendering. Calvin rather significantly translates this verse, 'The throne is established by clemency (clementia)'. The more customary translation, reflected in the KJV's 'justice', was 'justitia'.¹⁷³

It can be seen that this ideal king, as represented by David, is the absolute reverse of the picture that has been sketched of the wicked king. Calvin held both up as a mirror of the kings of his own day. It was the picture of the wicked king that, sadly, was all too often 'mirrored' in the rulers of his day. It was the picture of the ideal king as represented by David, however, that Calvin held up as a model for them to follow.

Hence it can be seen that the Old Testament was used by Calvin as a mirror of the political realm. Once again we have only been able to give the briefest introduction to Calvin's use of the Old Testament in this way. Much more could be said about this aspect of Calvin's use of the mirror image as it could about the previous aspects.

We will close the present chapter by briefly summarizing its findings. In the first place, we saw that Calvin was deeply engaged with the Old Testament for the most part of his work as a Reformer. This engagement, we saw, was on all levels of his work and life. Next we sought to see something of Calvin's use and application of the Old Testament to his own time. The material for this is so vast that we sought to focus our thoughts by concentrating upon an image frequently found in Calvin's writings; the image of a mirror. Our treatment of this was necessarily limited. Nevertheless, in spite of the limitations, we were able to see that for Calvin the Old Testament was not some ancient piece of outdated historical literature. Rather, his use of the Old Testament as a mirror, brought home to us something of the vitality of his use of the Old Testament. The Old Testament, far from being irrelevant or of merely antiquarian interest, Calvin saw, was in living contact with his own world.

Chapter 2

The Problem of the Old Testament: The Judaizing of the
Old Testament

We have now considered Calvin's usage of the Old Testament and seen something of the broad extent of his engagement with it in all areas of his life and work. Moreover, we have seen something of the depth of his involvement with the Old Testament and his self identification with its history and people. We have now to enquire what understanding of the Old Testament and its interpretation lies behind Calvin's use of it. In other words, we have to consider the hermeneutics by means of which Calvin brought the Old Testament to bear upon his own life and situation as well as that of those around him.

What we have seen in the previous Chapter of Calvin's use of the Old Testament might lead us to believe that his approach to it was rather simplistic; that for him there was no problem of the Old Testament, but that it was simply a matter of directly transferring what was written in the Old Testament to his own day. In other words, we might be led to think that for Calvin there was no need of a distinctive Old Testament hermeneutic, but that the Old Testament could simply be appropriated en bloc and applied to his own situation without further ado. Nothing, in fact, could be further from the truth. As it is hoped this and the following chapters will show, Calvin's approach to the

Old Testament was a response to what might be called an Old Testament 'problem' in his day. To meet this problem Calvin worked out, not always explicitly, a distinctive Old Testament hermeneutic.

Recent Calvin scholarship has shown that Calvin's theology was worked out largely in relation to two very different theological positions or tendencies present in the 16th. Century of his day.¹ On the one hand there was a resurgent Roman Catholicism, as represented by the so called Counter Reformation which, in Calvin's lifetime, became very much on the offensive. On the other hand there were those diverse tendencies and groups who, while breaking with Catholicism, felt that there was need for a more far reaching Reformation than that represented by the mainstream reformers. In recent Reformation scholarship the latter have come to be known collectively as the 'Radical Reformation'. In the 16th. Century, however, they were generally referred to as 'Anabaptists'. This latter designation is somewhat inadequate and misleading as not all of the groups that were so called actually practised re-baptism as the name 'Anabaptist' would suggest.² In the present study it will nevertheless be retained since this is the way Calvin refers to such groups.

This double front on which Calvin worked out his wider theology also provides us with the key for understanding his Old Testament hermeneutics. Thus, in the present chapter an attempt will be made to show that Calvin's approach to the Old Testament was, like his wider theology, also worked out

in conscious opposition to the same two groups.

As we shall see in proceeding there is in Calvin's approach to the Old Testament both a negative and a positive response. To the question of whether the Old Testament can be thought of as a Christian book Calvin wanted to say both 'Yes' and at the same time 'No'. This 'yes-no' response of Calvin was shaped by his encounter with what he saw as the Roman Catholic and the Anabaptist approaches to the Old Testament.

On the one hand, Calvin saw the Roman Catholics as being too ready, in certain important respects, to interpret the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament. As he saw it the Roman Catholics subordinated the New Testament to the Old and imposed what belonged distinctively to the Old Testament dispensation on the Christian era. In other words, Calvin regarded the Roman Catholics as being liable to what we might call an Old Testament monism. To this approach Calvin emphasized the negative side of his response to the Old Testament. Thus against the Roman Catholic 'Yes' he set an emphatic 'No'. Indeed, Calvin, as we shall see, attributed what he saw as some of the most distinctive errors of Roman Catholicism to a faulty Old Testament hermeneutic. The Anabaptists, on the other hand, were, in Calvin's eyes, in one way or another guilty of the opposite fault. They emphasized the authority of the New Testament to such an extent that they denied that the Old Testament had any relevance for the Christian Church. Thus they subordinated the Old Testament to the New. They were

liable to what we might refer to as a New Testament monism. To the Anabaptist approach Calvin emphasized the positive side of his response to the Old Testament. Thus against the Anabaptist 'No' Calvin placed an emphatic 'Yes'. With the more evangelical and spiritual groups among the Anabaptists with whom Calvin came into contact, their attitude to the Old Testament took the form of a marcionitic denial of the Old Testament; its spirituality and its morality, being much more primitive than that found in the New Testament, was felt to be no longer relevant to the Christian Church. In this way the Old Testament was ignored in favour of the New Testament. The Old Testament was thought to contain not only a lower level of spirituality and morality than the New, but even a different salvation. With others, such as Servetus, with whom Calvin entered into controversy, in addition to this marcionitic emphasis, there was also a denial that the Old Testament could be seen as even so much as a praeparatio ad evangelium.

In opposition to both these extremes of emphasis, Calvin sought to develop an approach to the Old Testament which was truly balanced. The Roman Catholics confounded the two Testaments, and they thus brought about what Calvin calls a 'confusio temporum'.³ By so doing they obscured the light of the Gospel. The Anabaptists, on the other hand, dissociated the Testaments, bringing about, what Calvin might very well have called, a 'separatio temporum', and by so doing they, too, obscured the light of the Gospel. While distinguishing the two Testaments he sought not to dissociate them. While maintaining their unity he sought

not to confound them. And it was largely in opposition to these two extremes that he worked out his views. Hence, as a preparation for examining Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics we shall examine these two approaches to the Old Testament against which he reacted. It should be emphasized that we are seeking to view the attitudes and ideas of these two groups mainly from Calvin's own perspective. Whether Calvin's assessment of their views was right or wrong is not the objective of the present study and consequently the question will not be raised. For what is important here is not what these groups actually thought, but what Calvin perceived them to think since it was this, right or wrong, against which he reacted and which, therefore, shaped his own thought.

Strangely enough, though the Roman Catholics and the Anabaptists were rather opposite in their overall approaches to the Old Testament, Calvin in fact lumped them together by accusing both of 'Judaizing' in their interpretation of the Old Testament and labeling both of them as 'Judaism' or their proponents as being 'Jews'. Such charges were not new in the history of the Church.⁴ However, Calvin's use of this terminology can best be understood by first of all looking at his attitude to the Jews themselves and in particular to their interpretation of the Old Testament.

The fact that Calvin gave this label to groups so diverse as the Roman Catholics and the Anabaptists would tend to indicate that in his distinctive approach to the Old Testament he was battling on a much broader front than

merely an internal conflict amongst various Christian groups. Rather, it would indicate that he felt himself engaged in a conflict as old as Christianity itself, that is, whether Christians have the right to claim the Old Testament as part of their canon of authoritative religious literature. In other words, it would indicate that he felt that he was not contending merely for a particular interpretation of the Old Testament, but for the continued use of the Old Testament itself as part of the Christian canon. In this age old conflict it is primarily the Jews with whom Christians had to contend for a right to call the Old Testament their own. Such is the significance of Calvin's labeling his opponents 'Jews' in their interpretation of the Old Testament.

From this we can see the importance of understanding Calvin's attitude to the Jews and their interpretation of the Old Testament, since here we have the root to what we might call 'the problem of the Old Testament' as Calvin conceived it, that is the fear of 'Judaizing' the Old Testament. From what follows I trust it will become clear that Calvin himself was engaged in this conflict and that his distinctive Old Testament hermeneutics were, in part at least, a response to it. In the present chapter we will seek to sketch Calvin's description and evaluation of his opponents' position, and it will be left to the remaining chapters to examine Calvin's response.

1. Calvin's Polemic against Jewish claims on the Old

Testament

The Jews since the beginning of the Christian era have disputed the legitimacy of both the Christian use of the Old Testament and the Christian method of interpreting it.⁵ The main point of controversy has naturally been the fulfilment of the Messianic passages of the Old Testament. Needless to say, at the Reformation these controversies were still very much alive. The Jews were spread throughout Europe, so Christians came into frequent contact with them. . Protestantism, with its renewed emphasis on the authority of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures, no doubt sharpened the conflict. For Protestants, whose claims rested on the Scriptures of both Testaments, it was more important than ever to appropriate the Old Testament for the Christian Church and to resist and refute the counter claims made upon it by the Jews.⁶ This necessity was heightened by the fact that to a large extent the authority of the New Testament itself depended on its continuity with the Old Testament, for one of the major arguments to buttress the authority of the New Testament was that of the fulfilment of prophecy. Hence among the Protestant Reformers we find the growth of a renewed polemic with the Jews.

It is thought unlikely by some scholars that Calvin had much direct contact with Jews.⁷ This, perhaps, is reflected in the fact that there is no major work of Calvin dealing

specifically with the Jews and the questions raised by them. However, at least during his time in Strasbourg, the years of exile 1538-41, it is probable that Calvin had close contact with Jews and probably entered into debates with them.⁹ Moreover, we have Calvin's own express statement of his involvement in debates with 'many Jews', and there seems to be no good reason for doubting it. In his commentary on Daniel he states, 'I have had much conversation with many Jews'.⁹ Further support for this contention can be found in the fact that amongst the writings attributed to Calvin there does exist at least one short tract addressed to the Jewish question, entitled, 'Responsio ad Judaeum'.¹⁰

Whether or not Calvin had direct contact with Jews it seems incontrovertible that he was aware of the issues involved.¹¹ It is inconceivable that someone with Calvin's breadth of theological knowledge and awareness of, and, we might add, involvement in contemporary ecclesiastical controversies could have been unaware or unconcerned with the issues involved. He was after all perhaps the foremost theologian of his day and was widely recognized as such by his contemporaries. Moreover, many of the other leaders of the Reformation looked to him for advice on the issues of the day.¹² The many references scattered throughout his writings, and especially his commentaries on the Old Testament - the chief bone of contention - bear eloquent testimony to this fact.

We now turn to examine Calvin's writings to see what can be gathered from them as to his attitude to the Jews and his

assessment of their Old Testament hermeneutic.

Calvin's general characterization of the Jews is more or less typical of the age in which he lived. It is thus somewhat black. The Jews were generally viewed with much hostility and suspicion by Christians in the 16th. Century.¹³ They were seen as wicked despisers of God, the devil's emissaries who sought to undermine the Christian faith.¹⁴ Calvin differs little from his contemporaries in this assessment, though he is perhaps a little more mild in his strictures upon them than many were. The Jews were seen as greedy and covetous, filled with desire for materialistic gain.¹⁵ They were proud and arrogant deceivers.¹⁶ They are filled with superstitious beliefs.¹⁷ Their greatest crime however, the one for which they still suffered the wrath of God, was their rejection of the promised Messiah in Jesus Christ. In a sermon on Deuteronomy 6.4-9, Calvin launches into the following attack on the Jews:

Yet they have no reverence for God, but they would that God no longer had power or authority over them. They show this very clearly because not only did they hate Jesus Christ who ought to rule over them, not only did they shun and reject him, but they crucified him, despising God, and they turned away from the salvation which had been promised them.¹⁸

This constituted a rejection of God and his rule over them for which they in turn had been rejected by God.¹⁹ This rejection had involved not only God's casting them off, but also he had blinded them so that they were no longer able to see the truth, '...God has blinded them in such a manner as to be deprived of all judgment.'²⁰ Thus Calvin can write,

But whereas they [the Jews] ought willingly to run to embrace him [Christ], they purposely catch at every possible subterfuge, by which they may lead themselves and others far astray in tortuous by-paths. It is no wonder,

then, if the spirit of bitterness and obstinacy, and the lust of contention have so blinded them, that, in the clearest light, they should have perpetually stumbled.²¹

Such blindness, Calvin believed, extended to their reading and understanding of the Old Testament. Commenting on Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 3.12ff., '...but their understandings were blinded: for until this very day at the reading of the Old Testament the same veil remains unlifted; which veil is done away in Christ.' Calvin writes,

The Law is in itself full of light but we appreciate its clarity only when Christ appears to us in it. The Jews turn their eyes as far away from Christ as they can, so that it is not surprising that they should see nothing when they refuse to look at the sun. ... we should learn that without Christ, the sum of righteousness, there is no light even in the Law and in the whole Word of God.²²

Commenting on verse 16 of the same chapter he says,

Since Christ is the end of the Law, to which it ought to be referred, it was turned away in another direction when the Jews excluded Christ from it. Thus as in reading the Law they wander into byways, so the Law itself becomes twisted to them and like a labyrinth, until it is referred to its own end which is Christ. If therefore the Jews seek for Christ in the Law, the truth of God will appear clearly to them but, as long as they wish to be wise without Christ, they will wander in darkness and never reach the true meaning of the Law.²³

Calvin discerned another mark of God's judgment on the Jews in their stubbornness and persistency in what he saw as their errors. Like Pharaoh in the book of Exodus, they have been judicially hardened by God. 'To this day', Calvin writes, 'they are hardened ... and yet retain much of their ancient pride.'²⁴ They are, thus, stubbornly stuck in their errors and their 'stubbornness in wrangling is unvanquishable'.²⁵

However, our concern and interest is not so much with Calvin's wider attitude to the Jews, interesting though that may be, but more particularly with his assessment of their

interpretation of the Old Testament.

Calvin frequently cites Rabbinic commentaries and refers to Rabbinic exegesis throughout his Old Testament commentaries. Unfortunately, at least from our point of view, as was his stated procedure, he frequently refers to them not by name but collectively.²⁶ Thus he will speak of 'the Rabbins',²⁷ or 'the Hebrews',²⁸ and 'the Hebrew Interpreters'.²⁹ There are occasions, however, when he does cite them by name. Many different authors are referred to, and we find references, for example, to: the Targum of Jonathan,³⁰ the Chaldean Targum (which Calvin usually refers to as 'the Chaldean Paraphrast or Interpreter [chaldaeus paraphrastes/interpres])',³¹ the 10th. Century Rabbinic commentator Saadia Gaon,³² and Isaac Abravanel.³³ However, of all the Rabbinic expositors it would seem that his favourite was the 12th. Century Jewish scholar David Kimchi. Calvin regarded the latter as, '... the most faithful [expositor] among the Rabbins (... David Kimhi, qui fidelissimus est inter Rabbinos).'³⁴

In spite of Calvin's frequent use of Rabbinic sources, we must raise the question whether Calvin knew their writings at first hand. That Calvin could have had good, first hand, knowledge of Rabbinic exegesis is in fact questionable. In the first place it is doubtful whether Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew - the only language in which most of the Rabbinic texts were then available - was adequate.³⁵ In the second place, it would seem that the great majority of references to Rabbinic sources in Calvin's commentaries can be found in

the Latin commentaries of other Christians.³⁶ That Calvin can cite authors in such a way as to give the impression that he knows them at first hand when in fact he does not, has been demonstrated in another context by F. L. Battles.³⁷ Hence this procedure would correspond with what we know of his method elsewhere. In fact, in the Old Testament commentaries themselves there is some evidence to support this from explicit statements made by Calvin.³⁸ Thirdly, we must not forget the very practical point that Calvin was, during his time in Geneva, an extremely busy man.³⁹

We shall have occasion to discuss Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew in another context. Suffice it to say for now, that Calvin appears to have had an adequate knowledge of Hebrew for the purpose of expounding the Old Testament. Whether or not his knowledge of Hebrew would have enabled him to read Rabbinic texts, a great number of which were written in the middle ages and thus in a Hebrew somewhat different from Biblical Hebrew, is, however, doubtful.⁴⁰ Calvin himself seems to suggest this. He makes frequent references to 'the learned grammarians',⁴¹ or 'those skilled in the Hebrew language'.⁴² He also makes frequent deferential statements as to the knowledge of others on a point of Hebrew, acquiescing in their judgment.⁴³ Such statements are not found in his New Testament commentaries, and his competence at Greek is well attested. Hence, it seems reasonable to conclude that he did not see himself as an expert in Hebrew as he did in Greek. This is not surprising, for in the age of Calvin only a very few Christian scholars attained to a

profound knowledge of Hebrew, as there were many barriers to learning the language.⁴⁴

Calvin's characterization and assessment of Rabbinic or Jewish exegesis is on the whole rather unfavourable to say the least! Yet, in spite of this he will frequently refer to them for resolving linguistic and grammatical questions. The fact is that Calvin valued the Rabbinic commentaries as being excellent for the understanding of Hebrew grammar and words, but as totally inadequate when it came to the actual interpretation of the meaning of the Old Testament. Thus, in his commentary on Dan. 4.10-16, referring to Abravanel (Barbinel), he writes,

... nothing is more insipid than the Jews, whenever they digress from their grammar (sed nihil magis est insipidum Iudaeis, quoties ex grammatica sua egressi sunt).⁴⁵

Thus it is that he frequently follows a Jewish interpreter in matters of Grammar and in such cases he will cite them favourably. However, when it comes to the exposition of the meaning of a text he usually quotes the interpretations of Jewish scholars only to reject or refute them.⁴⁶

A frequent criticism of Rabbinic exegetes is that they do not stick to the true, or, to use Calvin's terminology, genuinus meaning (sensus) of the Old Testament.⁴⁷ Instead they 'introduce fables'⁴⁸ or 'they trifle'.⁴⁹ Thus Calvin frequently characterizes Rabbinic interpreters as 'triflers'. This is evident from the following quotation,

... the Rabbins trifle in their usual way; for when an obscure place occurs, they immediately invent some fable; though there be no history, yet they exercise their wit in fabulous glosses, and this I wholly dislike: but what need is there of running to allegory, when we may simply take what the prophet says ...⁵⁰

Such characterizations are frequent throughout Calvin's Old Testament commentaries. Moreover, they are indicative of Calvin's general attitude to the Jews as interpreters of the Old Testament. Not only do the Jews 'trifle' in obscure passages of the Old Testament, but their vaingloriousness causes them to 'pervert' Scripture when it contains anything unfavourable to their own nation. They 'willingly and eagerly ascribe to the glory of their own nation whatever is written everywhere throughout the Scriptures'.⁵¹ This '... ambition of the Jews often compels them to trifle; seeing that they apply their whole study to boasting of the glory of their race.'⁵² In this way their 'ambition' leads them, not only to 'trifle' with Scripture, but even to corrupt and falsify it. Commenting on Joshua 2.1 Calvin writes,

It is indeed a regular practice with the Rabbins, when they would consult for the honour of their nation, presumptuously to wrest Scripture and give a different turn by their fictions to anything that seems not quite reputable.⁵³

However, when we are speaking of the Old Testament, the chief ground of controversy between Jews and Christians was whether or not the Jesus of Christian belief was the fulfilment of Old Testament expectations. For Calvin, Christ forms the link between the Old Testament and the New. If Christ is not the one 'fore-showed and foreshadowed'⁵⁴ in the Old Testament, if he is not the Messiah, then for Calvin there are no grounds of continuity between the community of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament community.

As we have seen, Calvin regarded the Jews as having wittingly rejected their promised Saviour/Messiah in the

person of Jesus.⁵⁵ This, he saw, as an outcome of their national characteristics. They had always been proud and stubborn, and had continually rebelled against God throughout their history.⁵⁶ In the Old Testament they had rejected the prophets sent by God. In the New they rejected the Messiah who was his Son.⁵⁷ A second national characteristic of the Jews is their materialism, they are always eager for gain. This coloured their Messianic expectations, they expected a Christ who would free them from their enemies and bring them material prosperity. This blinded them to God's intended Messiah, Jesus. They are unable to conceive of the kingdom of God in anything but materialistic terms, hence they cannot see the true, spiritual kingdom.⁵⁸ The root of all these other faults is found, Calvin believes, in the most characteristic national trait of the Jews - their lack of faith.⁵⁹

For Calvin the divinity and mission of Jesus are so evidently attested in the Old Testament and so beyond question that only a wilful ignorance on the part of the Jewish nation could refuse to acknowledge it. This colours his characterization of the Jewish interpreters. 'The Rabbis', he affirms,

... display the grossest ignorance and dishonesty. For they do not err through simple ignorance, but they purposely desire to overthrow what Scripture here states clearly concerning the advent of the Christ.⁶⁰

The Jews will not admit, even in the face of the clearest testimonies from the Old Testament, that Jesus is the one promised there. Their stubborn national pride, their materialism and their wilful blindness all prevent them from acknowledging him. But that Jesus is the promised Messiah,

Calvin believes, is evident from innumerable Old Testament passages. Therefore, if the Jews are to continue in their unbelief and at the same time claim the Old Testament as their own they can only do so by 'corrupting or perverting' it. Thus, commenting on Daniel 2.44,45 - a passage which he saw as a clear testimony to Jesus' Messiahship - Calvin says,

The Jews agree with us in thinking this passage cannot be otherwise understood than of the perpetual reign of the Christ ... they differ from us in expecting a Christ of their own. Hence they are compelled in many ways to corrupt this prophecy; because, if they grant that the fourth empire or monarchy was accomplished in the Romans, they must necessarily acquiesce in the Gospel, which testifies of that Messiah who was promised in the Law.⁴¹

This, for him, is the normal Jewish method. They constantly seek to deny the Old Testament's witness to Jesus as the Christ.⁴² Where the Old Testament speaks of the Christ they distort and corrupt it, and because of their unbelief and wilful refusal to acknowledge the Jesus of Christian belief as the Christ they are compelled so to do. On the prophecy in Isaiah 7.14, Calvin has this to say,

This passage is obscure, but the blame lies partly with the Jews, who, by much cavilling, have laboured, as far as lay in their power, to pervert the true exposition. They are hard pressed by this passage; for it contains an illustrious prediction concerning the Messiah, who is here called Immanuel; and therefore they have laboured, by all possible means, to torture the prophet's meaning to another sense.⁴³

In short, the Jewish interpreters '... pervert, without any shame all the testimonies in favour of Christ; and they think it enough to elude whatever presses hard on them.'⁴⁴

Thus Calvin pictures the Jews, hardened and blinded, in a desperate attempt to shield their eyes from the truth which is so evident on the very pages of the book which they claim

as their own against the Christians. They can only continue to do so by 'perverting' that same book, which they do by overlaying it with their 'foolish glosses' and 'fables'.

However, it should be emphasized that for Calvin this corruption of the Old Testament only extended to their interpretations of it. He believes that God has restrained the Jews in their 'perversion' and 'corruption' of the Old Testament. He has not let them go so far as to change the actual text of Scripture.⁴⁵ There is one important exception to this, however, that is, the Messianic prophecy in Psalm 22.16 (22.17 in Hebrew). Here Calvin believes, there is good evidence to suggest that the actual text has been changed by the Jews whose '... only desire is to spoil the crucified Jesus of his titles.'⁴⁶ However, this is very much the exception.⁴⁷ For Calvin rather regarded the Jews as the 'guardians' of the Scriptures. In fact in the Institutes he calls them 'the librarians of the Christian Church'.

Quoting from a saying of Augustine, he writes that the Jews were 'the librarians of the Christian Church, because they supplied us with the books of which they themselves had not the use.'⁴⁸

Hence it is in their interpretations of the Old Testament that the Jews 'corrupt' Scripture. They do so by refusing to acknowledge the Christ who is so clearly revealed there and who was manifested in Jesus of Nazareth. But for Calvin, as we shall see, Christ is the 'end' and 'goal' (scopus) of the whole of Scripture,⁴⁹ hence the Old Testament cannot be understood apart from him. Hence their interpretation is

from the outset radically wrong or 'perverted'. But more than this, they themselves actively seek to pervert the Old Testament by striking Christ - as believed in by Christians - out of its pages.

This sets the background for us to Calvin's conflicts over the Old Testament with the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics. We can now, perhaps, understand something of the significance of the charge of 'Judaizing' that Calvin brings against them in their use and interpretation of the Old Testament. To 'Judaize' the Old Testament would thus appear to signify emptying it of Christ and therefore the Christian Gospel. The full significance of this for Calvin will be brought out in the next chapter. Now, however, we will turn to examine Calvin's understanding of the 'Judaizing' tendencies of the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics.

Christian 'Judaizers'

We have seen that, broadly speaking, Calvin's approach to the Old Testament was worked out on two fronts, against the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics. Calvin saw both of these, though in differing ways, as Judaizing in their interpretation of the Old Testament. The rest of this study will be concerned with examining Calvin's understanding of these two Judaizing tendencies and his reaction to them. In the remainder of the present Chapter we will seek to fulfil the first of these two objectives. We will begin, first of all, with the Anabaptists.

2. Servetus and the Anabaptists

It may seem somewhat strange to us that Calvin referred to Servetus as being an 'Anabaptist', for although Servetus rejected the doctrine and practice of infant Baptism, in many other respects he differed markedly from the Anabaptists and indeed distanced himself from them.⁷⁰ However, as was common in his time, Calvin used the word 'Anabaptist' as a general pejorative title and applied it to a number of diverse groups which often had little in common with each other and many of which were unconcerned with the Baptism issue. We will, therefore, deal with Servetus's view of the Old Testament alongside that of the Anabaptists proper. As will become clear there were similarities in the overall tendencies or results of both Servetus's and the Anabaptists' approach to the Old Testament, though their approaches themselves were different. We will turn, first of all, to Servetus.

a. Servetus

Calvin throughout his commentaries and sermons frequently charges Servetus with 'Judaizing' in his interpretation of the Old Testament. However, this charge of Calvin's is brought out most dramatically during the trial of Servetus which took place in Geneva during August to October 1553.

When on Sunday 13 August 1553 Servetus, having escaped from a prison in Vienne - where he was being held by the Inquisitor General on a heresy charge - arrived in Geneva he was soon recognized and promptly arrested. His trial soon followed. In Geneva too he was tried on a charge of heresy and blasphemy arising out of his heretical views.⁷¹

Calvin had probably made the acquaintance of Servetus in Paris some years earlier, during his first residence there in the years 1532-34, at which time Servetus may have expressed and explained his peculiar tenets to Calvin, though we have no record of this.⁷² Subsequent to this meeting the pair had carried on a correspondence with each other during the period 1546 to 1547.⁷³ Calvin, however, had broken off this correspondence in the belief that Servetus was, as he himself expressed it, 'an obstinate heretic'.⁷⁴ That is, through his contact with him, Calvin had come to the conclusion that Servetus was irredeemable.

Prior to Servetus's arrival in Geneva, in a letter to Farel,

dated 13 February 1546, Calvin had already expressed his intended action should Servetus be foolhardy enough to pay him a personal visit in Geneva, as Servetus had intimated he might do. Calvin writes,

Servetus lately wrote to me ... He takes it upon him to come hither, if it be agreeable to me. But I am unwilling to pledge my word for his safety, for if he shall come, I shall never permit him to depart alive, provided my authority be of any avail.⁷⁶

The accusation against Servetus was lodged by Nicholas de la Fontaine, Calvin's secretary, and the trial began on 14 August 1553. A host of accusations were drawn up against Servetus. These were reduced into 38 Articles by Calvin himself, who also provided 'proof texts' of Servetus's heresies drawn from the writings of Servetus, and especially from his Restitutio, a draft copy of which Servetus had sent to Calvin for his perusal in 1546.⁷⁶ The most important accusation brought against Servetus was that he had attacked and denied the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ as handed down from the early general councils.⁷⁷ This was regarded as tantamount to blasphemy by the Genevan authorities, as a breach of the third commandment and, therefore, as worthy of the punishments laid down for the breach of this commandment in the Old Testament.⁷⁸

It is not, however, our task to give a full account of Servetus's trial, but rather to point to certain elements within it that are relevant to the present thesis. What interests us, then, are certain accusations brought against Servetus during his trial by Calvin and the Compaigne des Pastors to the effect that he was guilty of 'Judaizing' in

his interpretation of the Old Testament. In fact, this charge of Judaizing, as I hope to show, played a prominent role in Servetus's trial and indeed in Calvin's previous dealings with him.

'The central contention of the opponents of Servetus was that his entire system was a vindication of Jews and Judaism; in proof of this assertion, they examined his writings with scrupulous care, and at his trial sought to build their case against him upon their findings.' So wrote L. I. Newman, in his book entitled, Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements.⁷⁹

The accusation of being a 'Judaizer' was frequently levelled at Servetus. Calvin was not the first to bring such an accusation against him. Already, as early as 1530, the reformer Oecolampadius had accused Servetus of 'Judaizing' those passages of Scripture which predicted the coming of Christ.⁸⁰ However, this charge was taken up more forcibly and with more dramatic outcomes by Calvin and his associates in 1553, at Servetus's trial. What were seen as Servetus's Judaistic interpretations of certain Old Testament passages were brought forward as condemning evidence against him.

Of particular importance in this respect is Servetus's interpretation of certain Messianic passages from the prophet Isaiah and especially the 53rd chapter of that prophecy. In a letter written by Calvin to Servetus, Servetus is accused of 'associating' with the Jews in that he applies Isaiah 53 to Cyrus and not to Jesus Christ.⁸¹

Interestingly, this same interpretation of Isaiah is brought forward during Servetus's trial. Moreover, it is mentioned again at the close of the refutation of his errors which was drawn up and signed by Calvin and thirteen others. There we find the following words,

But he has scattered the poison of his impiety still more widely. For twelve years ago when the Lyon Bibles were printed he sullied their margins with many pernicious fabrications. The faithful know that nowhere is the virtue of Christ's death better attested in the Old Testament than in Isaiah 53; yet what the prophet affirms concerning the provision of our reconciliation, the expiation of sins, and the removal of the curse, this corrupter diverts to Cyrus, because in his death the Jews paid the just penalties of their sins.⁸²

Again during both the third and the fourth interrogations of his trial this passage, together with his interpretations of the 7th and 8th chapters of Isaiah was brought forward as condemnatory evidence against Servetus. The account given of these interrogations, runs as follows,

Moreover, respecting the annotations on the Bible, they cited the 7th and 8th chapters of Isaiah, along with the 53rd, in the latter passage, they say, Servetus has assigned to Cyrus, what is assigned to Jesus Christ concerning the blotting out of our sins, and the bearing of our iniquities ...⁸³

In each instance, as the 'minutes' of the trial record, Servetus appeals to Nicholas of Lyra in support of his interpretation.⁸⁴ Lyra himself had drawn heavily, as had Servetus, upon Jewish sources in his commentaries. This, as we shall see, is very significant for Servetus's approach to the Old Testament. In particular, in the interpretation of Isaiah 53, Lyra had drawn heavily upon the mediaeval Jewish exegete, Rashi.⁸⁵

From Servetus's trial it is, therefore, clear that in Calvin's eyes and the eyes of his fellow Pastors Servetus

was guilty of Judaizing in his interpretation of the Old Testament. As they saw it, Servetus's interpretation of the Old Testament was Jewish rather than Christian, and made dangerous concessions to Judaism.

Calvin and his associates attributed Servetus's anti-Trinitarianism to the same Judaizing tendency which they detected in his exegesis of the Old Testament. Among the statements extracted from Servetus's writings and condemned as being blasphemous, the following is to be found, and it is drawn from Book I of Servetus's De Trinitate Erroribus.

... all those who believe a Trinity in the essence of God are Tritheists, true atheists.

And in the same passage he continues,

The Hebrews being supported by so many authorities deservedly wonder at the Tripartite Deity that is introduced to us.⁶⁶

In their reply to these statements, the Genevan ministers state,

In truth it appears as an abomination to see how this wretched man also excuses the blasphemies of the Jews against the Christian religion ...⁶⁷

Servetus felt that the traditional orthodox doctrine of the Trinity was illogical and unbiblical. Hence he sought to develop his own doctrine along what he conceived of as more rational and biblical lines.⁶⁸ His anti-Trinitarianism provided the motive for his interpretation of the Old Testament.

Unravelling Servetus's doctrine of the Trinity is no easy matter, as it seems to be composed of a number of conflicting and contradictory ideas and statements. J.

Friedman attributes this state of affairs to Servetus's having a lack of suitable terminology ready at hand with which to express his doctrine of the Trinity which was substantially modalistic.⁸⁹ Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Servetus drew rather heavily on Jewish sources both in giving expression to his doctrine of the Trinity and also in seeking to substantiate it.⁹⁰ The doctrine of the Trinity, as Servetus saw it, was the major stumbling block in the conversion of the Jews to Christianity,⁹¹ a stumbling block which he felt himself called to remove. Moreover, he considered that the anti-Trinitarian arguments of the Jews were much stronger and better than the Trinitarian arguments of Christians. Hence he was able to write,

The Jews are supported by so many authorities that they naturally wonder at the great division of God ... what sort of reasoning should you rely upon in order that such Jews might be persuaded as you see expecting the messiah today ...⁹²

And in another passage, referring directly to the exegesis of an Old Testament passage we read,

I can not refrain from sighing when I see the replies that Rabbi Kimchi made against the Christians on this point (i.e. the exegesis of Ps. 2.7). I find the reasons with which they sought to convince him so obscure that I can not but weep.⁹³

It is clear from this latter passage that, not only did Servetus believe that the Jews had the strongest arguments on their side, but that also their exegesis of the Old Testament was better.

Most important, for our purposes, is the fact that Servetus seems to have thought that it was from within the Jewish tradition that a solution might be found to the problem of

the doctrine of the Trinity.⁹⁴ It was, therefore, to Jewish sources that Servetus turned in order to develop his own distinctive approach to the interpretation of the Old Testament. This method of Old Testament interpretation, in turn, formed the foundation of his doctrine of the Trinity. In other words, rather than seeking 'proof' texts in the Bible which might seem to support his modalistic position on the Trinity, Servetus sought a solution to the Trinitarian problem by developing a distinctive Old Testament hermeneutic. 'Servetus', as J. Friedman, writing on Servetus's method of exegesis, puts it, 'opted for ... building an entirely new approach to the Bible whose very essence would lead towards modalism.'⁹⁵ Thus Servetus's whole approach to the Old Testament can be seen as arising out of his doctrine of the Trinity, or to be more accurate, his anti-Trinitarianism. His approach to the interpretation of the Old Testament served his modalistic view of the Trinity.

Our next question must, therefore, be what was Servetus's method of exegesis? We can best answer this by continuing the passage quoted from Friedman above. He writes, 'Servetus proposed that the Bible be understood within its own historical, philological and philosophical context ...'. He goes on to quote a passage from Servetus himself, it reads,

For you must bear in mind that all things written about Christ took place in Judea and in the Hebrew tongue ...⁹⁶

Thus Servetus's method was to emphasize the historical particularity of the Old Testament. He therefore maintained that the Old Testament could only be understood when set firmly within the historical and philosophical thought world

which gave rise to it. As a result he stringently maintained that any interpreter, if he was to understand the Old Testament aright, must have a thorough knowledge of both the Hebrew language and the historical background of the Old Testament, that is, the history of Israel and other neighbouring nations.⁹⁷ Servetus attributed the origin and rise of Trinitarian doctrine to a lack of the knowledge of the Hebrew language among the Greek fathers.⁹⁸ Moreover, by utilizing these principles of exegesis, Servetus sought to arrive at the non-christological interpretation of Old Testament prophecy that we have seen was characteristic of him.

In addition, his rejection of the messianic or Christological interpretation of the Old Testament was partly based upon a dispensational concept of the Old Testament. Servetus divided history into five different stages, each of which was self contained and so distinct from all the others. Each period of history, Servetus argued, was granted a degree of revelation proper to it. Those who lived in a particular period were limited to the knowledge current and proper to it and could not transcend that knowledge.⁹⁹ This, when applied to the Old Testament, meant that the prophets, being limited to the degree of knowledge current in their own particular period, could not have seen beyond it. This leads Servetus to the following conclusion,

And to wish ... to apply the prophecies to Christ is to be wanting in good sense, in which matter the Jews accuse us with good reason.¹⁰⁰

Moreover, we find the following statement in the Restitutio,

There is no enigmatic vision of the future then so much as a view of present things.¹⁰¹

Thus, Servetus sought to do away with the christological or messianic interpretation of the Old Testament prophets by interpreting them, as he thought, purely within their own particular historical context. In this way, what the Church, since its earliest times, had seen as the great Messianic passages in the Old Testament, and as proof texts, against the Jews, for the messiahship of Jesus Christ were now emptied of their Christian significance. Isaiah 7.14 was, according to Servetus, not a prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ, but merely a reference to the birth of king Hezekiah, '... who was called the strength of God and Immanuel...'. In the same way Servetus interpreted Isaiah 19.20 as referring to Hezekiah and not Christ as traditional Christian exegesis had done. Jeremiah's prophecy of the 'righteous branch' (Jer. 23.5), 'was meant literally of Zerubbabel' and in Servetus's view had no reference to Christ.¹⁰²

His interpretation of the Psalms followed the same lines. He saw in them little more than what he referred to as, 'David's own attempt at autobiography'.¹⁰³ His comment on Ps. 2.7, sums up his whole approach. Commenting on the phrase, 'Thou art my son; this day have I begotten [thee]' - an important Christological proof text, used within the New Testament itself¹⁰⁴ - Servetus writes, '... David, when he escaped from his enemies is said to be born this day.'¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Ps. 22.16 (v. 17 in Hebrew), traditionally interpreted as a prediction of Jesus' crucifixion, is

interpreted purely as a reference to David, who in fleeing his enemies had suffered certain injuries.¹⁰⁶

It is clear from this brief sketch of Servetus's exegetical method and its results, that there were strong grounds for the accusation of 'Judaizing' made by Calvin and his colleagues. It was against Servetus's whole approach to the Old Testament that Calvin set himself and which elicited the charge of Judaizing from him. We have seen that Calvin viewed the Jews as seeking to obscure the Old Testament's testimony to Christ. In their desperate rebellion against God and their rejection of his Messiah they seek to 'pervert' or 'corrupt' the Old Testament by striking Christ out of it and framing a Messiah after their own imaginations. Servetus's interpretation of the Old Testament seemed little different from this. For he too sought to deny the presence of Christ in the Old Testament and even sought to support Jewish arguments and their exegesis of individual texts. Moreover, as we have seen, Servetus himself freely acknowledged his debt to the widespread and fundamental influence of Jewish commentators. It is not surprising, therefore, that Calvin should write with reference to Servetus's interpretation of Isaiah 41.2,

The perfidious scamp wrenches the passage so as to apply it to Cyrus rather than Christ ... Everyone will admit that I was right when I told him that no author had so boldly corrupted this signal prophecy.¹⁰⁷

Nor is it any wonder that during his trial Calvin and his colleagues should refer to him as 'this good Rabbi (hic bonus Rabbinus)'. Indeed, they would seem to have had ample ground for such a remark!¹⁰⁸ Such remarks on Servetus and criticisms of his interpretation of the Old Testament are

echoed throughout Calvin's writings. Gathering all this material together, it would seem that Calvin conceived of Servetus's exegesis of the Old Testament, stemming as it did from his anti-Trinitarian stance, as tending to what we might call a de-Christianization of the Old Testament. His approach to the Old Testament, by denying its christological content and stressing what we have earlier called a separatio temporum, resulted in a *dissociation* of the two Testaments.¹⁰⁹ In Calvin's opinion, Servetus, with his use of Jewish sources, and his non-christological approach was emptying the Old Testament of its Christian significance and so alienating it from the Church of Christ.

Further, since for Calvin Christ is the foundation of the grace and promises of God in all ages, to deny Christ in the Old Testament is also to deny the presence of God's grace and promises there.¹¹⁰ Thus, in his commentaries and sermons Calvin makes a twofold attack on Servetus. In the first place, for abolishing the promise in the Old Testament and, since such promises are of the essence of the Gospel, for denying the presence of Gospel in the Old Testament. According to Servetus the Old Testament fathers did not partake of the same grace that we in Christ now partake of. More than this, however, to deny the presence of Christ in the Old Testament and thus to deny the fathers any knowledge of Christ, is ^{to} deny them also any knowledge of God whatsoever since God can only be known in and through Christ. Thus Calvin credits Servetus with saying that 'Abraham the father of the faithful had only a chimerical faith and did not really know God' and that '... he worshipped angels instead

of God and knew nothing at all of eternal life'.¹¹¹

This is the significance of the following remark, which is frequently echoed throughout Calvin's writings,

He deprives the fathers who died under the Law of all spiritual grace, as though they were fed like pigs.¹¹²

These remarks are found in a passage from a Sermon on Deuteronomy preached on the 7 June 1555, less than two years after Servetus's execution, and at a time when the controversy over Servetus's execution was still raging strongly. Calvin says,

... it is an abominable blasphemy against God, if it is said that God kept the ancient people like pigs in a sty, and that they had only had some fleeting appearance of the spiritual blessings which have been given us today. Like that miscreant who was punished here, who perverted everything in this way. He was so bold as to vomit out this heresy; that the Old Testament was only a bare form (simple figure). He went as far as saying that Abraham, the father of all believers, had only a chimerical faith (foy fantastique), and that he did not really know God. It was for this reason, he said, that Abraham worshipped angels instead of God, and knew nothing at all of eternal life.¹¹³

All this Calvin saw as arising from Servetus's Old Testament hermeneutics which involved a separation of the Gospel from the Law, that is, of the Old Testament from the New. This is made clear from what he says in a sermon on Deuteronomy 30.6 - a passage in which he groups together the Anabaptists proper and Servetus. He speaks of 'Those fantastical fellows (ces phantastiques), who in our times would wish to abolish the Baptism of small children' before going on to speak of 'that abominable heretic who was punished in this city'. Of them he says,

It seemed to them [the Anabaptists] that circumcision was merely a temporal affair, indeed something ridiculous, and that it was not spiritual for the ancient fathers. Moreover, that abominable heretic who was punished in this city, mocked at all the Sacraments of the Law of Moses.

Abraham had only a shadow of the heavenly life, although he is called the father of the faithful, although it is clear that he was resolved upon the heavenly heritage above all else, he did not receive it. Moreover, the fathers did not know God, they worshipped an angel who was present in visible form instead of God. Such are the horrible blasphemies when one separates the Law from the Gospel in this way.¹¹⁴

He continues the sermon by pointing out that although 'we today have a grace which surpasses what God showed our fathers' yet the fathers partook of the 'spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ' just as we do.¹¹⁵ Later he sums all this up in the following words,

Thus let us note that, although the fathers who lived under the Law were like little children under their tutors and guardians (*petis enfans sous tuteurs et curateurs*), yet they were children of God as we are, they had the self same promise of salvation, the sacraments which God gave them tended to the self same end and they were, consequently, spiritual.¹¹⁶

We have seen that Calvin was acutely aware of Jewish claims with respect to the Old Testament and their criticisms of the Christian use of the Old Testament. Moreover, we have seen that Calvin, in his Old Testament exegetical works and elsewhere engaged in continual conflict with them, seeking to refute their claims. It is no wonder, then, that Calvin should accuse one, like Servetus, who drew heavily on Jewish sources and who took the side of the Jews in what were regarded the fundamentals of the Christian faith, of Judaizing. No doubt as Calvin saw it, Servetus was another opponent in the same warfare, but one that was all the more dangerous since by profession he belonged to the Christian camp. Thus, it would not be too strong to say, that for Calvin Servetus was not merely an opponent, but a traitor in the midst. His treachery could only be made manifest by a full disclosure of his true colour. This is the significance of Calvin's references to Servetus as a 'Rabbi' and

'Judaizer'.

By denying the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity and, by consequence, banishing Christ from the Old Testament, Servetus was thereby shutting the Old Testament saints out from all hope of spiritual salvation. The effect of this, in Calvin's assessment, was to remove the Old Testament from the Christian Church and to hand it back to the Jews.

b. The Anabaptists

In general, the Anabaptists stressed the priority of the New Testament over the Old Testament and sought to subordinate the Old Testament to the New. They taught that the Old Testament period was totally dissimilar from that of the New Testament and that the New Testament not the Old was to be accepted as the ultimate authority for Christians.¹¹⁷ This view of the Old Testament served their Ecclesiology (as Calvin's view of the Old Testament served his), since they wished to establish a 'gathered Church' composed only of true believers and fully separate from the State. Hence, they sought to disassociate the people of God in the form of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament from the Church in the New Testament. Whereas, in the Old Testament the people of God had been a national, theocratic state, in the New Testament it was the gathered company of believers called out from the state and independent of it. Moreover, whereas in the Old Testament Israel, as the people of God, had persecuted her enemies, the ungodly, with the edge of the sword, in the New Testament it is the people of God who are persecuted and who are called upon not to slay their enemies but to suffer at their hands and yet still love them.¹¹⁸ There was, therefore, a dissociation or separation of the two Testaments involved in their attitude to the Old Testament.

There were different emphases amongst the Anabaptist and

Radical groups in their attitudes to Scripture and the Old Testament. However, it is the more evangelical groups amongst them against whom Calvin's comments on the interpretation of the Old Testament are generally directed. Such groups were not quite so extreme in their view of the Old Testament as the spiritualizers were, who totally rejected the Old Testament affirming that it belonged to a previous stage in God's dealings with mankind which had now been superseded by the age of the Spirit and so was totally invalid for Christians. Some spiritualizers went so far in their rejection of the outward forms of religion as to place the New Testament in the same category.¹¹⁹ For the evangelical Anabaptists, such as Menno Simons and Pilgram Marpeck and their followers, however, the New Testament alone was considered normative for Christian teaching and morals. The Old Testament was accepted as part of the canon and as authoritative for instruction and guidance, but only in complete subordination to the New Testament and therefore only in so far as it was thought to be in explicit agreement with the New Testament. The ethics of the Old Testament in toto were felt to be no longer applicable to Christians involving as they did a lower order of morality which necessarily existed before the coming of Christ, but which was felt to be no longer acceptable now that he had come. Thus, except where there was explicit warrant in the New Testament, the Old Testament was not to be followed. For these Anabaptists, in distinction to Calvin and the Reformed Churches, it was the Sermon on the Mount that was considered the sum and norm of Christian behaviour rather than the decalogue.¹²⁰

One important corollary to this view of the Old Testament which, as we shall see, Calvin regarded as very important concerned the question of the status of the faithful under the Old Testament dispensation. Did they partake of the same salvation as believers now do after the coming of Christ? Were they regenerated by the Holy Spirit? Did they know Christ? A negative answer was given to these and similar questions by the Anabaptists.¹²¹ We have seen that Calvin raised the same questions when speaking of Servetus and it is noticeable that he does so when speaking in the same context of the Anabaptists. Thus Calvin associates Servetus and the Anabaptists together in their approach to the Old Testament.¹²²

The Anabaptists construed the two Testaments in terms of a rigid promise-fulfilment schema. By laying full stress on the promise element in this schema, they refused to acknowledge the actuality of salvation in the Old Testament. In their logic, if something is promised it is not yet given; thus, while it is promised, its possession is still future.¹²³ This is similar to Calvin's understanding of Servetus's view that, as he puts it, 'the fathers had only the shadow' and his criticism of Servetus that 'He deprives the fathers who died under the law of all spiritual grace ...'.¹²⁴

The Anabaptist position is made clear in the writings of the south German Anabaptist leader, Pilgram Marpeck, who of all the Anabaptists wrote at most length on this issue.¹²⁵ Thus

in his Admonition (Vermanung), written in 1542, Marpeck states, in a passage in which he criticizes the views of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches, that,

First of all, there is no basis in divine Scriptures to aver that the ancients received the same Holy Spirit and renewal of regeneration as believers in Christ experience now, for the true circumcision of the heart is quite a different matter.¹²⁶

Moreover, Marpeck evaluates the Old Testament purely in terms of promise. Thus in the same work as that just quoted he continues,

The old covenant is merely a covenant of promise. ... What was only promised in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the humanity of Christ.¹²⁷

Further, the promises given to the people of the Old Testament were merely earthly promises, they had reference to this life and concerned only temporal blessings. The faithful in the Old Testament were given no hope of eternal life.¹²⁸ Marpeck sets his views out alongside those of the Reformed theologians in a passage in the preface to his Explanation of the Testaments (Testamentserleutterung), a passage which is worth quoting at length as a succinct statement of the two opposing points of view.

For some time now, and even at present, there has been dissension over the difference between the Old and the New Testaments, between the old Mosaic and the new Christian church. For some say: Christ's suffering was retroactive to the Old Testament. They also say that there was actual forgiveness of sin in the Old Testament leading to eternal life, just as in the New. Furthermore that there was also actual atonement, sacrifice, salvation, healing, comfort, cleansing, sanctification, justification, righteousness, goodness, peace, joy, rest, grace, mediator, hope, faith, love ... in the Old as well as in the New Testaments. Although all these were somewhat less bright, less free, more childish and incomplete, nevertheless the people of the Old Testament were, like us, Christians. ... There are however, those who believe that there is a difference. They say that in the Old Testament it was all only fleshly, figurative, shadowy and temporal, but not actual. Nor did they have the spirit of divine promise which leads to eternal life. Nor did they have other actual things spoken of in this book for they were not then given but

only promised.¹²⁹

It is clear from what Marpeck goes on to say that he was very much of the second opinion which was also typical of many other Anabaptists.

Our chief concern in the present section, however, is to examine Calvin's views on the Anabaptists' understanding of the Old Testament. According to H. Balke, who has made a detailed study of Calvin's dealings with the Anabaptist movement, even prior to 1536, the year when the first edition of Calvin's Institutes appeared, 'Calvin was not only engrossed in the writings of Luther, but was also becoming thoroughly familiar with the radical movements outside of France.'¹³⁰ Evidence for this is his Psychopannychia, originally written in the early part of 1534, which was an attack on the doctrine of Soul sleep advocated by some Anabaptists.¹³¹ However, as far as we have record, Calvin's first debates with the Anabaptists over the place of the Old Testament would seem to have taken place between 1536 and 1538, that is, during his first period in Geneva.¹³² This would, presumably, help to explain why in the second, enlarged edition of the Institutes published in 1539 and written during his banishment in Strasbourg, Calvin added an entirely new chapter on the similarity and difference between the Old Testament and the New, chapter which dealt with the very points at issue between the Reformed position on the Old Testament and that of the Anabaptists. This section was further expanded in subsequent editions of the Institutes until it reached its present size of three chapters in the final, 1559

edition.¹³³

Thus it would seem that as early as his first stay in Geneva (1536-38), Calvin was already aware that one of the main issues separating himself from the Anabaptists was a differing view of the Old Testament and its place in the Christian Church. However, it was during his exile in Strasbourg that Calvin probably had closer contacts with the Anabaptists than at any other time in his life.¹³⁴

Moreover, during this period too he had more leisure and therefore greater opportunity for study and debate than he would ever have again after his return to Geneva. These are no doubt important contributory factors in the addition of the new section on the Old Testament in the 1539 edition of the Institutes.

It is clear from this new material that it was directed specifically against the Anabaptist view of the Old Testament as outlined above, since Calvin himself tells us so. He writes, in an introductory section to the chapter,

Indeed, that wonderful rascal Servetus and certain madmen of the Anabaptist sect, who regard the Israelites as nothing but a herd of swine, make necessary what would in any case have been very profitable for us.¹³⁵

Already, in this chapter, the main lines of the debate on the Old Testament stand out clearly. It would seem that Calvin saw the Anabaptist attitude to the Old Testament as involving a de-Christianization of the Old Testament. Though Calvin never explicitly refers to the Anabaptists as Judaizing the Old Testament, it will become clear as we proceed that he attributes the same tendencies to them as to Servetus. And what is most significant in the final edition

of the Institutes is the fact that Calvin associates the Anabaptist view of the Old Testament with that of Servetus by inserting his name alongside theirs as the reason necessitating a section on the Old Testament.¹³⁶ This would tend to suggest that he regarded the Anabaptist interpretation of the Old Testament as a form of Old Testament Judaizing in the same way as he did the interpretation of Servetus.

We now turn to examine what Calvin's response to the Anabaptist attitude to the Old Testament was. It is clear from the quotation already given from Institutes II.x.i, that Calvin fastened on the Anabaptist view of the Old Testament as containing only fleshy and temporal promises. For Calvin this is equivalent to a rejection of the spiritual character of the Old Testament.¹³⁷ Whereas for the Anabaptists, the Old Testament contains only earthly promises the New Testament contains spiritual ones. The Anabaptists stress the differences between the two Testaments to breaking point. By so doing they make the Old Testament of little relevance to Christians. To this charge Calvin frequently returns both in the Institutes and in his other writings.

The largest part of Institutes II.x is taken up with refuting the Anabaptist contention that the Old Testament fathers partook of merely earthly blessings and promises. Against them Calvin seeks to show that Old Testament believers partook of the same promises as we do and had the same hope of eternal life (II.x.5-23). What is most

interesting is the way he prefaces his whole argument in II.x.3-4. In II.x.3, he argues, in the first place, that the Gospel was promised by God in the Old Testament and quotes Rom. 1.2f. as proof. He continues, '... the gospel does not confine men's hearts to delight in the present life, but lifts them to the hope of immortality. It does not fasten them to earthly pleasures, but by announcing a hope that rests in heaven it, so to speak, transports them thither.' Hence Calvin concludes that since,

The doctrine of the gospel is spiritual, and gives us access to the possession of incorruptible life, let us not think that those to whom it had been promised and announced omitted and neglected the care of the soul, and sought after fleshly pleasures like stupid beasts. Let no one perversely say here that the promises concerning the gospel, sealed in the Law and the Prophets, were intended for the new people. For the apostle, shortly after saying that the gospel was promised in the law, adds: 'Whatever the law contains is without doubt intended specifically for those under the law'[Rom. 3.19]. ... When the apostle says that the promises of the gospel are contained in it, he proves with utter clarity that the Old Testament was particularly concerned with the future life.¹³⁸

Thus Calvin argues against the Anabaptists, from the New Testament itself and from the very nature of the Gospel that believers in the Old Testament actually partook of the blessings and promises of the Gospel. Calvin at this point, therefore, throws down the gauntlet,

Who, then, dares to separate the Jews from Christ, since with them, we hear, was made the covenant of the gospel, the sole foundation of which is Christ? Who dares to estrange from the gift of free salvation those to whom we hear the doctrine of the righteousness of faith was imparted? ¹³⁹

From this it is clear that Calvin regarded the Anabaptists as making the Old Testament devoid of Gospel. The Gospel 'raises men to the hope of immortality' it does not merely 'fix them down to earthly things'. In denying that the Old Testament fathers partook of Gospel blessings the

Anabaptists were denying the presence of Gospel in the Old Testament. But worse than this, since '... the gospel preaching, too, declares nothing else than that sinners are justified apart from their own merit by God's fatherly kindness; and the whole of it is summed up in Christ.'¹⁴⁹ To deny that the fathers partook of the Gospel is to deny that they partook of Christ in whom the Gospel is founded and with whom the Gospel is inseparably linked. This as Calvin saw it was to deny the presence of Christ in the Old Testament. Thus by affirming that the fathers partook merely of earthly promises, the Anabaptists, in Calvin's view, were, by consequence, denying the presence of Christ in the Old Testament and so dissociating it from the New. Without Christ the Old Testament becomes something alien to the Christian Church, it becomes a non-Christian book.

We have seen that Calvin's main contention with the Jews over the Old Testament was that they refused to acknowledge the presence of Jesus as the Christ in it. For Calvin, however, the Old Testament clearly bears witness to the Christ of Christian belief. Hence in seeking to lay claim to the Old Testament over against the Christian claim to it the Jews are driven to pervert Scripture when it speaks of Christ and so to empty it of Christ. This understanding of the Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament forms the background to the charge of 'Judaizing' that Calvin brought against various Christian groups. These too, in one way or another, deny the presence of Christ in the Old Testament. Although, so far as I am aware, Calvin never explicitly brings the charge of 'Judaizing' against the Anabaptists, it

is clear from what we have said about his attitude to Servetus and the fact that he refers to Servetus as an 'Anabaptist', that he would have considered them as falling into the same category. Can it be any accident that it is precisely in this matter of the interpretation of the Old Testament that Calvin associates the Anabaptists with Servetus, who, as we have seen, Calvin characterized as a 'Judaizer'?

Moreover, can it be accidental that this same chapter of the Institutes, which Calvin began as a refutation of 'Servetus and some madmen of the sect of the Anabaptists', and in which he has throughout sought to answer the Anabaptist position on the Old Testament, should close with an attack on the Sadducees at the time of Christ and the Jews of his own day?¹⁴¹ What we have seen of Calvin's response to the Anabaptist approach to the Old Testament, combined with the fact that Calvin associates the Anabaptists in their position on the Old Testament, on the one hand, with Servetus and, on the other, with the Jews would, tend to suggest that it is quite legitimate to apply to them also the title of 'Judaizers'.

3. The Roman Catholics: 'Papal Judaism'

As we have indicated, Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics, was worked out on two fronts, that is against the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics. The first of these, the Anabaptists, we have already examined, we come now to a consideration of the second, the Roman Catholics.

Calvin viewed the Anabaptists as bringing about a separation of the two Testaments. By denying the presence of Christ in the Old Testament and salvation in him they were denying the relevance of the Old Testament for the Christian Church. With the Roman Catholics, however, Calvin saw another, opposite tendency at work in their use of the Old Testament, which, however, had the same results. The Roman Catholics, far from denying the validity of the Old Testament, did the very opposite. Far from rejecting the Old Testament they appropriated it and imposed it on the Christian Church in toto and in such a way as to subordinate the New Testament to it. The Anabaptists so distinguished the Testaments as to deny any relation between them, whereas the Roman Catholics so confounded and mixed up the Testaments as to overlook the differences between them. This 'confusio temporum', as Calvin calls it, though very different from the Anabaptists' 'separatio temporum', he also labelled 'Judaizing'. This was because he saw in both of them the same ultimate effect; the obscuring of the Gospel of Christ. Whereas the Anabaptists set the Gospel above the law, the New Testament above the Old, and so obscured Christ in the Old Testament, the Roman

Catholics were setting the law above the Gospel, imposing the Old Testament on the New, and by so doing they obscured the Gospel.

Calvin frequently charges the Roman Catholics with 'Judaizing' in their usage and interpretation of the Old Testament. He goes so far as to refer to their theologians as 'those Rabbis (illi Rabbini)' and he accuses them of 'foolishly imitating the Jews'.¹⁴² Such accusations were no mere quibble over some refined point of Old Testament exegesis. Rather they indicate that Calvin saw himself as engaged in a conflict for the proper use and place of the Old and ultimately the New Testament in the Christian Church. They indicate a clash between two conflicting Old Testament hermeneutics. For it was to a wrong usage and approach to the Old Testament that Calvin traced many of what he saw as the distinctive errors of Roman Catholicism by which they had corrupted the Gospel. Hence he affirms that the Roman Catholics had dared '... to bury the clarity of the Gospel with a new Judaism (evangelii claritatem novo Iudaismo obruere ausi sunt)'.¹⁴³

So much is already clear from these statements drawn from his commentary on Exodus 28. Here it is clear that Calvin attributes much that he thinks wrong in the Roman Catholic Church to a fundamentally wrong use of the Old Testament. His commentary on this chapter of Exodus is found in the Harmony of the Last Four Books of Moses. It is worth looking at in detail. The chapter deals with the setting apart of Aaron and his sons for the work of the Priesthood. Calvin

arranges it with other material from Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy under the Second Commandment, which he interprets as referring to the 'legitimate worship' of God (*legitimum eius cultum*).¹⁴⁴ The Calvin Translation Society edition divides Calvin's treatment of the second commandment up into a number of sections which correspond to a distinction Calvin himself makes. 'The legal worship', as Calvin calls it, is divided into three parts, 'the tabernacle, the priestly office and sacrifice.'¹⁴⁵ It is with the second of these that his interpretation of Exodus 28 is concerned. He begins by interpreting the Old Testament priesthood as a type of Christ. At the end of his exposition he deals with the statement made in verse 43 that 'it was to be a statute for ever'.¹⁴⁶ Commenting on the Hebrew word 'ôlm (for ever) in this verse brings him to attack the Roman Catholics. He sets down the principle,

... that the word 'ôlm , whenever the legal types are in question, attains its end in the advent of Christ; and assuredly this is the true perpetuity of the ceremonies, that they should rest in Christ, who is their full truth and substance.

He goes on to state that the use of the ceremonies '... has ceased after the manifestation of their reality.' It is precisely at this point that the Roman Catholics err in their use of the Old Testament. They are guilty of a 'twofold sacrilege'. Calvin says,

... in their foolish imitation of the Jews, they have heaped together ceremonies which are directly opposed to the nature of Christ's priesthood.

Secondly, as a result of the above,

... they have dared to obscure the brightness of the Gospel with a new Judaism.¹⁴⁷

Calvin's fundamental criticism of the Roman Catholic usage

of the Old Testament is that they do not take sufficiently into account the differences between the Old Testament era and the New. They ignore the differences between the people of God in the Old Testament period and believers in the New Testament period. They equate their priests with the priesthood in the Old Testament.¹⁴⁸ They seek to justify payment of tithes because such were paid to priests in the Old Testament.¹⁴⁹ The mass as a sacrifice is likewise supported by equating their priests with the priests in the Old Testament who offered sacrifices.¹⁵⁰ They support pilgrimages by appealing to the fact that the passover lamb in the Old Testament had to be eaten in one place.¹⁵¹ Again they support their various ceremonial innovations by pointing to Old Testament ceremonial,¹⁵² and so forth. The Roman Catholic use of the Old Testament, as did that of the Anabaptists, served their ecclesiology. However, Calvin criticizes the Roman Catholics of his day for precisely the opposite attitude to that of the Anabaptists. With the Roman Catholics, therefore, he is concerned to emphasize the dissimilarity of the two Testaments whereas with the Anabaptists he was concerned to emphasize their similarity.

The criticism that the Roman Catholics fail to distinguish properly between the two Testaments is brought out in many passages from Calvin's commentaries and sermons. Thus speaking on Deuteronomy 16.1-4, a passage in which he attacks Roman Catholic pilgrimages, Calvin says,

It was not to give precedent to the pilgrimages which the Papists have invented, for in this they have shown that they are no different from the Jews. Moreover, there is no question of their excusing themselves by the example of the Jews, for the latter had a command from God, but the Papists have made their pilgrimages without any command.

And in this they have utterly rejected Jesus Christ and have overturned what is declared in the fourth chapter of St. John, 'That the time is come when God will no longer be worshipped in a certain place, but that he would have his name called upon throughout the whole world.'¹⁵³

In this context Calvin introduces the idea of accommodation, a concept that is fundamental to his Old Testament hermeneutics and which we shall examine in detail later in this study. The Old Testament modes of worship with their emphasis on the ceremonial were accommodated to the people of God in the Old Testament. 'God's worship is spiritual' Calvin affirms, and this is true of both the Old Testament and the New. However, the form that the worship of God takes in each Testament differs. Calvin frequently quotes in support of this the words in John 4.23, 'But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.'¹⁵⁴ Thus, in terms of the outward forms of worship, there is a difference between the people of God in the Old Testament and in the New. In the Old Testament the 'spiritual worship of God' was cloaked in the external forms of rituals and ceremonies. These were necessary in the Old Testament as pedagogic devices for two reasons, in the first place, because of the dullness and ignorance of the Jewish people and ~~and~~ in the second, because the full light had not yet dawned with the coming of Christ. Thus, there is a twofold accommodation involved.

As 'pedagogues' the ceremonial aspects of the law were meant to lead the Old Testament fathers to Christ.¹⁵⁵ Calvin refers to them as 'shadows' which adumbrated Christ to those who lived during the Old Testament period. They prefigured

Christ, but in a 'dark', obscure manner.¹⁵⁶ They were necessary until the coming of Christ. They kept the eyes of the fathers fixed on Christ, but once Christ has come their usefulness is at an end and they are abolished. As the light of dawn dispels the shadows of night so the coming of Christ dispels the 'shadows' of the law.¹⁵⁷

Hence the ceremonial aspects of the Old Testament, being accommodated to the needs and condition of a particular people at a particular time were only temporary and limited to that particular nation, they are no longer in force for us.¹⁵⁸ This is where, for Calvin, the Catholics make their fundamental hermeneutical mistake. They fail to recognize the Old Testament's accommodated character. By overlooking this they fail to distinguish between what is temporary in the Old Testament - intended only for the Jews - and what is permanent.

Such a wrong approach to the interpretation of the Old Testament, ignoring its accommodated nature, Calvin felt, could have far reaching consequences in the interpretation of prophecy, especially in those prophecies which concern the kingdom of Christ. This is brought out in Calvin's commentary on Malachi 1.11, where the prophet says, 'My name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering'. Both Calvin and the Roman Catholics, as did the exegetical tradition, understood this prophecy as a prediction of the kingdom of Christ. The Roman Catholics, however, used it to support their doctrine of the Mass as a sacrifice. Calvin

counters this interpretation by pointing out that the prophet's language is accommodated in its expressions to the Jews under the Old Testament. Calvin writes,

Moreover the prophet by offering and by incense, means the worship of God; and this mode of speaking is common in the Scriptures, for the Prophets who were under the law accommodated their expressions to the comprehension of the people. Whenever then they intended to show that the whole world would come to the faith and true religion - 'An altar,' they say, 'shall be built to God;' and by altar they no doubt meant spiritual worship, and not that after Christ's coming sacrifices ought to be offered. For now there is no altar for us; and whosoever builds an altar for himself subverts the cross of Christ, on which he offered the only true and perpetual sacrifice.

Calvin continues by laying down a general principle for the interpretation of the Old Testament.

It then follows that this mode of speaking ought to be so taken, that we may understand the analogy between the legal rites, and the spiritual manner of worshipping God now prescribed in the gospel.

Although 'There was also under the Old Testament the spiritual worship of God' a distinction must be drawn between it and the worship of the New Testament. There is, as the above quotation indicates, an analogy between the forms of worship in the Old Testament and those in the New, 'but there were then shadows connected with it'. It is true that 'God was worshipped in spirit by the fathers, 'but' their worship 'was concealed under outward rites' whereas 'now under the gospel the simple, and so to speak, the naked truth is taught'. Thus,

What the Prophet says of offering and incense availed under the law; but we must now see what God commands in his gospel, and how he would have us to worship him. We do not find there any incense or sacrifices.

This leads Calvin to launch a direct attack on the Old Testament interpretation of the Roman Catholic Church.

And thus it appears how absurd are the Papists, when they hence infer that God cannot be worshipped without some kind of sacrifice; and on this ground they defend the

impiety of their mass, as though it were the sacrifice of which the Prophet speaks. But nothing can be more foolish and puerile; for the prophet, as we have said, adopts a mode of speaking common in Scripture.

He goes on in the same passage to compare Malachi with 'Joel' who 'accommodated what he said to the time of the law'. 'So also', he continues, 'in this place the prophet, by offering and incense, designates the spiritual worship of God.'¹⁵⁹

Closely associated with this idea of accommodation is Calvin's idea of the Old Testament as 'the childhood of the Church'.¹⁶⁰ As we have seen, when speaking of his doctrine of the Church, Calvin considered the Church to have existed in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Those fathers who knew Christ and trusted in him as their only hope of salvation, in other words who were elect, were united to Christ by the Holy Spirit and thus were as much a part of the body of Christ as believers after the coming of Christ are. However, he draws a distinction between the Church before Christ's advent and after.

In the Old Testament we find the Church in its childhood, but in the New Testament, after Christ has come and brought the fuller revelation, the Church reaches its manhood.¹⁶¹ Thus for Calvin there are two eras, and the Old Testament and the New Testament represent two ages of the Church. The ceremonies contained in the law belonged to the Church's infancy. The Roman Catholics, however, confuse these two ages and seek to impose upon the Church in its manhood what belonged to the Church in its infancy. Calvin makes this clear in a sermon on Deuteronomy 16.9-12, where he says,

However that may be, they [the Jews] had this figure. Today, without such a ceremony we must have the truth. Hence we see what great superstition there exists amongst the Papists, for they have converted this festival of affliction into their lenten fasts ... and they allege the example of the Jews. Indeed, but we must always return to this distinction that Paul sets down for the Galatians, between us and the fathers, for otherwise how has the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ benefited us? If today we must have these shadows which were under the law, where is the liberty of which he speaks? ... we are no longer brought up (gouverner) like little children (comme petits enfans), for this [form of upbringing] was used until the advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, and until he appeared in the world. Now, however, we must abandon the figures, and that which belongs to the rudeness of that time, and we must come to the true marrow and substance.¹⁴²

What belongs to the Church in its infancy cannot be applied to the Church in its maturity or adulthood. Thus when the Roman Catholics seek to justify images in Churches from the directions given in Exodus 26 as to the decoration and building of the Ark of the Covenant, Calvin replies,

Ridiculous is it of the Papists to infer from hence that churches would be empty and unsightly unless they were adorned with images ... it is preposterous, as I have said, forcibly to transfer these rudiments, which God delivered only to his ancient people, to the fulness of time, when the church has grown up and passed out of its childhood.¹⁴³

This failure to acknowledge the differences between the two Testaments leads the Roman Catholics to imitate the Jews in things that no longer belong to the New Covenant. This, Calvin believes, is the explanation for many of the Roman Catholic 'innovations'. Like 'apes they foolishly imitate the Jews'.

Hence it appears how foolishly the papal Bishops like apes imitate Moses, when they sprinkle their priests, altars, and other vanities with stinking oil. Seeing that it is clear enough that this ceremony of sprinkling, belonging as it did to the ancient shadows of the law (veteres legis umbras), ceased with the coming of Christ.¹⁴⁴

It was upon this 'apish' imitation of the Jews by the Roman Catholics which itself was the result of a wrong approach to

the Old Testament that Calvin blamed many of what he saw as the distinctive errors of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus he writes, in his Commentary on the Psalms,

The Papists have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jews (a Iudaeis mutuati sunt papistae).¹⁴⁵

Calvin continues the passage by explaining that the whole passover was symbolic of Christ and that God wanted the people to gather at Jerusalem to sacrifice the pascal lamb so as to preserve this symbolism.

Hence it is that Calvin accuses the Roman Catholics of having 'utterly rejected Jesus Christ'. The Old Testament ceremonies to which the Roman Catholics appeal to support their practices were symbolic of Christ in the Old Testament. More than that, they actually mediated the reality of Christ and his grace to Old Testament believers. But now Christ has come there is no longer any need for the symbol. We have Christ and his grace in reality. By re-establishing the symbol, the Roman Catholics are in fact rejecting the reality. This is a point that Calvin makes frequently when speaking of the Old Testament ceremonies. Hence, commenting on Numbers 7, a text which was used by the Roman Catholic priests to justify their immunity from secular laws, Calvin writes,

That under this pretext the Papal clergy should claim immunity for themselves, so that they may live as they like in exemption from the laws, is not only an unsound deduction, but one full of impious mockery; for, since the ancient priesthood attained its end in Christ, the succession, which they allege, robs Christ of His right, as if the full truth had not been manifest in Him.¹⁴⁶

Thus it is clear that in the Roman Catholics Calvin saw another form of Judaizing, which although somewhat different

from the first form nevertheless had the same result, that is, it 'obscured the Gospel'. The Catholics, by ignoring the difference between the two Testaments and so confusing them, were not only undoing what Christ had done, but were also bringing about a 'confusio temporum' which brought the Church into the bondage of a 'new Judaism'. Thus they 'rob Christ of his right'.

In this way Calvin traces many of what he saw as the errors of the Catholic Church to a faulty Old Testament hermeneutic. The Catholics seek to do that which Calvin considered as being fundamentally impossible and downright absurd. By their ceremonies and 'innovations' they confound two distinct eras or 'dispensations' in the history of revelation. Hence they obscure the light of Christ with the 'shadows' of the old law. It was not so much that they took what belonged in its historical particularity to the Jews and imposed it on the Church of Christ, but worse they failed to take into account the different stages within God's plan of redemption, imposing what belonged to the earlier 'childish', 'shadowy' stage onto the time of fullness 'manhood' and 'light'.

Once again it will be helpful to summarize the findings of this chapter. Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics were shaped by theological conflicts. We have sought to look at these, as far as possible, through Calvin's own eyes. We have seen that Calvin reacted to a tendency in his own day which moved towards what he saw as a Judaizing of the Old Testament. The Jews, in their denial of Jesus as the Christ and their anti-Christian polemic, 'corrupt' and 'pervert' the Old Testament by 'excluding Christ from it'. Such a Judaizing of the Old Testament was not, however, confined to the Jews. Amongst Christians too Calvin discerned a tendency to Judaize the Old Testament. Servetus Judaized the Old Testament by developing an approach to it in support of his unorthodox doctrine of the Trinity which involved a radical separation of the two Testaments. In Calvin's eyes, Servetus's understanding of the Old Testament and his adoption of Jewish interpretations excluded all continuity between it and the New Testament. Here too, Christ was being excluded from the Old Testament and, as a result, the Old Testament was de-spiritualized and the Gospel obscured. The Anabaptists were guilty of a similar fault. They subordinated the Old Testament to the New. The Old Testament contained merely the promise of spiritual blessings, but the reality was reserved for the New Testament. Again Christ was excluded from the Old Testament and the Gospel was obscured. Finally, there were the Roman Catholics. In them Calvin too discerned a tendency to Judaize the Old Testament. However, they did so by travelling along a different path. Here it

was not a case of a 'separatio', but of a 'confusio temporum'. The Anabaptists and Servetus failed to see the continuity between the two Testaments, the Roman Catholics failed to see the difference. What belonged to the old dispensation was imposed on the new. The 'shadows' of the Old Testament cast their darkness on the 'brightness' of the New. Again the Gospel was obscured.

From this it is clear that for Calvin what was involved was the understanding of the Old Testament as a Christian book and its continuing significance in the Christian Church. Moreover, this conflict over the Judaizing of the Old Testament, as Calvin saw it, also involved a correct understanding of the Gospel. Hence its significance touched the very heart of the Christian message.

Our next task is to ask how Calvin sought to respond to this Judaizing tendency and appropriate the Old Testament for the Church. In other words, we are inquiring after Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics.

Chapter 3

The Old Testament as Gospel: Christ as the Scopus of Scripture

We have seen that Calvin, in approaching the Old Testament, was confronted with two opposite tendencies, both of which he thought of as erroneous and which he labelled 'Judaism'. On the one hand there was a Judaizing tendency which conceived of the Old Testament as a Jewish book and thus, in varying degrees, as irrelevant to Christians. At the opposite end of the spectrum there was a tendency to Judaize the New Testament, by imposing distinctively Old Testament/Jewish ideas and forms on it. The first approach stressed the difference between the two Testaments to breaking point, whilst the second over-stressed their similarity. Calvin was critical of both of these extremes. His own solution to the problem of the Old Testament, which we will turn to next, lay somewhere between these two extremes. To the question of whether the Old Testament can be thought of as 'Christian' Calvin wanted to say both 'Yes' and 'No', he wanted to give both a positive and a negative answer. The task of the remainder of this study will be to show how Calvin worked out the 'Yes' and the 'No', the negative and the positive side to his answer. We will first of all look at the 'Yes', the positive side to his answer, for it is this which in every sense is primary.

Calvin, as we have seen, charged the Anabaptists and Servetus with Judaizing in their interpretation of the Old

Testament. As Calvin saw it they were bringing about a separatio of the Old Testament from the New. Thus they were rendering the Old Testament irrelevant to the Christian Church and so 'obscuring the Gospel'. The seriousness with which Calvin took this is evident from the fact that in the second edition of the Institutes (written in 1539, during his stay in Strasbourg when he had extensive contacts with various Anabaptist groups and engaged in prolonged discussions with them) he added an entirely new chapter (later expanded into three chapters in the final edition of 1559) on the relation between the Old and New Testaments with the aim of answering the anabaptist position.¹

The implication of this charge of Judaizing is that in Calvin's view these various groups, in one way or another, have, if I may so speak, 'de-Christianized' the Old Testament. This in turn implies that Calvin conceived of the Old Testament as, in some way, a 'Christian book', and thus that one must read it not as a 'Jew', but as a Christian. How could Calvin conceive of the Old Testament in this way? What was it about the Old Testament that enabled him, in opposition to this Judaizing tendency, to give a positive, affirmative response to it, to conceive of it as 'Christian' and so seek to appropriate it for the Church of Christ? The present chapter will seek to give some answer to such questions as these.

In seeking to respond to these questions, one simple and fundamental answer can be given: in Calvin's conception, the Old Testament includes within itself Gospel. The Old Testament, in other words, is not devoid of Gospel. Thus, '... the Old Testament was both founded upon the free mercy of God and confirmed by the intercession of Christ (et gratuita Dei misericordia constituisse, et Christi intercessione fuisse confirmatum). For Gospel preaching proclaims nothing other than that sinners are justified by the fatherly kindness of God, irrespective of their own merit.'² He continues,

Who, then, dares to separate the Jews from Christ, since with them, we hear, was made the covenant of the Gospel, the sole foundation of which is Christ (quibuscum audimus fuisse percussum Evangelii foedus, cuius unicum fundamentum Christus est)? Who dares to estrange from the gift of free salvation those to whom we hear the doctrine of the righteousness of faith was imparted?

In brief, '... the covenant of Grace [a synonym for the Gospel] is contained in the law .. .'³

Hence the Law and the Gospel⁴ are not to be thought of as contradictory or as two opposing realities. Commenting on Psalm 19.7ff., in which the Psalmist extols the Law, Calvin writes,

David commends the whole doctrine of the Law (totam legis doctrinam), with which the Gospel agrees (cui evangelium respondet), and therefore, he includes Christ under it.⁵

Similarly, commenting on the statement made in Romans 3.21, that the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel was witnessed to by the law and the prophets, Calvin writes,

Paul adds this, that the Gospel should not seem to be - contrary to the law in conferring free righteousness....

If the law bears testimony to free righteousness, it is evident that it was not given to teach men how to obtain righteousness for themselves by works.⁶

Thus, the Law, or more accurately, 'the whole doctrine of the Law' (totam legis doctrinam), the Law considered in its widest extent, agrees with the Gospel and includes Christ. Here, then, we have Calvin's basic conception of the Old Testament. The Old Testament contains Gospel and is thus not inconsistent with the New Testament.

However, Calvin never allows this to obliterate the distinction between Law and Gospel and thus between the two Testaments. Although it contains Gospel and agrees with it, Calvin never designates the Old Testament 'Gospel', just as he never calls the New Testament 'Law'. When speaking about the presence of Gospel in the Old Testament, he frequently shows great caution in his use of terms. The term Gospel, correctly speaking, that is, following its biblical usage, '. . . is a solemn proclamation of the grace revealed in Christ.' Hence '... the word denotes the New Testament.'⁷ In the Institutes Calvin writes, 'Now I take the gospel to be the clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ.' Thus, he continues, 'In a higher sense (per excellentiam, the older translation by Beveridge has, 'by way of excellence', which is probably a better interpretation of the phrase which could also be translated, 'above all') the word refers to the proclamation of the grace manifested in Christ.'⁸

Strictly speaking, therefore, the word 'Gospel' belongs to the New Testament since it speaks of Christ in his incarnation. However, we have already seen that Calvin

speaks of the Gospel and indeed of Christ as being present in the Old Testament. Thus we are led to ask how Gospel and therefore Christ are present in the Old Testament, or in other words what is it that attests the presence of Gospel in the Old Testament?

For Calvin the answer to this question is to be found in the promises of God's mercy and grace which are scattered throughout the Old Testament. Such promises, for Calvin, are of the essence of the Gospel. Speaking in the Institutes of the Old Testament Calvin can say, quite simply, that '... the promises of the Gospel are comprised within it (sub eo ... Evangelii promissiones contineri).' Again in the Institutes we read,

I recognize, of course, that since Paul calls the gospel 'the doctrine of faith' (II Tim.4:10), all those promises of free remission of sins which commonly occur in the law, whereby God reconciles men to himself, are counted as parts of it.¹⁰

Hence, Calvin continues,

From this it follows, that the word 'Gospel', taken in the broad sense (Latin (1559): large sumendo; French (1560): generalement), includes those testimonies of his mercy and fatherly favour which God gave to the patriarchs of old.¹¹

As it is the 'whole doctrine of the Law', the Law in its broadest extent which contains Gospel, so it is Gospel 'taken in the broad sense' of the word which is to be found in the Law. The Old Testament is not exclusive of Gospel, since it, like the New Testament, includes promises of God's free mercy and favour.¹² The same ideas are also expressed in the argumentum to Calvin's commentary on the Gospel of John.

Some extend the word Gospel to all the free promises of

God scattered even in the Law and the Prophets. And it cannot be denied that whenever God declares that He will be propitious to men and forgives their sins, He sets forth Christ at the same time, whose property it is to shed abroad the rays of joy wherever He shines. I admit therefore that the fathers partook of the same Gospel as ourselves, so far as the faith of free salvation is concerned.¹³

Commenting on Romans 10.8 Calvin can write,

Paul declares that in the ministry of the Gospel there was complete agreement between him and Moses, since Moses too has placed our happiness in the free promise of divine grace alone.¹⁴

The essence of the Gospel, 'the free promise of divine grace alone', is to be found at the heart of the Old Testament, it is proclaimed as truly by Moses as it is by Paul. For Moses too the Gospel promise is the only foundation of 'our happiness', hence Moses too, rooted as he is in the Old Testament, is a witness to the Gospel, no, more, he is a minister and preacher of it.

It is for this reason that Calvin, against the Anabaptists and Servetus, so strongly maintains that the Old Testament promises do not merely concern temporal and earthly blessings such as the land or material prosperity. Rather these earthly realities are only the signs of the higher, spiritual promise. He speaks of '... the appalling impudence of those fanatics who do not hesitate to regard the promises of the Old Testament as temporal, and to confine them to the present world.'¹⁵ And in the Institutes he writes of,

... that wonderful rascal Servetus and certain madmen of the Anabaptist sect, who regard the Israelites as nothing but a herd of swine ...For they babble of the Israelites as fattened by the Lord on this earth without any hope of heavenly immortality.¹⁶

On the contrary, believers under the Old Testament partook

of the same Gospel promises as believers today. However, they partook of them under the forms of temporal realities. In a sermon on Deuteronomy chapter 11 Calvin states,

Although Moses speaks here only of the land of Canaan and of the fruits that the people would gather for their food and sustenance, it should not be thought that God meant to lead the faithful of that time no further than these things. For it is most certain that they had the promise of life in the self same way as it is contained today in the Gospel.¹⁷

The land of Canaan was the pledge of a better inheritance. The fathers under the Old Testament knew this, thus 'God did not set forth the land of Canaan to the Jews so that they should rest content with it ...' rather, '... under the earthly inheritance which he had promised to their fathers he gave them a taste of the heavenly heritage.'¹⁸

It is because of the promises, the same promises as are contained in the Gospel, that the Old Testament was and can still be a concern of Christian faith, an object on which faith can fix itself. Certain statements that Calvin makes in expounding his doctrine of faith will help to clarify this further.

Although, as has been frequently pointed out, Calvin's Institutes are not a systematic theology in the sense that there is one central dogma from which the rest of the system is then deduced,¹⁹ yet it would seem, as recent studies have shown, that the doctrine of faith plays somewhat of a pivotal role.²⁰ Indeed the very position of Calvin's treatment of faith in the second chapter of the third book of the Institutes means that it occupies a central position. Moreover, it has been argued that Calvin sought to relate

all his other doctrines to it.²¹

Here too we find that the promises play a fundamental role. Calvin's definition of faith comes in III.ii.7., and is most significant from our point of view.

Now we shall possess a right definition of faith if we call it a firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us, founded on the truth of the freely given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds, and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit.²²

Elsewhere, Calvin also defines faith in connection with the promises, but now connects the promises with the Gospel.

The apostle tells us that faith perishes if our soul does not rest securely in the goodness of God. Faith is therefore not the mere acknowledgment of God or of his truth, nor is it even the simple persuasion that there is a God, and that his word is truth, but is the sure knowledge of divine mercy which is conceived from the Gospel, and brings peace of conscience in the presence of God. The sum of the matter is, therefore, that if salvation depends on the observance of the law, the mind will not be able to have any confidence in it and indeed all the promises offered to us by God will prove of no effect.²³

Hence, for Calvin, faith can only rest upon a knowledge of God's mercy and the conviction of his good intent towards oneself. Both of these are manifested only through the promises which form the essence of the Gospel.

On the basis of this definition of faith Calvin goes on to make a distinction within the Word of God itself. Not every part of Scripture, Calvin argues, can be regarded as the object of faith as defined above nor does every part of Scripture engender such faith. In the same chapter of the Institutes as that quoted above, Calvin himself poses the following question,

But since man's heart is not aroused to faith at every word of God, we must find out at this point what, strictly speaking, faith looks to in the Word.²⁴

He goes on to give us some examples of what he means,

God's word to Adam was, 'You shall surely die' (Gen. 2.17). God's word to Cain was, 'The blood of your brother cries out to me from the earth' (Gen. 4.10). But these are so far from being capable of establishing faith that they can of themselves do nothing but shake it. .. Where our conscience sees only indignation and vengeance, how can it fail to tremble and be afraid? or to shun the God whom it dreads? Yet faith ought to seek God, not to shun him.²⁵

Calvin later makes a distinction between faith as the intellectual content of belief and faith proper, the act of faith which takes hold of the promises of God's free favour.²⁶ Faith in the former sense must, of course, 'accept and embrace the Word of God in all its parts',²⁷ but not so faith in the latter sense, faith as an act of trust and self surrender to the mercy of God. Calvin continues,

In the meantime, we do not deny that it is the function of faith to subscribe to God's truth whenever and whatever, and however it speaks. But we ask only what faith finds in the Word of the Lord upon which to lean and rest.²⁸

Not every word of God is fitted to create in us or form the basis of faith as trust. Faith in this sense cannot rest on God's threats nor on the Law nor even on truths about God albeit they tell us that God is merciful and true.²⁹ For 'It would be presumptuous in us to hold that God is propitious to us, had we not his own testimony and did he not precede us by his invitation, which leaves no doubt or uncertainty as to his will.'³⁰ Hence, faith can rest only upon the promises of God's mercy held out in Scripture. In other words, since such promises form the essence of Gospel, it is the Gospel that forms the proper object of faith understood as trust or belief. It is not surprising, therefore, that Calvin should write,

We make the freely given promise of God the foundation of

faith because upon it faith properly rests. Faith is certain that God is true in all things whether he command or forbid, whether he promise or threaten; and it also obediently receives his commandments, observes his prohibitions, heeds his threats. Nevertheless, faith properly begins with the promise, rests in it, and ends in it. For in God faith seeks life: a life that is not found in commandments or declarations of penalties, but in the promise of mercy, and only in a freely given promise.³¹

Thus it is those parts of Scripture which tell us of God's free promises of mercy, that is, those parts which proclaim the Gospel, that faith, properly speaking, has regard to. It is such faith 'which separates the Children of God from the reprobate',³² such faith justifies a man and makes him a true believer.

If someone believes that God both justly commands all that he commands and truly threatens, shall he therefore be called a believer? By no means! Therefore, there can be no firm condition of faith unless it rests on God's mercy.³³

This distinction within the one Word of God between what is and what is not the proper object of faith, understood as the act of justifying faith, would thus seem, in some respects, to correspond to the distinction between Gospel and Law. What is most significant from the point of view of the present study is that Calvin finds this proper object of faith, not only in the New Testament, the Gospel proper, but within the Old Testament too.³⁴ For, as we have seen, the Old Testament contains promises of God's free mercy. Thus it is that Calvin can apply this distinction to the Old Testament. It too, in certain parts, can be the object of this justifying faith, since it too contains promises of God's mercy. In other words, the Old Testament too contains Gospel.³⁵

It is clear from this that although Calvin habitually designates the Old Testament, 'the Law' and the New

Testament, 'the Gospel',³⁶ these are not to be thought of as mutually exclusive. The Law is not without Gospel, likewise the Gospel is not without Law.³⁷ Hence the terms 'Law' and 'Gospel' do not merely distinguish between the Testaments, but also distinguish within each Testament. In this respect, therefore, there is a basic unity between the two Testaments in the fact that both contain the elements of Law and Gospel.

As we have already seen, Calvin does not allow this fundamental similarity to obscure the difference between the two Testaments. They do not for him become one, undifferentiated whole. The New Testament contains 'the clear manifestation of the mystery of Christ'. The promises are there clearly set forth, whereas in the Old Testament Christ is more obscurely revealed and the promises are not so clear.³⁸ However, such statements as these make it clear that Calvin conceived of the difference between the Testaments, in respect of Law and Gospel, as being merely one of degree. The emphasis on the clearness of manifestation is significant.³⁹ The difference between the Old Testament and the New, considered in terms of Law and Gospel, is here defined in terms of 'clearness of manifestation'. In the New Testament, though it too contains Law, it is the promises and therefore Gospel that is most in evidence, for Christ is clearly revealed in it. Whereas in the Old Testament, though there are promises and thus Gospel, it is the Law with its threats that is most in evidence, and Christ, though present, is obscurely revealed, and his presence is a hidden presence.

The promises of the Gospel, however, are found only here and there in the writings of Moses, and these are somewhat obscure, while the precepts and rewards, appointed for those who observe the law, frequently occur. The function, therefore, of teaching the character of the true righteousness of works is, justifiably, peculiarly attributed to Moses, as is also the function of showing the nature of the remuneration which awaits those who observe it, and what punishment awaits those who transgress it.⁴⁰

It is for this reason that we are able to call the Old Testament the Law and the New Testament the Gospel, because these are the most prominent aspects of each.⁴¹ Hence although both Law and Gospel are intertwined in both Testaments one or other predominates in each and gives it its over all character.

Thus it is the Law taken in its widest extent, the 'totam legis doctrinam',⁴² that is, the Old Testament as a whole, the Law as inclusive of its promises, in which Gospel is present. This is important, for Calvin distinguishes between the Law understood in this way and law considered in and of itself. Law considered in this narrower sense, law in itself is devoid of Gospel. Thus commenting on Ezekiel 16:61 Calvin writes,

Therefore, if the law is regarded in itself, the promise made in the New Covenant, I will not remember your sins, will not be found in it.⁴³

Law as law is devoid of promise and thus Gospel. Thus, although '... the faithful under the Old Covenant were given and endowed with the spirit of regeneration ', this is not to be attributed to the law itself, but to the Gospel present in the Law.

It could not, therefore, be ascribed to the Law that God regenerated his own elect, because the spirit of regeneration was from Christ, and therefore from the Gospel and the new covenant.⁴⁴

It is, therefore, clear how Calvin can distinguish between Law and Gospel within the Old Testament itself. The two are never confused. Each has its own effects, and regeneration which Calvin ascribed to believers under the Old Testament belongs to the Gospel present in it. With respect to the Law, however, such blessings as regeneration and the forgiveness of sins are to be thought of as 'additional' or 'foreign privileges'.⁴⁵

However, if we are to be faithful to Calvin himself, we must guard against a possible misunderstanding here. The Law does not nor was ever meant to exist in its own right independently of the Gospel. Such an understanding of the Law is for Calvin a misunderstanding and carried through into practice would have drastic consequences. Far from existing in and for itself, the Law only exists with and indeed for the Gospel.⁴⁶ When he distinguishes between the Law as the whole Old Testament and the Law in itself, Calvin makes it clear that this is only valid as a theoretical distinction.⁴⁷

It is such a theoretical distinction between the law as the 'totam legis doctrinam', the whole Old Testament including the promises, and the Law considered in itself, the 'nuda lex', as Calvin calls it, ⁴⁸ which enables him to explain Paul's rather negative statements about the Law. Again we return to Calvin's commentary on Psalm 19. Commenting on verses seven and eight, in which the Psalmist 'exalts the dignity and excellence of the Law', Calvin is careful to define exactly what is meant by the term 'Law'; it is, as we

have seen, 'the whole doctrine of the Law'. Only the Law taken in its widest extent and therefore as inclusive of the 'free adoption and the promises' is worthy of such '... titles and commendations by which he exalts the dignity of the Law' and which '... would not agree with the ten commandments alone.' In other words the Psalm is speaking of the Law as inclusive of Gospel.

Such a careful definition is necessary here, because there is a seeming contradiction with Paul. At the end of his comments on verse eight, Calvin faces this problem, 'no small question (*non parva quaestio*)',⁴⁹ as he calls it. Paul's attitude to the Law would seem to conflict with David's, 'for', far from praising the Law, 'Paul seems entirely to overthrow these commendations of the law which David recites here.' For David the Law 'restores the souls of men', it 'rejoices the hearts of men' and 'enlightens their eyes', but for Paul the Law is 'a dead and deadly letter', it brings men under 'a spirit of bondage and strikes them with terror', it 'casts a veil before their minds' and excludes the light which ought to penetrate within'. Here is absolute contrast, or so it would seem. In fact, this is not the case, for David and Paul are not speaking about the same thing. The one is speaking of Law in its widest extent, as inclusive of the promises and thus of the Gospel whereas the other is speaking about the 'Law in itself', the Law as stripped of the promises and thus of the Gospel, in other words the '*nuda lex*'.⁵⁰

... David does not speak simply of the precepts of the Moral Law, but includes the whole covenant by which God had adopted the descendants of Abraham to be his peculiar people. Therefore, to the Moral Law, the rule of living

well, he joins the free promises of salvation, or rather Christ himself, in whom and upon whom this adoption was founded. However, since he had to deal with perverse interpreters of the law (*perversis legis interpretibus*), who separated it from the grace and spirit of Christ, Paul is concerned with the bare ministry of Moses (*nudum Mosis ministerium*). Furthermore it is certain that where the Spirit of Christ does not quicken the law, it is not only unprofitable, but brings death to its pupils.⁵¹

It is clear from this that the concept of the Law 'in itself' is really a false understanding of Law and is valid only as a theoretical distinction. Paul's opponents are, for Calvin, 'perverse interpreters of the law' since they 'separate it from the grace and spirit of Christ', in other words they empty it of Gospel. We have seen that Calvin regarded the Anabaptists and Servetus as guilty of this; they too, in emptying the Law, that is, the Old Testament, of Gospel are '*perversis legis interpretibus*'.⁵² If to 'separate the law from the grace and spirit of Christ', and thus from the Gospel, is a perverse interpretation of it, it will follow that, correctly interpreted, the Law will include Gospel.

The assumption on which Calvin's whole argument in this passage hangs is that Gospel is actually present in the Old Testament as such. It is not a case of reading the Gospel into the Old Testament, it is simply and concretely there through the promises. A genuine interpretation of the Old Testament, in contrast to a 'perverse' one, recognizes this and interprets the Old Testament accordingly. Hence when Calvin preaches from an Old Testament text, he can preach the Gospel in the fullest sense of the word.⁵³

It is clear, therefore, that for Calvin, whilst Law and

Gospel, thus the Old and the New Testament, are distinct, yet the Old Testament is not to be thought of as exclusive of Gospel, but, through the evangelical promises within it, it contains Gospel. The Old Testament, or the Law taken in its widest signification, contains promises of God's mercy, which for Calvin are a distinguishing characteristic of the Gospel. Law and Gospel belong to both Testaments, though not in the same degree. Law and Gospel, whilst distinct from each other, and whilst the latter properly speaking refers to the New Testament, can be used to distinguish not only between the two Testaments, but within them. Hence it is possible, with caution,⁵⁴ to speak of Gospel in the Old Testament. At this point we must draw out another aspect of Calvin's view.

As some of the passages quoted above have already indicated, in Calvin's thinking there is a connection between the promises, the Gospel and Christ.⁵⁵ The free promises of God's mercy which constitute Gospel cannot be separated from Christ since he is the foundation of all God's promises and gracious actions towards man. Thus Christ is present in the Old Testament.⁵⁶ In Institutes II.vi.2, Calvin writes,

Accordingly, apart from the Mediator, God never showed favor toward the ancient people, nor ever gave hope of grace to them.⁵⁷

Later in the same section he continues,

... the blessed and happy state of the Church always had its foundation in the person of Christ.⁵⁸

And he concludes the whole section with the following sentence,

From this it is now clear enough that, since God cannot without the Mediator be propitious toward the human race, under the law Christ was always set before the holy

fathers as the end to which they should direct their faith.⁵⁷

Such statements are found frequently throughout Calvin's writings.⁶⁰ Calvin frequently asserts the dependence of the promises of both Testaments on Christ.⁶¹ Such statements are so frequent that only a few examples can be cited here. Thus in his commentary on 2 Corinthians 1:20 Calvin writes, '... Christ ... is the foundation of all the promises of God.' This assertion, Calvin goes on to state, 'depends upon another principle - that it is only in Christ that God the Father is graciously inclined towards us.'⁶² But what of the Old Testament period? Calvin poses the question,

But the question arises whether before Christ's advent the promises were uncertain or worthless, for Paul seems to speak here of Christ manifested in the flesh.

Calvin's answer is emphatic,

My answer is that all the promises given to believers from the beginning of the world had their foundation in Christ. Thus, whenever Moses or the Prophets are dealing with reconciliation with God or the hope of salvation or grace of any kind they mention Christ and at the same time proclaim his advent and kingdom.⁶³

Here, it must be emphasized that it is not simply a matter of reading the Old Testament from a post-incarnational or Christian standpoint and so, with hindsight, reading Christ back into it. On the contrary, the fathers under the Law actually knew Christ as their mediator, thus Christ was actually present under the Old Testament administration.⁶⁴ It is important to notice that Calvin arrived at this conclusion as a result of two distinct, yet closely related theological arguments. The first we have already seen. The promises of God's grace and mercy are inseparable from Christ, but these were given to the patriarchs in the Old

Testament, therefore they must have known Christ.⁶⁵ The second argument is similar. God cannot be known apart from a mediator; and this mediator is, and always has been, Christ. This was true even for man in his original, pre-fallen state.⁶⁶ But the fathers under the Old Testament knew God, therefore they must have known Christ.⁶⁷

Therefore, holy men of old knew God only by beholding him in his Son as in a mirror. When I say this, I mean that God has never manifested himself to men in any other way than through the Son ... From this fountain Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others drank all that they had of heavenly teaching.⁶⁸

As we shall have occasion to note later, this presence of Christ in the Old Testament, is a 'hidden presence'. The same passage from which the above quotation is taken, continues as follows,

For this wisdom has not always manifested itself in one way. Among the patriarchs God used secret revelations, but at the same time to confirm these he added such signs that they could have no doubt that it was God speaking to them.⁶⁹

Christ is present, but obscurely. This obscurity corresponds to the obscurity of the promises which we noted above. However, what is significant for the present is the fact that Christ, for Calvin, was known by believers in the Old Testament and thus is present in it.

But Calvin goes much further than this. Christ is not only present in the Old Testament, he is in fact the 'scopus' and the 'summa' of the Old Testament in its entirety. 'The Law and the Prophets have no other goal than Jesus Christ.' He is the 'scopus omnium prophetarum.'⁷⁰ The Old Testament as a whole and in all its parts points to Christ.

Indeed every doctrine of the law, every command, every promise, always points to Christ. We are, therefore, to apply all its parts to him.⁷¹

Christ is the 'Soul of the law',⁷² He is the one who vivifies it and gives it life. The Old Testament, therefore, cannot be understood apart from him.

This remarkable passage (Rom. 10.4) declares that the law in all its parts has reference to Christ, and therefore no one will be able to understand it correctly who does not constantly strive to attain this mark.⁷³

Without Christ, the law, and indeed the whole of Scripture is dead and will be a closed book, study of it will be profitless.⁷⁴ Hence for Calvin Christ becomes the key which unlocks the whole of Scripture. This understanding prepares the way for Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics, that is, his basic goal in the interpretation of the Old Testament. If Christ is the 'scopus' of the entire Old Testament, then the ultimate aim of interpretation must be to 'find Christ' there. As Calvin himself puts it, commenting on John 5:39,

... the Scriptures must be read with the aim of finding Christ in them... By the Scriptures, of course, is here meant the Old Testament. For Christ did not first begin to be manifested in the Gospel ...⁷⁵

Calvin seems to have formed this idea early on in his theological career, for already in the two prefaces which he wrote for Olivetan's French translation of the Bible, printed in 1535, Calvin's sets this out programmatically as the aim of the study and interpretation of Scripture as a whole and 'the Law and the Prophets' in particular. He writes,

This, in sum, is what we must look for in the whole of Scripture. That is, thoroughly to know Jesus Christ and the infinite riches which are treasured up in him and are offered us through him by God the Father. For when one carefully examines the Law and the Prophets one does not find in them so much as one single word that does not drive and lead us to him (qui ne nous reduise et ameine la). ... It is not, therefore, lawful for us to deviate from this even in the slightest degree. On the contrary, our judgement must be entirely decided on this point: to learn to recognize (a cognoistre) in Scripture Jesus

Christ alone, in order to be properly led through him to the Father who contains within himself the sum of perfection.⁷⁶

If it is not read with this aim the whole of Scripture will be unprofitable. Thus, 'Whoever turns aside from this object, though he wears himself out all his life in learning, will never reach the knowledge of the truth.'⁷⁷ Only by seeking Christ in the Old Testament will it be profitable. In a sermon on 2 Timothy 3.14,15, Calvin says,

In 2 Corinthians 3, it is said that Jesus Christ is the soul of the law, so that the law is compared to a dead body without strength or virtue or life in it if Jesus Christ is separated from it. What must we do then? If we are to profit in the Holy Scripture we must learn to come to our Lord Jesus Christ.⁷⁸

And,

Because the world has not followed this rule, it has profited so evil in the Holy Scriptures.⁷⁹

Here then, we have Calvin's basic hermeneutical orientation towards the Old Testament. Since Christ is the centre and the goal of God's revelation in all ages and thus in the Old Testament, it is to be read with the intention of finding Christ there.

It will be helpful at this point to recapitulate the findings of this chapter. We began by asking the question, what was it about the Old Testament that prompted Calvin to give an affirmative response to it over against those who sought to minimize its relevance for the Christian Church. We found the answer to this in Calvin's doctrine of the promises. The Old Testament, like the New, contains promises of God's grace and mercy, in fact both Testaments contain the same promises, though in different forms. Such promises, we saw, are, for Calvin, constitutive of the Gospel, thus the Old Testament contains Gospel. In turn, these promises which constitute the Gospel are inseparable from Christ. Christ is, therefore, present in the Old Testament. Moreover, Christ is the centre and goal of the Old Testament. Hence the Old Testament, like the New, must be read with the intention of finding Christ in it.

As the next stage of our study it is necessary to ask how Calvin found Christ in the Old Testament, that is what exegetical method(s) did he employ to achieve his stated hermeneutical aim? This we will attempt to do in the following chapters.

Chapter 4

Calvin's Rejection of Allegorical Exegesis

First of all we must pose the question whether Calvin's interpretation of the Old Testament was not simply a form of eisegesis. Indeed, given Calvin's presupposition that the Old Testament must be read with the aim of finding Christ in it and his concept of Christ as the scopus of the Old Testament, we might quite reasonably conclude that this would lead Calvin to some form of Old Testament interpretation that was dominantly subjective. Given Calvin's basic starting point in approaching the Old Testament and the goals to which he thought Old Testament interpretation ought to lead, we might very well expect him to employ some form of allegorical exegesis. This assumption is greatly strengthened when we consider the prevailing position that allegorical exegesis held historically in the Church's use of the Old Testament.

Since its earliest days, the Christian Church had made use of allegory in her exegesis of the Old Testament.¹ The Old Testament was, after all, originally a Jewish book, and it still continued to be the holy book of the Jewish Religion, a religion which repudiated Christ and Christianity and which refused to acknowledge Christianity as having any claim whatsoever to the Old Testament. Hence the Christian Church was forced to appropriate the Old Testament for itself, it had to show vis a vis the Jews, that its own beliefs were not alien to it. In the polemical confrontation with the Jewish

Synagogue which ensued, allegory proved a most powerful weapon in the armoury of the Christian exegetes. Allegorical exegesis enabled the Church to read the Old Testament christologically and so construe it as a Christian book and thus appropriate it for the new religious context.²

The Christian fathers were, of course, not the first to employ the allegorical method of exegesis. It had been used among the ancient Greeks since the 6th. Century B.C. The more philosophically minded among them employed allegorical techniques as a means of interpreting the Homeric Mythology, which was conceived of as being divinely inspired and therefore authoritative in the religious sphere, in accordance with their own religious and philosophical viewpoint. Thus they were able to appropriate Homer for a different thought world.³ Nor were the Christian fathers the first to employ this method with respect to the Old Testament text itself. Where the Jewish religion had been influenced and refined by Greek philosophical thought, allegory proved useful in dealing with what were thought to be unacceptable aspects of the Old Testament and so harmonizing the Old Testament with Greek concepts.⁴ Hence it was widely used within the Hellenistic-Jewish community. Philo (c. 20 B.C. - c. A.D. 50), an Alexandrian Jew, steeped in the philosophical ideas of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, is perhaps the best known figure here, due to the great bulk of his writings which have survived. ⁵ As with the Homeric Myths we see the same motive at work, that is, the reappropriation of a religious document for a changed (more refined) philosophical and religious context.⁶

From this brief account it is clear that the allegorical method of exegesis was a widely recognized and accepted form of Old Testament interpretation at the opening of the Christian era. Hence it is not surprising that when the early theologians and apologists of the Church were confronted with the problem of the Old Testament they should turn to allegory.⁷

However, it was with Origen and the Alexandrian theological tradition that allegorical exegesis in the early Church reached its peak. Once again the influence of Greek thought and Philosophy⁸ is very much in evidence. It was Origen who elaborated allegory into its classical form of the threefold sense. The meaning of Scripture corresponds to the nature of man, which Origen conceived as trichotomic. Man is composed of body, soul and spirit, likewise in Scripture there is a literal, moral and a mystical or allegorical meaning.⁹ Needless to say, the literal sense, corresponding to the body, was regarded as the lowest, while the mystical or allegorical - corresponding to the spirit - was thought of as the highest meaning, which could be understood or perceived only by the 'spiritually mature'. Origen's mystical or allegorical sense was later further elaborated giving rise in addition to the anagogical or eschatological sense. Hence by the time of the medieval Church biblical exegesis had become fixed in the famous medieval Quadriga or four-fold sense.¹⁰

The basic presupposition of allegorical exegesis is that, in addition to the literal meaning of a text, that is, the

meaning contained in the actual words of the text as understood grammatically and historically, there is another deeper meaning which lies behind the words of the text and which is the ultimate or real meaning intended by its divine author.¹¹ It may be that this other meaning depends on the literal-historical meaning of the words of the text,¹² but nevertheless this has to be set aside or transcended and is relatively unimportant in the final analysis.¹³ Indeed for some allegorists the literal meaning of the text could be regarded not only as unimportant, but as misleading and harmful.¹⁴ Hence, the text can come to be seen as a sort of cryptic clue or cypher which has to be decoded so as to get at its true meaning.¹⁵

The harmful effects of this method within the field of Old Testament studies became increasingly clear as the Middle Ages progressed. Where it was employed, the historical dimension of the Old Testament was lost sight of. The Old Testament was increasingly seen as an enigma, full of dark puzzles which could be dangerous for the ignorant and were to be understood, that is, decoded, only by those specially trained to unravel them or who were endowed with some special charisma or gift of interpretation.¹⁶ Lacking all external, objective controls and criteria, exegesis became increasingly subjective and arbitrary.¹⁷ Allegorical exegesis, as a tool of Scholasticism sought for 'timeless' and abstract philosophical and theological concepts in the Old Testament and so dissolved its historical character.¹⁸

From the beginning voices had been raised in criticism

against allegory,¹⁹ these continued throughout the Middle Ages,²⁰ but these were never dominant until the period of the Reformation.

Even from this brief sketch, it can be seen that by the time we arrive at the period of the Reformation there existed within the Church a long standing tradition of allegorical exegesis. Allegory was the prevailing method employed by Christian interpreters of the Old Testament to illicit a 'Christian' meaning from it. They felt this could only be achieved by setting aside the literal-historical meaning and by presupposing that Scripture had a manifold meaning (multiplex sensus), and that the most important sense lay beyond the literal meaning of the words.²¹

Calvin, broadly speaking, shared the same exegetical goals in his approach to the Old Testament as the preceding Christian tradition, namely to read the Old Testament Christologically, and thus as a 'Christian book'. Moreover, we have seen that Calvin, like the early Church Fathers, engaged in polemic with the Jews and with Christian 'Judaizers' over the Old Testament. We might expect him, therefore, to walk in their exegetical shoes, and thus to find Christ in the Old Testament by reading it, as many of them did, allegorically. It seems reasonable to ask, therefore, whether Calvin too adopted their understanding of Scripture as having a multiplex sensus, and thus whether he too employed the allegorical method or one of its modifications. Was it by means of the allegorical method of exegesis that Calvin sought Christ in the Old Testament? Was it with the aid of

allegorical exegesis that Calvin was able to construe the Old Testament as a Christian book and so appropriate it for the Christian Church? We will now attempt to answer these questions by examining what Calvin's writings reveal about his attitude towards allegory.

In the Institutes (II.v.19), Calvin makes the following statement, 'Allegories ought not to go beyond the limits set by the rule of Scripture, let alone suffice as the foundation for any doctrines.'²² Such a statement could be understood as allowing the use of allegorical interpretation, albeit within certain limitations, and in fact has been so understood.²³ The fact that Calvin himself on many occasions actually employs the terminology of the fourfold sense might be seen as confirming this.²⁴ The occasional commendation in his commentaries of the allegorical interpretations of other exegetes could also be construed in this way.²⁵ Finally, the fact that Calvin recognized the presence of allegorical passages in Scripture might be seen as further confirmation. Calvin admitted that Christ himself made use of allegories to convey his teaching,²⁶ as did the prophets in the Old Testament, especially Daniel and Zechariah.²⁷

Such evidence, however, is quite misleading and the conclusion drawn from it quite unwarranted. That Calvin recognizes the presence of allegories in Scripture is in fact irrelevant to the point in hand. Calvin can quite easily admit the presence of allegory in Scripture as a literary device without feeling at all constrained to use it as an interpretative tool since the two are, in reality, quite distinct. Moreover, in such circumstances Calvin is quite careful to define exactly what he means by allegory. Thus commenting on Daniel 4.10-16, he tells us that,

The entire discourse is metaphorical, indeed, properly speaking, it is allegory since allegory is nothing else

than extended metaphor (continua metaphora). Had Daniel merely depicted the king by the figure of a tree, it would have been metaphor, but when he pursues his figure of speech in an uninterrupted course, his speech becomes allegorical.²⁸

In this definition of Allegory as 'extended metaphor' Calvin's early humanist training clearly emerges.²⁹ Indeed Calvin's background in humanism is a powerful influence to dispose him against allegorical exegesis.³⁰ The important thing about the definition given here is that it shows us that Calvin could define allegory purely in terms of a literary figure of speech. Hence Calvin's retention of the term does not necessarily say anything about his approval of allegory as an exegetical method. As we shall see, he can reject allegory in the sense of a technical term for the method of exegesis derived from the early and medieval Church while retaining the word in a less technical sense as a term to denote a literary form or mode.³¹

This may also help us to understand Calvin's statements in Institutes II.v.19. The word 'allegories' here could be taken as a reference to allegorical passages of Scripture. Thus the meaning would be that those parts of Scripture which make use of allegory as a literary device should be interpreted in the light of those parts of Scripture which do not and that, consequently, allegorical passages of Scripture are not in themselves a sufficient basis on which to found some doctrine. In other words in this passage we would have a statement of the familiar principle that the more obscure passages of Scripture should be interpreted in the light of the clearer ones.

Finally, Calvin's usage of the traditional terminology of the medieval four-fold sense is really quite fluid, for he does not use the terms with the same meanings or connotations.³² For example the word anagogé in the terminology of the four-fold sense refers to the eschatological sense of a text.³³ Thus in the classic example of Jerusalem, anagogically it will refer to the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the glorified Church. Calvin's usage of the word is very different to this. He uses it in the sense of 'application' or 'transference' of a biblical text to some particular situation or truth.³⁴ This is made clear by his comments on Genesis 3.15, where he writes,

We must now pass over (transitum facere; literally- make a transition) from the serpent to the author of evil himself; and this is not only a comparison but a true literal anagogé.³⁵

The word 'literal' is important here, it shows that Calvin understood anagogé as an application which arises out of the very letter of a text. Calvin's usage of the word here and on other occasions³⁶ makes it clear that he does not use anagogé in the traditional four-fold sense. The same could be said of the usage Calvin makes of other terms traditionally used in the medieval quadriga.³⁷

In fact far from allowing allegorical exegesis, Calvin is deeply hostile to it and rejects it as being in any sense a valid tool in the task of biblical interpretation. Calvin's criticisms of allegorical exegesis, its practitioners and fruits are frequent and uncompromising. It is Origen, in Calvin's eyes, who is chiefly to blame for introducing this contagion into the Church. In his commentary on 2 Corinthians 3.6ff., a locus classicus proof text for the

allegorists,³⁸ Calvin leaves us in no doubt of his attitude towards allegory and that in his view it is Origen who is its infamous progenitor.

This passage has been distorted and wrongly interpreted first by Origen and then by others, and they have given rise to the most disastrous error that Scripture is not only useless but actually harmful unless allegorized.³⁹

He then goes on to give us a list of the harmful effects that this kind of exegesis has had on biblical interpretation.

This error has been the source of many evils. Not only did it open the way for the corruption of the natural meaning of Scripture but also set up boldness in allegorizing as the chief exegetical virtue. Thus many of the ancients without any restraint played all sorts of games with the sacred Word of God, as if they were tossing a ball to and fro. It also gave heretics a chance to throw the Church into turmoil for when it was an accepted practice for anybody to interpret any passage in any way he desired, any mad idea, however absurd or monstrous, could be introduced under the pretext of an allegory. Even good men were carried away by their mistaken fondness for allegories into formulating a great number of perverse opinions.⁴⁰

Here we find some of Calvin's major criticisms of allegorical exegesis, criticisms which are echoed innumerable times throughout his writings and especially his Old Testament expositions. Allegory sets aside the 'natural meaning of Scripture' - a crucial idea in Calvin's exegesis - and so opens the way for purely arbitrary interpretations. Having set aside the objective criterion of the text, it opens the way for the full play of human subjectivity. Thus the true meaning of Scripture is distorted and men can foist on Scripture any meaning they wish. This is dangerous since it destroys Scripture as an objective canon and so gives room for heretics to enter in.⁴¹

Elsewhere, Calvin characterizes allegory as a form of 'speculation'⁴² - a word which in Calvin's vocabulary has

very negative overtones - and feels that it is a natural tool of Scholastic theology which he also characterized as 'speculative'.⁴³ Wherever free reign is given to human speculation, there is a loss of simplicity and sobriety, men loose their level headedness and wander away from the truth which is basically clear and simple. This is what has happened in both Scholastic theology and in allegory, its exegetical hand-maid.⁴⁴

In the final analysis, allegory, for Calvin, is no more than a form of eisegesis, something which Calvin, in his own way, tried painstakingly to avoid. The allegorists weave their so called 'expositions' from their own imaginations. Their interpretations are no more than the creations of their own brains and fancies. They do not read their ideas out of Scripture but they read them into Scripture.⁴⁵ Thus by seeking a meaning that is hidden behind the words of the text, they twist the true and plain meaning of Scripture which is to be found in the actual words of the text as literally understood, that is, grammatically and historically.⁴⁶

Since the allegorical method has no objective controls, but is almost entirely subjective, there can be no rules governing the meaning that is to be given to a particular passage. Who is to say why one allegorical interpretation should be preferred to another? For example, some explain the fact that, according to Exodus 26.19, there were to be two bases under every board of the Ark of the Covenant as a reference to the two Testaments, whereas others take it as

referring to the two natures of Christ, '... because believers rest on these two foundations'! Calvin has no trouble in showing the absurdity of such interpretations. He suggests a third possibility, 'With no less probability we might say, that two bases were placed beneath each of the boards ... because godliness has the promise of this life and that which is to come'. A fourth absurdity suggests itself, perhaps it was '... because we must resist on both sides the temptations which assail us from the right and from the left' and finally there is a fifth possibility, '... because faith must not limp nor turn to the right nor the left'! In this way Calvin destroys the allegorical interpretation of this passage by showing the absurdity of the sheer numbers of possible interpretations. One could go on for ever inventing new interpretations, '... thus there would be no measure (or limit) to game playing (sic nullus erit ludendi modus)'.⁴⁷

Then there is another problem, how far are we to go in the allegorical interpretation of the details of a passage? Once again the allegorical method can provide us with no guide in this matter. For example, the Jews were to eat only those animals which chewed the cud and were cloven hooved. The literal meaning of this command seems quite straightforward, but the allegorists are not content with that, they must seek some deeper, more profound meaning. Thus this command really concerns the two Testaments, and it means that we must make a difference between the Old Testament and the New. Chewing the cud, say they, really means that we must inwardly digest the doctrine of Scripture. If this is so, Calvin says, then let them tell us what the scales of the fishes mean!⁴⁸ Again

the tabernacle was to be covered with rams' skins; this, say the allegorists, is obviously a reference to Christ, the lamb of God, 'whose blood covers and protects the Church'. Very well, Calvin asks, but what do the badgers' skins mean with which the ark was also covered or again the goats' hair?⁴⁷ There is, of course, no answer.

Calvin's criticisms begin to give us some idea of the reasons behind his hostility to allegorical exegesis. But we must probe deeper to find its roots. It can be traced to two basic sources, his doctrine of Scripture and its authority and, closely linked with this, his doctrine of revelation and the nature and function of language in general.⁵⁰ Thus Calvin's attitude to allegory as an exegetical device can be seen as a necessary corollary of his basic theological position, founded as it was upon Scripture conceived as being the final and authoritative communication of God in verbal form.

Calvin, as Emile Doumergue tells us, was 'tormented by an incomparable need for certitude'.⁵¹ Such a need could only find satisfaction in a very high doctrine of Scripture. Calvin's mind could only find the rest and security it sought in the certitude of an absolutely reliable, objective and infallible authority. It was in Scripture that Calvin found such an authority. Scripture conceived of as being absolutely trustworthy in every detail and word,⁵² in other words, Scripture conceived of as without error and thus infallible. Scripture could only be thought of in this way if it had its origin solely in God, if there was, to use one of Calvin's common phrases, 'no human admixture' in it,⁵³ since

anything originating from the corrupt and fallible nature of man is necessarily defective as a religious authority⁵⁴ Thus God's control over the production of Scripture must be total, that is, it must extend to the very words of Scripture themselves. To use the language of later dogmatics, Scripture, if it is to satisfy the function of an absolute authority that Calvin sought to give it, must be verbally inspired.⁵⁵ In Calvin's mind, though he did not use the term, infallibility and authority are inextricably linked to verbal inspiration. Only a Scripture conceived of as being verbally inspired could be taken as an absolutely reliable and infallible guide.

Calvin, therefore, speaks of the biblical writers as 'the instruments or organs of the Holy Spirit' (*Spiritus Sancti organa*).⁵⁶ They are God's or the Holy Spirit's 'amanuenses or secretaries' (*Spiritus Sancti amanuenses*)⁵⁷ who record only what He dictates to them,⁵⁸ and 'pass on nothing of their own'.⁵⁹ Scripture is thus 'dictated by God' or 'the Holy Spirit'.⁶⁰ Even the style and language used in Scripture is determined by God, thus it can be called 'the style of the Holy Spirit'.⁶¹ The very words used and even the individual letters fall under God's control.⁶² Hence, for Calvin, Scripture is 'God himself speaking in his own words'.⁶³ In Scripture 'God opens his own sacred mouth'.⁶⁴ Thus when we read or hear it we are hearing God himself speak.⁶⁵ For this reason '... we ought to pay to Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from the Lord alone and has nothing human mixed in.'⁶⁶

However, and it may seem somewhat paradoxical, this does not mean that the human instruments are totally irrelevant and so can be forgotten, nor does it mean that they are totally passive. On the contrary, they are important precisely as the instruments that God himself has chosen and prepared to convey his revelation to us. If God, who in his majesty is infinitely exalted above all that is human, is to reveal himself to us he must condescend to finite human capacity by accommodating himself to the use of a human medium and human thought forms etc.⁶⁷ This he has done by using men to be the authors of Scripture. These men, though inspired, are not bereft of their own minds, they are in control of their own reason and capacities,⁶⁸ thus the authors have different characteristics and styles.⁶⁹ However, these men have been so chosen and prepared by God that they convey exactly the message, down to its very words, that he has determined.⁷⁰ Hence the human authors are significant, and whilst their significance is but that of instruments, they are none the less human instruments and continue to be so during the process of inspiration.⁷¹ This is important for Calvin's concept of divine accommodation in revelation. God comes down to the human level and to human capacities so as to make his revelation appropriate and intelligible to mankind.⁷² He does so by revealing himself through men and using them as men, not by somehow negating that which is human in them.⁷³ Thus the human authors of Scripture cannot be ignored if the Scriptures are to be understood correctly. This is very important for Calvin's concept of exegesis and his rejection of the allegorical method. The meaning of

Scripture, that is the message of God in Scripture, can only be grasped and understood by understanding the meaning intended by the human instruments. In the event of inspiration the divine and human somehow become one. God's meaning is their meaning. In turn, the meaning of the human authors can only be arrived at by understanding the language and words they used.⁷⁴

This, in effect, brings us to the second source of Calvin's hostility to allegorical exegesis, his concept of the nature and function of language in general. It will become clear as we proceed that what Calvin has to say here is closely connected with his doctrine of revelation and inspiration as we have sought to outline it here.

It should be clear by now that for Calvin inspiration is verbal. This is also true of his doctrine of revelation in general. Not only is inspiration verbal, but, Calvin points out, the revelatory events which are recorded in Scripture always involved some form of verbal communication. They were either purely verbal,⁷⁵ or if there was a vision or some kind of physical event, it was always followed or accompanied by some kind of verbal communication.⁷⁶ Calvin is always very careful to emphasize the verbal nature of revelation in his Old Testament commentaries and sermons. Typical examples of this can be found in his Commentary on Genesis and his Sermons on Psalm 119. Commentating on Genesis 46.2, Calvin writes,

It is, however, needful to recall what I have often stated, that the word was joined with it, because a silent vision would have profited little or nothing.... Since no living image of God can exist without the word, whenever

God has appeared to his servants, he has always spoken to them.⁷⁷

He goes on to speak about 'visions' which 'require to be animated by the word' and of a 'mutual connection' between vision and word, such that '... the word immediately follows' visions. In short, the word is '... as it were the soul of the vision'.⁷⁸

A vision without some verbal communication is, for Calvin, dumb. Calvin did not draw the same distinction between revelation and Scripture as the record of revelation, or between the Word of God and Scripture as is drawn by modern theologians.⁷⁹ If we must speak of Calvin in such terms as these, I believe that to be true to Calvin we should have to say that Scripture is a revealed (in the sense of verbally inspired) record of revelation.⁸⁰

Whatever view we take of Calvin's doctrine of inspiration it is clear that, for Calvin, Scripture, when accompanied by the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, is now the only locus of revelation.⁸¹ Redemptively speaking, God is not now revealing anything new about himself. All that he has chosen to be made known of himself is to be found in Scripture.⁸² Nor do we have direct access to Christ and the Holy Spirit, or to any revelatory events, but only an indirect access through the Scriptures.⁸³ This means that God's redemptive revelation of himself to man is to be found in the very words of Scripture and, we might add, only there.⁸⁴ Hence, for us too God's revelation is verbal.

Therefore, in Calvin's thought, God's revealing himself to

man necessarily involves language, that is, some form of verbal communication. Calvin, it is true, nowhere in his writings systematically develops or states a concept of language and communication. As scholars have observed, 'Calvin was no philosopher'.⁶⁵ However, from various references scattered about in his writings, it is possible to form a good idea of what his views must have been. Language and communication were very important issues for the Humanism in which Calvin was schooled as a young man.⁶⁶ Calvin, we can easily imagine, would be forced to form some ideas on the subject during his years of involvement with humanism as a classical scholar, the statements he makes in his writings would seem to bear this assumption out.

Calvin's general concept of language can be stated in his own words very briefly. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 2.11 he writes,

For since language is the character mentis, men communicate their own thoughts to one another, so that others become aware of their thoughts.⁶⁷

The phrase character mentis used here, and reiterated elsewhere,⁶⁸ is especially significant. The Latin word 'character' is derived from the Greek word and means 'the impression left on wax by a seal'.⁶⁹ It can thus come to mean 'image' or 'representation'.⁷⁰ Hence, in Calvin's view, language is a representation or image of the mind or thought.

This same idea is brought to expression and further developed in his comments on Genesis 11.1, where, commenting on the statement that before the building of the Tower of Babel the

earth had 'one language', Calvin makes the following observations:

Truly the diversity of tongues is to be regarded as a prodigy. For since language is the impress of the mind (nam quum mentis character sit lingua), how does it come about that men who partake of the same reason and who are born for a social life, do not communicate with each other in the same language?⁹¹

It is clear that, in Calvin's view, if all men possess the same reason then they should all speak the same language. Why? because language is the 'character mentis', the representation of the mind. The fact that men do not speak the same language is something 'unnatural', indeed, it is the result of God's judgment and curse on human pride, as Calvin goes on to argue from this same chapter of Genesis.

This defect, seeing it is repugnant to nature, Moses states is adventitious; and pronounces the division of tongues to be a punishment divinely inflicted on men because they impiously conspired against God.⁹²

Elsewhere, Calvin demonstrates the great importance he placed on language by designating it, 'the bond of society'.⁹³ A designation which arises out of the underlying concept of language as the character mentis. The 'division of tongues' in the tower of Babel story thus represents an undermining of human society. Calvin himself makes the point that many of the conflicts and misunderstandings between various nations are directly attributable to differences in language.⁹⁴

However, what is most interesting from the point of view of Calvin's exegetical method is that he thinks that this concept of language is also applicable to God. Commenting on John 1:1, Calvin writes,

For just as in men speech is called the expression of the thoughts, so it is not inappropriate to apply this to God and say that he expresses himself to us by his speech or word.⁹⁵

In other words, just as human language is the character mentis and therefore an adequate vehicle for the expression of human thoughts the same can also be said of the language God uses in revealing himself in Scripture.

Calvin also defines language as the effigies mentis. This is, perhaps, an even stronger expression than the former. In his commentary on Isaiah 59:4 he quotes favourably the 'common proverb' that 'linguam esse effigiem mentis'.⁹⁶ The word effigies signifies a copy or an imitation, a likeness or portrait and an image. In the above proverb, it implies that language is a copy or an imitation of the mind or of the thoughts of the mind.

This concept of language as the character/effigies mentis, taken together with his doctrine of revelation and inspiration, is an important aspect of Calvin's biblical hermeneutics and constitutes a crucial factor in his idea of correct exegetical method. It forms the basis of his rejection of allegorical exegesis.

As we would expect, Calvin's idea of the true task of the exegete quite naturally flows from these related concepts of Scripture and language. As T.H.L Parker has put it, speaking with reference to Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, 'Since language is the character mentis, it follows that the expositor encounters the mentem scriptoris in the language he uses - that is, in the text of the document.'⁹⁷ In other words, for Calvin, the chief task of the biblical exegete must be to discover and explain the mind (mens) of

the author as it is revealed in the text of Scripture. Calvin himself states this programmatically in the dedicatory epistle to his commentary on Romans, addressed to Simon Grynaeus.

Since it is almost his [the interpreter's] only task to unfold the mind of the writer whom he has undertaken to expound (*mentem scriptoris, quem explicandum sumpsit, patefacere*), he misses the mark, or at least strays outside his limits, by the extent to which he leads his readers away from the meaning of the author (*quantum ab ea lectores abducit*).⁹⁸

Recent studies have drawn attention to the fundamental importance of this letter for Calvin's hermeneutics.⁹⁹ In it he refers to certain discussions he had had with Grynaeus during their time together in Basel in 1535-36. During these discussions they had debated the function of a commentary and the task of exegesis. Thus three years before he embarked upon his work as a commentator Calvin had already formed a clear view of his task. Indeed the dedicatory epistle as a whole would seem to give expression to Calvin's ideals of exegesis and the goals he had set himself as an interpreter.¹⁰⁰

As we have seen since language is the character/effigies mentis it is an adequate vehicle of communication which faithfully represents the meaning intended by the author.¹⁰¹ Hence the exegete will approach the text in a different way to the allegorist. He will not approach it as some sort of hindrance to attaining the mind of its author, or as an obstacle that has to be laid to one side before the author's thought can be reached, nor will he see the text as a system of enigmatic signs or symbols which point beyond themselves to the true (hidden) meaning. On the contrary, the text, that is, its very words, is a copy or representation of

the writer's thoughts and since the task of the exegete is to discover and lay bare the mind of the author it is with the words of the text that he will be concerned.

Now, as we have seen, for Calvin as for the allegorists the ultimate author of Scripture is God, the Holy Spirit. This means that the expositor must, ultimately, seek the mind of God, the Holy Spirit in Scripture. Thus both Calvin and the allegorists had the same exegetical goals, however, there is one crucial difference between them. For Calvin the *mens Dei*, the meaning God himself intended to convey through Scripture, was to be found in the words and concepts employed by the human authors. The mind of God is to be found in and through the mind(s) of the human authors of Scripture. The allegorists, on the other hand, came to a very different conclusion. Pursuing the same goal as Calvin, the mind of God in Scripture, they were led away from the literal meaning of the Old Testament. Because God is the author of Scripture, they felt that it must have some deeper, more profound meaning than that which is contained in the literal meaning of the words. The literal meaning of the Old Testament, according to Origen, is often too trifling or crude to be attributed to God, hence one must plumb below its surface to find the deeper truths which lie hidden there and which were really intended by God.¹⁰² Thus the allegorists were led to attribute a multiplex sensus to Scripture and to place the greatest emphasis upon its non-literal, allegorical or mystical meanings.¹⁰³ The historico-grammatical meaning of the Old Testament, the meaning intended by the human authors, was by and large considered to be inferior,¹⁰⁴ or,

at most, a springboard for 'the true', allegorical meaning.¹⁰⁵

Calvin outrightly rejected the idea that Scripture, including the Old Testament, had a manifold meaning (multiplex sensus) along with his rejection of the allegorical method. He categorically argued that Scripture has a unitary or single meaning (simplex sensus).¹⁰⁶ Commenting on Galatians 4.22-24, which raises issues about the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament and which was another favourite proof text for the allegorists, Calvin writes,

Scripture, they say, is fertile and thus bears multiple meanings. I acknowledge that Scripture is the most rich and inexhaustible fount of all wisdom. But I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which anyone may fasten to it at his pleasure. Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and simple one (verum sensus scripturae, qui germanus est ac simplex), and let us embrace and hold it resolutely. Let us not merely neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended expositions which lead us away from the literal sense (a literali sensu).¹⁰⁷

Thus while Calvin does not deny the fertility of Scripture, he will not allow it to consist in what the exegete himself reads into the text. The meaning of Scripture is simplex. Its fecundity and depth, put there by God, consist in the words of the text as understood literally.

Calvin's interpretation of this passage shows us the depths of his hostility to allegory as an exegetical method and the lengths to which he was prepared to go in opposition to it. It would seem clear that Paul, in this passage, is interpreting the Old Testament allegorically.¹⁰⁸ Indeed he even uses the term.¹⁰⁹ In spite of this, however, Calvin, in his commentary on this passage, endeavours to show that

Paul is not really allegorizing, but is simply drawing a comparison, or anagogé.¹¹⁰ Calvin argues that there is no 'departure from the literal meaning', and that Paul uses the term allegory in this passage, as Chrysostom pointed out, in an imprecise way.¹¹¹

It will be helpful at this stage to summarize our findings. We closed the preceding chapter by pointing to the fundamental presupposition of Calvin's interpretation of the Old Testament. That is, that Christ is the scopus of Scripture and therefore that Scripture, the whole of Scripture, and thus the Old Testament, should be read with the aim of finding Christ. In the present chapter we have begun to ask how Calvin proposed carrying this aim out, that is, how Calvin proposed reading the Old Testament so as to find Christ there. In the light of Calvin's explicit aim it seemed likely that he might seek to achieve it by some form of non-literal exegesis. Thus we posed the question whether Calvin, to accomplish his goal, employed the allegorical method as did a great deal of exegetical tradition before him. It should be clear by now that a negative response must be given to this question. Calvin's Christological orientation, in spite of what we might expect, did not lead him away from the literal-historical meaning of the Old Testament. The task of the Old Testament interpreter is to discover the mind of the author, ultimately, of course, this is God the Holy Spirit, but in the production of Scripture God has employed and accommodated himself to human instrumentality. Thus Scripture is at once divine and human. Therefore to understand the mind of God in Scripture we must understand the mind of its human authors. And since language is the character mentis, to understand their meaning we must seek to understand what the authors meant when they wrote or said what they did. It is this understanding of the interpreters task that radically shaped Calvin's Old

Testament exegesis, as will become clear through a discussion of his exegetical principles.

Chapter 5

Calvin's Method of Exegesis

In seeking to describe Calvin's principles of exegesis we are treading a well trodden path, along which many have gone before. Indeed, since the rise of historical theology as a discipline in its own right, Calvin's principles of exegesis, though until recently not receiving much detailed treatment, have been a matter of continual interest.¹

It might be assumed that this would make our present task easier, but on the contrary it can pose somewhat of a problem for us. It is all too easy to read the presuppositions of one's own time back into Calvin, or to criticize him for not holding the presuppositions that we ourselves hold. Moreover, under the influence of the dominant critical theories of our own day, it is all too easy to fall into a selective reading of Calvin in this area.²

Doubtless, some degree of selectivity is necessary to all historical work; moreover, it is the questions and needs of one's own epoch which, as it were, set the agenda for historical enquiry. Historical enquiry if it is to be relevant must respond to the times in which it is done. In addition, it is impossible for scholars to detach themselves totally from their own age since they, like everyone else, are to some extent a product of it. However,

in spite of this, responsible historical enquiry must seek to do full justice to the data with which it is working.

What should not be forgotten is that Calvin lived at a time when the modern historical consciousness was just beginning to dawn. Schooled as he was in Humanism, he was as historically conscious as any in his age could be.³ His Humanistic training was never eradicated. After his conversion to Protestantism it was given a new direction, but it was not lost. Thus Calvin, the 'biblical humanist', as he has been called,⁴ had an historical consciousness which owed something to both Humanism and Protestantism.

Calvin did not view history as something that could be explained merely by reference to natural phenomena. He saw history, rather, as an expression of the divine will and thus understood it theologically and providentially.⁵ This has three important ramifications which must be taken into consideration when speaking of Calvin's exegesis. In the first place, this sets him off from much of the preceding medieval tradition which was basically timeless and therefore unhistorical in its thinking and which saw history as a static entity. In the second place, it sets him off from much of the Humanist thinking of his own time which was increasingly understanding history in non-theological and secular terms.⁶ Thirdly, it also sets him off from our own time which also understands history in non-theological terms.

For Calvin with his 'biblical humanism', history could only

be understood providentially and therefore theologically. Calvin's idea of history is dominated by his idea of God as the sovereign and all powerful being whose purpose is ineluctable and whose will is the shaper of history and human destiny. History is, therefore, an outworking of the eternal plan of God, every event in it is an expression of His almighty will.⁷ Ultimately everything is for God's glory, but God is glorified in the salvation of men, thus God's plan of salvation comes to occupy the centre of the great drama of history, a plan which was formed in eternity.⁸ In spite of this tremendous emphasis upon the divine agency, Calvin, perhaps paradoxically, sought also to give due weight to the efficacy of human agency in the drama of history.⁹ Moreover, he was aware that history was a human phenomenon and that the human race had undergone development and change. Though it is true that he believed that human nature was fundamentally the same in all ages, yet he was aware that in some respects men had developed. He saw differences not only of race and temperament, but also of culture, knowledge and, what is more, of spiritual and moral awareness.¹⁰ Thus for Calvin there was development, but it was a development under the divine tutelage and as such it was all a part of God's great plan of redemption.

This development is expressed perhaps most graphically in Calvin's doctrine of accommodation, a doctrine which we shall have to turn to in more detail later. Basically, this doctrine taught that God in revealing himself to men must take into account their limited human capacity.¹¹ What is

significant is that Calvin did not see this capacity as a merely static thing, but as something which changed and, under the divine tutelage, developed.¹² To each age there was a degree of revelation appropriate to the people who lived in that age.¹³ The doctrine of accommodation, therefore, is fundamental to Calvin's approach to Scripture and to his understanding of it as an historical entity.¹⁴

Calvin, then, had not 'learned' to 'de-mythologize' history. Hence, it is not surprising if, from our modern perspective, Calvin's approach to Scripture seems a strange mixture of 'historical' methods and theological ideas. It is not to be wondered at, if with our historicism, we feel a tension between, what we might call, Calvin's 'historico-critical' approach to Scripture and his theological presuppositions. Perhaps to some extent we are justified in this. However, what we need to realize is that perhaps the tension exists more in ourselves than it does in Calvin.

It should now be clear what we must avoid in dealing with Calvin's exegetical principles: on the one hand, the desire to maximize Calvin's historical approach, and thus to 'modernize' him; and on the other, the unsympathetic critical attitude that would label Calvin as being 'pre-critical' and so as having nothing to offer us in terms of understanding Scripture.¹⁵ Both these extremes are wrong and must be avoided when dealing with Calvin's exegetical principles. On the one hand the desire to 'modernize' Calvin in this area is unnecessary. Why do scholars feel the need to do this? Is it to make Calvin more acceptable

to modern biblical scholars or to a generation brought up on source criticism, form criticism and all the other types of criticism? to gain him an hearing, as it were? If this is so then it is both foolish and shortsighted. For, on the one hand, Calvin was not a twentieth-century biblical scholar. He did not work with the same assumptions or questions as the scholars of today. No efforts to make him appear 'modern' can be successful. The attempt to dress him in twentieth century clothes is, therefore, doomed to failure from the start. It may be possible to make him appear 'modern' in an essay dealing with, for example, his exegetical principles, but whenever anyone turns to his commentaries or sermons they will soon see through such a study.

In the second place, such a desire is shortsighted, for what we need to-day is not another voice saying the same thing as all the others, but one who is saying something different. Only such a different voice can help to lead us out of the impasse created by much recent Old Testament/Biblical scholarship. In terms of the theological and Christian significance of the Old Testament, modern scholarship, obsessed as it is with questions of source and authorship, is particularly sterile. There is a growing awareness of this sterility in recent Old Testament scholarship.¹⁶ Moreover, with this awareness and the rise of so called 'text immanent' methods of exegesis, such as the concept of 'Final Form' Criticism, there has come also a new humility towards the past exegetical tradition. The attitude, still prevalent in most quarters, that anything

before Wellhausen and the Documentary Hypothesis is pre-critical, and therefore irrelevant is at last being challenged and seen as the arrogance that it is.¹⁷ There is a desire among some scholars to listen to the past exegetical tradition and to learn the lessons it has to teach us.¹⁸

This is not to say, however, that Calvin's method of exegesis is totally different from modern historical-critical exegesis. On the contrary, there are many points of similarity, and we often find ourselves being astonished at the 'modernity' of one such as Calvin, who is 'precritical'. This modernity is not surprising in view of the rising historical awareness and the new attitudes to the past among the humanists of Calvin's day.

What we have said about Calvin's basic hermeneutical approach to the Old Testament - the Old Testament should be read with the aim of finding Christ - might appear, a-priori, to rule out any truly historical understanding of the Old Testament and thus lay Calvin open to the worst suspicions of those who label him 'precritical'. Moreover, what we will go on to say about Calvin's use of typology and accommodation might seem to confirm this further. However, as the last chapter began to indicate, Calvin's christocentric orientation to the Old Testament did not lead him into the non-literal and unhistorical realms of allegorical exegesis as we might have supposed it would. On the contrary he sought to adhere to what he considered the literal meaning of the text. Moreover, in the last

chapter we also saw something of what Calvin meant by the 'literal meaning'. It will be the task of the present chapter to explore the means by which Calvin sought to elicit this literal meaning of the Old Testament, and thus to show something of the historical nature of his method of exegesis. Taken in itself this chapter may appear to be doing what we have said must be avoided, that is, seeking to modernize Calvin. This is not the case. The chapter must be read in conjunction with the study as a whole. The need to deal with Calvin's principles of exegesis in a chapter of their own arises out of a desire for order and system.

Because of his historico-grammatical method of exegesis Calvin has been styled, 'the first scientific interpreter in the history of the Christian Church.'¹⁹ How far this is in fact the case can only be answered at the close of the present chapter. Whatever the case may be, it is widely agreed that historico-grammatical exegesis involves two main tasks: (1). The investigation of the historical background of a text. Here questions such as dating, authorship and the historical context and occasion which gave rise to a particular text are discussed. (2). The investigation of the language of the text. Here questions such as the integrity of the text, the meaning of its words, the grammatical constructions and the idioms of the language are discussed. In what follows some account of Calvin's method of grammatical historical exegesis will be given using this twofold division, which, it is hoped, will be faithful to Calvin himself. Since Calvin nowhere gives us anything like a manual of his principles of exegesis,²⁰

to determine them we must pick up the scattered statements he makes concerning his methods here and there throughout his writings as well as examining his actual practice as found in his Old Testament exegetical works.

1. Historical Exegesis

In the first place, Calvin sought to understand the historical circumstances of the text on which he was commenting.²¹ Calvin's commentaries always begin with an introduction (in Latin, 'praefatio' or 'argumentum'). In this he usually gives a brief introduction to the book, a short outline of it, and discusses questions of authorship and historical context.

Where the exegetical tradition is uniform Calvin usually accepts traditional views of authorship. However, he was no blind slave to tradition and he can dissent from it, at times even in places where it was fairly uniform. What is significant is that the grounds on which he determines authorship in such cases are largely historical in nature combined with a certain amount of good sense. A good example of this is found in the argumentum to the Commentary on the Book of Joshua. Here Calvin writes,

As to the author of this book, it is better to suspend our judgment than to make random assertions. Those who think that it was Joshua, because his name stands on the title page, rest on weak and insufficient grounds. The name of Samuel is inscribed on a part of the sacred history containing a narrative of events which happened after his death; and there cannot be a doubt that the book which immediately follows the present is called Judges, not because it was written by them, but because it recounts their exploits. Joshua died before the taking of Hebron and Debir, and yet an account of it is given in the 15th. chapter of the present book.²²

In spite of his assertion here that, '... it is better to suspend judgment ...' he cannot resist giving his own solution which, he feels, is 'probable'.

The probability is (magis probabilis coniectura est),

that a summary of events was framed by the high priest Eleazar, and furnished the materials out of which the book of Joshua was composed.²³

It is be noticed here that Calvin does not say that Eleazar was the author of the book of Joshua, rather the author is unknown. When he gives reasons for this 'conjecture' they are historical, based on an understanding of the role of the priesthood in ancient Israel. Hence, in the same passage, he continues,

It was a proper part of the high priest's duty not only to give oral instruction to the people of his own time, but to furnish posterity with a record of the goodness of God in preserving the Church, and thus provide for the advancement of true religion. And before the Levites became degenerate, their order included a class of scribes or notaries who embodied in a perpetual register everything in the history of the Church which was worthy of being recorded.²⁴

In the end, though, he acknowledges that all solutions to the problem are uncertain.²⁵

Even in places where he accepts traditional views of authorship he does not suspend his historical judgment. Thus, in his day there was no reason to question the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. However, he is aware that even here qualification is needed. Moses cannot have been the one who gave an account of his own death! Thus commenting on Deuteronomy 34.1-6 Calvin writes,

It is not certain who wrote this chapter, except that the old interpreters think it probable that the author was Joshua. However, since Eleazar the priest could have performed such tasks, it is preferable to leave the matter, which is of little importance, undecided.²⁶

Calvin's historical sensitivity is further displayed in his Commentary on Genesis when he questions how Moses could have known certain facts about the distant times of the Patriarchs. For example, concerning Jacob's blessing in

Genesis 49 Calvin asks,

Whence did Moses derive his knowledge of a conversation held in an obscure hut, two hundred years before his time? ... Whence had he his knowledge of the places in the land of Canaan, which he assigns, like a skilful surveyor, to each tribe?²⁷

In the first place, Calvin appeals to divine revelation to solve the problem.²⁸ What is interesting from our point of view, however, is that this appeal to divine revelation does not prevent him from approaching the problem historically. Hence it is that Calvin goes on to give us, in addition, a decidedly historical answer to the question.

Besides among many other things which the holy fathers had handed down by tradition this prediction might then be generally known.²⁹

He goes on to give us a list of things that had been 'handed down by tradition', then he continues,

... what impudence will it be to deny that the heavenly servants of God more accurately investigated (*exactius fuisse observatum*) whatever was important to be known respecting the promised inheritance?³⁰

Thus, for Calvin, the authorship of books even like the Pentateuch is a complex affair with an historical dimension. The role that Calvin assigns to tradition in the above passage is noteworthy. Calvin frequently insists upon this role of tradition elsewhere in his commentaries on the Pentateuch.³¹ Though we must be aware of making too much of it as some scholars have done,³² nevertheless it is an important dimension of Calvin's historical consciousness. Whatever we may think of his solution to the problem, it is clear that he does not take refuge in some simplistic appeal to divine inspiration in order to side step such questions, as we might have expected him to do, with his view of inspiration as verbal. On the other hand, the fact that the author of a book cannot be ascertained, or that

there is a process of historical development behind the origin of a book, does not lead him to doubt that that book is inspired. Thus in the preface to his Harmony on the Last Four Books of Moses he speaks about the Mosaic books as being inspired in the strongest sense of that term.³³ This balance of theological theory and historical method is entirely in harmony with Calvin's doctrine of inspiration as already outlined. Scripture originates entirely in God, but God uses human instrumentality to bring it into existence.³⁴

These ideas of the role of tradition and the priesthood are employed in a most startling way in his treatment of the Prophetic writings. Fortunately, Calvin has stated his views on the origin of the prophetic books - a problem which still baffles Old Testament Scholars today - at length in the preface to his Commentary on the Book of Isaiah. The passage is most illuminating as an example of Calvin's historical awareness and is worth quoting at length.

The Prophets, after having publicly addressed the people, drew up a brief abstract of their discourse, and placed it on the gates of the temple, that all might see and become more fully acquainted with the prophecy. When it had been exposed for a sufficient number of days, it was removed by the ministers of the temple, and placed in the Treasury, that it might remain as a permanent record. In this way it is probable that the books of the Prophets were compiled; and this may be inferred from the second chapter of the book of Habakkuk, if it be properly examined, and likewise from the eighth chapter of this prophecy. (Hab. 2.2; Is. 8.1)³⁵

He realized that even this solution had its difficulties; after all 'the Priests were often the bitterest enemies of the Prophets'. That these 'enemies of the Prophets' were instrumental in the transmission of the prophetic books,

Calvin regarded as 'a remarkable instance of the providence of God.'³⁴ Once again we find the same mixture of theological and historical thinking which characterizes Calvin's whole approach, reminding us, yet again, that for Calvin history was not a purely secular idea.

This solution seems to have been original to Calvin, for in the same section we find him complaining, 'Not one of the commentators whose writings I have hitherto perused answers this question.'³⁷ This highlights something of the originality of Calvin's historical thinking. Moreover, it was more than some fleeting opinion. The fact that it is often repeated throughout his commentaries on the Prophetic writings shows that it was, what we might term, 'a critical axiom with Calvin' in his treatment of the Prophets.

Whatever we might think of the validity of Calvin's attempts to solve these problems, which today we would call 'source criticism', the important thing is to see that Calvin was wrestling with such problems. He worked, quite clearly, within the limitations of his own day and age. What is significant however, are not the solutions themselves, but the fact that he saw a problem in the first place, secondly that he thought the problem valid enough to attempt to give some solution to it, and thirdly, that he sought a solution to it in terms of an historical discussion. Thus, it is not so much the answers he gave, but the fact that he sought to answer such questions at all that we must observe.

It is in his Commentary on the Book of Psalms where, perhaps more than anywhere else in his Old Testament commentaries, we find Calvin wrestling with problems of authorship. He is concerned as far as possible to determine the authorship of each Psalm. He accepts the headings of the Psalms, it would seem, as part of the given, inspired text. Nowhere does he either question the validity or authority of them. Where these make statements about authorship he, therefore, accepts them without question and reads the Psalm in the light of the historical allusions made there. However, what interests us here are those places where the headings make no statements about authorship. Here Calvin seeks to determine authorship by other means and once again we see some indication of Calvin's historical frame of mind.

It is illuminating to note the factors which Calvin considers important in determining authorship in such instances. Frequently it is the content of a Psalm, its ideas, style, and the historical background which can be read from it that determines authorship for Calvin. Thus, for example, with respect to Psalm 48, Calvin feels certain that it cannot have been written by David. His reasons are historical in nature. From the historical allusions made in the Psalm he concludes,

It is easy to gather from the subject matter of the Psalm that it was composed after the death of David. I indeed admit that among David's enemies there were some foreign kings, and that it was not for want of will on their part that the city of Jerusalem was not utterly destroyed; but we do not read that they went the length of besieging it, and reducing it to such extremity as to render it necessary that their efforts should be repressed by a wonderful manifestation of the power of God.³⁰

Calvin goes on to tell us that the Psalm would fit better in the time of Ahaz '... when the city was besieged and the inhabitants brought to the point of utter despair, and when, nevertheless, the siege was suddenly raised.' Or again, 'the time of Jehoshaphat and Asa'. Calvin comes to similar conclusions of non-Davidic authorship in his commentary on the inscription of Psalm 74. Here he thinks that the Psalm may have been composed during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes; in fact he feels that this is 'the most probable' solution to the question of dating this Psalm. Once again his arguments move entirely on the historical level, comparing historical allusions made in the Psalm with what is known about the history of Israel in the proposed period.³⁹

From the closing verses of Psalm 78 Calvin thinks it probable that,

... it was written long after the death of David; for there we have celebrated the kingdom erected by God in the family of David. There also the tribe of Ephraim, which is said to have been rejected, is contrasted with and set in opposition to the house of David. From this it is evident, that the ten tribes were at that time in a state of separation from the rest of the chosen people; for there must be some good reason why the kingdom of Ephraim is branded with a mark of dishonour as being illegitimate and bastard.⁴⁰

Once again Calvin relies on the historical allusions made in the Psalm to reach his conclusion of non-Davidic authorship. Here, then, we get a glimpse of Calvin's keen historical sense and also his razor sharp logic.

Likewise Psalm 79, '... contains internal evidence that it was composed long after the death of David.'⁴¹ Here Calvin

rejects the standard argument of those who argued for Davidic authorship in spite of the historical evidence of the Psalm; that David was speaking 'by the spirit of prophecy'. This argument was tantamount to a naive appeal to divine inspiration. Calvin will have nothing to do with such thinking. His refutation of this view is made in terms of his understanding of Old Testament prophecy. 'It is not usual', he argues, 'with the prophets thus to speak historically in their prophecies'.⁴² He goes on to argue for a date in the exilic period or in the time of Antiochus IV purely in terms of the historical allusions made in the Psalm. He writes,

Whoever judiciously reflects on the scope of the poem will easily perceive that it was composed either when the Assyrians, after having burnt the Temple, and destroyed the city, dragged the people into captivity, or when the temple was defiled by Antiochus, after he had slaughtered a vast number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Its subject agrees very well with either of these periods.⁴³

Thus Calvin is not afraid to give some Psalms a very late date if he feels that the internal criteria of the Psalm demand it. Psalm 44 is a striking example of this. The complaints and lamentations it contains '... may be appropriately referred to that miserable and calamitous period in which the outrageous tyranny of Antiochus destroyed and wasted everything.' Thus Calvin feels that, '... it was composed rather by any other person than by David!'⁴⁴

For Calvin, it is clear, that the question of authorship is closely connected with that of date and historical context. Calvin invariably raises the question of dating and authorship in the introductions to his Old Testament

exegetical works. Though sometimes, usually in those places where he feels that it cannot be determined, he dismisses such questions as unimportant for a correct understanding of the book in question. Again we find Calvin's doctrine of inspiration in the background of such dismissals. The reasoning behind this seems to be somewhat as follows: if knowledge of the historical background of a book were essential to our understanding of it then God would have given us some clue as to its date. This would appear to reflect a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards historical questions. However, it must be emphasized that Calvin never raised questions of authorship and dating as an end in themselves. His aim was always to gain a clearer understanding of a passage or text of Scripture. Historical considerations were merely a means to that end. Where no clear historical clues were given by Scripture Calvin believed that - since Scripture was inspired by God - such considerations must be unimportant for understanding that particular book. However, the fact that Calvin invariably raises historical questions shows us that he did consider them as being important for a true exposition of Scripture and, as we have mentioned, Calvin only reaches the opposite conclusion where he feels a lack of historical criteria in the text.

It is when we turn to Calvin's commentaries on the Prophets that we find him placing particular emphasis on this. The historical background of the prophecy of Hosea, he argues, is essential for a true understanding of the prophet's message. Thus he writes,

Not to know the time of Hosea would be to readers a great loss, for there are many parts of his prophecy which could not be explained without a knowledge of the history.⁴⁵

However, what Calvin goes on to say shows us that the importance of the historical background is not for him absolute. In the case of Hosea and, indeed, most of the prophets, the period in which the prophet functioned is supplied in his prophecies. However, this is not always the case, as for example, with the prophet Joel. Calvin observes that, 'the time at which Joel prophesied is uncertain', but in his case it is not too important, '... for the import of his doctrine is evident though his time be obscure and uncertain.'⁴⁶ Once again it would seem that Calvin's doctrine of inspiration is in the background here. If God has supplied us with the historical data from which to reconstruct the prophet's historical situation then we should do so in order to understand the prophet's message. If such data is lacking, on the other hand, then, since Scripture is (verbally) inspired by God, it must not be essential. The prophet's message can be understood without it. Once again we see Calvin's historical approach tempered by his doctrine of Scripture.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, in all his Old Testament expositions, wherever he is able, Calvin seeks to understand the biblical text against its historical background. Calvin asserts this quite categorically as an exegetical principle in his commentary on Ezekiel, where, commenting on chapter 17, he writes,

But since the prophet's discourse cannot be understood without a knowledge of the history, I shall therefore make a beginning ... ⁴⁸

He goes on to reconstruct the historical background which, he believes, lies behind Ezekiel 17. Calvin's commentaries and lectures on the Old Testament are full of this sort of thing. It is impossible to give an adequate picture here. Only a few examples can be given. One must read Calvin himself if one is to gain an adequate conception of his procedure.

It is once again in his commentaries on the Psalms that we find some of the most striking examples. As he expounds the Psalms he continually seeks to reconstruct their historical background. In the first place, he does so from the internal evidence of the Psalm itself and then, when this is done he attempts to fill it out from the historical parts of the Old Testament. Most frequently, since for Calvin most of the Psalms are Davidic, his historical reconstruction takes the form of placing the Psalm in the setting of the life of David as deduced from the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. He thus turns to the historical books of the Old Testament to supply him with the details of David's life. In this way, Calvin constantly seeks to understand what experiences in the life of David could have given rise to the ideas and sentiments expressed in a particular Psalm.⁴⁹

A striking example, at least from our modern perspective, of this sort of questioning into the experiences or events that could have given rise to a particular Psalm is his attempt, in the case of some Psalms, to describe the cultic occasion(s) for which they were composed. Thus, he speaks

of a 'solemn assembly' at which psalms of praise were sung,⁵⁰ of 'public thanksgivings',⁵¹ and even of a ceremony of covenant renewal.⁵² The very fact that these ideas seem so remarkably modern means that we have to beware of reading too much into them or of reading our modern ideas back into Calvin. Moreover, we must be wary of overstressing their significance for Calvin himself. Their importance for us is that they reveal a mind sensitive to historical questions, but for which such questions have not become the be all and end all of Old Testament exegesis.

Calvin's historical awareness is further revealed in that for him not only historical events, but also the cultural environment must be taken into account in order to understand the Scriptures. This is brought out clearly in Calvin's commentary on Ezekiel. Calvin is aware that with Ezekiel's style we have passed the 'golden age' of the Hebrew language.⁵³ Not only is the Hebrew of a lower kind, but Ezekiel, Calvin feels, is rather too prolix and repetitive. Calvin attributes this to the historical and cultural environment in which Ezekiel ministered. He writes,

This is a repetition of the same doctrine; for we said that our Prophet is more verbose than Isaiah, and even than Jeremiah, because he had accustomed himself to the form of speech which was then customary among the exiles (quia ad formam loquendi quae tunc erat inter exsules assueverat). He is not, therefore, either so restricted (restrictus=succinct) or so polished; but we must understand that he accommodated his language to learners, because he had to do with a people not only rude and dull, but also obstinate. And then they had degenerated as much from the purity of their language as from that of their faith (degeneraverant fere sua lingua, sicuti etiam a puritate fidei); hence the prophet purposely bends aside from elegance of language.⁵⁴

Thus Calvin takes into account the cultural and historical

conditions of Ezekiel in order to understand his message. It is, for him, the condition of the people in exile in Babylon, who were losing their cultural roots, that explains Ezekiel's prolixity and poorer Hebrew style.

This brings us, finally, to another important aspect of the historical method frequently employed by Calvin, that is, the determination of the audience for whom an author wrote. This principle is prominent in Calvin's exegesis of the Prophets. Calvin felt that this was important if we are to understand why a biblical author wrote what he did and apply it correctly to our own day. The examples given above from Calvin's commentaries on Ezekiel illustrate this principle, many others can be gathered from his exegesis of the other Prophets. For example, the words of the prophet Zephaniah in 1.2,3 seem very hard, he seems to have 'dealt too severely' with the people. However, the severity of his words is, for Calvin, to be explained by reference to the people to whom he prophesied.

We must remember that the prophet, living at the same period with Jeremiah, had regard to the stubbornness of the people, who had been already with more than sufficient evidence proved to be guilty.⁵⁵

The above sketch, it is hoped, will give some idea of Calvin's historical awareness and how he sought to employ it in his Old Testament exegetical work. It is impossible, in a study of this size, to give an exhaustive account of this aspect of Calvin's Old Testament exegetical work. We can see in Calvin what may seem to us an incompatible mixture of the historical and the theological. Calvin, however, shows no awareness of an incompatibility between the two. He can move quite easily from the one to the other in the same context of argument. This may seem inconsistent to us and no doubt Calvin is sometimes inconsistent in this respect. However, what we need to recognize most of all is that Calvin is working with very different views of history and Scripture than those which are dominant in much academic study of the Old Testament today. For Calvin both history and Scripture are expressions of the divine will.

Having reached this stage, however, we have only covered one half of the equation, as it were. For we said that Calvin's method of interpretation can be called 'historico-grammatical'. It remains, therefore, to examine the second half of this 'equation'. Hence we now turn to examine Calvin's grammatical exegesis.

2. Grammatical Exegesis

Having dealt with questions of authorship and historical background Calvin will next turn his attention to the text itself. Here we are dealing with the second fundamental principle of historico-grammatical exegesis. Once again, as we examine Calvin's method, we may be surprised by his 'modernity'. However, here too we must be on our guard against pressing this too far and so overlooking the differences between Calvin's approach and that of modern historical scholars.

Since Calvin nowhere gives us a detailed description of the exegetical principles, we must gather them from the various comments made in his writings and, more importantly, from his actual practice as a commentator.

In an earlier chapter we saw that, Calvin, in the dedicatory epistle to his Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans addressed to Simon Grynaeus, programmatically expressed his view that the exegete's primary task is to discover the mind of the author as expressed in the text of Scripture. Elsewhere, Calvin designates this meaning by a number of different words or phrases, for example: the 'germanus sensus', the 'verus sensus', the 'simplex sensus', or the 'literalis sensus'. However he most frequently speaks of the 'genuinus sensus'.

In his Old Testament exegetical works, the phrase

'consilium auctoris', or 'prophetarum' etc., seems to be equivalent to the phrase 'mens scriptoris' found in the epistle to Grynaeus and frequently in his New Testament commentaries. This word 'consilium' underlines for us the aim of Calvin as an interpreter. All of his principles of exegesis were aimed at one fundamental goal, that is, at laying bare the mind or intention (consilium) of the author as expressed in the language he uses. The word 'consilium', in Calvin's usage, has perhaps a somewhat wider significance than the word 'mens'. It implies not only discovering the author's meaning, but also its implications. It involves asking the question, not only what do these words mean? but also where do they tend? to what do they point? what is their ultimate significance? The use of the word 'consilium' is bound up with Calvin's application of the Old Testament to the Church and his christological interpretation of it. Thus the 'consilium auctoris' is the meaning intended, in the first place, by the human, but ultimately, the divine author.⁵⁴

As with the 'mens scriptoris', however, the 'consilium auctoris' can only be reached through the words of the text, that is, the 'verba auctoris'. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Calvin insisting very strongly on the importance of words and their meaning. This emphasis is obvious even from a cursory reading of any of Calvin's commentaries, lectures, and even his sermons, though to a lesser extent. In his Old Testament commentaries and lectures he constantly seeks to define the meanings of words, to find their roots and to trace their

etymologies. Occasionally he will do the same in his sermons too.⁹⁷ He is concerned also with the grammatical structure of a sentence, and its idioms. To this end he makes use of all the grammatical and lexical tools available to Hebrew scholars of his day.

The emphasis that Calvin placed on the importance of understanding the words of Scripture is made explicit in the following statement,

It is important to know how the Holy Spirit uses words. It is true that we must not stop simply at words, but we cannot understand the teaching of God unless we know what procedure, style and language he uses.⁹⁸

This is a very revealing passage, for it gives us two important aspects of Calvin's emphases as an exegete. This passage makes clear, firstly, the importance of words as conveying the meaning intended by the author. Calvin regards words as forming the basic units of a passage. If we cannot understand how they are being used by an author (here, the Holy Spirit, emphasizing Calvin's doctrine of inspiration) we cannot understand what the author is trying to say to us, we cannot get at his meaning. However, in the second place, it is clear from this passage that Calvin did not regard words as an end in themselves. The words of a passage point beyond themselves to something else, they are a means of penetrating into the mind of the author. In the first place this will mean the human author, but, since the human author is an 'instrument of the Holy Spirit', through the mind of the human author one reaches the mind of God. This is in complete harmony with what we saw in the last chapter.

Because of this emphasis upon the mind of the author (mens/consilium auctoris) and the genuinus sensus, Calvin's exegesis of the Old Testament can be called historico-grammatical.

In view of his stress on words as the means of attaining to the mind of the (divine) author it should not surprise us to find that Calvin regarded a knowledge of the Hebrew language as essential equipment for the Old Testament exegete. This leads us into the consideration of the adequacy of Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew which at various times has been questioned. Few readers of Calvin's Old Testament commentaries would now be willing to subscribe to the opinion of the French Roman Catholic critic Richard Simon, who in his Histoire critique du Vieux Testament of 1685 stated that Calvin 'knew scarcely more than the Hebrew alphabet'!³⁷

One does not need a profound knowledge of Hebrew nor a very great acquaintance with Calvin's Old Testament exegetical works to see the falsity of this statement. A. Baumgartner, in his monograph, Calvin hébraïsant et interprète de l'Ancien Testament published in 1889 was easily able to show how erroneous Simon was in his judgment. Moreover, Baumgartner sought not only to show the extent of Calvin's knowledge of the language as seen in his commentaries and lectures but also to trace the sources of his knowledge of Hebrew. Baumgartner was thus able to show that Calvin had '... a truly sound and detailed knowledge of Hebrew'.⁴⁰ Recent scholars have

acquiesced in Baumgartner's conclusion. Thus as Ludwig Diestel put it, writing with reference to Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew in his book Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche, Simon's criticism '... is disproved by every page of his [Calvin's] Old Testament commentaries.'⁴¹

At the same time, however, it must be acknowledged that Calvin was not a specialist in Hebrew. His knowledge of Hebrew does not match his knowledge of Greek. Baumgartner himself recognizes this.⁴² Indeed it would seem that Calvin himself was aware of the limitations of his knowledge in this area. This can be made clear by a comparison of his Old and New Testament commentaries and lectures. Thus, (1). whereas in his New Testament commentaries we frequently find him making authoritative statements on matters of Greek grammar and textual criticism this happens relatively infrequently in his Old Testament exegetical works. (2). Indeed in the Old Testament commentaries we often find him making, what may be called, deferential statements to the competence of others in matters of Hebrew scholarship.⁴³ This contrasts very sharply with his attitude to Greek scholarship in the New Testament commentaries. In these we find him rather taking issue with other 'experts'. Indeed, on a few occasions he even takes it upon himself to criticize the great Erasmus himself on matters of the Greek language!⁴⁴ Though this sort of thing does happen in his Old Testament commentaries and lectures, it is much more rare, and it is out weighed by the times he acquiesces in the expertise of

others. (3). Finally, the very language Calvin uses when referring to other authorities indicates that he did not rank himself alongside them as being an expert in the Hebrew language of the same class as they were.⁶⁵

Hence, it would seem that we are warranted in the conclusion that whilst Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew was by no means outstanding, it was nonetheless perfectly adequate for the purposes for which he required it.⁶⁶

Calvin's attitude to the study of Hebrew and the necessity of the knowledge of Hebrew for Old Testament exegesis was, in fact, fairly enlightened for the time in which he lived. The state of Christian Hebrew scholarship in Calvin's time was at a much lower stage of development than was the Greek scholarship of the time. This was the result of a number of factors. The major hindrance to hebraic studies in the 15th. and 16th. Centuries, next to the scarcity of materials, was 'that suspicion for the motive of them was all too easily aroused.'⁶⁷

There was a deep seated fear and prejudice of the Jews among Christians. We have already had occasion to notice Calvin's attitude to the Jews; his was typical of the majority of Christians.⁶⁸ These attitudes were deeply inhibitive to the development of Hebrew learning among Christians for the Jews, at that time, were the chief source for learning the language. Good non-Jewish Hebraists were very rare; consequently to learn Hebrew the student would probably have to travel very far and expend

large sums of money. In addition the student of Hebrew might very well have to face the reproach and suspicion of fellow Christians, for the prejudice against the Jews spread even to learning their language. It was thought that the learning of Hebrew would make one into a Jew and it was feared that an exposition of the Old Testament based on the Hebrew text would 'Judaize' Christianity and make those who heard it Jews.⁶⁹ These attitudes and fears were not merely the expression of popular superstition, for they were shared by some of the most creative minds of the period. Luther himself frequently gave voice to such fears and was very critical of Christian Hebraists. Even the enlightened Erasmus shared in such fears.⁷⁰

However, in spite of this inhibitive suspicion of the Jews prevalent amongst Christians, Calvin believed in the importance of knowing Hebrew for Old Testament exegesis. Moreover, it would seem that he went to some lengths to acquire a knowledge of the language.⁷¹ That Calvin should make the effort to learn Hebrew from others and to teach himself the language only goes to show us how broad his attitudes could be and how far he could transcend the prejudices of his age. More so when we bear in mind Calvin's polemic against Jewish exegesis of the Old Testament and his awareness of the dangers of Judaizing the Old Testament.

Thus, what was said above as to the adequacy of Calvin's knowledge of the Hebrew language should not lead us to think that Calvin regarded the knowledge of Hebrew as

anything less than essential for expounding the Old Testament. On the contrary it is evident that he regarded it as a fundamental tool of the exegete and teacher of the Old Testament.

This is further shown by the fact that all his commentaries and lectures are based directly on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Calvin, we are informed by the printer in a preface to Calvin's Lectures on Daniel, was accustomed to give his lectures directly from the Hebrew text.⁷² Moreover, some of his sermons would tend to indicate that he also preached directly from the Hebrew text.⁷³ Thus, he expounded the Hebrew text directly. We can only expect that he would have followed a similar procedure in writing his commentaries in the private of his study.

Calvin's attitude to the importance of Hebrew for the Old Testament exegete is also demonstrated by his custom of giving, at the start of his comments, his own translation of the Hebrew text into Latin. This translation is very literal. This, it would seem, was a common procedure in Calvin's day. Such a literal translation was probably meant to serve as an aid to understanding the Hebrew text for budding hebraists. It may also have aided his hearers or readers, even those who had no Hebrew, to understand how he arrived at his exegetical conclusions.

Interestingly, Calvin in the course of his exposition, especially in his lectures, seeks to balance this very literal translation with a paraphrastic form of

translation based on his own exposition of the text.

There is little certainty as to which particular Hebrew text Calvin would have used. There were at least four that would have been easily available to him.⁷⁴ The fact that Calvin occasionally points out the variant readings of the Qere-Kethib would tend to indicate, either that his Bible had an apparatus containing the Qere-Kethib, or that he had a Hebrew Grammar which contained some Qere-Kethib variations.⁷⁵ If the former was in fact the case it would narrow down which text(s) he could have used since not all of the texts available had such an apparatus.⁷⁶

Having dealt with the equipment necessary for the Old Testament interpreter, we will now go on to examine Calvin's procedure or method when faced with the actual text of Scripture.

The first rule in grammatical exegesis is the establishment of the true text with which one is dealing. Where one is confronted by a passage which has a number of variant readings in its textual tradition, some sort of decision must be made as to which is the most likely or best reading.

Thus Calvin, in the first place, shows a concern for the integrity of the Old Testament biblical text. For him, of course, it is the Massoretic text which is regarded as the inspired text and which therefore forms the basis of his exposition, though he does make use of the LXX too.

However, when he does so it is as a subordinate authority which helps to elucidate or establish the Hebrew text.⁷⁷

Comparing Calvin's Old Testament commentaries and lectures with his New Testament commentaries it soon becomes evident that textual criticism does not figure so prominently in the former as it does in the latter. There were three factors responsible for this state of affairs. In the first place, we must remember that the great bulk of Calvin's Old Testament exegetical works are in fact direct transcripts of his expository lectures given in the Genevan school and later in the Academy. Many of those Old Testament commentaries that are not direct transcripts of lectures began their lives as lectures.⁷⁸ In the second place, we must bear in mind what Calvin's appointment in Geneva involved. He was appointed Professor of Old Testament whilst there was a separate Professor of Hebrew.⁷⁹ This meant that the elucidation of the Hebrew text as such and its textual criticism was not, strictly speaking, part of his responsibility. Calvin alludes to this fact several times in his lectures.⁸⁰ Naturally, it is impossible to avoid all references to such matters when giving an exposition of the Old Testament based directly on the Hebrew, as Calvin did. However, Calvin only touches on the finer points of Hebrew grammar and textual criticism where it bears directly on the passage he is expounding. Nevertheless, it is clear from both his practice in expounding the Old Testament and the statements he makes that he regarded the establishment of the true reading as essential.

These factors, then, help to explain why Calvin deals with text critical matters much less often in his Old Testament commentaries than he does in his New Testament ones. A more obvious explanation is to be found in the fact that there were very few Hebrew MSS available in the 16th. Century. The textual situation for the Hebrew Old Testament is very different from that of the Greek New Testament. The Hebrew text was copied and handed down much more carefully, by trained scribes. Hence, the variations in the textual tradition are not nearly as numerous as for the New Testament. In addition to this, until the discovery of the scrolls at Qumran, very few Hebrew MSS existed that were older than the 8th. or 9th. centuries AD.¹ The poor condition of Christian Hebraica that we have already had occasion to consider was no doubt a further contributory factor here. It meant that the materials for the study of Hebrew available to Christians were also scarce. All these were factors which affected the development of Old Testament textual criticism. However, in spite of these caveats, it is, as we shall see, clear from Calvin's commentaries that the establishment of the correct reading was an important aspect of Calvin's method.

Calvin, believed very strongly in the integrity of the Massoretic text. He believed that the Massoretic text, as it had come down to us from the Jewish Scribes was highly reliable. He regarded this, in the first place, as a singular mark of God's providence. However, at the same

time, he had a very high regard for the ability of these scribes. Thus he often remarks on their accuracy as copyists.⁸² His attitude here contrasts with many of his contemporaries and with much of the earlier Christian tradition. Thus he rejects the view, held by many Christians that the 'Rabbis', as they were referred to, had extensively corrupted the Hebrew text so as to refute Christian claims.⁸³ He is not slow to reprove even Augustine for this, for whom he had the highest regard in other respects.

...for he entertained a suspicion of the Jews, that as they were the most inveterate enemies of the faith, they would have tried to falsify the Law and the Prophets.

Calvin rejects this idea and says of Augustine that 'superstition possessed him'.⁸⁴

However there is one important occasion when Calvin does in fact accuse the Jews of corrupting the text, that is, in the case of the Hebrew word k'rf in Psalm 22.16 (verse 17 in the Hebrew). Yet he does not speak out of mere prejudice, but feels that he has good, scholarly, grounds for making such an accusation. His argument is instructive as an example of his method of working in the area of textual emendation. In the first place Calvin recognizes that,

As all the Hebrew Bibles (omnes libri hebraici) at this day, without exception, have this reading ...

This for him is a very important consideration and he is aware that it is very strong evidence in favour of the integrity of the text as it stands, as his following comments indicate. He, thus continues,

... I would have had great hesitation in departing from a reading which they all support (a tanto consensu recedere mihi religio esset) ...

Calvin's usual procedure, it would seem, was, in the first place, to accept a reading unless there was some evidence in the textual tradition to cast doubt on it. However, he feels that on this occasion there are certain weighty reasons which compel him to depart from his usual procedure. He goes on to give us his reasons for this. In the first place he says, '... the connection of the passage (this is my translation of the Latin phrase, *sententiae ratio* - a difficult phrase to translate, T. H. L. Parker has 'the reason of the sentence'^{es}) compels me to do so ...'. Here we see a fundamental principle of Calvin's method, that is, that it is the context which is supreme in matters of textual criticism and emendation. We shall have cause to return to this later. In the second place he thinks that there are other grounds for the '... probable conjecture that the passage has been fraudulently corrupted by the Jews.' Calvin's arguments and procedure here are very revealing.

Firstly, he appeals to the Septuagint reading of this passage. He writes,

Certainly, there is no doubt that the Greek interpreters [Calvin's customary designation of the Septuagint] read the letter waw where yodh is now written.

Secondly, he points us back to the context and to the sheer logic of grammatical construction. Thus he writes,

If we receive this reading as they would have us to do the sense will be confused and terribly obscure. In the first place, it will be a defective form of expression (*defectiva locutio*); and to complete it, they say it is necessary to supply the verb to beset. But what does it mean to beset the hands and the feet? Besetting belongs

no more to these parts of the body than to the whole man.⁶⁶

The above example brings out many of Calvin's leading principles in his approach to textual problems. In the first place, it shows that even when he does feel it necessary to emend the text, he does so reluctantly because of his strong belief in the basic reliability of the Hebrew text as it has come down to us. This means that he is very cautious when it comes to emendations. Thus, when faced with a difficult reading Calvin tries, first of all, to make sense of the text as it stands. This is clear from his comments on Psalm 22. Calvin's Old Testament exegetical works provide us with many more examples of the same.⁶⁷ He is aware, moreover, that Hebrew is very different to his native French and has some very strange idioms. Thus just because a reading does not seem to make good sense in his mother tongue he will not reject it. If necessary he will bring out the meaning of a difficult idiom by paraphrasing.⁶⁸

The crucial consideration here, as it is throughout Calvin's exegesis, is the context. He continually seeks to make sense of a difficult reading by placing it in the larger context of a passage.⁶⁹ As the above examples already indicate, when Calvin is thinking about the context of a passage he has in mind a number of related considerations, for example, the flow of the author's thought, his usual style, the Hebrew grammar itself, and whether or not a particular reading makes sense. It was considerations such as these that led Calvin to the conclusion that the Jews had corrupted the text of Psalm

22.16.

On the occasions when Calvin feels that emendation is the only possible solution, it is only after a careful consideration of the evidence and after reaching the conclusion that the text as it stands cannot be made sense of. Only then will he consider emendation. Once again his procedure when faced with such a state of affairs is very revealing.

It is interesting to note that in spite of his doctrine of inspiration he did not regard the external vowel system of the Hebrew Bible as being inspired. Here Calvin contrasts with some later proponents of the doctrine of verbal inspiration who went so far as to argue that even the Hebrew vowel points were infallibly inspired.⁹⁰ Calvin, on the contrary, held them to be secondary, of later origin than the (inspired) consonantal text and added to it much later by scribes.⁹¹ Hence he shows much more readiness, where he feels it necessary, to emend the external vowel system than he does the consonantal text.⁹² When it is a matter of a seeming corruption in the consonantal text Calvin shows great caution in emending it.⁹³

What are the criteria by which Calvin decides whether or not a text is in need of emendation? We have touched on some of these already. The primary consideration is always whether or not a particular reading can be made sense of in its context as it stands.⁹⁴ However, Calvin does not rest here, he introduces another important principle into

his textual criticism. For he frequently feels constrained to explain how an alternative reading or corruption in a text could have come about. In so doing he seeks to justify his preferred reading.

Frequently he attributes the alternative reading to the confusion of two very similar Hebrew characters on the part of the copyists. Thus he seeks to support the reading he prefers by giving an explanation of how the other reading could have come about.⁷⁵ However, even in such cases as these he will often seek what he calls, an 'authority' for his preferred readings.⁷⁶ It is not quite clear what he means by an 'authority' here, he gives us no explanation. It could be a reference to some learned Christian Hebraist, or perhaps a Jewish Rabbi. On the other hand, it may refer to the variant readings of the Qere-Kethib, the Massorah parva, or others. From certain statements made by Calvin, it would seem that he had some kind of access to the variant readings of different Hebrew MSS.⁷⁷ Whether this was at first hand, however is impossible to tell; in view of what has been already said as to Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew and his post in Geneva this must be doubtful.

In actually making emendations, where these are conjectural, he allows himself, as ever, to be guided by the context. Thus as well as comparing other versions, and deducing the most probable reading from them, Calvin can often deduce the best reading, by appealing to the context in which the text stands.⁷⁸ Hence, it is often

the case in Calvin's procedure that the context itself will indicate the most likely reading for a text that is to be emended.

The adequacy of Calvin's method may seem questionable from our modern standpoint. However, given the time at which he lived, his procedure was probably the safest that could be adopted and probably saved him from many pitfalls.⁹⁹

Textual criticism was very much in its infancy, very few Hebrew MSS were available and anyway scholars had no adequate way of assessing the relative value of the texts they had. Add to this the fact that the Hebrew language itself was not properly understood and it becomes clear that the textual criticism of the Old Testament could be a very hit and miss affair. Thus Calvin's very cautious approach to the subject and his constant appealing to the context would seem to have been the best possible method for his time.

Having established what he considers to be the true text Calvin is now ready to expound it. As we have seen his exegesis can be characterized as 'grammatical'. He sought to discover the literal grammatical meaning of a text. This for him meant the meaning contained in the words of a text as understood in their grammatical and historical context. This meaning was the true and in fact the only meaning of a text. This is what Calvin usually refers to as the 'genuinus sensus' or the 'simplex sensus' or the 'verus sensus'.¹⁰⁰

As a grammatical exegete, Calvin's primary concern is with the actual words of the text and their grammatical and syntactical structure. In seeking to understand the meaning of Hebrew words Calvin makes use of every available source.¹⁰¹ It is true that the available sources in the 16th. century were very limited, we have already noted that the study of Hebrew was still in its infancy and was hindered by deep seated prejudices. However, Calvin would have had several Hebrew grammars available to him, some of which were in Latin.¹⁰² It is perhaps to these, and their authors that he refers when he speaks of 'those skilled in the Hebrew language' or 'the most learned Hebrew Scholars'.¹⁰³

It is almost impossible to deduce from Calvin's commentaries what specific sources he used, for it was against his stated policy to explicitly refer to them.¹⁰⁴ It is clear that he makes use of the leading Christian interpreters of all ages as well as the productions of Humanist scholars of his own time. Whether, however, he made use of Rabbinic and other Jewish sources at first hand is, as we saw in our second chapter, doubtful.¹⁰⁵ Whether or not he knew them at first hand or derived his knowledge of them from the Latin writings of Christian Hebraists, it is nevertheless the case that Calvin frequently cites the opinions of Jewish interpreters. As we have seen Calvin never ceases to regard the Jews as opponents of the Christian faith. Because of this he usually shows caution in the way he uses them. Hence, he is frequently critical of their interpretations of the Old

Testament and, when he explicitly cites them in this respect, he usually does so only to criticize and reject them.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, he gives them high credit when it comes to deriving the meanings and etymologies of Hebrew roots.¹⁰⁷ We saw in chapter 2 of the present study that among the Jewish commentators, Calvin shows the highest regard for Rabbi David Kimchi, referring to him as '... the most faithful [expositor] among the Rabbins'.¹⁰⁸

The understanding of the actual words of a passage was fundamental to the task of exegesis as Calvin saw it. How did Calvin go about deciding the meaning of a Hebrew word? What were his methods and principles? We will now attempt to give some answer to this question. Calvin's commentaries are so extensive and his discussion of Hebrew words so frequent that it is difficult to do full justice to his method. The best procedure to adopt would seem to be to find some passage in his commentaries which give a fair illustration of his principles and which is typical of his method as a whole. Such a passage can be found in Calvin's commentary on Joel. In chapter 2.23 of Joel Calvin discusses, at some length the Hebrew word môrh and provides us with a very good example of his method.

'The meaning of the word', Calvin tells us, 'is ambiguous'. He notes that some translate it 'a teacher', but he himself prefers to render it differently. In the first place he compares the usage of the word elsewhere in the Old Testament. Hence, he argues that the word môrh,

... is very often taken for rain, sometimes generally, at others for a particular kind of rain, as we shall

shortly explain.¹⁰⁹

In the second place we find him, as ever, appealing to the context. Thus his second principle is whether the context favours one particular interpretation over another. In this particular instance Calvin feels sure that it does. Thus, whilst he is aware that teacher is probably the most usual meaning of this word, he argues that the context would favour the meaning rain. He therefore states,

Although môrh signifies a teacher, yet the context (circumstantia loci) does not seem to support this meaning.

However, as his explanation continues it is clear that by context (circumstantia loci) he means a number of different but related considerations. The word context, in the first instance, bears the usual connotation of the immediate context in which the word stands. That is, the meaning of the passage or verse in which the word is to be found. Thus encountering an occurrence of the word later in the same verse Calvin affirms that,

The word 'teacher', therefore, is in no way suitable, moreover what immediately follows must be noted. He puts a word from which môrh is derived, then, in a second time, he adds môrh; there is no doubt but that it signifies rain, all acknowledge this, and they acknowledge that in the same verse it is taken for rain. Since, then, all are in agreement on this matter, it seems to be excessively forced, to render this word in the same verse at one time 'teacher' and at another 'rain'...

Thus context, in the first place, means the immediate context of the verse in which a word stands. But context means much more than this for Calvin. For, in the second place, it means the whole process of thought of the prophet both in the nearer context of the passage or particular prophetic oracle in which a verse stands and the much wider context of the book as a whole. In this

case context means rather the context of thought. This is brought out when, in the passage before us, Calvin appeals to the intention of the prophet (*prophetae consilium*). We have seen the importance Calvin places on this idea. In the present passage Calvin appeals to the intention of the prophet to support his rendering of the word mórh.

Continuing on from the passage just quoted, he states that,

... especially when we see that the intention of the prophet moves in this direction (*praesertim quoniam videmus prophetae consilium huc tendere*), that he may make the people aware of the blessing of God in outward things.¹¹⁰

Context in this second sense can be extended to include the even larger context of the prophetic corpus as a whole and even Scripture in its totality. Here we would seem to have the context of what Calvin considered the teaching contained in Scripture as a whole. In the background is Calvin's doctrine of inspiration as verbal with its consequent emphasis upon Scripture as a unity. This is brought out when, in the present passage, Calvin goes on to summarize the reason which had led some to translate

... mórh as 'teacher' and his reply to them.

Those who have taken it in this way seem to have been led by one consideration, that it is absurd to set in the first place and as if on a higher level transitory blessings which merely pertain to the food and nourishment of the body.

He replies in terms of his own distinctive understanding of prophecy.

However, this argument is excessively frigid. For we know that the Prophets conduct children as it were by first principles to the higher doctrine. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if the prophet offers here a taste of God's grace in physical blessings, after he will ascend higher, as we shall see, and indeed the context also demands this.¹¹¹

Thus from this passage of his commentary on Joel we can see some of Calvin's leading principles for determining the meaning of Hebrew words. It is clear that Calvin's practice could be extremely sophisticated, involving as it did a whole complex of considerations both grammatical and theological/hermeneutical.

Another method Calvin employed to understand the meaning of Hebrew words, one that we might find somewhat dubious today, was the appeal to its etymology. He often shows independence of judgment in this area.¹¹² Here too Calvin appeals to the context to support his arguments.¹¹³ Because of the limitations of knowledge in his day and the scarcity of sources it is not surprising that Calvin, along with his contemporaries, often made mistakes in this area. Thus his etymologies can be rather fanciful. At times they are little more than guesswork.¹¹⁴ It was his constant appeal to the context that saved Calvin from many of the excesses that can attend this method. It meant that Calvin never treated words as totally individual, isolated units of meaning; instead their meaning was always to some extent dependent on their context and was affected by it. Hence by appealing to the context Calvin made decisions as to what he believed was the most plausible etymology, often using it to reject alternative suggestions.¹¹⁵

Another factor in the interpretation of the words of a passage is an historical one. Calvin shows some awareness of the fact that the language of the Old Testament itself has undergone development and change. He did not conceive

of language as being some static thing. Words, he realized, change their meanings through the course of time. An interpreter must be aware of this and take it into account in the interpretation of the Old Testament.¹¹⁶

Finally, before closing this examination of Calvin's grammatical exegesis of the Old Testament, we must draw attention to another important aspect of it, that is, his appreciation of the literary modes and forms found in the Old Testament.

Calvin shows a great sensitivity to the literary styles and techniques employed by the authors of the Old Testament. He is constantly analyzing figures of speech and literary-rhetorical modes and forms. The list of literary forms that Calvin finds in the Old Testament and the technical terms that he employs to denote them is long and would be too tedious to repeat here.¹¹⁷ No doubt it was through his humanist training, that Calvin gained the thorough grounding in literary forms and figures of speech that is evident in his Old Testament exegetical works. His earliest literary product, the Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, published in April 1532, shows a remarkable grasp of literary forms and modes for the youth of 23 years of age that Calvin then was.¹¹⁸ However, the retention of this form of exegesis in his biblical work may be due largely to the example of Augustine. In his De Doctrina Christiana, Augustine deals with the interpretation of figures of speech in Scripture and

sanctions such interpretation as a valid form of biblical exegesis.¹¹⁹ The literary genius of Calvin, already evident in his De Clementia, found ample scope to display itself when he turned to the Old Testament.

Perhaps the most astonishing example, at least from our modern perspective, is Calvin's perception of Poetic Parallelism. That Calvin was aware of parallelism is especially clear from his commentaries on the Psalms and Prophets. For example, in his commentary on Psalm 19.1 he states, 'The repetition which is added in the second member is exegetical (Repetitio quae secundo membro additur, exegetica est). For David explains how the heavens proclaim the glory of God to us ...'¹²⁰ Moreover, Calvin also shows some awareness of the function of parallelism in Hebrew poetry and its implications for the exegesis of the text. This is brought out while he is commenting on Psalm 112.1. There he writes,

I separate the words thus:

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord
And delights in his commandments.

since by the second member (secundo membro) the prophet defines in what the fear of God consists.¹²¹

It is clear Calvin recognizes that the second member of a parallelism expands the meaning of the first. This shows that Calvin's interest in and awareness of parallelism went beyond the simple observation of it as an aspect of the Old Testament's 'art'. Calvin called attention to parallelism not only as a poetic device to heighten the effect of a poem, but he also recognized that it had an important role to play in the actual exegesis of

the text.

As an outworking of this insight Calvin was also aware of the importance of parallelism as an aid to defining the meaning of the words of a text. Thus he frequently determines the meaning of a Hebrew word by appealing to its counterpart in the parallel member of the poetic structure. Many instances of this can be found in Calvin's lectures and commentaries especially those on the Prophets and, as we would expect, the Psalms. A good example - and a rather surprising one - is to be found in Calvin's commentary on Isaiah 41.14. Commenting on the Hebrew word mtîm, Calvin writes,

Some translate mtîm, 'men', which by no means agrees with the context. Therefore, plain reasoning (manifesta ratio) demands that it be rendered 'dead [men] (mortuos)'.¹²²

Having stated this Calvin goes on to give us his reasons and they are entirely in terms of an understanding of the verse's parallelistic structure. He continues,

For it is an exposition of the former word by repetition, which is very common with the Hebrews. I, therefore, agree with Jerome who translates it in this way and I am not worried that mtîm is written with a 't' not with a 'd'. For it was easy for such similar points to be interchanged.¹²²

The correctness of Calvin's translation of the word mtîm in this passage is no doubt questionable. Nevertheless, the important thing here is the way in which Calvin came to his conclusion via an understanding of poetical parallelism. One more example of Calvin's use of parallelism to determine the meaning of a Hebrew word will have to suffice. This example is taken from Calvin's Commentary on the Psalms. Commenting on the word pgd in

Psalm 8.4 (verse 5 in Hebrew) Calvin argues that it should be rendered 'think' or 'remember'. He writes,

Forasmuch as almost all interpreters take pgd for to visit, I would not differ from them, as the sense agrees very well with it. Yet as it signifies, now and then, to remember, and that the repetition of one sentence in different words often occurs in the Psalms (et iteratio eiusdem sententiae [=thought or meaning ?] sub diversis verbis frequenter in Psalmis occurrit), it will not be amiss to translate it as if he had said, This is a wondrous thing that God thinks upon men continually.¹²³

We will close this section by noting that Calvin's application of this insight into the nature of the parallelistic structure of Hebrew verse could have far reaching consequences for Old Testament texts that had been traditionally seen as 'proof texts' for central Christian doctrines. In the Institutes, for example, we find the following in Calvin's discussion of the Trinity:

I deliberately omit many testimonies that the church fathers used. They thought it justifiable to cite from David, 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and all their power by the spirit of his mouth' [Ps. 33.6], to prove that the universe was no less the work of the Spirit than of the Son. But since it is common practice in The Psalms to repeat the same thing twice, and since in Isaiah 'spirit of the mouth' means the same thing as 'the word' [Isa. 11.4], that was a weak reason.¹²⁴

We are reminded by such a passage as this that Calvin did not leave his exegetical principles behind when he turned to the exposition of his theology and that Calvin could follow his exegetical method through to its ultimate goal.

This sketch of Calvin's exegetical method, though necessarily brief, does, however, make it clear that Calvin employed a method of interpreting the Old Testament that is recognizably historico-grammatical. We can already see in his exegesis, if only in germ form, the major principles that characterize an historical approach to the Bible. It is true that Calvin nowhere develops such ideas systematically and he is often inconsistent and even selective in his use of them. Moreover, Calvin's approach to history was theological, a fact that might, to some, classify him as being 'hopelessly pre-critical' and therefore irrelevant. He saw history in terms of providence and he conceived of Scripture as being verbally inspired. Nevertheless Calvin's exegesis of the Old Testament can be called historico-grammatical. For Calvin, in asserting the divine, as he did so strongly, did not negate or ignore the human.

It might be asked whether it was not in fact the mystery of the divine-human relationship in the production of Scripture that for Calvin constituted both the need and the necessity of an historico-grammatical approach to Scripture. The sovereignty of God over history and yet the liberty of man in history, the plenary verbal inspiration of Scripture, and yet Scripture as a form of God's accommodation of himself through the employment of human - time bound - authors, are the foci within which Calvin's exegesis of the Old Testament continually moves. It is these foci that make Calvin's principles of interpreting

the Old Testament at once both strange and yet familiar to many modern ears. Calvin's concern as a biblical scholar is to expound the words of men. As a theologian, on the other hand, he is concerned with the word of God. However, for him the two are not separate. He does not make the same distinction between them that is made in Neo-orthodox theologies. The human words are not to be set aside in order to grasp the divine word. Nor are the human words a sort of 'shell' in which the divine word is contained as a 'kernel', but which first must be 'stripped away'. The divine word is to be found, not beyond the human words, but in and with them. Nor does he seem to feel any tension between his two roles as biblical scholar and theologian, though we today may feel such a tension.

At this point it will be helpful if we once again summarize our findings so far. We began the present section by seeking to answer the question whether Calvin, in order to realize his own hermeneutical aim of finding Christ in the whole of Scripture and thus in the Old Testament, made use of the allegorical method of exegesis as we might expect given this hermeneutical starting point. We have found, in our last chapter, that this was in fact not the case, on the contrary we saw that Calvin explicitly repudiates allegorical exegesis largely on the basis of his understanding of Scripture. In the present chapter we have sought to draw this out further by describing the exegetical method Calvin employed which arose out of his understanding of Scripture and divine revelation as accommodated. In the next section we must go

on to examine how far Calvin's exegetical method allows him to fulfil his Christological exegetical goal.

Chapter 6

Accommodation and Typology: Finding Christ in the Old Testament

So far we have examined Calvin's use of the Old Testament and seen that he made use of it in all areas of his life and activity as a Reformer. However, we went on to see in our second chapter that Calvin's approach to the Old Testament was influenced by what he saw as a false approach to the Old Testament on the part of the Anabaptists and Servetus on the one hand and the Roman Catholics on the other. In the third chapter we saw that Calvin's basic hermeneutical approach to the Old Testament was to read it with the intention of finding Christ there. In the fourth and fifth chapters we asked how this affected his exegetical method. We found that this hermeneutical aim did not lead him into wholesale allegorization of the Old Testament as we might have expected, but that he interpreted the Old Testament historically and gram^matically. At this point we must ask whether there is not somewhat of a tension between, on the one hand, Calvin's stated hermeneutical aim in reading the Old Testament, and on the other, his exegetical method.

Calvin sought to understand the mind of the authors of Scripture by means of a literal form of historical-grammatical exegesis and yet at the same time he sought to find Christ in the Old Testament. Certainly to the twentieth century mind these may appear somewhat mutually exclusive. However, this unease is not limited to our own century.

Indeed some of Calvin's contemporaries themselves when faced with the results of his exegetical method as embodied in his commentaries had similar feelings. Thus, rather ironically it came about that Calvin himself had the same criticism levelled against him that we found him directing towards the Anabaptists, and the Roman Catholics, that is, the accusation of 'Judaizing' in the interpretation of the Old Testament. In fact, this tension between Calvin's hermeneutical approach to the Old Testament and his exegetical method which resulted in the accusation of 'Judaizing' sets the background for us to Calvin's usage of accommodation and typology. It helps, therefore, to clarify the problems that his use of accommodation and typology were seeking to deal with problems that arose out of his adherence to a literal method of exegesis combined with a christological hermeneutical stance which would appear to lead to a non-literal interpretation of the Old Testament. Hence, it will be worthwhile, before turning directly to his use of accommodation and typology, to take a look at the basis of this criticism.

Calvin was criticized as being a 'Judaizer' in his interpretation of the Old Testament by a Lutheran theologian named Aegidius Hunnius, in a book entitled Calvinus judaizans, published at Wittenberg in 1593.¹ What is interesting about this book is that it is precisely with respect to Calvin's christological approach to the Old Testament that the accusation of 'Judaizing' is made. To understand the accusation we must look at certain passages in Calvin's commentaries in which he rejects traditional

Christian interpretations of the Old Testament, for it is such passages as these that Hunnius cites to prove his case.

In his Old Testament commentaries Calvin's historical-grammatical exegesis often leads him to reject what had been seen traditionally as proof texts of Christ. Thus Calvin frequently indicates that his reason for rejecting the traditional interpretation is that it does not agree with the 'genuinus' or 'simplex sensus', that is, with the passage as understood literally. Such interpretations are, as he expresses it, 'destitute of plausibility'. Calvin's commentary on Isaiah 16 is an example of this. Jerome, Calvin tells us, had explained this passage as referring to Christ. Calvin, however, expounds the passage quite literally of the Moabites, taking it as 'a condemnation of late repentance'. He goes on to state that 'both Jews and Christians misinterpret this passage'. He continues,

Jerome explains it as referring to Christ, because he drew his birth from the Moabites, (Ruth 1.4; Matt. 1.5,) from whom Ruth was descended; and that opinion has been adopted by almost all Christians; as if the Prophet had said, 'O Lord, though a judgment so severe as this awaits the Moabites, still thou wilt not utterly destroy them; for they will send thee a Lamb, the ruler of the world.' But that interpretation, being destitute of plausibility (quia nihil habet coloris), need not be refuted.²

Calvin goes on to tell us that he follows the 'true and genuine interpretation (interpretationem ... veram et genuinam); thus he interprets 'Ruler' as a reference to God and 'lamb' as a reference to a literal lamb as a sacrifice. Moreover, he seeks to understand the passage in terms of the purpose or intention of the author (Prophetae consilium). This he believes is 'to condemn the Moabites for not having repented in due season, and to tell them that they will now

in vain do what they might easily have done formerly'. Thus it is clear that Calvin's principles of exegesis lead him away from interpreting this passage of Christ as was traditional.

Elsewhere in the commentary on Isaiah, he rejects the christological interpretation of 52.3 and 63.1,3 because it does not agree with the natural meaning of these passages.

On Isaiah 52.3 he complains that,

This verse has been badly expounded by many commentators, who have here chosen to enter into philosophical subtleties; for they have dreamed of many things at variance with the Prophet's meaning (praeter mentem prophetae).³

On Isaiah 63.1, he is even more scathing,

This chapter has been violently distorted by Christians, as if what is said here related to Christ (Hoc caput violenter torserunt Christiani, quasi ad Christum haec pertinerent), whereas the Prophet speaks simply of God himself; and they have imagined that here Christ is red because he was wet with his own blood which he shed on the cross. But the Prophet meant nothing of the sort. The obvious meaning is (simplex sensus est) ...⁴

Once again, it is clear from the above passages that it is Calvin's historical-grammatical approach to Old Testament exegesis that leads him to reject their christological interpretation. The further outworking of this principle led him also to reject many Old Testament passages which had received a time honoured place in the Christian tradition as proof texts for central Christian dogmas. Thus in Gen. 1.1 he rejects the view that the word 'beginning' refers to Christ, he states, 'To expound the term "beginning", of Christ, is altogether frivolous'.⁵ Again on the same verse, he rejects the view that the plural form Elohim can be taken as a proof of the Trinity, he writes, '... it appears to me to have little solidity, I will not insist upon the word;

but rather caution readers to beware of violent glosses of this kind'.⁶ On Jeremiah 31.22, where traditionally the words 'A woman shall encompass a man' had been applied to the virgin birth, Calvin states, 'All this is deservedly laughed at by the Jews'.⁷ Such passages as these could be multiplied from Calvin's exegetical works.⁸

Calvin's caution in this respect, however, has another source besides his method of exegesis, one which is of a more polemical nature. Calvin felt that many of the texts used to support Christian teachings from the Old Testament, because they did not agree with the natural sense of the passage would open the Church up to the 'ridicule of the Jews'.⁹ It is interesting to note that Calvin felt that the Jews could only be met by adhering rigidly to the literal meaning of the Old Testament.

It is clear how such passages from Calvin's commentaries as those referred to above could give rise to the anxieties of Hunnius. Nevertheless it must be said that Hunnius's anxieties have arisen from a misunderstanding of Calvin's Old Testament exegesis. We have already seen in the second and third Chapters of the present study Calvin's avowed christological approach to the Old Testament. Calvin, as we there saw, far from eschewing a Christian/christological interpretation of the Old Testament sought to maintain the Christian use of the Old Testament in opposition to the Anabaptists and Servetus. Moreover, he sought to maintain against them a Christological interpretation of the Old Testament, treating any non-christological approach as being

what he himself called a Judaizing of the Old Testament. Indeed, his explicitly stated aim in approaching the Old Testament is to find Christ there.

Hunnius, it would seem, has fastened on only one side of Calvin's exegesis. Whilst focusing in on certain passages in Calvin's exegesis of the Old Testament, he has failed to recognize Calvin's overall fundamental hermeneutical stance. Yet, at the same time, it must be acknowledged that Hunnius has pointed up a genuine problem implicit in Calvin's approach to the interpretation of Old Testament with its aim of finding Christ there whilst, at the same time, not abandoning its literal meaning. The case of Hunnius would tend to indicate that already in Calvin's time or shortly thereafter it was felt that Calvin's method of Old Testament interpretation with its tenacious adherence to literal exegesis could be inimical to a Christian understanding and interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures.¹⁰ However, this was a problem of which Calvin himself was not unaware and, indeed, it was a problem which his doctrine of accommodation and his use of typology as an interpretative method were seeking to grapple with.

This is not to say, however, that Calvin denied that the Old Testament in its literal-historical sense referred directly to Christ. Calvin did sometimes take Old Testament prophecies as direct predictions of Christ.¹¹ Moreover, Calvin was accustomed to identify the 'Angel of the Lord' in the Old Testament with Christ.¹² He refers to them as 'preludes (praeludium)' to Christ's incarnation in human

flesh, but he rejects the view that they were actually incarnations of Christ.¹³ However, such isolated examples of direct references to Christ in the Old Testament do not satisfy Calvin's basic hermeneutical goal of finding Christ in the Old Testament. For Calvin, as we have seen, it is not a question of Christ's being merely promised in the Old Testament. Nor is it a case of finding Christ here and there in the Old Testament. The Old Testament in its entirety must be read with the aim of finding Christ. The Law, as well as the Prophets, bear witness to Christ.

Indeed, whatever the law teaches, whatever it commands, whatever it promises, always has Christ as its goal (*semper Christum habet pro scopo*). We are, therefore, to apply all its parts (*omnes partes*) to him.¹⁴

It is with the realization of this in Calvin's exegesis of the Old Testament that we are concerned here.

How did Calvin read the Old Testament so as to find Christ in 'all its parts'? How did he seek to remove the tension in his approach to the Old Testament? That is, how did Calvin bridge the gap between, on the one hand, his aim of finding Christ in the Old Testament and, on the other, his historical-grammatical method of exegesis? As is evident from the title of the present chapter, it is the author's conviction that Calvin sought to achieve this bridging by means of the two related ideas of Accommodation and typology. Hence it is to an examination of the use of these two ideas in Calvin's Old Testament exegesis that we shall now turn.

1. Accommodation

Typology and accommodation are closely related and, it may be said, intertwined in Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics. His understanding of typology, or rather his rationale and justification for the use of typology, is to be found in his concept of accommodation. Therefore, we shall first of all examine his idea of accommodation in so far as it relates to his understanding and use of typology.

We have had various occasions already to refer to the doctrine of accommodation in Calvin's Old Testament exegetical work, and it is in fact a very wide ranging idea. As has already been indicated Calvin's doctrine of accommodation is always related, in some way, to his idea of Revelation. E. A. Dowey puts it very succinctly when he writes,

The term accommodation refers to the process by which God reduces or adjusts to human capacities what he wills to reveal of the infinite mysteries of his being, which by their very nature are beyond the powers of the mind of man to grasp.¹⁵

The primary need for God to accommodate himself in his self revelation to man is the disparity that exists between the divine infinitude and the limited finite capacity of the human understanding.¹⁶ Calvin makes use of the latin word capetus (capacity) to describe the human capacity and its limits. There is a 'gap' between the capacity of man and the divine reality which can only be 'bridged' from the side of the divine. Man can never surmount the gulf that exists between him and God. Only God can by 'in some way descending' to the limitations of the human capetus.¹⁷ In short, 'God

cannot be comprehended by us except in as far as he accommodates himself to our standard.¹⁸

As F. L. Battles puts it in his essay dealing with this theme, '... God ... knows the incalculable difference in measure between his infinity and our finiteness, and accordingly accommodates the one to the other in the way in which he reveals himself to us.'¹⁹ God as he is in himself cannot be known by man, and if man is to have any knowledge of God, God must 'lower himself' or 'stoop down' to mankind, he must accommodate his infinitude to our finitude.²⁰ The whole created order which for Calvin is a revelation of God as Creator,²¹ is an accommodation in this sense.²² This is brought out very clearly in the argumentum to his Commentary on Genesis, where he writes,

The intention of Moses, in beginning his Book with the creation of the world, is, to render God, as it were, visible to us in his works.²³

Later in the same passage he continues as follows,

We know God, who is himself invisible, only through his works (Deum, qui invisibilis est, nonnisi ex suis operibus cognoscimus). ... This is the reason why the Lord, that he might invite us to the knowledge of himself, places the fabric of heaven and earth before our eyes, rendering himself, in a certain manner, manifest in them (in ea se quodammodo conspicuum reddat). For his eternal power and Godhead (as Paul says) are there exhibited, (Rom.1.20).

God cannot be known in his 'naked essence', but only as he is clothed in his works. Hence Calvin continues,

As for those who proudly soar above the world to seek God in his unveiled essence (nuda sua essentia), it is impossible but that at length they should entangle themselves in a multitude of absurd figments. God - by other means invisible - clothes himself, so to speak, with the image (imagine) of the world, in which he would present himself to our contemplation. They who will not deign to behold him thus magnificently arrayed in the incomparable vesture of the heavens and the earth, afterwards suffer the just punishment of their proud contempt in their own ravings.²⁴

This, then, is the first and primary aspect of Calvin's doctrine of accommodation; all revelation, by the very nature of the case, because of the gulf that separates an infinite God from his finite creature, man, must be accommodated.

However, since the fall of man into a state of sin there is need of an additional accommodation, this time to human sinfulness and its effects. This form of accommodation is connected, not with the work of creation, but with redemption.²⁵

Not only is man's capacity finite, but it is also now weakened, darkened and blinded by sin. Hence the gulf between God and man is widened further. Not only is there by nature an ontological gulf, but by sin there is now also a moral gulf. The human mind is at enmity with God. Thus, in its darkened state, which is not only an effect of sin itself, but also a result of God's punishment upon sin itself, the human mind in itself is now incapable of attaining any knowledge of God whatsoever.²⁶ The knowledge of God in his works of creation and providence is now ineffectual. So darkened and corrupted is the human mind and so much at enmity with God that it immediately twists and perverts even such knowledge of God as is afforded by the light of nature, and thus rather than imparting any truth about God this light becomes the occasion of falsehood and idolatry, in other words it is turned into darkness.²⁷

Now, therefore, if God is to reveal himself to man, he must

take into account, not only the natural limitations of the human captus, but also its blindness and inability occasioned by sin. Thus, corresponding to the two-fold incapacity of the human condition, there is a twofold aspect to the divine accommodation, relating to both the content and the form of revelation.²⁸ In revealing himself God takes into account man as he is, finite man in the condition of sin. This understanding structures Calvin's whole concept of revelation and Scripture.²⁹

Our particular interest is with Calvin's doctrine of accommodation insofar as it relates to the form and content of revelation in the Old Testament. Even more specifically we are concerned with Calvin's usage of accommodation in his interpretation of the Old Testament especially as it relates to his thinking on typology. Nevertheless, since this cannot be divorced from the wider understanding of this concept in Calvin's doctrine of revelation we can only adequately grasp this narrower aspect of accommodation against this wider background of the idea. Now, therefore, having sketched this wider background we will turn to its narrower use in Calvin's interpretation of the Old Testament.

The 'stooping down' of God to the human level, in other words the divine condescension, which takes place in the divine accommodation characterizes God's revelation of himself to man in all ages. God had revealed himself as the Creator in the fabric and frame of the created universe, so accommodating his divine nature and attributes to the capacity of man. With the entrance of sin and the consequent

corruption of human nature this revelation is inadequate, serving only to bring man into condemnation.³⁰ Hence, after the fall, God begins to reveal himself as God the Redeemer.³¹ However, as we have seen, God cannot be known as gracious outside of Christ. Hence the revelation of himself as Redeemer is, in fact, a revelation of God as gracious in Christ.³²

This, Calvin considers, was done gradually over the long centuries, beginning with the third chapter of Genesis and continuing through to the appearance of Christ in the flesh.³³ The Incarnation is thus the culmination of God's whole redemptive purpose, but this was already prefigured or, rather, revealed through figures and types to the fathers under the Old Testament dispensation. Thus, for Calvin, God's great purpose in history has been to reveal Christ. He sees the whole period covered by the Old Testament in terms of the gradual revelation of Christ. Christ, as we saw in an earlier chapter, was known by the Old Testament fathers, but dimly. The form of this revelation of Christ in the Old Testament was accommodated to the situation and the capacities of the fathers.

Thus for Calvin revelation does involve development or progression. However, in Calvin, this should be understood after the model of an organic growth rather than the idea of progressive revelation which was current, for example, in the nineteenth century History of Religions School.³⁴ Thus, there is progress in the sense that God's revelation becomes gradually clearer and fuller as the history of the Old

Testament progresses. The culmination point is reached in Christ who is the supreme example of divine accommodation and yet is, at the same time, the clearest revelation of God.³⁵ In this sense alone there is a development or rather growth in divine revelation. To use Calvin's own image, the daylight grew gradually brighter and clearer until full day dawned in Christ, the Sun of righteousness.

... and the Lord manifested himself to them, by degrees (Dominus gradatim se illis patefecit), until, at length, Christ the Sun of Righteousness arose, in whom perfect brightness shines forth (in quo perfectus apparet fulgor).³⁶

Moreover, the form that this revelation of God the Redeemer in Christ takes, varies in different ages according to the varied characteristics of the people to whom God was revealing himself.³⁷ However it should be emphasized that for Calvin it is only the form of this revelation that changes and not its content. The latter always remains the same, being the revelation of the grace of God in Christ.³⁸

Here we are brought once more into contact with something of Calvin's historical awareness. Men do not always remain statically the same. Under the divine tutelage there is growth and development in terms of the knowledge of God. Nor are all races the same, but each has its particular racial characteristics. When God reveals himself to the Jews he takes their particular racial characteristics into account and adapts or accommodates his revelation accordingly.³⁹ As God takes the differing, changing capacities of men into account in the revelation of himself by thus accommodating his revelation to them, so we must take this same factor into account when interpreting Old Testament Scripture. The

Old Testament, in contrast to the New, was originally given to a particular race at a particular time. This particularity must be taken into account when we seek to interpret and apply the Old Testament to our own day. Thus, according to Calvin, one of the goals of Old Testament interpretation should be to aim at recognizing what is accommodated and adapted to the peculiar situation of the Jews and distinguishing it from what is still valid for us today.⁴⁰

Calvin's concept of accommodation leads him to divide Scripture into various historical periods or dispensations⁴¹ in terms of the stages in this revelation and the form taken by divine accommodation. It would seem that basically Calvin divides history up into three distinct periods: the Patriarchal age, the period of the Law, and the period from Christ to the end of the world.⁴² It is true that Calvin nowhere expounds this view systematically, but it would seem to be implicit in much of what he says. Moreover, such a periodization is a necessary corollary of his understanding of Natural Law and his implementation of the Pauline concept of the Mosaic Law as a 'Pedagogue'.⁴³

Each period has its own distinctive characteristics in terms of both the mode and the clarity of divine revelation.⁴⁴ Though in each period the 'substance' of what God reveals is the same, yet in each there is a degree of revelation proper to it, the bounds of which cannot be overstepped in that period. Hence when in Genesis 32.29 Jacob wrestling with the Angel asks, 'Tell me, I pray thee, thy name', Calvin, who

identifies the angel with Christ, writes,

It is to be observed, that although Jacob piously desires to know God more fully, yet, because he is carried beyond the bounds prescribed to that age in which he lived (*ultra suae aetatis metas provehitur*), he suffers a repulse.⁴⁵

The three periods and their characteristics are as follows: firstly, there is the period of the Patriarchs, lasting till the time of Moses and the giving of the Law which forms the second; the third began with the life, death and resurrection of Christ and will continue until the end. Of the first period, the Patriarchal, Calvin commenting on the same passage of Genesis writes,

... God had manifested himself under so many veils and coverings, that he [Calvin is speaking of Jacob] had not yet obtained any clear knowledge of him [that is, of God] ... though Jacob's wish was pious, the Lord does not grant it, because the time of full revelation was not yet completed: for the fathers, in the beginning, were required to walk in the twilight of morning ...⁴⁶

So much for the clarity and degree of revelation in the Patriarchal period. With respect to its form Calvin contrasts this period with that of Moses by the fact that in it there was no written form of the Word of God. Rather the record of God's Word existed only in the form of traditions which were handed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth. This is brought out in the following passage from Calvin's commentary on Deuteronomy 31.10,

First, he says that he had written the Law. Before this the doctrines of religion had only existed in verbal form (literally, "in words", *antea vocalis tantum fuerat pietatis doctrina*), for their fathers used to hand down by tradition to the children whatever had been disclosed to them from Heaven (*quia tradebant patres filiis quasi per manus quod coelitus patefactum fuerat*). Thus, the religion and faith of the people in Egypt was founded only upon ancient oracles and the tradition of the fathers.⁴⁷

Moreover, the manner in which God revealed himself to the Patriarchs was distinctive, that is, the form taken by

divine accommodation. This is best seen by contrast with the form taken by divine accommodation in the second, Mosaic period, to which we now turn.

This second period is the one that Calvin is, quite naturally, most concerned with in his Old Testament commentaries since it encompasses the largest part of the Old Testament. Of this period, compared with the former, Calvin says, '... God rendered himself more conspicuous'.⁴⁸ In fact, Moses '... occupied an intermediate place between patriarchs and apostles'⁴⁹ and, in comparison with the former, '... he is said to have seen, face to face, the God who had been hidden from the fathers.'⁵⁰ Moreover, in this second period, there is also a change in terms of the form of revelation. The increasing perverseness and blindness of mankind, which Calvin saw as an effect of the spread of sin, makes a written form of the record of revelation necessary.⁵¹ As for the manner in which, or modes through which God revealed himself, this period is distinguished from the others by the fact that God revealed himself redemptively to the Jews through their political and religious institutions, that is, through the ceremonial and political laws given them by God. The whole religious and sacrificial cultus together with its ceremonies and institutions,⁵² and even the very nation itself as a political institution, with its possession of the land,⁵³ are part of God's 'stooping down', his accommodation, to the Jewish people. Since we are interested in Calvin's doctrine of accommodation in so far as it relates to his usage of the typological method of interpreting the Old Testament, it is

this second period of Calvin's schema with which we are concerned.

Calvin refers to this second period as 'the form of religion handed down by God through Moses (formam religionis per manum Mosis a Deo traditam).'⁵⁴ He usually refers to it as 'the law'.⁵⁵ The aim of this law was to reveal Christ to the Jews. Hence, in the same section of the Institutes, he writes,

The law was added ... not ... to lead the chosen people away from Christ; but rather to hold their minds in readiness until his coming; even to kindle desire for him, and to strengthen their expectation, in order that they might not grow faint by long delay.⁵⁶

This was, in particular, the function of the ceremonial aspects of the law, as is clear when he goes on to state that,

This fact was very clearly revealed in the ceremonies. For what is more vain or absurd than for men to offer a loathsome stench from the fat of cattle in order to reconcile themselves to God? Or to have recourse to the sprinkling of water and blood to cleanse away their filth? In short, the whole cultus of the law, if taken literally (si per se reputetur) and not as shadows and figures corresponding to the truth, will be utterly ridiculous. ... For if something spiritual (spirituale aliquid) had not been set forth to which they were to direct their course, the Jews would have frittered away their effort in those matters, just as the Gentiles did in their trifles. ... if the forms of the law (legales figurae) be separated from its end, one must condemn it as vanity.⁵⁷

Indeed, the very ceremonies themselves indicate that they were not an end in themselves, but pointed to some higher spiritual reality,

Yet that very type shows that God did not command sacrifices in order to busy his worshipers with earthly exercises. Rather, he did so that he might lift their minds higher. This also can be clearly discerned from his own nature: for, as he is spiritual, only spiritual worship delights him.⁵⁸

In short, Calvin affirms, '... the law was not devoid of

reference to Christ'.⁶⁹ Similar ideas are expressed in his Commentary on Galatians. Thus, commenting on Galatians 3.24, Calvin can say,

And certainly ceremonies had the power not only of alarming and humbling consciences, but of exciting them to faith in the coming Redeemer. In the whole solemnity of the ceremonial everything that was presented to the eye had impressed on it, as it were, the mark of Christ (notam Christi impressam habebat). The whole law, in short, was nothing but a manifold variety of exercises (multiplex exercitii genus) in which the worshippers were led by the hand to Christ (quo cultores manu ducebantur ad Christum).⁶⁰

Relevant here is another distinction made by Calvin, this time in his Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

Commenting on Romans 10.5 he draws a distinction between, on the one hand, what he calls 'the universal office of Moses' and 'the peculiar office of Moses', on the other.

Corresponding to this distinction, 'The word law is used in a twofold sense'. In the wider sense it refers to 'the whole doctrine taught by Moses (universam doctrinam a Mose proditam)', but in the narrower sense it refers to 'that part of it which belonged peculiarly to his ministry'.⁶¹

This introduces us to an idea which is closely associated with what we have been saying so far, that is, the idea of the ceremonial aspects of the Old Testament as a form of divine pedagogy. Accommodation, we have seen, is a pedagogical device used by God to convey truths about himself to mankind. The Old Testament is one possible form of this divine pedagogy adapted to the needs of the Jews. Thus Calvin sees the whole period from Moses to the Incarnation of Christ in terms of the overarching category of a divine pedagogy of the Jewish nation. The purpose of the institutions found in the Old Testament was to train the

Jews up to Christ.⁴²

The concept of the pedagogue implies that of the immaturity or childishness of the Jewish nation. A pedagogue is necessary only during childhood, once maturity is reached one is no longer needed.⁴³ Calvin uses this idea with respect to the Old Testament ceremonies, thus in the Institutes, he writes,

He [Paul] compares the Jewish nation to a child heir, not yet fit to take care of himself, under the charge of a guardian or tutor to whose care he has been trusted (tutoris aut paedagogi cuius custodiae commissus est) [Gal. 4.1-2]. Although Paul applies this comparison chiefly to the ceremonies, nothing prevents us from applying it most appropriately here as well. Therefore, the same inheritance was appointed for them and for us, but they were not yet old enough to be able to enter upon it and manage it. The same Church existed among them, but as yet in its childhood. Therefore, keeping them under this tutelage (paedagogia), the Lord gave, not spiritual promises unadorned and open, but ones foreshadowed, in a measure, by earthly promises.⁴⁴

The history of the Old Testament is from this point of view the growth and progress of the revelation of God the Redeemer in Christ.

We have seen in an earlier chapter that Calvin's estimation of the Jews in his own day was pretty poor. He also takes a low view of the Jews during the Old Testament period. Calvin viewed the Old Testament as a whole as the period of the 'childhood' of the Church, 'The same Church existed among them, but as yet in its childhood'.⁴⁵ Elsewhere, he contrasts the Church in the Old Testament, before the incarnation of Christ, with that in the New Testament, after the incarnation, in terms of 'childhood' and 'manhood' or 'maturity'. Hence, writing on Galatians 3.24, a passage in which he works this idea out at length, he writes,

In this way Paul compares the Jews to children and us to growing youths (Hoc modo pueris confert Iudaeos Paulus, nobis adulescentiam attribuit).⁶⁶

The Jews being children were 'barbarous'⁶⁷ and 'ignorant'⁶⁸. As children they could not 'rise above childish elements'. They were addicted to outward forms of worship and physical things.⁶⁹

This condition of the Church in the Old Testament determines the form that the divine accommodation to the Jews had to take. Hence writing in the Institutes, Calvin says,

Paul expresses this slenderness of understanding by the word 'childhood'. It was the Lord's will that this childhood be trained in the elements of this world and in little external observances, as rules for children's instruction, until Christ should shine forth, through whom the knowledge of believers was to mature.⁷⁰

The Jews were 'sons and heirs'; they knew Christ, but in understanding and outlook they were children and 'because of their youth (pueritiam) they had to be under the charge of a tutor (sub paedagogi custodia habendi essent).'⁷¹ This 'tutor' (pedagogue) was the 'ceremonies' in which 'the Old Testament of the Lord was ... wrapped up ... and delivered to the Jews' and which were 'shadowy (umbratili) and ineffectual'.⁷² 'Hence', Calvin continues, 'it is clear in what sense the apostle said that the Jews were led to Christ by the tutelage of the law before he appeared in the flesh [Gal. 3.24; cf. ch. 4.1-2].'⁷³

Thus God, in revealing himself accommodates himself to their capacity, making use of outward physical things to teach them spiritual truths. That this method was peculiar to the Jews is clear from a comment Calvin makes on Isaiah 1.13, where he writes,

... he recalls the people of his time to the right manner of observing ceremonies, and shows with what design and for what purpose they were instituted. For since the beginning of the world the worship of God was spiritual, and the diversity of our worship from that which prevailed under the Old Testament had a reference to men, but not to God. In God there is no change, (James 1.17,) but he accommodates himself to the weakness of men. That kind of government therefore was suitable to the Jews, just as a preparatory training (paedagogia) is needed for children.⁷⁴

The ceremonial practices of the Old Testament are in themselves worthless, but God has adopted them to convey his message to a 'rude and ignorant people'.⁷⁵ Thus Calvin is able to interpret the whole sacrificial cultus and all the religious institutions of the Old Testament as an 'accommodation' on the part of God to the capacity of the Jewish people. The whole form of the religion of Moses (*forma religionis Mosis*) was adapted to the childhood of the Church as represented by the Jews in the Old Testament and through it God was seeking to reveal Christ and salvation in him to them.

We are seeking to answer the question how Calvin realized his fundamental hermeneutical orientation towards the Old Testament, that is, how he found Christ there. We have now seen that, for Calvin, God's revelatory purpose has been to reveal himself as Redeemer in Christ, and thus to reveal Christ. This revelation, though accomplished in the Incarnation, was begun in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament as well as the accommodation to human finitude which marks all revelation, there was involved a special accommodation to the Jews. Christ and redemption in him was revealed to the Jews, but in a way suitable to their capacity. This, as Calvin saw it, was the significance of the ceremonial and political laws and institutions given to

the Jewish nation in the Old Testament. It is this understanding of the accommodated nature of God's revelation in the Old Testament that forms the basis of Calvin's typological method. This brings us to a consideration of Calvin's Christological Typology.

2. Typology

Calvin's fundamental principle, as we have shown, is that the Old Testament should be read with the aim of finding Christ in it. We have seen that this does not lead him away from the literal meaning of the Old Testament into an allegorical method of exegesis, as we might have expected it to have done. On the contrary Calvin, while adhering, on the one hand, to a strongly providential and theocentric view of history and Scripture, and, on the other, to a christological approach to the Old Testament, sought nevertheless to understand the Old Testament in its literal and historical sense. And to this end he made use of all the tools then available. In the light of this and his explicit rejection of the allegorical method as a means of attaining his hermeneutical goal we are led to ask how Calvin sought to realize his fundamentally christocentric hermeneutical aim. The answer to this question, we are seeking to show, lies in the related ideas of accommodation and typology. The concept of accommodation, it has been argued, forms the theoretical basis and rationale for Calvin's use of typology in his Old Testament exegetical works. Having arrived at this point let us now turn to look at Calvin's typological method itself.

Although the concept of accommodation constitutes the hermeneutical presupposition of his typological method Calvin also felt that there was justification for this method on other grounds. Most importantly, he felt that it

was founded on the authority of Scripture itself. Christ himself, he argued, used the Old Testament in this way. Commenting on the first verse of Psalm 110 he writes,

Having the testimony of Christ that this Psalm was penned in reference to himself, we need not apply to any other quarter for the corroboration of this statement ... It is acknowledged that the kingdom of Christ is typified in the person of David ...⁷⁶

Christ's usage and authority is for Calvin final. However, he believes that it is supported by other New Testament writers who also employ this form of Old Testament exegesis. Fre eminent here is the example of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁷⁷

In addition to biblical support, he also felt that sound reason was on his side in favour of a typological form of Old Testament interpretation. Thus, commenting on the interpretation of an Old Testament passage he can express the view that to interpret it typologically is self evident and therefore in need of no further proof.⁷⁸

Another argument he often employs to justify his typologizing can only be called, for want of a better name, the criterion of 'non-fulfilment'. As has been remarked earlier in the present study, Calvin, with his providential view of history and his verbal idea of inspiration, held the view that all Scriptural prophecies must be fulfilled.⁷⁹ He often observes, however, that certain prophecies about the kingdom or about the king have not been fulfilled in Old Testament times. This, he argues, is because the events or persons referred to in the prophecies were really types of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and he is

their true fulfilment.⁸⁰

Finally, Calvin finds support for the typological method in the very language used in the Old Testament. This criterion is closely related to the former. Frequently, he points out, the Prophets speak in hyperbolic language which cannot be taken as truly and fully applying to or fulfilled in any historical figures or facts other than Christ.

Calvin comes to this conclusion, for example, when commenting on Isaiah 9.7. The phrase, 'To the increase of his government there will be no end', he believes, 'cannot be understood to refer to any other than Christ.'⁸¹

Similarly the prediction in Isaiah 60.17, he thinks,

... was never accomplished in that external restoration of the people, or during the commencement of it, and even that the temple which was afterwards erected was far inferior to the former. It follows, therefore, that the Prophet, to whom a full redemption was exhibited in spirit, not only relates what shall happen immediately after the return of the people, but discourses concerning the excellence of the spiritual temple; that is, of the Church of Christ. We must, therefore, come down in uninterrupted succession to Christ, if we wish to understand this prophecy.⁸²

Having seen how Calvin seeks to justify the typological method we must next pose the question whether such a method is consistent with what we have seen of Calvin's historical-grammatical approach to the exegesis of the Old Testament. Calvin has been accused of '... letting in allegory by the back door of typology'.⁸³ Is this in reality the case? Is Calvin's typological method inconsistent with his historical method of exegesis? Does Calvin in interpreting the Old Testament typologically fall back into a non-literal understanding of the Old Testament not far removed from the allegorical method which he tried

so hard to avoid? In what follows we shall seek to answer such questions as these by examining Calvin's typological method itself.

Firstly, it will be helpful to give some definition of what is meant by typology. Erich Auerbach's description of typology, or 'figural interpretation' as he prefers to call it, is most illuminating and forms an excellent introduction to Calvin's understanding. He writes,

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, and only the comprehension, the intellectus spiritualis, of their interdependence is a spiritual act.

In this conception, an occurrence on earth signifies not only itself but at the same time another, which it predicts or confirms, without prejudice to the power of its concrete reality here and now. The connection between occurrences is not regarded as primarily a chronological or causal development but as a oneness in the divine plan, of which all occurrences are parts and reflections. Their direct earthly connection is of secondary importance, and often their interpretation can altogether dispense with any knowledge of it.⁸⁴

Though not written with specific reference to Calvin, Auerbach's definition is a tool that provides us with most penetrating insights into Calvin's understanding and use of typology. Many of the aspects present in Auerbach's definition can be found in Calvin's understanding of typology. Typology, as is brought out in the first paragraph of Auerbach's definition, 'establishes a connection between two events or persons'. These are 'real events or persons, they are 'within temporality', both must be 'contained in the flowing stream which is historical life'. In other words, both poles of a typological

interpretation, that is, both the type and its antitype, must be historical facts or persons. Thus typology, as an interpretive method is rooted in history and historical realities. It is only the 'comprehension' of the 'interdependence' of the two historical realities which constitute the type and its antitype which is 'a spiritual act'. Nevertheless, it is clear that although typological thinking may go beyond the purely historical it yet can never dispense with it nor supersede it. The historicity of type and antitype is essential for typology to function. Here, of course, it differs fundamentally from allegory.

Patrick Fairbairn, a 19th Century Scottish Old Testament scholar who also gave much attention to the subject of typology, like Auerbach also lays emphasis on the importance of history to typology. He defines a type as an historical fact or circumstance found in the Old Testament which embodies the same truth or principle as its anti-type.²⁵

It is clear from the above definitions that typology is not per se inconsistent with or hostile to a literal-grammatical exegesis of the Old Testament such as is employed by Calvin. On the contrary, it would appear from Auerbach's understanding that the literal and historical understanding of the events or persons concerned is essential for typology to operate. Thus typology actually depends upon a literal and historical reading of Scripture.

As a corollary to this, both Auerbach and Fairbairn show a

concern to distinguish typology from allegory for which the historical is non essential. Thus Fairbairn writes,

... typical interpretations of Scripture differ from allegorical ones ... in that they indispensably require the reality of the facts or circumstances stated in the original narrative. And they differ also from the other, in requiring besides this, that the same truth or principle be embodied alike in the type and the antitype. The typical is not properly a different or higher sense, but a different or higher application of the same sense.⁸⁶

When we examine Calvin's usage of the typological method we find that he too sought not to digress from what he considered the literal-historical meaning of the Old Testament.

Here, in the first instance, it might be noticed that as well as being an important aspect of his hermeneutics, Calvin's concept of accommodation, which provides the basis for his typology, can also be seen as an aspect of historical thinking. Firstly, as an aspect of Calvin's historical approach, if God who is outside of and transcendent over time is to reveal himself to man who exists only within the limitations of time, then he must take into consideration the historical circumstances and particularities of those to whom he wishes to reveal himself. Then, when we come to interpret the Old Testament which was originally delivered to one particular race - the Jews - we must take into account their historical particularity which is different from our own.

Secondly, as an aspect of Calvin's hermeneutics, the concept of accommodation can be seen as an aspect of his setting the Old Testament at a fixed point within the

framework of his schema of the history of God's revelation of salvation in Christ. The Old Testament belongs to the period before the full dawning of God's revelation in Christ. This framework was fundamentally hermeneutical and thus had important consequences for his reading of the Old Testament, forming, as we have said, the basis for his typological approach to the Old Testament. Because we today live in very different historical and cultural circumstances from the people in the Old Testament and, more importantly, we live after the coming of Christ and so in a different period or section of God's plan of revelation we must seek to sift what is abiding and still holds for us from what was temporary and relevant only for the Jews.

Calvin's principle of accommodation is thus an aspect of his historical approach to the Old Testament. The same is also true for his typological method which arises out of his idea of accommodation. This is well stated by H. W. Frei, in his book The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, when he writes,

Nonetheless, his [Calvin's] sense of figural interpretation remained firmly rooted in the order of temporal sequence and the depiction of temporal occurrences, the links between which can be established only by narration and under the conviction of the primacy of the literal, grammatical sense. As a result, his application of figural interpretation never lost its connection with literal reading of individual texts, and he was never tempted into allegorizing.²⁷

Thus Calvin's typological method was firmly rooted in what he considered the historical-grammatical meaning of the Old Testament. Accordingly, Calvin constantly seeks to maintain the historical reality and particularity of his types. This

is brought out very clearly in his comments on 1 Corinthians 10.11, one of the few passages in the New Testament where we find the Greek word 'tupos' or one of its derivatives being used.²⁰ Commenting on this word Calvin writes,

This explanation, as well as being simple and realistic, also has the advantage of silencing certain madmen, who distort this passage in order to prove that the only things ever done among the ancient people were things which foreshadowed what was to come. They first of all take it for granted that the people prefigure (esse figuram) the Church. From that they conclude that all that God promised them or gave them, whether benefits or punishments, only prefigured what had to be brought to full reality with the coming of Christ. This is a most damaging piece of nonsense, because it does serious injury to the holy fathers, and still more injury to God. For those people foreshadowed the Christian Church in such a way that they were at the same time a genuine Church. ... These words of Paul, then, give no support to those fools, for these words do not mean that the events of that age were 'types' in the sense that they had no real significance for that time, but were a kind of empty show.²¹

In this passage Calvin is not denying that events and people in the Old Testament and the promises and blessings given them by God prefigured the Christian era. He is not rejecting a typological interpretation of the Old Testament as such, which would understand Old Testament events and persons as types of Christ and his kingdom. What he is rejecting is an understanding of typology that would negate or neglect the historical reality of such persons and events by ^{affirming} that they had no meaning or fulfilment within the Old Testament itself. Hence, he seeks to maintain that Old Testament 'types' had an historical reality and significance in their own right. Thus, what are understood as types in the Old Testament had real historical significance for their contemporaries, and continue to have real historical significance, as well as having a new, more

profound, meaning as types.

Calvin's comments on Jeremiah 32.41 are very revealing in this respect.

We now then understand what the prophet means when he compares to a plantation the restoration of the people after their return from exile. We know, indeed, that the people from that time had not been banished, and that the temple had ever stood, though the faithful had been pressed down with many troubles; but this was only a type of a plantation. We must necessarily pass on to Christ, in order to have a complete fulfilment of this promise. The beginning, as we have said, and I am often compelled to repeat this, is to be taken from this return; but Christ is not to be excluded from that liberation which was like the morning star, before the sun of righteousness itself appeared in its own splendour. When Christians explain this passage and the like, they leave out the liberation of the people from Babylonish exile, as though these prophecies did not belong at all to that time; in this they are mistaken. And the Jews, who reject Christ, stop in that earthly deliverance. 90

Here Calvin criticizes the interpretations of this passage that had been given by both Christians and Jews.

His criticisms of each group tell us much about his own position. Christians, he believes, do not take the literal-historical reality of the passage seriously enough. In their eagerness to interpret the Old Testament prophecies of Christ they overlook their relevance to the prophet's contemporaries to whom they were originally delivered, 'they leave out the liberation of the people from Babylonish exile'. The Jews, on the other hand, never get beyond the literal-historical meaning.

That Calvin's typological method seeks to take the historical nature of the Old Testament - as he understood it - seriously, is also evident in his actual practice. Thus, in his interpretation of the prophecy in Isaiah 32.1,

'Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness ...', Calvin takes it, in the first place, historically as a reference to 'Hezekiah and his reign'. However, since the Davidic Royal line, to which Hezekiah belonged, foreshadowed and typified the kingly power of Christ, in the second place, he argues that the prophecy refers, typologically, to Christ in whom it also finds its ultimate fulfilment.⁷¹

Far from ignoring or dissolving the historical reality of the Old Testament, typology depends upon it. Indeed the historical reality of that which is taken as a type is essential to its being a type. These ideas are very well brought out when Calvin is commenting on Zechariah 9.16, there he states,

All Christian expositors give us an allegorical interpretation, - that God sent forth his armies when he sent forth Apostles into all parts of the world, who pierced the hearts of men, - and that he slew with his sword the wicked whom he destroyed. All this is true; but a simpler meaning must in the first place be drawn from the words of the prophet, and that is, - that God will render his Church victorious over the whole world.

He continues by alluding to God's safe keeping of his people, and believes that, 'In this way is really fulfilled what we read here ...' The literal historical meaning is quite adequate without allegorizing it. One does not need to allegorize the Old Testament in order to gain an edifying meaning from it. This is an important point. He continues,

There is then no need to turn the Prophet's words to an allegorical meaning, when this fact is evident - that God's Church has been kept safe, because God has ever blunted all the weapons of enemies ...'

He goes on to relate Josephus's account of Alexander the Great's expedition into Palestine and his leaving Judea

unharmful due to a dream he had had.⁷² Thus, he seeks to expound the passage in terms of its historical context and its meaning for Zechariah's contemporaries. He seeks, to use his own terminology, to understand the mind of the prophet. Next, having established what he considers to be the literal meaning of the text, Calvin then returns to the former interpretation of the 'Christian expositors' which before he had criticized as being 'allegorical'.

At the same time there is another view of this victory; for alien and remote people were subdued by the sword of the Spirit, even by the truth of the gospel ...

Hence he comes to a similar interpretation, but he does so by an entirely different exegetical route; one which avoids allegorization. He allows this passage its full historical meaning and in no way detracts from this as being the true and primary meaning of the passage. However, he feels that the truth it contains, when set alongside its New Testament counterpart, has a wider extension. Thus he continues,

... but this is a sense deduced from the other; for when we apprehend the literal meaning of the Prophet, an easy passage is then open to us by which we may come to the kingdom of Christ.⁷³

This latter remark is fundamentally important for understanding Calvin's typological method. It is quite clear that only when the 'literal meaning' is 'apprehended' can a passage then be interpreted typologically of 'the kingdom of Christ.' It is only in and with the literal sense, but not beyond it, in the sense of leaving it behind, that typology functions for Calvin. Incidentally this same passage also shows that Calvin was careful to distinguish his method from allegorization.

Calvin's commentaries supply us with many illustrations of a

concern to found his typology on a literal-historical exegesis of the passage concerned. His commentary on the Psalms in particular provides us with some rather startling examples. Psalm 68.18 (v. 19 in Hebrew), used in Ephesians 4.8 with reference to Christ, Calvin interprets, in the first place, quite literally of David.

There can be little doubt that these words are intended to magnify the proofs of Divine favour granted upon the elevation of David to the throne, by contrasting the state of matters with that under Saul.⁷⁴

He continues by comparing Saul's reign with that of David. His exegesis so far moves purely on the level of the historical meaning of the passage. Only when he has expounded this does he turn to its use in Ephesians, and thus to its typical meaning. The use of this passage in Ephesians, Calvin believes, 'agrees with the meaning and scope of the Psalmist', in other words with the literal-historical meaning of the passage. This is so because, '... David, in reigning over God's ancient people, shadowed forth the beginning of Christ's eternal kingdom.' David as an historical figure, that is, is a type of Christ.⁷⁵

Again, in Psalm 72, he objects against, 'Those who would interpret it simply as a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ (Qui simpliciter vaticinium esse volunt de regno Christi) ...' because they,

... seem to distort the words over violently (nimis violenter torquere verba). Then one must always take care lest an occasion for clamouring is given to the Jews, as if it were our intention to transfer sophistically (sophistice trahere) to Christ those things which are not directly applicable to him.

However, indirectly, that is, understood typologically, this Psalm must be understood as referring to Christ for,

What is here exhibited of eternal dominion cannot be restricted to one man, or to a few, nor indeed to twenty ages, but the succession which had its goal and complete fulfilment in Christ is denoted.⁹⁶

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this in his commentary on the Psalms is to be found in his exposition of Psalm 22. On the one hand, 'It is evident, from the testimony of the Apostles, that this Psalm is a prophecy of Christ. On the other hand, however, he is critical of some of the interpretations given by 'the ancient interpreters' who,

... thought that Christ would not be sufficiently dignified and honoured unless, putting a mystical or allegorical sense (*allegorico sensu*) upon the word hind, they viewed it as pointing out the various things which are included in a sacrifice.⁹⁷

The argumentum sets the tone for his commentary on the Psalm as a whole. He writes,

David complains in this Psalm, that he is reduced to such circumstances of distress that he is like a man in despair. But after having recounted the calamities with which he was so severely afflicted, he emerges from the abyss of temptations, and gathering courage, comforts himself with the assurance of deliverance.⁹⁸

It is clear from this that he is going to interpret the Psalm as referring historically to David. Throughout his commentary on the Psalm this is in fact what he does. He continuously interprets it in terms of David's inner feelings and states of mind, and seeks to find events in the life of David which correspond to statements made in the Psalm.

Yet, at the same time, this Psalm is also taken by Calvin as referring to Christ,

At the same time, he sets before us, in his own person, a type of Christ (*in sua persona typum Christi proponit*) ...⁹⁹

For Calvin, therefore, typology is not inconsistent with an historical-grammatical method of exegesis and thus with the literal meaning of the Old Testament.

In order to preserve the historical nature of typology, Calvin shows a frequent concern to distinguish typology from allegory. We have already seen something of this in Calvin's exegesis of Zechariah 9.16. The same concern is evident throughout his Old Testament exegetical works. Commenting on Isaiah 33.17, in reference to Hezekiah as a type of Christ, Calvin writes,

Yet it should also be noticed that that reign was a type of Christ's reign, whose image Hezekiah bore. For otherwise the fulfilment of this promise would be trifling, if we did not pass over to Christ (nisi transitum ad Christum faceremus), to whom all these things ought to be referred. Lest anyone thinks that I am pursuing allegories here, to which I am hostile, I do not interpret directly of Christ (non simpliciter de Christo interpretor); but because the constancy of that shadowy reign is found in none other than Christ, the image which Hezekiah bore in his own person leads us by the hand, as it were, to him (nos ad ipsum veluti manu ducit). Therefore, the anagoge from Hezekiah to Christ is pleasing to me (Mihi ergo placet ab Ezechia ad Christum anagoge) that we may understand how great his beauty will be.¹⁰⁰

From this passage it is clear that Calvin sought to distinguish typology from allegory. In addition it is interesting to note his use of the word anagoge here. As we saw in a previous chapter, Calvin uses the word anagoge not in the same way as it was used in the Mediaeval Quadriga, but rather in the sense of a 'transferral' or 'application'. This is brought out very clearly in the present context since Calvin has placed anagoge parallel to such phrases as 'pass over' (transitum faceremus) and 'lead by the hand' (manu ducit). A similar use of anagoge can also be observed in the passage quoted from Calvin's

comments on Zechariah 9.16 above. It is clear that Calvin's use of this word in these passages is closely connected with his typological method.

As well as distinguishing typology from allegory Calvin seeks to rescue it from the far-fetched typological interpretations of the early Church fathers who often fell into allegorizing. Thus, he is frequently critical of the early fathers for over concentration on the minutiae of Old Testament types. For example, he takes the Ark of the Covenant, whose construction is described in Exodus 26, as a 'type of the Church'. The 'magnificence of ornament' with which it was adorned typify 'the excellency of spiritual gifts' of the Church.¹⁰¹ Having made these general comments, however, he warns his readers not to,

... expect of me any conceits which may gratify their ears, since nothing is better than to contain ourselves within the limits of edification; and it would be puerile to make a collection of the minutiae wherewith some philosophize; since it is by no means the intention of God to include mysteries (mysteria) in every hook and loop. Even if no part lacked a mystical sense [mystico sensu] (which, however, no sane person will allow), it would be better to admit our ignorance than to play foolish guessing games (frivolis divinationibus ludere).¹⁰²

There is a very thin line between typology on the one hand and allegory on the other. Calvin is constantly aware of this, and the danger of slipping from typology to allegory. Thus he usually shows great moderation when giving a typological interpretation of a passage. He constantly seeks to avoid pressing the details too far and by so doing wandering into allegory.¹⁰³ Calvin appeals to the Epistle to the Hebrews in support of this. He writes,

Of this sobriety, too, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a fit master for us (idoneus nobis est

magister), who, although he professedly shows the analogy between the shadows of the law and the truth manifested in Christ (*analogiam demonstrat inter umbras legales et veritatem in Christo*), yet only sparingly touches upon some main points, and by this moderation restrains us from too curious disquisitions and deep speculations.¹⁰⁴

There are times, however, when Calvin seems to forget his usual rule and pushes the details of his typological interpretation so far that it becomes difficult to distinguish it from allegory. Such occasions are, however, rare and are confined almost entirely to his exposition of the ceremonial laws in his Harmony of the Last Four Books of Moses.¹⁰⁵ They are to be seen as deviations from Calvin's normal method in so far as it can be gathered from his exegetical practice. They remind us that even Calvin was not absolutely consistent with himself.

This brings us to consider how Calvin distinguished a type within the pages of the Old Testament. What was it for Calvin that constituted something a type? Does Calvin have anything to say about rules governing the use of typology? Does he lay down any rules or criteria which guided him in his selection of types in the Old Testament? Although, as with his principles of exegesis, he nowhere sets his principles out systematically for us, this does not mean that he had no criteria for determining what he regarded as types. Such rules or criteria can be gathered from various statements he makes throughout his writings as well as from his typological interpretations themselves.

At the most obvious level, in agreement with what we have already said, a type for Calvin must be some historical fact, person or event. Thus, for example, he commonly

interprets the deliverance from Egypt as a type of the believer's deliverance from sin,¹⁰⁶ the land of Canaan is a 'type of the heavenly country',¹⁰⁷ and David, as king, is a type of Christ.¹⁰⁸ However, the question still remains, which among the innumerable facts and persons of the Old Testament are suitable to act as types?

We have already seen that Calvin appeals to the New Testament and in particular to the Epistle to the Hebrews to justify typology itself. In addition to this general appeal, however, we should also notice that Calvin frequently seeks to justify his interpretation of something in the Old Testament as a type by appealing to the New Testament. It is noteworthy how frequently Calvin does this, so that wherever possible he seeks to support his types from the New Testament. However, it would be going too far to say that Calvin limited typology to New Testament usage.

Hence, in addition we find that Calvin lays down the rule that there must be some likeness or correspondence between the type and its anti-type. As he puts it, there must be 'an analogy between the shadows of the Law and the truth manifested in Christ (analogiam ... inter umbras legales et veritatem in Christo patefactam)...'¹⁰⁹ When using the French language, for example in his Sermons on Deuteronomy, he uses the word similitude which is equivalent to the Latin analogia and can mean an analogy, comparison or resemblance. Thus in a sermon on Deut. 1.19-21, he speaks about there being a similitude between the land of Canaan,

promised to the Patriarchs as an inheritance by God, and the Christian's heavenly inheritance. Thus he says,

However, this passage will be even clearer and better understood when we understand the analogy (la similitude) between the land which was promised to the children of Israel and the kingdom of God to which we are called. For, indeed, the land of Canaan was but as a symbol and an earnest (comme une figure et une arde) of the heavenly kingdom. ... we must make this comparison (ceste similitude) between this land and the inheritance to which God has called us ...¹¹⁰

In his interpretations, therefore, he frequently seeks to bring out these similarities or affinities between type and anti-type.

These criteria can be somewhat arbitrary and circular, and at times they can land Calvin in difficulties and contradictions. Thus, for example, Calvin interprets the altar on which the sacrifices of atonement were made as a type of Christ and his sacrifice for sin. However, later in Exodus 29.36-7 a sacrifice of atonement is to be made for the altar itself. This creates a problem for Calvin, hence he poses the question,

Since the ancient altar was no less a type of Christ than the priest was, it may naturally be asked, what its expiation could mean, as if there were anything impure or polluted in Christ.

Calvin answers this question as follows,

But we must remember, what I before averted to, that no simile is identical (nullum simile esse idem). For then neither could the substance and reality of the shadows be represented in their perfection.¹¹¹

Similar difficulties are encountered in Calvin's exegesis of Psalm 45. Calvin interprets this Psalm, in the first place, in a thoroughly historical manner. The Psalm, Calvin argues, concerns Solomon and his marriage. Thus in the

argumentum, he writes,

In this Psalm, the grace and beauty of Solomon, his virtues in ruling the kingdom, and also his power and riches, are illustrated and described in terms of high commendation. More especially, as he had taken to wife a stranger out of Egypt, the blessing of God is promised to him in this relationship ...¹¹²

However, Solomon is a type of Christ. Calvin seeks to prove this. Thus, turning from the purely historical meaning of the Psalm, he writes,

Hitherto I have explained the text in the literal sense (a rather clumsy translation, the Latin reads, *Huc usque literalem sensum exposui*). But it is necessary that I should now proceed to illustrate somewhat more largely the comparison of Solomon with Christ (*Solomonis cum Christo*) which I have only cursorily noticed. ... it is of importance to show briefly from the context itself (*ex contextu ipso*), the principal reasons from which it appears that some of the things here spoken are not applicable fully and perfectly to Solomon.¹¹³

Calvin's main argument for applying this Psalm typically to Christ is drawn from the statements made in it concerning the eternal duration of the king's reign and the ascription of the word 'elohim', without qualification, to the king.¹¹⁴ As a result of this Solomon's marriage becomes a type of 'the holy and divine union of Christ and his Church'. Calvin writes,

... there can be no doubt, that under this figure (*sub hac effigie*) the majesty, wealth, and extent of Christ's kingdom are described and illustrated by appropriate terms ...¹¹⁵

And he continues,

... this song is called *maskil* to teach us, that the subject here treated of is not some obscene or unchaste amours, but that, under what is here said of Solomon as a type (*sub Solomonis figura*), the holy and divine union of Christ and his Church is described and set forth.¹¹⁶

Having established these points, Calvin continues by showing how the phrases applied to Solomon in the first seven verses are also applicable to Christ. Yet, as his exposition of the Psalm proceeds he begins to encounter

problems. Thus commenting on vv. 8ff. (vv. 9ff. in Hebrew) Calvin criticizes Solomon for polygamy, '... all that is here commended in Solomon', he writes, 'was not approved of by God'.¹¹⁷ Polygamy, among other things, 'is displeasing to God'. Hence when he turns to a typological interpretation of these verses he is faced with a problem. He adds a qualification to meet the problem,

... it is not necessary that we should apply curiously to Christ every particular here enumerated (necesse non est singula membra curiose ad Christum aptari), as for instance, what is here said about the many wives which Solomon had.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, in spite of this qualification, Calvin goes on to expound Solomon's marriage to a foreign woman as 'a remarkable prophecy of the future calling of the Gentiles'.¹¹⁹ This brings to the fore one of the major weaknesses of Calvin's typological method. Calvin first posits a relationship between type and antitype, but when he encounters difficulties - in terms of characteristics which would not be suitable to apply to the antitype, in this case, Christ - he is compelled to equivocate. And as S. H. Russell points out, Calvin, '... ends by basing the case for typological relationship on two contrary arguments: (a) similarity of language and function shows they are related; (b) dissimilarity in language and function between two realities shows that one is superior in comparison to the other.'¹²⁰ Such equivocations remind us that we should not expect absolute consistency from Calvin.

Whatever the case may be as to the consistency of Calvin's application and use of typological exegesis, it is clear

that typology plays a fundamental role in his christological exegesis of the Old Testament. Typology, we might say, forms the bridge between his historical-grammatical method of exegesis on the one hand, and, on the other, his avowedly christological hermeneutical goal of reading the Old Testament with the intention of finding Christ in it. So far we have looked at Calvin's use and understanding of typology in general. It will be helpful before closing the present chapter to look at some examples of Calvin's christological typology in particular.

3. Finding Christ in the Old Testament: Calvin's
Christological Typology.

When dealing with Calvin's Old Testament Christological typology one is confronted with such a mass of material that one feels the need for some sort of axis around which to group it.

On the most general level, it would be true to say that for Calvin all that was distinctive of the Mosaic economy - all of its institutions and ceremonies - was a type of Christ. We have already noted this when dealing with Calvin's understanding of accommodation as the basis of his typological method. From this perspective, the whole of the Mosaic administration is seen as an accommodation of God's revelation of his salvation in Christ to the people of the Old Testament. These institutions and ceremonies actually mediated the reality of Christ and his salvation to the elect under the Old Testament administration. In this sense they functioned as sacraments.¹²¹ For us, however, who live after the coming of Christ and the resurrection which culminated his work of salvation, they function only as types. Even when Calvin sees persons in the Old Testament as types of Christ it is usually because of the role they played in the Mosaic administration.

However, this observation, whilst it may inform us in which areas of the Old Testament we should expect to find Calvin's

typology, does not provide us with a way of organizing or grouping the exegetical material available. A more satisfying alternative might be found in Calvin's doctrine of the 'triplex munus' of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King as it is expounded in his Institutes.¹²² This concept of the offices of Christ might lead us to expect that in his christological typology Calvin would interpret the offices of Prophet, Priest and King in the Old Testament as types of Christ. Such, however, is not the case. For although Calvin interprets Priesthood and Kingship in the Old Testament as types of Christ, he does not do so of the prophetic office. The Prophets, it is true, bear witness to and predict Christ. Moreover, they interpret and make clearer the types of Christ contained in the other parts of the Old Testament. Yet they are never taken to be types of Christ as such. This would seem to support the findings of J. F. Jansen, who, in his book Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ, argued that the prophetic office played little part in Calvin's thinking outside of Institutes II.xv.1-2.¹²³

In spite of this, Calvin's concept of the offices of Christ may still serve as a useful centre around which to group our material. However, we will now be speaking, not of a 'triplex munus', but of a 'duplex munus'. Calvin's Old Testament typological interpretations group themselves around the offices of Christ as Priest and King and thus draw on the corresponding institutions in the Old Testament. This is made clear by explicit statements made by Calvin to this effect.¹²⁴

We shall look, first of all, at Calvin's interpretation of the Priestly office as a type of Christ. The material dealing with this aspect in Calvin's exegetical work is far more extensive than that dealing with the Kingly office. This is due simply to the fact that Calvin's exegetical works cover those parts of the Bible which are concerned with the Priesthood more extensively than those parts which are concerned with Kingship. Thus, we have commentaries by Calvin on the whole of the Pentateuch and Sermons on the whole of Deuteronomy and parts of Genesis, but there are no commentaries on the books of Samuel or Kings, although there are sermons on 2 Samuel and Homiliae on 1 Samuel. As one would expect it is in his Harmony of the Last Four Books of Moses that Calvin is most involved with the Priestly office.

Calvin deals with the Priesthood and the Sacrifices under his exposition of the second commandment.¹²⁵ This commandment, according to Calvin, is concerned with the 'legitimate worship (legitimus cultus)' of God.¹²⁶ As he understood it this was also the aim of the Mosaic ceremonial laws or the 'legal worship (cultus legalis)', as he calls it.¹²⁷ They were concerned with preserving the correct worship of God.

In the course of his exposition, Calvin divides this 'legal worship' into three parts: the Tabernacle, the priestly office, and the Sacrifices.¹²⁸ Accordingly, he devotes a separate section in his exposition to each part.

The Tabernacle, Calvin takes to be 'the type of the Church'.¹²⁹ Hence it does not directly concern us here since

we are interested in Calvin's Christological typology. Hence our main concern is with the priestly office and the Sacrifices.

Calvin deals with the priestly office at length in his exposition of Exodus 28. In his exposition of this passage he gives us an introduction to his understanding of the Priesthood as a whole. The Priest he tells us,

... so mediated as an intercessor, that he reconciled men to God, and in a manner united heaven to earth. Now there is no doubt that the Levitical Priests acted the part of Christ (gestasse Christi personam), because with respect to their office they were even more excellent than the angels. This would scarcely be proper, unless they were the image (imago) of he who is himself the head of the angels.¹³⁰

Later in the same passage he writes,

... the Levitical Priesthood was established that it might be a representation (umbra) of the genuine mediator.¹³¹

After making this statement he goes on to compare the Priesthood of Christ with that of the Old Testament Priests. In so doing he gives seven 'marks (notas)' by which Christ's Priesthood is to be distinguished from that of the Old Testament administration.¹³² In the first place, the Old Testament Priesthood, being only a type (figura) of Christ's, was temporary. Arising from this there is a second distinction; only Christ, because he is eternal, is a 'sufficient Priest'. The third difference is that Christ is divine. In the fourth Calvin points out that the Old Testament did not allow the 'union of Kingship and Priesthood' in one person, but Christ exercises the offices of both King and Priest.¹³³ In the fifth place, 'the legal Priest only appeared before God in the visible and earthly sanctuary' but 'Christ entered into heaven, to offer us to the Father, not in the external symbols (symbolis) of stones

(a reference to the Priest's dress), but in 'reality itself (re ipsa)'. A sixth difference, Calvin finds in the 'perfect righteousness of Christ'. Thus Christ, unlike the 'legal Priest', has no 'need to seek pardon for himself'. The seventh is that 'the Priest took from external types (externis figuris) things which in Christ were exhibited genuinely and in reality (quae in Christo vere et re ipsa sunt exhibita).' He goes on to give us some examples,

The sacred vestments signified something more than human. The anointing also was a sign (symbolus) of the Spirit who dwells in Christ, hence he was not consecrated with external and corruptible oil, but with the plenitude of all gifts.¹³⁴

Here, it might be thought, we can see something of the circularity of the typological method of exegesis that was pointed out earlier. However, it should be noted that Calvin's typological understanding of the Old Testament Priest is not founded primarily upon inherent similarities of detail between the Old Testament Priest, his clothing and other incidentals. Rather, it is founded upon an understanding of the similarity between the role and function of the Priesthood under the Mosaic administration and that of Christ. This is the significance of Calvin's words from the passage already cited. In his office, the Old Testament Priest 'acted the part of Christ (gestasse Christi personam).' He 'mediated as an intercessor' and 'reconciled men to God'. The function of Priesthood in the Old Testament corresponds with Christ's role in the New Testament. Indeed, the Old Testament Priesthood actually mediated the reality of Christ's priestly work to the Old Testament fathers. Thus, the Priest quite literally 'acted the part of Christ'. It is true that Calvin does go on to interpret the details of the

priestly office in the Old Testament as typifying various aspects of Christ's Priesthood. But this does not establish the typological correspondence. Rather it is founded upon it. This is an important point as will appear as we proceed.

These distinctions made, the way is open for Calvin to interpret the details of the Priesthood typologically of Christ.

Calvin's exposition of Exodus 28, following the text itself, goes on to expound the garments worn by the High Priest. Calvin's treatment of this passage is rich in typologizing. Calvin refers to the sacred vestments as a 'shadowy appendage (*umbratilis accessio*)'.¹³⁵ Such an 'external decoration' implies, Calvin reasons, 'a deficiency of the real and spiritual decoration (*veri et spiritualis defectum*)' on the part of the earthly Priests. 'For', Calvin continues, 'if the Priest had been complete in the harmony of all perfections, a shadowy appendage would have been superfluous.'¹³⁶ The High Priest's garments thus come to represent the purity of Christ. Calvin writes,

On the other hand, God wished to show in this symbol (*hoc symbolo*) the more than angelic splendour of all virtues, which would be exhibited in Christ.¹³⁷

Hence the priestly garments 'conceal the faults' of the Priest and, at the same time, indeed, by so doing, prefigure 'the incomparable decoration of virtues (*incomparabilem virtutum ornatum*)' in Christ.¹³⁸ However, it is the latter which in Calvin's view is the most important,

But it is necessary chiefly to keep in mind what I said; that in this clothing was foreshown the pre-eminent purity and the wonderful glory of Christ.¹³⁹

When he comes to expound v. 4 of Exodus 28 Calvin warns his readers to 'abandon all subtle speculations' and to 'be contented with simplicity'.¹⁴⁰ He goes on to distance himself from what he sarcastically calls 'praiseworthy allegories' which are, he says, 'child's play'. He intends to stick only to 'the trustworthy knowledge of facts (*solida rerum cognitio*)'.¹⁴¹ Yet when he comes to look at the priestly garments in detail he interprets the details typologically. In the first place, there is the breastplate with the twelve stones set in it representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Of this Calvin says,

This, however, is worthy of the utmost attention, that the Priest bore the sons of Abraham, as it were, on his heart, not only that he might present them before God, but that he might be mindful of them and also careful for their well-being.¹⁴²

The Old Testament Priest is not a private, but a representative person. He stands before God in the name of all the people, he, as it were, brings them before God and represents them. Calvin takes this to be a 'figure' of the unity of believers with Christ and their 'ingrafting' into the body of Christ.¹⁴³ Next he turns to the 'Urim and Thummim'. Calvin interprets these typologically in a twofold way. In the first place, he relies on what he considers to be the meanings of the Hebrew words. Calvin translated the word 'Urim' into the Latin word 'splendores' which can mean 'brightnesses' or 'splendours'. These 'splendours' 'admonished the people to turn their eyes to the splendour of the Priest.' As a result he took the 'Urim' to represent 'the light of teaching with which the real Priest (*verus sacerdos*) irradiates all believers', Christ being 'the light of the world'. The word 'Thummim', on the other hand, Calvin

rendered by the word 'perfections (perfectiones)'. These he took, predictably, to be a 'symbol of the entire and real purity which is only to be sought in Christ.'¹⁴⁴ In concluding his interpretation of the Urim and Thummim Calvin makes it clear that the idea of the union of believers with Christ their 'great high Priest' is in the background of his exposition. Thus he writes,

It was God's purpose to show that neither of these [ie, light and purity] is to be sought anywhere but in Christ, because we have both light and purity from him, when he deigns to make us partakers according to the measure of the free gift. Hence it follows, that those who seek either the least spark of light or drop of purity outside of Christ cast themselves into a labyrinth where they wander in deadly darknesses and suck in the fatal vapours of false virtues to their own destruction.¹⁴⁵

Calvin's second interpretation of the 'Urim and Thummim' is more familiar. Here he relies on the way these were used to make enquiries as to the divine will on a matter. Here Calvin introduces his idea of accommodation. In the Urim and Thummim Calvin believes, 'God yielded (Deus concessit) to the ignorance of the ancient people'.¹⁴⁶ As yet the 'real Priest (verus sacerdos)' had not appeared who is 'the fountain of all revelations' and 'by whose Spirit all the Prophets spoke'. Hence the 'shadowy Priest (umbratilis sacerdos)' was 'clothed with the insignia of Christ (insignibus Christi)' that he might be 'God's go-between among men (ut Dei apud homines internuncius esset)'. Hence Calvin concludes, 'Thus even then believers were taught under the figure that Christ is the way by which one comes to the Father and that he too brings from the secret bosom of the Father whatever is proper to be known for salvation.'

Likewise when Calvin comes to the third item in his

enumeration of the High Priest's vesture - the onyx stones with the names of the twelve tribes engraved on them - the idea of the union of believers with Christ is present. These two stones were to be set in the shoulders of the High Priest's ephod. This Calvin thinks was meant to show the people that 'this one man was not separated from the others for the sake of private advantage, but that in his person they were all a kingdom of Priests'.¹⁴⁷ This was fulfilled in Christ. However, this is not all, Calvin continues,

But we must remember the reason why our High Priest is said to bear us on his shoulders, for we not only crawl on earth but are plunged in the lowest depths of death; how then should we be able to ascend to heaven, unless the son of God should raise us up with him? ... Therefore, in that ancient figure (in veteri illa figura) was foreshadowed (adumbratum) what Paul teaches, that is, that the Church is Christ's body and fulness (Eph. 1.23).¹⁴⁸

Hence these two Onyx stones become for Calvin a type of 'Christ' who 'supports us on his shoulders'.

Next Calvin moves on to Ex. 28.31ff. and deals with the robe and its borders which were to be decorated with golden bells and pomegranates. Calvin observes that the pomegranates would have no smell. Yet, he believes, that 'the figure would suggest this to the eyes, as if God required in that garment a sweet fragrance as well as a sound.'¹⁴⁹ From this Calvin deduces his typological interpretation. He writes,

Indeed we who stink with the filth of our offences are only a sweet odour to God when we are clothed with the garment of Christ. But God wants the bells to ring, because the garment of Christ brings grace to us only by the word of the Gospel which diffuses the fragrance of the head to all the members.¹⁵⁰

Here, it may be thought, Calvin has moved from typology to allegory. He seems to be aware of this, for he says, 'In this allegory (In hac allegoria) there is nothing over subtle'. We

are reminded not to expect absolute consistency from Calvin!

Finally, Calvin comes to the High Priest's turban with the plate of gold which bore the inscription 'Holy to the Lord'. This inscription, Calvin argues, was meant to testify that 'the legal Priesthood was approved of, and acceptable to Him [God], since He had consecrated it by His word'.¹⁵¹ However, interpreted typologically, the meaning is,

... that out of Christ we are all corrupt, and all our worship faulty; and however excellent our actions may seem, that they are still unclean and polluted. Thus, therefore, let all our senses remain fixed on the forehead of our sole and perpetual Priest, that we may know that from him alone purity flows throughout the whole Church.¹⁵²

From Calvin's exposition of Ex. 28 we thus gain some idea of his typological method. Calvin finds the priestly office of Christ clearly 'fore-showed and foreshadowed' in the institution of the Priesthood in the Old Testament. On the whole Calvin adheres to his intention to avoid 'subtle speculations' and 'allegories'. His typologizing is very moderate. Though he does look at the details of the High Priest's clothing, unlike some, he has nothing to say about minute details such as the various colours or materials out which the High Priest's garments were to be made.¹⁵³

In addition another important point emerges from our study so far. That is, that behind Calvin's whole exposition of the Priesthood in Exodus 28 lies the doctrine of Christ's unity with the Church or the doctrine of the 'unio mystica', as it is known. In fact, Calvin's whole interpretation of this chapter has been seeking to bring this out. Hence, in his exposition of the High Priest, Calvin is really unfolding

this one theological idea. This whole exposition of the Priest as a type of Christ arises out of his understanding of the role and function of the Priest in the Old Testament as compared with the Priesthood of Christ. The Priesthood as a whole 'played the part of Christ' by reconciling men to God. It 'united heaven and earth' to use Calvin's own words. This is exactly what Christ does in the New Testament.

Much more, of course, could be said about Calvin's interpretation of the Old Testament Priesthood as a type of Christ. We have by no means exhausted the material in Calvin's writings. However, we would be missing out an important aspect of Calvin's christological typology as it relates to the priestly office and work of Christ if we said nothing about his interpretation of the Old Testament Sacrifices. Hence it is to Calvin's interpretation of the Old Testament sacrificial cultus as a type of the priestly work of Christ that we now turn. Here again, because of the wealth of material to be found in Calvin's exegetical writings, we must of necessity limit ourselves.

The Sacrifices, according to Calvin's schema, represent 'the third part of the external worship (externi cultus)'.¹⁵⁴ 'The Sacrifices', Calvin states, 'were foreshadowings of Christ (sacrificia Christi erant figurae)'.¹⁵⁵ Hence, in the Institutes he writes, 'What was figuratively represented in the Mosaic Sacrifices is manifested in Christ, the archetype of the figures.'¹⁵⁶ The practice of offering sacrifices to some deity, Calvin observes, is universal.¹⁵⁷ And he feels it indubitable that,

... by the secret inspiration of the Spirit the holy fathers were directed to the Mediator, by whose death God would at length be appeased. Indeed, since Christ has been sacrificed, all the killings which are offered are no different than profane butcheries.¹⁵⁸

Christ is not only the anti-type of all the Sacrifices he is also their fulfilment. With his offering of himself upon the cross all Sacrifices cease.

Calvin interprets the different types of Sacrifice found in the Old Testament as typifying various aspects of Christ's work of atonement.

Burnt-offerings, Calvin believed, have been offered to God 'since the very beginnings of the human race'. They have always typified the offering of Christ. Interestingly, Calvin understands them as foreshadowing Christ's spiritual sufferings.

It is clear that from the very beginning of the human race there were burnt-sacrifices. They were suggested by the secret inspiration of God's Spirit, since there was no written Law. And there is no doubt that by this symbol (symbolo) they were taught that flesh must be consumed by Spirit, if men are to duly offer themselves to God. Thus they perceived under the type (sub typo), that the flesh of Christ would be a perfect victim to placate God, since it would be consumed by heavenly virtue (ex coelesti virtute sumpturam). Thus (by the testimony of the apostle [Heb 9.14]) he offered himself by the Spirit.¹⁵⁹

By the daily Sacrifice '... the minds of the people were directed to Christ.' 'This', Calvin says, 'was its use and object with the ancients'. Yet, though its practice, like all the Sacrifices, is abolished, it is not without profit for us today, '... that we may know that whatever was then shewn under the figure was fulfilled in Christ.'¹⁶⁰ By understanding the daily offering typologically Calvin is able to draw an application for his own day.

God promises that this Sacrifice would be to Him 'a savour of rest'. We may not, therefore, doubt but that He has been altogether propitiated to us by the Sacrifice of His only-begotten Son and has remitted our sins.¹⁶¹

Christ was offered once and for all, but this Sacrifice is daily. How does the type conform with its anti-type here?

Calvin responds,

But although Christ was once offered, that by that one offering He might consecrate us for ever to God, yet by this daily Sacrifice under the Law, we learn that by the benefit of His death pardon is always ready for us, as Paul says that God continually reconciles himself to the Church when he sets before it the Sacrifice of Christ in the Gospel.¹⁶²

The annual Sacrifice of atonement, on the other hand, brought home the once-for-allness of Christ's perfect Sacrifice; '... by this Sacrifice, which they saw only once at the end of the year, the one and perpetual Sacrifice offered by God's Son was more clearly represented (*clarius repraesentatum*).'¹⁶³

As for the two goats, the scape goat - the outcast or offscouring as Calvin prefers to call it - and the other which was offered as a Sacrifice, Calvin believes that,

The reality (*veritas*) of both these figures (*figuræ*) was manifested in Christ, since he was both the Lamb of God (whose sacrifice blotted out the sins of the world), and, that he might be an offscouring (=Scapegoat?), his comeliness was destroyed, and he was rejected of men.¹⁶⁴

Calvin also saw Christ typified in the regulations governing the manner in which Sacrifices were to be offered. The animals used for Sacrifice were to be 'without blemish' (Lev. 1.3). Calvin comments,

Freedom from blemish (*puritas*) is required for two reasons; for, since the Sacrifices were types of Christ, it behoved that in all of them should be represented that complete perfection of His whereby his heavenly father was to be propitiated.¹⁶⁵

Many of the offerings were also to be burned. Calvin raises the question why this was so, what was it meant to typify?

The question now arises why it was burned either wholly or partially. My own opinion is that by the fire the efficacy of the Spirit is represented, on which all the profit of the Sacrifices depends; for unless Christ had suffered in the Spirit, He would not have been a propitiatory Sacrifice. Fire, then, was as the condiment which gave their true savour to the Sacrifices, because the blood of Christ was to be consecrated by the Spirit, that it might cleanse us from all the stains of our sins.¹⁶⁶

Before leaving Calvin's typological interpretation of the Old Testament sacrificial cultus we might note that for him the whole efficacy of the Old Testament Sacrifices and the work of the Priesthood depended upon Christ and his Sacrifice. In themselves, apart from Christ, they are worthless. Their whole efficacy for the people under the old covenant consisted in the fact that they participated in the reality of Christ. And, they were only valuable in so far as they mediated the reality of Christ to the participants. They did not merely prefigure Christ, but actually conveyed the benefits of his Priesthood to the fathers under the Old Testament. Thus commenting on Leviticus 1.1-4 Calvin writes,

... in the ancient Sacrifices there was a price of satisfaction which should release them from guilt and blame in the judgment of God; yet still not as though these brute animals availed in themselves unto expiation except in so far as they were testimonies of the grace to be manifested in Christ. Thus the ancients were reconciled to God in a sacramental manner (modo sacramentali) by the victims, just as we are now cleansed by baptism.¹⁶⁷

Now that Christ, the reality which they foreshadowed has come, their usage for us is terminated. Yet they are still of value as types and figures which bear witness to and clarify Christ and his work for us.¹⁶⁸ Thus, the Old Testament too nourishes and builds up our faith in Christ.

One could continue along this line much further, but there is not the space here. What has already been said gives an adequate idea of Calvin's typological interpretation of the

Old Testament sacrificial cultus.

Next we turn to Calvin's portrayal of Old Testament Kingship as a foreshadowing of Christ's kingly office. Calvin states his typological understanding of Old Testament Kingship in the most emphatic terms. It is for him a leading principle in his interpretation of the Psalms. He writes,

Indeed, it is a principle that can in no way be overturned (principium illud everti nullo modo potest), that David ruled over the ancient people in that covenant, so that under that figure (sub figura) Christ, the eternal king, might begin [or, institute, Latin = inchoaret] his rule.¹⁶⁹

Strictly speaking for Calvin it is not the King himself that typifies Christ, but the institution of Kingship. Thus commenting on Jeremiah 17.25, Calvin writes,

... for David together with his posterity was, so to speak, a visible pledge of the grace of God. At the same time it should be understood that his royal power (regnum) was the image (imaginem) of a much more excellent royal power (regnum), which, as yet, had not been plainly revealed. Therefore, in the posterity of David the Jews contemplated Christ, until he was manifested.¹⁷⁰

All the royal successors of David were, therefore, 'types' or 'figures' of Christ. For example, Solomon,¹⁷¹ and Hezekiah,¹⁷² were. However, this led Calvin into certain difficulties. He was thus forced to make certain qualifications.¹⁷³

However, it is always David who is the prime figure. We have already seen that Calvin regarded him as the model of all other Kings. He attained a degree of virtue and piety far beyond any other. Moreover, Calvin regarded him as the first King of Israel not Saul. Thus commenting on Genesis 49.10, he can write,

... the monarchy (regnum), which began from the time of David (inceptit a Davide), was, so to speak, a prelude and a

typical pattern (umbratile specimen) of that greater grace which was kept back and suspended for the advent of the Messiah.¹⁷⁴

'... in the person of David the form of Christ's Kingship was foreshadowed (in Davidis persona fuisse adumbratum effigiem regni Christi).'¹⁷⁵ Moreover, '... David was an image of God's only begotten Son.'¹⁷⁶ And, commenting on Habakkuk 3.13, Calvin writes,

For David, along with his successors, was a living image of Christ (viva imago). Thus, God more familiarly portrayed a living picture of his Christ when he set up the monarchy in the person of David ...¹⁷⁷

Here, as with his interpretation of the Priesthood as a type of Christ, Calvin does not establish it by looking for details or points of similarity between a particular king and Christ. Rather, his typological interpretation is founded on the role played by the monarchy in the Old Testament and Christ as king in the New Testament. This is why the whole posterity of David was 'a living image of Christ'. However, once this is established, Calvin can then go on to interpret the historical details of, for example, David's reign as typifying Christ as he does in his commentary on Psalm 68.

The interpretation of Old Testament Kingship as a type of Christ allows Calvin to apply Old Testament prophecies to Christ while at the same time retaining their historical referent. This is clear in his interpretation of Isaiah 32.1, 'Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness ...'. This, Calvin argues, refers in the first place to Hezekiah,

There is no doubt that this prophecy relates to Hezekiah and his reign, under which the Church was restored to her former splendour and reformed.¹⁷⁸

But Hezekiah was a 'type (typum)' of Christ and 'foreshadowed his kingly power (ipsius regnum adumbravit)'. 'Hence', he can

write,

Hence we see more clearly that, while the Prophet describes the reign of Hezekiah, he intends to lead us farther; for here he discourses concerning the restoration of the Church, which indeed was shadowed out (adumbrata) by Hezekiah, but has been actually fulfilled in Christ (in Christo vere impleta est).¹⁷⁹

And even more explicitly, commenting on Isaiah 33.17, Calvin writes, again of Hezekiah,

Meanwhile it must also be observed that that reign was a type of Christ's reign (typum ... regni Christi), whose image Hezekiah bore. For otherwise the fulfilment of this promise would be trifling if we did not make a transition to Christ (transitum ad Christum faceremus), to whom all these things ought to be referred. Lest anyone thinks that I am pursuing allegories, to which I am hostile, I do not interpret directly of Christ; but because the constancy of that shadowy reign is found in none other than Christ the image which Hezekiah bore in himself leads us by the hand, as it were, to him. Therefore the anagoge from Hezekiah to Christ pleases me ...¹⁸⁰

Thus the Prophets speak directly of the kingdom in their own day, but this was a shadow or type of Christ's kingly rule. Hence, indirectly, they refer to Christ.¹⁸¹ In this way Calvin's christological typologies do not ignore the literal and historical meaning of the Old Testament. Rather, as we have seen, they are dependent on it.

Once again, as with his typological interpretation of the Old Testament priesthood, it is the unity of the king with the people over which God has set him and thus the king as a representative person on which Calvin's exegesis concentrates. Calvin compares the king with Christ in that the former under the old covenant was the minister of God's grace and favour to the people as Christ is in the New Testament. This is brought out particularly clearly in Calvin's comments on Psalm 20.9 (v. 10 in Hebrew), which Calvin translated, 'Save, O Jehovah, let the king give heed

to us in the day that we call upon [him].’ The verse constitutes somewhat of a difficulty, because it would seem that ‘what is proper to God only’ is ‘attributed to an earthly king’, that is, ‘to be called upon and to hear prayer’. Calvin rejects the solution of reading the verse ‘O Jehovah, save the king’, taken, for example, by the Septuagint. Calvin’s solution lies, rather, in his typological understanding of the role of the king. Hence, he writes,

If we cast our eyes upon Christ, as we ought to do, it will be no marvel that what is peculiar unto him should by a similitude (per similitudinem) be attributed to David and his offspring, in so far as they represented the person of Christ (personam eius gestarunt = played or acted his [Christ’s] part).¹⁰²

The king, like the priest, ‘acted the part of Christ’. Hence, Calvin goes on to compare the role of the king in the Old Testament with that of Christ in the New.

Now as God rules and preserves us by the hand of Him, we must not look for salvation anywhere else, even as also in old time the faithful were wont to flee unto their king as the minister of God’s saving grace (salvificae Dei gratiae ministrum) .¹⁰³

The priest, ‘so mediated as an intercessor, that he reconciled men to God’ now we learn that the king was ‘the minister of God’s saving grace’. The people are ‘... brought in craving help to their king, to whose protection and custody they are committed, and who is set over them to be their head instead of God (qui Dei loco in capite eorum praesidet).’ The king, moreover, is a ‘... glass (speculum), wherein the image of God may shine to them.’¹⁰⁴ Thus the king is thought of as a public person in a similar way to which we have seen the priest was conceived.

The Davidic succession thus becomes a symbol of God’s

benevolent will for his people and as such it is a type of Christ.¹⁸⁵

However, it is also clear that as with the Priesthood, Kingship as a type of Christ had a sacramental role. It mediated the reality of Christ and his blessings to the ancient people. The Davidic king, therefore was not merely a representative of Christ and his kingdom, but he also mediated the reality of Christ's kingdom and made it in some way present to those who lived under the Old Testament. This would seem to be the significance of the statement we have already looked at in Psalm 68.19.¹⁸⁶

Again behind Calvin's exegesis lies the doctrine of the 'unio mystica' of Christ with his people. His whole typological exegesis of Old Testament kingship is really aiming at this theological principle. This leaves the way open for a threefold application of the Psalms. David, or rather the monarch, is the representative and head of God's people in the Old Testament. As such he is a type of Christ and his body the Church. Thus there is a threefold reference in Calvin's exegesis; to David, Christ and Christ's body the Church. This would seem to be a modification of the caput-corporis-membra schema, expounded by Augustine in De Doctrina Christiana III.xxxi.44, and made use of by Luther in his exegesis of the Psalms.¹⁸⁷ Whatever is said of David or the king is typical of Christ and can be applied to him, and since the king, like Christ, is a representative figure whatever is said of the king can be applied to the whole body of the people. Moreover, whatever is said of Christ can also

be applied to his body the Church and thus to each member of that body since Christ, the head, is united to his people, the body.

A good example of Calvin's use of this hermeneutical rule is to be found in his interpretation of Ps. 69. Commenting on the inscription (v. 1 in Hebrew) Calvin writes,

... David did not write this Psalm so much in his private character as in the person of the whole Church, since he bore the image of the head ...¹⁸⁸

Hence, the Psalm leads us 'to contemplate ... the common condition of all the pious (communis piorum omnium conditio).'¹⁸⁹ These statements come at the head of his whole commentary and represent the presupposition under which the whole Psalm is to be understood. Thus commenting on verse 3 (v. 4 in Hebrew), Calvin writes,

Now since David has spoken, as it were, out of the mouth (ex ore) of Christ and out of the mouth of all the pious, inasmuch as they^{are} members of Christ (membra Christi), it ought not to seem absurd to us if ever we are so overwhelmed with death that not one single spark of life appears. Indeed, as long as God preserves let us in good time learn to arm ourselves with this meditation, that in the deepest depths and doldrums of adversities faith will sustain us, nay, it will raise us to God.¹⁹⁰

Calvin's exposition continues in this way, continuously moving backwards and forwards from David, to Christ and to the whole Church (the membra Christi). On verse 9 (v. 10 in Hebrew), he writes,

Besides, as David bore the part of the whole Church (totius ecclesiae personam sustinuerit), whatever he asserts concerning himself it was necessary should be filled in the supreme head (summo capite). Thus it is no marvel that this passage is accommodated to Christ by the evangelists (Jn. 2.17). By the same rule (eadem ratione) Paul in Romans 15.3,5 and 6, where he exhorts the faithful to the imitation of Christ, extends the second part of the verse to them all ...¹⁹¹

And, on v. 21 (v. 22 in Hebrew) Calvin writes,

John Chapter 19.20, however, correctly narrates that this scripture was fulfilled when the soldiers gave Christ vinegar to drink on the cross, because it was necessary that the cruelty which the reprobate employ in his members be represented in a visible sign in Christ.¹⁹²

For Calvin such a method of interpretation is not out of harmony with the literal-historical sense of the Psalm. Thus at the close of his comments on verse 21, he writes,

The genuine sense (*genuinus sensus*) must still be maintained; that no relief was given to the holy prophet, like a wretched and afflicted man who found out that his food and drink had been marred with bitterness.¹⁹³

It should by now be clear that Calvin's Old Testament christological typology involves a subtle interplay of theology and hermeneutics. Interestingly, the two main christological types that Calvin sees in the Old Testament - the Priest and the King - are used to set forth one main theological idea, the unio mystica. All else flows from this one theological concept. Calvin's typological interpretations of the Priest and the King do not depend on the comparison of minutiae which would be more suitable to an allegorical approach. Rather, they are based squarely on an understanding of the role and function of the Priest and King in the Old Testament. In this way Calvin's typological interpretations seek to remain faithful to the literal meaning of the Old Testament. They are thus in harmony with his historical-grammatical approach to the interpretation of the Old Testament. Moreover, Calvin's typological method seeking as it does to remain faithful to the literal meaning of the Old Testament forms a bridge between it and his hermeneutical goal of reading the Old Testament with the aim of finding Christ.

Chapter 7

Calvin's Doctrine of the Old Testament: The Unity of the
Covenant

So far we have seen: (1). That Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics were developed in a twofold confrontation against the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics. (2). That in response to this Calvin's basic Old Testament hermeneutical goal was to read the Old Testament with the intention of finding Christ in it. (3). This, however, did not lead him into some form of allegorical exegesis, but, on the contrary. (4). Calvin adhered to a method of interpreting the Old Testament that was both historical and grammatical. (5). Calvin sought both to counter what he considered the false views of the Old Testament held by his opponents and to realize his hermeneutical goal by means of accommodation and typology.

In the present chapter, I would like briefly to examine Calvin's doctrine of the Old Testament as it is related to his Old Testament hermeneutics. Calvin's doctrine of the Old Testament is in fact the crystallization of his use and hermeneutics of the Old Testament. It is for this reason that I have sought to avoid a discussion of it hitherto.

What we are primarily concerned with in in the present context is Calvin's idea of the relationship between the Old Testament and the New. We have already had occasion to look

at Calvin's doctrine of Inspiration in chapter four of our study. It should be clear from what was said there that Calvin made no distinction between the Old Testament and the New in terms of their Inspiration. Nothing more need be added.

Calvin's teaching on the relationship between the two Testaments is worked out methodically in the Institutes in the chapters which deal with the similarity and difference between the Old Testament and the New (book II chapters 9-11). It is also frequently introduced in Calvin's exegetical writings and indeed it is implicit throughout his Old Testament exegetical works. Because of its more methodical treatment, however, we will concentrate primarily on the discussion of the question found in the Institutes.

We saw in our discussion of the Law and the Gospel that for Calvin the promises of God's grace and mercy which constitute the Gospel are to be found in the Old Testament as well as the New. The promises given to the fathers under the Old Testament are the same given to Christians under the New Testament. Hence, for Calvin, the Gospel is present in the Old Testament too. However, since Christ is the foundation of the free promises of God's mercy in all ages, Christ too is present in the Old Testament and was known by the Old Testament fathers. The difference between the Law and the Gospel in this respect is merely one of 'clearness of manifestation'. This, for Calvin, constitutes the starting point of his whole discussion on the similarity and difference between the Old Testament and the New as

found in Institutes II.x--xi. It is briefly stated as a kind of preface in Institutes II.ix--x.1.

The transition is made in Institutes II.x.1. He makes it explicit that the whole discussion is directed against the Anabaptists and Servetus.

In the first place he deals with the 'resemblance/similarity (similitudo)' or 'comparison (simile)', as he also calls it, between the two Testaments. This is the burden of chapter ten. He states that his intention is 'to remove all the difficulties that usually rise up immediately when mention is made of the difference between the Old and the New Testament'.¹ And, with a view to resolving these difficulties, his aim is to,

... look in passing at the similarities (Latin = simile which is singular = 'comparison'?) and differences (Latin = diversum, again it is singular = 'discordance'?) between the covenant that the Lord made of old with the Israelites before Christ's advent, and that which God has now made with us after his manifestation.²

The language Calvin uses in stating his aim here might seem to imply that he thought of the relationship between the Old Testament and the New in terms of two different covenants. This language, however, is misleading as is made clear by what he immediately goes on to say. For in Institutes II.x.2 he gives his answer to the question posed in Institutes II.x.1 in very brief terms. He writes,

Both can be explained in one word. The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same (Patrum omnium foedus adeo substantia et re ipsa nihil a nostro differt, ut unum prorsus atque idem sit ...). Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation (... administratio [=administration] tamen variat).³

What Calvin means by 'substantia' here is made clear by his

comments on Jer. 31.31. Here too Calvin is speaking on the relationship of the Old Testament to the New. He states,

Now as for the 'new covenant'; it is not so called because it was different from the first covenant. For God does not contradict himself, nor is he unlike himself. ... Now it can be seen why he promises a new covenant to the people. There is no doubt that this refers to the form (formam), as they say. This form, however, not only lies in the words, but first of all in Christ, then in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and finally in the whole external method of teaching; but the substance remains the same. By substance I understand doctrine (doctrina), because God reveals nothing in the Gospel, which the Law does not contain. We see, therefore, that God has so spoken from the beginning, as afterwards to change not even a syllable, as far as the sum (summam) of doctrine is concerned.⁴

All that Calvin goes on to say in the subsequent sections of this chapter of the Institutes is merely an outworking of the first half of this formula.⁵ That is, he seeks to show that the Old Testament does not differ in substance from the New. It differs from the New only in its mode of dispensation (dispensatio) or administration (administratio). In other words, the two Testaments differ only in their outward forms, but not in their inner essence. Hence, in actual fact, there are not two covenants, but only one.⁶ The Old and the New Testaments represent no more than two forms in the administration of this one covenant.⁷ In the next chapter (II.xi) Calvin will go on to show that the differences (diversum) between the Old Testament and the New, therefore, represent merely differences or variations in the administration or form of the one covenant.

In turn this one covenant is founded on Christ. He is the foundation of the one covenant to which both Testaments bear witness.⁸ He also is the 'foundation (fundamentum)'⁹ of the promises of the covenant. This is further made clear when we enquire what this one covenant is. It is 'the

covenant of free adoption (foedus gratuita adoptionis)'.¹⁰
Or 'the covenant of his [God's] grace (foedus gratiae
suae)'.¹¹ It is this which is the 'substance and reality' of
both the Old Testament and the New Testament
administrations.

Furthermore, Christ himself is not merely the foundation of
the covenant, he also is its 'substance and reality'.¹²

Here we might point to a parallel use of the word
'substantia' in Calvin's discussion of the sacraments in
Institutes IV.xiv. It is interesting to note that in this
section Calvin defines a sacrament as,

... an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our
consciences the promises of his good will towards us in
order to sustain the weakness of our faith; and we in turn
attest our piety toward him in the presence of the Lord
and of his angels and before men.¹³

These two elements - the ratification of God's promise and
the dedication of ourselves to obedience - are also involved
in a covenant. Thus, later in the same chapter, Calvin
brings out the relationship of the sacraments to God's
covenant. The sacraments are 'signs' or 'tokens' of the
covenants.¹⁴ However, as Calvin goes on to say in a later
section,

Christ is the matter or (if you prefer) the substance of
all the sacraments; for in him they have all their
firmness, and they do not promise anything apart from him
(Christum Sacramentum^{or} omnium materiam, vel (si mavis)
substantiam esse dico: quando in ipso totam habent suam
soliditatem, nec quicquam extra ipsum promittunt).¹⁵

Thus there is a fundamental unity between the Old Testament
and the New: a unity which is founded on Christ. They are
one in substance in that both bear witness to the same
covenant, the covenant of free adoption of which Christ
himself is the substance.

Having dealt with the 'resemblance (similitudo)' of the Testaments, Calvin next turns to discuss the difference (differentia), or distinction (discrimen) as he also calls it, between the Old Testament administration and the New. This discussion occupies Institutes II.xi. It is little more than an outworking of the second half of the definition that we have seen Calvin gave in Institutes II.x.2, that the two Testaments '... differ in the mode of administration'.¹⁶

Here, it is true, there is no mention of Roman Catholics and their approach to the Old Testament. In fact Calvin is still directing the discussion against the Anabaptists and Servetus who emphasized the disunity of the Testaments. However, in the light of what we have seen in the second chapter of our study, it is clear that what Calvin saw as the Roman Catholic use of the Old Testament has had an influence on his thinking at this point. Whether or not Calvin had the Roman Catholic approach to the Old Testament in mind as he wrote this chapter of the Institutes, it is clear that the principles laid down here enter into his controversy with them, as we saw in chapter 2 of our study.

Calvin begins by admitting '... the differences in Scripture, to which attention is called', that is, by the Anabaptists and Servetus. However, he will only do so '... in such a way as not to detract from its established unity.'¹⁷

Calvin goes on to state that there are five 'chief

differences'. But, he argues these '... pertain to the manner of dispensation rather than to the substance (ad modum administrationis potius quam ad substantiam)'. These can be stated briefly. We have already touched upon them in earlier parts of our study and besides they are well known.

[1]. In the Old Testament the spiritual blessings of the covenant are represented under the form of earthly, temporal blessings. These were adapted to the 'childhood of the Church' as it existed under the Old Testament (xi.2-3). [2]. Truth in the Old Testament is conveyed by images and ceremonies. In the Old Testament the 'reality (veritas)' was absent. Hence '... it showed but an image and shadow in place of the substance (imaginem tantum et pro corpore umbram)'. Whereas '... the New Testament reveals the very substance of truth as present' (xi. 4-6). [3]. The Old Testament is literal, in the sense that it is written on tablets of stone and, in itself, brings only death. The New Testament, on the other hand, is spiritual, since it is written on the heart and brings life (xi. 7,8). [4]. This distinction differs very little from the former and 'arises out of the third'. The Old Testament is a Testament of bondage, whereas the New Testament is one of freedom (xi.9,10). Here Calvin has in mind his distinction between Law and Gospel. He does not deny the presence of Gospel in the Old Testament. Indeed, since the patriarchs '... were obviously endowed with the same spirit of faith as we, it follows that they shared the same freedom and joy.' However, '... neither of these arose from the law. But when through the law the patriarchs felt themselves both oppressed by

their enslaved condition, and wearied by anxiety of conscience, they fled for refuge to the gospel.¹⁸ [5].

Calvin hesitates over whether or not this fifth difference ought to be included.¹⁹ It '...lies in the fact that until the advent of Christ, the Lord set apart one nation within which to confine the covenant of Grace.' The covenant under the Old administration was confined to the Jews, whereas under the new administration it is not confined to any one nation (xi. 11,12).

It is clear, that for Calvin each of these differences concerns merely the mode of administration of the one covenant of grace and that they do not affect the substance of that covenant. In fact these five differences are really reducible to one, that is, the difference in the clarity of the covenant of grace under the old administration and under the new. It being much more clearly displayed or presented under the new administration than it was under the old.²⁰ It is the same covenant, with the same promises. It is the presentation of it which differs in each Testament in so far as each represents a different administration of the covenant. In the Old Testament the promises of the covenant are obscure or hidden and they are indirect. They are 'wrapped up' or 'hidden', as it were, in the form of earthly, temporal promises. In the New Testament, on the other hand, the promises of the covenant are presented directly and they are no longer hidden but open. To put it another way, Christ, the substance of the covenant and its promises, was presented to people under the old administration just as he is today as the Mediator and

foundation of the covenant. It is not simply a question of Christ being foreshadowed in the Old Testament.²¹ Christ was truly imparted to the patriarchs through the Law and the Prophets as well as the institutions of the Old Testament which acted as 'seals' to its words.²² However, the difference is that Christ was revealed under the old administration only in an obscure and shadowy fashion whereas under the new administration Christ is revealed openly and clearly, he is 'exhibited'.²³

If it should be asked why this is the case, why should Christ and salvation in him have been revealed obscurely in the Old Testament? Calvin replies in terms of his idea of the childhood and immaturity of the Church in the Old Testament and also in terms of his doctrine of accommodation. The Church in the Old Testament could not bear the full light of day. God has accommodated the revelation of his grace in Christ to their 'weak' capacity.²⁴ Thus the Jews, as Calvin puts it in a Sermon on Deuteronomy, needed more ceremonies because they did not have full and clear doctrine that we now have.²⁵

It should be clear that Calvin's doctrine of the unity of the Old Testament with the New both lies behind his entire Old Testament hermeneutics and arises out of them. In other words, Calvin's doctrine of the Old Testament is in full harmony with his method of interpreting the Old Testament and, vice versa, his method of interpretation is in harmony with his doctrine of the Old Testament. Calvin's whole hermeneutics of the Old Testament have led us up to this and his whole hermeneutics are an outworking of his idea of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is Gospel because it bears witness to the same covenant of grace that is borne witness to by the New Testament. In fact the 'New Covenant' is simply the 'Old Covenant' though in a different form. The covenant in both its forms or modes of administration is founded on Christ. He is the 'substance and reality' of the covenant and therefore of the Old Testament and the New. Hence Scripture in its entirety, Old as well as New Testament proclaims Christ.

As a result, allegory is inappropriate as a method of Old Testament exegesis. Allegory, for Calvin, implies eisegesis. But Christ does not have to be read into the Old Testament since he is in actuality already there. In this way he was known to the patriarchs, that is, through the Old Testament, through the words of Moses at first and then later of the Prophets. These words were established and confirmed by the religious and civil institutions of the Old Testament which

acted as sacraments to convey Christ to the patriarchs. The only appropriate method of exegesis, therefore, is a literal one. It is in the literal meaning of the Old Testament as discovered by historical and grammatical principles of interpretation that Christ is to be found.

However, though the covenant is one and Christ its only foundation, the way in which it is presented or administered differs in each Testament. Under the old administration it is accommodated to the 'ignorance' of the Jews who represent the childhood of the Church. Hence in the Old Testament the covenant is presented in the form of promises of earthly and temporal blessings. And Christ the Mediator of the covenant is presented in the form of types and images. Hence, Christ is found in the Old Testament by means of typology. However, Calvin's typology is in large part controlled by his historical understanding of Scripture, since it is founded upon an understanding of the historical roles played by certain figures and institutions in the Old Testament.

At the same time it can, therefore, be seen that Calvin's doctrine of the unity of the Testaments is the quintessence of his response to both the Anabaptist and the Roman Catholic approach to the Old Testament. Against the Anabaptists' 'separatio' of the Old Testament from the New, stands Calvin's 'unum atque idem'.²⁶ And, against the Roman Catholics' 'confusio' of the two Testaments stands Calvin's 'administratio tamen variat'.²⁷ Against the Anabaptists Calvin says 'The covenant of all the fathers is no different from ours in substance and reality (Patrum omnium foedus

adeo substantia et re ipsa nihil a nostro differt).²⁸

However, against the Roman Catholics Calvin would say that, the Old Testament differs from the New in its 'external way of teaching (docendi ratio externa)²⁹ the one covenant.

Chapter 8

The Old Testament as Scripture

In this final brief chapter I would like to draw together several themes that arise out of our study of Calvin's Old Testament hermeneutics.

It should be clear that Calvin unequivocally accepted the Old Testament as Scripture for the Christian Church. As one reads his Commentaries, Lectures and Sermons on the Old Testament one is struck by the reality and the depth of this conviction. Indeed the massive extent of his Old Testament Commentaries, Lectures and Sermons in itself is a monument to this conviction of Calvin's. Calvin wrote his Commentaries, delivered his Lectures and preached his Sermons with one grand aim in mind - the edification of the Church. As a Teacher and Pastor of the Church in Geneva this was his raison d'être. All his energies and abilities were poured into achieving this goal. But the Church is 'built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets', in other words - according to Calvin's interpretation of Ephesians 2.20 - the Scriptures of the New Testament and the Old Testament. For Calvin, therefore, the exposition of Scripture - the Old Testament as well as the New - was of the utmost importance. The Old Testament as well as the New serves to up-build the Church. The Old Testament as well as the New is the Church's Scripture.

Moreover, what is significant is the basis on which Calvin

held this conviction. The Old Testament is Scripture because it bears witness to Christ and salvation in Christ. The Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the Church, but Christ is the 'chief cornerstone'. Indeed, for Calvin, the Prophets and Apostles are the foundation of the Church only insofar as they bear witness to Christ and, if I may so speak, 'the Christ event'. Again, the Prophets and Apostles are the foundation of the Church only insofar as Christ is their 'substantia', and the foundation of the one covenant of grace. Christ and salvation in him are present in the Old Testament. The Old Testament is thus not a book that is alien to the Christian Church. On the contrary for Calvin the Old Testament is decidedly a book for the Church since it, like the New Testament - though in a different way - bears witness to him who is the essence of Christianity.

From another angle Calvin's christological approach to the Old Testament can be seen as an outworking of his Trinitarianism. The God of the Old Testament is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This God is immutable. He is present in the Old Testament as Trinity. His plan of salvation in Christ is eternal. Christ is the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity and therefore he too is present in the Old Testament as the eternal Mediator between God and man and the 'fundamentum' of the covenant of grace.

The fact is inescapable, therefore, that Calvin sought to read the Old Testament from the standpoint of his Christian faith. He sought in other words to read the Old Testament as

a Christian, not as a Jew. As the revelation of the One God who is Trinity, Calvin expected to find Christ in the whole of Scripture, the Old Testament as well as the New. He did not lay aside his Christian faith and beliefs when he turned to the Old Testament. He came to the Old Testament expecting to hear God - the God and Father of Jesus Christ - speaking to him and his generation there. Hence, he read the Old Testament with the aim of finding Christ and he heard God speaking.

Such convictions, however, did not lead him away from the literal meaning of the Old Testament into the mists of allegorical exegesis. It was in the Old Testament understood - as far as in his day was possible - literally that the word of God in Christ was to be heard.

It is at this point also that Calvin challenges us today. All too often, especially in academic study, we come to the Old Testament merely as a source book for ancient Near Eastern history or religion. We do not come to it expecting to hear the word of God, as Calvin did. The academic study of the Old Testament over the last 150 years or so has been dominated by questions of the sources of the Old Testament text and its pre-history. The focus of interest for many Old Testament scholars has been upon discovering the sources, whether oral or documentary, which lie behind the biblical text. The text as we have it today, however, and its meaning for us was largely ignored. For a long period hardly anyone seemed to care too much about the message of the Old Testament. More recently, in some circles at least, things

have begun to change. There is a renewed interest in the writings of the Old Testament and their message as they stand. Calvin himself calls us back to this. It was the text as we have it, the text in its 'final form' to coin modern terminology, which was almost Calvin's whole concern. It is true, as we have seen, that Calvin was not wholly disinterested in questions of source. It may also ^{be} true that we cannot totally ignore the findings of source critics. However, at a time when there is a reorientation going on, Calvin can help us get our priorities right. It is the text as we have it which is the bearer of God's word for us, not some supposed sources that lie behind it, nor the historical events which can be reconstructed from it.

There is another area too in which Calvin challenges our modern assumptions. Since the end of the 18th Century the ideal within Old Testament scholarship has been to lay aside all presuppositions in approaching the Old Testament. The history of Old Testament scholarship since that time would seem to have demonstrated that such an ideal is neither realizable nor desirable. It is impossible entirely to lay aside all presuppositions. Those Scholars who have sought to do so may have succeeded in laying aside the presuppositions of Christian beliefs, but they have replaced them with others in the light of which - often unconsciously - they have read the Old Testament.

Calvin challenges us to read the Old Testament as Christians. He challenges us not to lay aside our theology when we approach the Old Testament, but with sensitivity to

the text and in continual submission to it, to see how it is present there in 'living colours'. Calvin shows no embarrassment over reading the Old Testament in the light of his Christian presuppositions. Yet at the same time he sought to avoid reading these presuppositions into the Old Testament by means of a forced exegesis. It may be that Calvin did not always succeed in this. Yet the challenge that Calvin presents us with still remains. The Old Testament itself must be allowed to speak, but when it does so it is the voice of Christ that is heard speaking through it. The Old Testament bears the word of God for us today because it bears witness to Christ and because its God is also the God of the New Testament. Thus Calvin recalls us to read the Old Testament as Christians.

Modern historical exegesis is mainly concerned with what the Old Testament meant. Those who have been trained in its methods have very often not learned to ask what the text means. They have learned to ask questions about what a given text could have meant to its original hearers, but are perplexed when it comes to asking what that same text means for Christians living in today's world. Calvin challenges us to ask such questions. We may not always come to the same answers as he did. Yet one cannot read Calvin's Old Testament exegetical works for long without being forced to grapple with the question of the bearing of the Old Testament on us today. 'Calvin's commentaries', writes J. R. Walchenbach with reference to the New Testament Commentaries, 'were written with one foot in the first century and the other in the sixteenth.'¹ It is only as we

learn to stand astride the centuries that separate our own times from those of the authors of the Old Testament, to have one foot in our own century and one foot in their's that we will once again come to see the message of the Old Testament for us.

Calvin's understanding of the Old Testament has not gone without criticism from a theological perspective in recent times. I would like, in closing this study, briefly to respond to some of these criticisms.

Emil Kraeling is perhaps the most scathing in his criticisms. In his book The Old Testament since the Reformation, he writes that,

... Calvin has Christianized the Old Testament and Judaized the New Testament in his efforts to make the two appear as one.²

And even more severely, that Calvin,

... practically closes his eyes to the new moral values in the preaching of Jesus and reduces him to the level of a correct interpreter of Moses ...³

Affirming that Calvin is guilty of,

... watering down Christian principles with Old Testament ideas.⁴

Almost identical criticisms were made by P. Wernle in his book Der evangelische Glaube.⁵

As we have seen the accusation that Calvin Judaizes in his interpretation of the Old Testament is no new one. We have seen that in the 16th Century he was accused of 'Judaizing' the Old Testament by the Lutheran Hunnius. It is significant that many who bring the same criticism against him today also belong to the Lutheran tradition which, following on

from Luther, has a very different understanding of the Law and the place of the Old Testament to Calvin.

Is this criticism valid? Has Calvin 'Christianized the Old Testament and Judaized the New'? The answer that we give to this question will to a large extent depend upon the theological tradition within which we ourselves stand. At the same time, however, we do not feel that such criticisms are valid. We have sought to show in the course of this study that Calvin sought to walk between two extremes, between the Anabaptist separatio of the Testaments on the one hand, and, on the other, the Roman Catholic confusio. We have seen that as a Christian Calvin sought to say both 'Yes' and 'No' to the Old Testament. The 'Yes' is of course primary, but the 'No' involved a full recognition of the 'Jewishness' of the Old Testament. That is, of the accommodated, historically particularized nature of the revelation of Christ in the Old Testament. The Old Testament bears witness to the Christian message, but in a 'Jewish' way. Though Calvin may have sought to get behind what we might call the 'Jewishness' of the Old Testament - the Old Testament's 'forma docendi', as he calls it - he never forgot it.

Has Calvin 'reduced Jesus to the level of a correct interpreter of Moses' and so 'Judaized the New Testament'? Let us look at it from another angle. We ought not to speak of any reduction. On the contrary, Calvin's understanding of the Old Testament does not involve a reduction in our understanding of Christ, but rather an extension. Christ is

not merely Jesus of Nazareth who lived and worked in Judea for a few years. He is the eternal Son of God. His ministry and work as the Mediator is not confined to the 'years of his flesh', but stretches back into the past of the Old Testament as it also stretches forward into the future. Christ is not merely the teacher of the Gospels, rather the Bible as a whole has its source in him as it also has its centre in him. It was he who gave the Law to Moses. It was the 'Spirit of Christ' who spoke in and through the Prophets. Since it was Christ who imparted the Law to Moses, he is also its 'best interpreter'. Such is Calvin's reasoning. Can it really be said that this involves a reduction of Jesus? We think not.

Chapter 1

1. I am indebted to H. Bornkamm's book, Luther and the Old Testament, for the idea to use the image of the Old Testament as a mirror here. Bornkamm shows how Luther used the Old Testament as a mirror for his own world. The same image can, as I hope will become clear, also be just as adequately used to describe Calvin's use of the Old Testament. The fact that he frequently refers to the Old Testament as a mirror already indicates this.

2. Calvin wrote commentaries on the following Old Testament books: Genesis, Exodus--Deuteronomy (in the form of an Harmony), Joshua, Psalms and Isaiah. However, of these Genesis and Isaiah began life as notes taken from Calvin's lectures by Nicholas des Gallars and reworked by Calvin. Thus only the three remaining are 'commentaries proper', though all of them are called 'commentaries'. See T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, pp. 23-29.

3. A fine account of Calvin's lecturing activity can be found in T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, pp. 13-29. As Parker points out, this is rather a neglected area of Calvin studies.

4. The Ordonnances Ecclésiastiques of 1541 had required two Sunday services and three weekday services. In 1549, the weekday services were increased to become daily including Saturday.

5. Calvin's commitment to systematic expository preaching is well illustrated by the fact that after his return to Geneva in Sept. 1541, having been banished for over 3 years, he took up his preaching exactly where he had left off.

6. Cf. H-F. Stähli's article, 'Das Alte Testament in den

Briefen Calvins' Wort und Dienst 15 (1979), pp. 123-129. See also P. E. Hughes, in the introduction to his The Register of the Company of the Pastors of Geneva, pp. 29f. and T. H. L. Parker John Calvin: A Biography, pp. 139-43.

7. Cf. R. Martin-Achard's article 'Calvin et les psaumes' Les Cahiers Protestants 40 (1960), pp. 102-5.

8. Calvin makes use of the Old Testament, for example, in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances. Of them, P. Lobstein in his article 'Les commentaires de Calvin', p. 86, wrote 'Les fameuses Ordonnances ecclésiastiques ne sont, à vrai dire, et ne doivent être qu'un façon d'exégèse biblique applique.' Though Calvin rarely quotes directly from the Old Testament here, it is clear that its political laws have shaped his thinking and that they lie behind many of his ordinances. However, Calvin is free from a 'literalistic' (cf. G. Harkness John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics, who accuses him of an Old Testament literalism) use of Old Testament legal material. Rather he uses the Old Testament political laws in a creative way, adapting and applying them to the specific needs of 16th. Century Geneva. This agrees with his theory in Institutes IV.xx. See A. Biéler's Calvin, prophète de l'ère industrielle, passim.

9. Cf. the article by R. A. Hasler entitled 'The Influence of David and the Psalms upon John Calvin's Life and Thought', HQ 5 (1965), passim. And the almost identically entitled M.Th thesis by J. Walchenbach The Influence of David and the Psalms on the Life and Thought of John Calvin, passim.

10. A. Baumgartner Calvin hébraisant et interprète de l'Ancien Testament, pp. 30f. See also T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, pp. 9ff.

11. Baumgartner, op. cit., pp. 31f. See also W. McKane's article 'Calvin as an Old Testament Commentator', p. 250.

12. cf. W. Walker, John Calvin, the Organizer of Reformed Protestantism, pp. 360-7. On p. 366 Walker writes, 'He [Calvin] would make Geneva the theological seminary of Reformed Protestantism.' See also Parker, John Calvin: A Biography, pp. 128f. Hughes, op. cit. pp. 25-8, speaks of Calvin's efforts in this area in terms of missionary endeavour.

13. Theodore Beza in the dedicatory epistle he wrote for the posthumous publication of Calvin's Lectures on the First Twenty Chapters of Ezekiel, writes, '... no one has existed within our memory to whom it has been permitted to leave so many and such exact monuments of his doctrine; for, if God had granted to us for another year or two the enjoyment of so great a light, I do not see what could be wanting to the perfect understanding of the books of either covenant.' (ET in CTS I p. xl; CO 40:9-10) In the dedicatory epistle to Gustavus king of Sweden which accompanied his Lectures on the Minor Prophets, Calvin states, '... I desire to spend the rest of my life in this kind of labour [the interpretation of the Scriptures], as far as my continual and many employments will allow me ... I shall not, however, deem my spare time in any other way better employed.'

14. cf. L. P. Smith 'Calvin as an Interpreter of Ezekiel', pp. 274-6. Smith writes,

'Calvin was himself a preacher, lecturing to men who were to be pastors of the Protestant churches of all Europe, and he took full advantage of the homiletic emphasis in Ezekiel. He did it, however, with such clear understanding of the ways of men, with such keen appreciation of their difficulties, and above all with such absolute sincerity that the paragraphs devoted to "edification" are by no means the least interesting in the commentary. ... Repeatedly he finds counsel for the ministerial candidates themselves.'

The Calvin Translation Society edition of Calvin's Commentaries on the Old Testament and the New have undergone a number of reprints in the last twenty years or so. A new translation of the Old Testament Commentaries is at present under preparation to be published by Eerdmans.

15. Calvin's preaching activity is documented by B. Gagnebin in his essay 'L'histoire des Manuscrits des Sermons de Calvin' in SC II, pp. xiv-xxvii. See also the very helpful chart in T. H. L. Parker The Oracles of God, pp. 160-2.

16. cf. the thesis by A. Cruvellier entitled Etude sur la prédication de Calvin, pp. 68f. see also Parker John Calvin: A Biography, p. 92.

17. See Gagnebin op. cit. pp. xv-xvii and CO 21:70.

18. The story is told in T. H. L. Parker in Supplementa Calviniana, pp. 8-11 and John Calvin: A Biography, pp. 91f.

19. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, p. 10.

20. *ibid.*

21. Parker John Calvin: A Biography, p. 91.

22. For example, see the dedicatory epistles to his Commentary on the Book of Isaiah. The first edition appeared in 1551 and Calvin dedicated it to Edward VI, the second revised edition appeared in 1559 and Calvin dedicated it to Elizabeth I. In the former Calvin we find ^{using} such phrases as the following:

'And here I expressly call upon you, most excellent king, or rather, God himself addresses you by the mouth of his servant Isaiah, charging you to proceed, to the utmost of

your ability and power, in carrying forward the restoration of the Church, which has been so successfully begun in your kingdom.'

And he continues,

It is of high importance, most noble king, that you should be stimulated to activity by the consideration of the duty enjoined on you; for Isaiah exhorts all kings and magistrates, in the person of Cyrus, to stretch forth their hand to the Church, when in distress, to restore her to her former condition. ... the Prophet may be said to stretch out his hand and call you to this office.

And addressing Elizabeth he writes,

You ought also to be stimulated, venerable Queen, by a sacred regard to duty; for the Prophet Isaiah demands not only from kings that they be nursing-fathers, but also from Queens that they be nursing-mothers. This duty you ought also to discharge, not only by removing the filth of Popery, and by cherishing the flock which not long ago lay trembling and concealed, but by gathering the exiles ...

23. See Stähli pp. 123f. for examples. See also the CTS of Calvin's Letters vols III p. 451 (CO 17:252) and IV p. 60 (CO 17:585f.) and Parker John Calvin: A Biography, pp. 140f.

24. cf. the dedicatory epistle to his Lectures on Daniel which he addressed to 'All the Pious Worshippers of God who desire the Kingdom of God to be rightly constituted in France'. Colladon, in his Vie de Calvin, described this epistle as being prophetic (CO 21:91). In the book of Daniel Calvin saw a,

... mirror, how God proves the faith of his people in these days by various trials; and how, with wonderful wisdom, he has taken care to strengthen their minds by

ancient examples, that they should never be weakened by the concussion of the severest storms and tempests; or at least, if they should totter at all, that they should never finally fall away.

Later he writes,

There is no doubt that the servants of God accommodated to their own times the predictions of this prophet concerning the exile at Babylon, and thus lightened the pressure of present calamities. Thus, also, we ought to have our eyes fixed on the miseries of the fathers, that we may not object to be joined with the body of that Church to which it was said, "O, thou little flock, borne down by the tempest and deprived of comfort, behold, I take thee up." (Isa. 54.11)

25. See, for example, the use of Ps. 107 to illustrate the doctrine of providence in I.v.8. In III.ii.17, Calvin draws on David's life to illustrate the struggle of faith with sin and temptation. He draws on the Old Testament in IV.i.24,25, for examples of God's grace and forgiveness to his people when they fall into sin.

26. See, for example, in his De aeterna Dei praedestinatione, the use he makes of the Jacob/Esau birth story (CO 8:278f.); the story of the Exodus and particularly the confrontation with Pharaoh who becomes a representative of the reprobate [Ex. 9.6] (CO 8:283f.), here Calvin appeals to the exegesis of Hebrew words for support (the Hiphils of $\text{׀}md$ and $k\hat{u}n$); Ex. 20.5,6 (CO 8:289); Isaiah's commission in Isa. 6.9, (CO 8:289f.), 'a passage which', Calvin notes, 'the Holy Spirit has decided to repeat six times in the New Testament'; and the promise of a new heart with the law written on it in Jer. 31.33 and Ezek. 36.26 (CO 8:300f.). Many more instances could be given from this one work alone, more than space will permit.

27. CO 31:15/16.

28. This is well documented by E. Mülhaupt in SC IV, Psalmpredigten Passions-, Oster- und Pfingstpredigten, pp. xxiv-xxviii. cf. the essay by R. M^{artin}Achard, 'Calvin et les psaumes', pp. 102ff.

29. cf. Mülhaupt, op. cit., pp. xxvf.

30. B. B. Warfield Calvin and Augustine, p. 20, '... the Reformed Churches did not sing until Calvin taught them to do it.'

31. CO 10:12 also in OS I.375. An ET can be found in Calvin: Theological Treatises, LCC Vol. 22, ed. J. K. S. Reid, pp. 47-55. The full text is found in CO 10:5-14 and OS I.369--77.

32. Calvin writes, LCC 22 op. cit. p. 55, 'We are unable to compute the profit and edification which will arise from this, except after having experimented. Certainly as things are, the prayers of the faithful are so cold, that we ought to be ashamed and dismayed. The psalms can incite us to lift up our hearts to God and move us to an ardour in invoking - and exalting with praises the glory of his name.' See also P. E. Hughes The Register of the Company of the Pastors of Geneva, pp. 35-49, for an English Translation of the 1541 Ecclesiastical Ordinances. The reference to Psalm singing is found on p. 45.

33. See OS II.16-18, and Parker John Calvin: A Biography, pp. 81f.

34. CO 10:12, ET in LCC 22, p. 53.

'On the other hand there are the psalms which we desire to be sung in the Church, as we have it exemplified in the ancient Church and in the evidence of Paul himself,

who says it is good to sing in the congregation with mouth and heart.'

35. Quoted from T. H. L. Parker, John Calvin: A Biography, p. 88. The original can be found in OS II.17.

36. Parker John Calvin: A Biography, 86f.

37. CO 24:460.

38. CO 24:460, 'Unde colligimus praedicatam fuisse gratiam quam populus fide apprehenderet.'

39. See the essay by H. Hageman entitled 'The Law in the Liturgy', p. 38.

40. Hageman, op. cit. pp. 36ff.

41. I am indebted to Hageman for the following orders of service, op. cit., p. 39.

42. See, for example, D. Schellong, Das evangelische Gesetz in der Auslegung Calvins, p.17. See also I. J. Hesselink's essay, 'Christ, the Law and the Christian: An Unexplored Aspect of the Third Use of the Law in Calvin's Theology.' In Institutes II.viii.5, Calvin writes, 'There is no doubt that the perfect teaching of righteousness that the Lord claims for the law has a perpetual validity (OS III.347.25-7), and '... the law has been divinely handed down to us to teach us perfect righteousness (Legem nobis esse divinitus traditam, quae nos perfectam iustitiam edoceret); there no other righteousness is taught than that which conforms to the requirements of God's will' (OS III.347.30-2).

43. cf. Hageman op. cit. pp. 42-4.

44. Hageman brings these points out very well, pp. 41-3.

45. In Institutes I.xiv.4 (OS III.156.17ff.), 'Not to take too long let us remember here, as in all religious doctrine, that we ought to hold to one rule of modesty and sobriety: not to speak, or guess, or even to seek to know, concerning obscure matters anything except what has been imparted to us by God's word. Furthermore, in the reading of Scripture we ought ceaselessly to endeavor to seek out and meditate upon those things which make for edification. Let us not indulge in curiosity or in the investigation of unprofitable things. And because the Lord willed to instruct us, not in fruitless questions, but in sound godliness, in the fear of his name, in true trust and in the duties of holiness, let us be satisfied with this knowledge.' The goal of all biblical exegesis, according to Calvin, must be the edification of the Church, thus the expositor must eschew 'nugatory philosophy', see H.-J. Kraus 'Calvins exegetische Prinzipien', pp. 332f. (ET pp. 10-12).

46. I. J. Hesselink, in his article entitled, 'The Development and Purpose of Calvin's Institutes', p. 68, calls the Institutes 'a sort of catechism'. The first edition of 1536 was meant to serve as a 'manual for religious enquirers'. It contained the traditional catechetical material: the Apostles' Creed, the Law and the Lord's Prayer. In the Prefatory address to Francis I, Calvin states, 'My purpose was solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness.' (OS III.9.6-8). Its 'principal aim', writes Hesselink, 'was practical and edifying'. Though the later editions of the Institutes had other aims besides the above, yet the practical, edifying aim was still dominant (cf. Hesselink pp. 69ff.). Thus, Hesselink concludes, 'the Institutes is above all a book about religion (or piety) which for Calvin comprehends a vital knowledge of God combined with gratitude, love and obedience.' F. L. Battles describes the Institutes as 'Spiritual Biography in Systematic Form'. See his comments

on the nature of the Institutes in his Analysis, pp. 14-18 and pp. 23f. Finally, see J. T. McNeill's comments in his introduction to Battles's translation in LCC 20, pp. 1-liii. McNeill writes that the Institutes is '... not a summa theologiae but a summa pietatis.' (p. li)

47. The practical nature of Calvin's theology is well brought out by E. Doumergue in his Jean Calvin: Les hommes et les choses de son temps vol. IV, pp. 22f. This remains a standard work on Calvin in spite of its age. In a sermon on Job 15.2 (CO 33:709f.), Calvin launches a scathing attack on scholastic theology, criticizing it for its speculative nature and impracticality. See also J. H. Leith's article 'John Calvin - Theologian of the Bible', pp. 333f. Ganoczy and Scheld Die Hermeneutik Calvins, pp. 107f., show that Calvin's aim as an interpreter of Scripture was always to be practical. V. Forestier in his dissertation Calvin exégète de l'Ancien Testament, p. 11, wrote, 'Ce sentiment si profondément religieux, pratique, se retrouve à chaque page. Dans toutes les situations il trouve matière à exhorter, à consoler, à édifier.'

48. Doumergue, op. cit., pp. 23f., see the references given there.

49. See also Isa. 2.3 (CO 36:63); Serm. Deut. 1.3-8 (CO 25:617); and Ps. 119.1-8 (CO 32:215).

50. CO 43:344, 'Ergo per תורה nihil aliud intellexit propheta quam doctrinam.' (trans. mine) See also Mal. 2.7 (CO 44:436f.), where Calvin states that the Law is the 'doctrina Mosis' which was 'the one and only fountain of all knowledge. For we know that God, in his Law, included whatever tended to the salvation of the Church. Therefore, our Prophet, under the word 'Torah' includes all doctrine (omnem doctrinam) ...'

51. CO 24:5/6, 'There are two parts to these four books:

the narrating of history, and doctrine by which the Church is instructed (instituitur) in genuine piety (which includes faith and prayer) as well as in the fear and worship of God; thus, also, the rule of living in an holy and just manner is related and everyone is urged to discharge his duty.' (trans mine) Calvin goes on to draw the implications of this distinction out at length (CO 24:5-8).

52. See M. H. Woudstra, Calvin's Dying Bequest to the Church: A Critical Evaluation of the Commentary on Joshua, pp. 13-16.

53. This is clear from what Calvin goes on to say subsequent to the passage quoted in note 51. He writes, 'Moreover, the use and application of the narrative in the four books is twofold; for the deliverance of his ancient people reflects, as in a bright mirror, the incomparable power, as well as the boundless mercy, of God in raising up, and as it were engendering his Church.' The 'deliverance of his ancient people', that is, the Exodus from Egypt, Calvin continues, also teaches us, among other things: God's 'inestimable loving kindness', the 'unwearied course of his grace', and 'to be bold in prayer' (cf. CO 24:5-8)..

54. CO 49:80, see also Isa. 26.2 (36:426).

55. CO 49:80. This understanding of history expressed by Calvin is in fact a very Humanistic understanding, cf. F. A. Yates Renaissance and Reformation: The Italian Context, London, 1983, pp. 89-91.

56. OS III.6.18-25.

57. OS III.8.5-7.

58. For example, see the 'Fraefatio' to his Commentary on Isaiah, (CO 36:20ff.), where he sets his views out on prophecy at length. See also his comments on Isa. 43.5 (CO

37:83).

59. CO 25:617-8, (trans mine).

60. CO 49:460. In the light of what has been said one must question the statement made by A. Vesson in his dissertation entitled Calvin considéré comme exégète. Vesson, p. 9, speaking with reference to the fact that Calvin did not write commentaries on the historical books of the Bible, such as Samuel and Kings, writes, 'Ce choix prouve que les livres historiques avaient moins d'attrait pour lui que ceux qui contiennent, en quelque sorte, l'essence du christianisme. Son esprit logique et organisateur devait préférer les raisonnements serrés d'un saint Paul, aux histoires froidement racontées des rois d'Israël ou de Juda.' That Calvin began his commentaries with the more 'doctrinal' parts of the Bible - the Pauline Epistles - is to be explained, partly at least, by his theological method as outlined above. One can only draw correct doctrina from historia if one is well instructed in doctrina to begin with.

61. Theology Today 17, p. 288.

62. Ps. 104.1 (CO 32:85); Serm. Job 1.6-8 (CO 33:62f.). See also Doumergue, op. cit. p. 87, who commenting, on Calvin's doctrine of the knowledge of God, writes, 'We cannot know his essence, but only his "vertus"; that is, his acts (actes), his manifestations, "by which he reveals himself to us, not as he is in himself (quid sit apud se), but as he is towards us (sed qualis erga nos)."' (trans. mine)

63. See, for example, Ezek. 1.28 (CO 40:60), '... the Glory of God was so beheld by the Prophet, that God did not appear as he really is, but as far as he can be beheld by mortal man (Deus non apparuerit qualis est, sed qualis conspici poterat ab homine mortali). ... Deus enim immensus

est ... But although God has never appeared in his immeasurable glory, and has never manifested himself as he really exists (nunquam se patefecerit qualis est), yet we must nevertheless hold that he has so appeared as to leave no doubt in the minds of his servants as to their knowing that they have seen God.'

64. D. Wright 'The Ethical Use of the Old Testament in Luther and Calvin: A Comparison', SJT 36 (1983), p. 485, says that the applications in Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries and Lectures are more general and less specific than Luther's.

65. L. P. Smith, 'Calvin as Interpreter of Ezekiel', p. 267, speaks of Calvin's lectures, in distinction from his commentaries, having, 'a directness, a vividness and a vitality of presentation'. The lectures he says, had a 'contemporaneousness which made them of special value to Calvin's hearers' (p. 273) and goes on to give some examples of the way Calvin applied the prophecy of Ezekiel to the contemporary situation (pp. 272-6).

66. See the comments made on Calvin's preaching by the Swiss printer Conrad Badius in his 1557 edition of Sermones de M. Iehan Calvin sur les dix commandemens de la Loy etc. (CO 25:595/596-599/600). See also the comments of B. W. Farley in the introduction to his translation of Calvin's Sermons on the Ten Commandments, pp. 29f., (and indeed the introduction passim) to which I am indebted for the Badius reference.

67. cf. F. Wendel Calvin, pp. 294ff.

68. In the dedicatory epistle to his Commentary on the Book of Genesis, ^{Calvin} writes, 'This one consideration stamps an inestimable value on the Book, that it alone reveals those things which are of primary necessity to be known; namely, in what manner God, after the destructive fall of man,

adopted to himself a Church (quomodo post exitialem hominis lapsum ecclesiam sibi Deus adoptaverit)' (CO 20:119). See also H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, pp. 118f.

69. Institutes II.x.4,7.

70. CO 49:461.

71. OS III.323.28ff.

72. Ex. 4.22 (CO 24:63), 'ad unicum caput Christum venire necesse est.' See also M. Woudstra's 'Calvin Interprets what Moses Reports', pp. 164ff.

73. CO 44:150f., (trans. mine). In the argumentum to his commentary on Psalm 10 (CO 31:108), Calvin states that the state of affairs described in the Psalm is a mirror of things in his own day. 'This description represents, as in a mirror (in speculo), a lively image (vivam imaginem) of a widely corrupt and disorganised state of society. When, therefore, we see iniquity breaking out like a flood, that the strangeness of such a temptation may not shake the faith of the children of God and cause them to fall into despair, let them learn to look into this mirror (oculos ad hoc speculum referre). It tends greatly to lighten grief, to consider that nothing befalls at this day which the Church of God has not experienced in the days of old; yea, rather that we are just called to engage in the same conflicts with which David and the other holy patriarchs were exercised.' H.-J. Kraus speaks of Calvin drawing out 'kerygmatic analogies (kerygmatischen Analogien)' in his application of Scripture to the life of the Church of his own day 'Calvins exegetische Prinzipien', p. 333 (ET p. 12).

74. CO 44:151, (trans. mine)

75. Genesis dedicatory epistle addressed to Henry of Navarre, (CO 20:119f.).

76. CO 20:120, '... Et certe ideo nos sanctis patriarchis in spem eiusdem haereditatis Deus adiunxit, ut superata quae nos separat temporum distantia mutuo fidei et patientiae consensu eadem certamina obeamus.'

77. CO 23:11/12, (trans. mine).

78. *ibid.*, (trans mine).

79. See O. Chadwick The Reformation, pp. 251ff.

80. Parker John Calvin: A Biography, pp. 97ff., 107ff. and 111ff

81. This is made very clear by P. E. Hughes, in his introduction to his translation of The Register etc. *passim*. See also the essay by B. Hall entitled 'The Calvin Legend' p. 124, where he writes, 'Those who wish to focus denigration of Calvin and what he stood for on his supposed cruelty and dictatorial powers fail to come to grips with two major facts. ... Second, if Calvin had dictatorial control over Genevan affairs, how is it that the records of Geneva show him plainly to have been the servant of its council which on many occasions rejected out of hand Calvin's wishes for the religious life of Geneva, and was always master in Genevan affairs? A reading of Calvin's farewell speech to the ministers of Geneva made shortly before he died should resolve doubt upon this point. To call Calvin the "dictator of a theocracy" is, in view of the evidence, mere phrasemaking prejudice. Calvin in Geneva had less power either in theory or in practice than had Archbishop Whitgift in England, and less than had Archbishop Laud, for he had neither the authority of their office nor the consistent and powerful political support which they received.'

The Charge of being a 'dictator' is still brought against Calvin by modern writers. For example, S. W. Baron in his essay, 'John Calvin and the Jews' in H. A. Wolfson Jubilee,

ed. S. Lieberman, writes of 'the dictatorial regime of the Geneva reformer' (p. 147) and speaks of 'his despotic theocratic regime in Geneva' (p. 160). He goes so far as to refer to Calvin as 'the Geneva dictator' (p. 161) and as 'He who succeeded in establishing in Geneva a powerful dictatorship which suppressed many existing democratic liberties and in erecting a dominance of the Church over the state in a way unparalleled elsewhere in contemporary Europe ...' (p. 162)!

82. See Parker John Calvin: A Biography, pp. 116, 124-6.

83. See E. Doumergue Jean Calvin IV. pp. 679f. See also Parker, op. cit. pp. 78f.

84. CTS Tracts vol. I pp. 58-60, (CO 5:410).

85. Serm. Dan. 9.7-10, (CO 41:540), trans. mine. Ganoczy and Scheld Die Hermeneutik Calvins, pp. 160-64, show how Calvin identified himself with and understood his position and role in Geneva in the light of the Old Testament Prophets and the prophetic office.

86. First Sermon on Jacob and Esau, (CO 58:19f.), trans. mine.

87. *ibid.* CO 58:19f., trans. mine.

88. Joel 2.32 (CO 42:578).

89. For example, Isa. 4.3 (CO 36:97f.); Isa. 11.11f. (CO 36:246f.) and Zech. 11.17 (CO 44:319f.).

90. cf. Isa. 28.7 (CO 36:466); 28.17 (CO 36:476); 29.14 (CO 36:494); Mal. 2.4 (CO 44:432) and Zech. 11.15-16 (CO 44:315f.).

91. Institutes IV.ii.3 (OS V.32.30--33.13).
92. CO 44:432f.
93. Jer. 18.18 (CO 38:310).
94. Amos 7.10-13 (CO 43:128).
95. CO 43:134.
96. CO 44:193
97. Quoted in Parker, Portrait of Calvin, pp. 41f.
98. CO 43:134, the Bishop of Winchester mentioned here by Calvin is probably a reference to Gardiner.
99. CO 44:193.
100. Zech. 4.10 (CO 44:190f.).
101. See the Commentary on Isa. 37.9 (CO 36:623f.), where Calvin compares the 'cruel tyrants' of his own day, who 'would wish that the Church of God were destroyed', with Sennacherib and the Assyrian messenger, Rabshakeh.
102. Calvin seems very conscious of the stumbling block arising from the smallness of the 'true Church'. He devotes a long section to the subject in his De Scandalis, see ET pp. 28-50 (OS II.179--194).
103. Gen. 33.6 (CO 23:450f.).
104. Isa. 49.7 (CO 37:198).
105. CO 36:229.
106. *ibid.*

107. *ibid.* See also Mic. 4.11-13 (CO 43:362); 5.7-8 (CO 43:376f.) and 5.9 (CO 43:378).

108. CO 36:379.

109. Mic. 4.11-13 (CO 43:362-3), see also Isa. 10.26 (36:229).

110. Serm. Job 3.1-10 (CO 33:142f.), 'See [ie in Job] how the faithful withstand temptations. They may well give way to them at some point. Indeed, to such a degree that God humbles them for it throughout their lives, that they may have occasion to know their infirmities and to weep for them. Nevertheless, in fighting they gain the victory, and God never allows them to be overwhelmed. The children of God, therefore, ought to console themselves in this; that when God sends them afflictions they may well feel inward sorrow within their hearts so that they do not know which way to turn, as they say, indeed, they may so throw off all constraint that they make use of language which is in no way excusable, yet, in spite of such infirmity, the power (la vertu) of God does not cease to dwell in them and to sustain them. Thus they feel themselves always to have some good inclination and although the legs fail them, as the proverb has it, yet the heart holds firm.' (trans mine)

111. cf. Isa. 38.1 (CO 36:645), and see Calvin's commentary on Isa. 38 *passim*.

112. Gen. 42.1 (CO 23:529).

113. Ex. 7.3-4 (CO 24:86f.); 8.25 (CO 24:106f.); 9.16 (CO 24:112f.) etc.

114. Gen. 26.11,12 (CO 23:361).

115. 17th. Serm. Ps. 119 (CO 32:685). H. H. Wolf in his Die Einheit des Bundes, p. 119, writes 'We are instructed by this 'proclamation' that the story of the Old Testament people of God is our own story (Wir werden durch diese "Verkündigung" (doctrina) belehrt, die Geschichte des alttestamentlichen Volkes ist unsere eigene Geschichte).' [trans. mine]. He continues, 'Now there is no longer any distinction between the story of the people of Israel and the story of the Church ... (Nun gibt es nicht mehr einen Unterschied zwischen der Geschichte des Volkes Israel und der Geschichte der Kirche ...)' [trans. mine]

116. Jn. 4.20 (CO 47:85).

117. *ibid.*, cf. Gen. 24.22 (CO 23:335); 26.25 (CO 23:366); 29.30 (CO 23:404); 42.7 (CO 23:530) and Amos 7. 16 (CO 43:138f.). On Gen. 42.7, Calvin warns, '...the faithful may sometimes piously do things which cannot be drawn into a precedent. Of this, however, in considering the acts of the holy fathers, we must always beware; lest they should lead us away from the law which the Lord prescribes to all in common.' See also H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, pp. 120-23 and M. Woudstra 'Calvin Interprets what Moses Reports', pp. 170-73.

118. John 4.20 (CO 47:85).

119. Gen. 42.7 (CO 23:530). See also Gen. 15.8 (CO 23:215).

120. Jn. 4.20 (CO 47:85). Commenting on Gen. 15.8 (CO 23:215), Calvin writes, 'It is, nevertheless, to be observed, that there were some special impulses (speciales fuisse aliquos in sanctis motus), which it would not now be lawful to draw into a precedent.'

121. See R. H. Bainton's essay entitled, 'The Immoralities of the Patriarchs according to the Exegesis of

the Late Middle Ages and of the Reformation', HTR 23 (1930), pp. 44f.

122. CO 47:85.

123. *ibid.*, '... quisque spiritu donatus sit, quid ferat cuiusque vocatio, quid singulis conveniat, et quid singulis sit mandatum.'

124. CO 47:85-6. One reason why the fathers of the Old Testament cannot always be imitated, Calvin felt, was due to the fact that human nature in the time of the patriarchs was not so corrupt as it had become in his own day. Thus certain things may have been lawful then which are not lawful for us. See, for example, Gen. 29.4 (CO 23:400) and 42.7 (CO 23:530).

125. Calvin, in this passage, goes on to say, 'The Jews had their sacrifices; and therefore, that Christians also might not be without a show, the rite of sacrificing Christ was invented. As if the state of the Christian Church should be any worse if all the shadows should pass away that obscure the brightness of Christ! This madness later broke out more strongly and spread beyond all bounds.

Therefore, that *we might not fall into this error, we* must always heed the following rule: Incense, light, sacred vestments, altar, vessels and ceremonies of this kind were formerly pleasing to God; and the reason was that nothing nothing is more pleasing or acceptable to Him than obedience. But since the coming of Christ the order has been changed (*Nunc a Christi adventu mutata est ratio*). We must therefore regard what He enjoins us in the Gospel, so that we may not unthinkingly follow what the fathers observed under the Law. For what was then a sacred observing of the worship of God would now be a wicked sacrilege.

Where the Samaritans went wrong was that they did not take into account how much the manner of their own time differed from that of Jacob.'

F. W. Farrar in his History of Interpretation must be questioned. He speaks as though Calvin exercised no discernment or caution in his use of Old Testament figures as examples. On p. 350, he writes, 'It would have been a less harmful error if Calvin had allegorised the whole Mosaic law than that he should have accepted the imperfect morality of the days of ignorance as a rule for Christian men. But he stood far below Luther in making no distinction between different parts of the Bible.' See also p. 352 of the same work.

126. See notes 25 and 26.

127. Calvin's first published work was his Seneca on Clemency with a Commentary. This belonged to the humanist genre known as a 'mirror for Princes'. See the Introduction to Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia edited and translated by F. L. Battles and A. M. Hugo, pp. 104-109. See also Q. Breen 'John Calvin and the Rhetorical Tradition' CH 26 (1957), p. 7. The Humanist ideal of history was 'To learn from the "examples" of historical characters how to avoid vice and follow virtue.' For them, the object of history was ethical. F. A. Yates Renaissance and Reformation: The Italian Context, London, 1983, p. 89. Yates (p. 91) goes on to describe 'historical writing' as a 'humanist achievement'.

128. Institutes I.xiv.1 (OS III.153.10).

129. cf. R. A. Hasler 'The Influence of David and the Psalms upon the Life and Thought of J. Calvin', HQ 5 (1965), p. 7.

130. CO 31:21/22.

131. *ibid.*

132. This is one of the very rare auto-biographical

passages that are to be found in the writings of Calvin. He was very reticent to speak of himself. Only three such passages exist in the whole of his works - excluding, of course, his letters which were never intended for the public eye in the first place. It is no accident that the longest of these auto-biographical passages is found here in the Letter to the Reader of the Psalms commentary.

133. CO 31:27/28.

134. CO 31:19/20, cf. J. R. Walchenbach's Th.M. thesis, The Influence of David and the Psalms on the Life and Thought of J. Calvin, Pittsburgh, 1967, pp. 2f. See also T. H. L. Parker's Introduction to his translation of the first volume of Calvin's Commentary on the Book of Psalms, pp. 11f.

135. CO 31:33/34, the French version reads '... qu'en declarant les affections interieures tant de David que des autres, i'en parle comme des choses desquelles i'ay familiere cognoissance.'

136. CO 31:17/18.

137. *ibid.*

138. CO 31:19/20.

139. CO 31:19, the French version reads, '... principalement toutesfois il nous enseignera et daira a porter la croix ...' (CO 31:20).

140. CO 31:19/20.

141. CO 31:13/14.

142. CO 31:15/16.

143. Institutes IV.viii.5 (OS V.137.9ff.); Ps. 19.8 (CO 31:201).

144. Institutes , op. cit.

145. Institutes IV.i.24 (OS V.27.14), '... regeneratus erat ...'

146. 15th. Serm. Ps. 119 (CO 32:662), trans. mine. In Institutes III.ii.17 (OS IV.27.34-6), Calvin writes, 'Scripture sets forth no more illustrious or memorable example of faith than in David, especially if you look at the whole course of his life.'

147. 18th. Serm. Ps. 119 (CO 32:695f.).

148. CO 31:19/20f., 'For although I follow David at a great distance, and come far short of equalling him; or rather, although in aspiring slowly and with great difficulty to attain to the many virtues in which he excelled, I still feel myself tarnished with the contrary vices; yet if I have any things in common with him, I have no hesitation in comparing myself with him.'

149. Ps. 38 inscription, [v. 1 in Hebrew], (CO 31:386).

150. CO 31:15/16.

151. *ibid.*

152. *ibid.*

153. CO 55:381, 'Nam quum hic posterior formando externo homini, et tradendis politicae vitae praeceptis magis sit intentus: illum assidue de spirituali tum Dei cultu, tum conscientiae pace, Deique misericordia, et gratuita salutis promissione concionari, notum est.'

154. CO 31:17/18.

155. cf. D. F. Kelly 'The Political Ideas of John Calvin as Referred to in his Sermons on II Samuel', p. 11.

156. Major treatments have included, for example, E. Doumergue in vol. V of his monumental seven volume work Jean Calvin, and M-E. Chenevière's La pensée politique de Calvin, which is very helpful. Most recently Calvin's political ideas have received treatment by H. M. Höpfl in his book The Christian Polity of John Calvin.

157. Wendel Calvin, pp. 308-10. cf. Institutes IV.xi.3, where Calvin makes the distinction between Church and state very clear.

158. Wendel ibid. See also note 81.

159. cf. F. Wendel Calvin, pp. 64f.

160. CO 31:767f.

161. ibid. See also D. F. Kelly 'The Political Ideas etc.' Evangel 2 (1984), p. 12, for similar statements in Calvin's Sermons on 2 Samuel.

162. CO 31:768. See also Kelly, op. cit., p. 12.

163. CO 31:769 and see Kelly p. 12.

164. Dan. 5.21 (CO 40:718).

165. ibid.

166. Dan. 6.16 (CO 41:17).

167. CO 41:17.

168. CO 32:56.

169. *ibid.*

170. CO 32:56.

171. See O. Breen's book John Calvin: A Study in French Humanism, pp. 80-85, for an account of the purpose of Calvin's De Clementia.

172. CO 32:56.

173. The Vulgate has 'quoniam justitia firmatur solium'.

Chapter 2

1. That Calvin saw his two main theological opponents as the Roman Catholics and the Anabaptists is clear from what he says in his reply to Cardinal Sadolet's Letter (CTS p. 36). He writes, 'We are assailed by two sects, which seem to differ most widely from each other. For what similitude is there in appearance between the Pope and the Anabaptists?' It is interesting to note that the above passage occurs in a context of the right use (Hermeneutics) of Scripture. See, also J. P. Newport, who in his Ph.D. thesis, An Investigation of the Factors etc., p. 112, argues that it was the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics who were Calvin's chief opponents in the conflict over Scripture. See also J. L. M. Haire 'John Calvin as an Expositor', pp. 12-14. A. Ganoczy argues, in his essay 'Calvin als paulinischer Theologe', pp. 53-58, that Calvin developed his general biblical Hermeneutics against the Roman Catholics and the Spiritualizers. R. R. Sundquist in his Ph.D. thesis The Third Use of the Law in the Thought of John Calvin, pp. 35-49, argues that Calvin developed his concept of Law against the two extremes of legalism and antinomianism as represented by the Roman Catholics and the Anabaptists respectively.

2. For this cf. O. Chadwick The Reformation, p. 189. R. H. Bainton preferred to characterize the various groups who did not form part of the mainstream of the reformation as the 'Left Wing of the Reformation' cf. his article entitled 'The Left Wing of the Reformation' in JR 21 (1941), pp. 124-34 see also W. R. Estep The Anabaptist Story, p. 2 note 6. G. H. Williams prefers the term radical Reformation in his book entitled The Radical Reformation. This designation, however, is at present itself undergoing some criticism, cf. J. A. Oosterbaan, 'The Reformation of the Reformation: Fundamentals of Anabaptist Theology' in MQR 51 (1977), pp. 172ff. H. Balke in his book Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals has argued that Calvin did distinguish clearly

between the various Anabaptist groups (p. 213). However, Calvin, it must be recognized referred to groups of a very diverse nature as being Anabaptists and hence there is some confusion in his terminology.

3. John 4.20 (CO 47:85).

4. cf. S. W. Baron, 'John Calvin and the Jews', pp. 145f.

5. The Bible of the first Christians was the Old Testament since the New Testament had not yet been formed. The early Christians, in contrast to the Jews, interpreted the Old Testament as prophetic of Jesus Christ and argued that it should be read in the light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Moreover, both Jews and Christians had their own distinct exegetical principles and methods. cf. J. D. Wood The Interpretation of the Bible, pp. 5ff.

6. For example, see Luther's polemic with the Jews in H. Bornkamm Luther and the Old Testament, pp. 1-10. The emphasis of the Reformers on Scripture as the sole authority led to a new interest in the original languages in which Scripture was written. However, to learn Hebrew in the 16th. would probably involve recourse to a Jewish teacher and Jewish sources. Thus greater contact was brought about between Christian and Jewish scholars and also a greater awareness among Christians of Jewish exegesis and theology. See R. G. Hobbs Martin Bucer on Psalm 22, p. 146 and B. Hall's essay 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries' in The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, pp. 48-50.

7. Baron, op. cit., p. 141.

8. Baron, op. cit., pp. 155f.

9. Dan. 2.44 (CO 40:605).
10. It is found in CO 9:653-74.
11. Baron himself provides evidence for this, *op. cit.* pp. 143f.
12. This can be seen from Calvin's correspondence. See also H. P. Stäli's article, 'Das Alte Testament in den Briefen Calvins', pp. 123ff.
13. cf. B. Hall 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries' in The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, p. 43.
14. See H. Bornkamm Luther and the Old Testament and R. H. Bainton Here I stand: A Life of Martin Luther, (London, 1950), pp. 296ff., for Luther's attitude. Erasmus, too, had a rather negative attitude towards the Jews, see G. Breen John Calvin: A Study in French Humanism, p. 65.
15. cf. Isa. 60.6-7 (CO 37:358), 'Foolishly do the Jews, under the pretence of this prophecy, devour with their insatiable avarice all the riches of the earth ...' They conceive of the Messiah as one who will bring them great wealth, Serm. Dan. 12.1 (CO 42:113f.).
16. cf. Isa. 38.8 (CO 36:653) and 48.21 (CO 37:187f.).
17. Serm. Deut. 6.4-9 (CO 26:441).
18. *ibid.* (trans. mine).
19. Serm. Deut. 6.4-9 (CO 26:442); Serm. Deut. 6.1-4 (CO 26:427), 'The Jews boast proudly that they have the Law and worship the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But what is the truth of it? They are apostates, they renounced God's Law when they rejected Jesus Christ who is the soul of the Law;

it is in him alone that God the Father wishes to reveal himself, it is in him that he wishes to be worshipped.' (trans. mine) In his commentary on Ex. 19.6 (CO 24:196), Calvin says that, 'the Jews by their refusal of Christ had departed from the covenant'. For this reason they had renounced the right to be called God's holy people. See also Rom. 9.30 (CO 49:192).

20. Isa. 7.14, (CO 36:154).

21. Gen. 49.10 (CO 23:958).

22. CO 50:45.

23. CO 50:45.

24. Ezek. 1.1-2 (CO 40:25).

25. Ps. 22.16 (CO 31.228), T. H. L. Parker's translation.

26. eg. Dan. 9.24 (CO 41:167) and cf. T. H. L. Parker Supplementa Calviniana p. 17. However, M. H. Woudstra is mistaken when he states that Calvin 'never mentions any of them [ie Rabbinic commentators] by name.' (cf. his essay, 'Calvin Interprets What "Moses Reports": Observations on Calvin's Commentary on Exodus 1-19', CTJ 21 [1986] p. 168, n.56.)

27. For 'Rabbini' see, for example, Dan. 9.24 (CO 41:172) and Ps. 119.1 (CO 32:215).

28. For 'Hebraei' see, for example, Ps. 17.10 (CO 31:164) and Ps. 119.1 (CO 32:215). This latter reference shows that the two designations can occur in the same context.

29. For 'hebraei interpretes' see, for example, Hab. 3.13 (CO 43:582).

30. For example Isa. 38.1 (CO 36:646).

31. For example Isa. 11.5 (CO 36:241) and Ps. 78.25 (CO 31:730).

32. Isa. 40.31 (CO 37:30), Calvin refers to him as 'Zaadias'.

33. Dan. 2.44 (40:604), Calvin refers to him as 'Barbinel'.

34. Ps. 112.5 (CO 32:174), trans. mine. In his commentary on Gen. 3.3 (CO 23:57), however, Calvin criticizes Kimchi's exegesis. Woudstra, 'Calvin Interprets' etc., p. 168, n. 56, states that Calvin was also 'acquainted' with Ibn Ezra and Rashi. However, he provides no evidence for this statement and I myself have been unable to find any.

35. cf. F. Edwards's Ph.D. thesis The Relation Between Biblical Hermeneutics and Dogmatic Theology, pp. 152ff. H-J. Kraus, however, seems to be of the opposite opinion, but provides no evidence ('Calvins exegetische Prinzipien' pp. 336f., ET pp. 14f.).

36. cf. the thesis by N. N. Paluku Rubinga Calvin commentateur du prophète Isaïe etc. pp. 40f. Woudstra, op. cit., thinks that Calvin may have known Rabbinic interpretations through Nicholas of Lyra whose Postillen he would almost certainly have (though, Calvin refers to Lyra only once, in his lecture on Dan. 9.25, CO 41:175). On the other hand, H-J. Kraus, op. cit., suggests a number of other sources including; Pellicanus, Bibliander, Capito, Musculus and Vermigli.

37. See the Introduction to F. L. Battles and A. M. Hugo Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia pp. 91-96.

38. In his commentary on Dan. 2.44 (CO 40:604ff.), he

states, 'I shall now relate what our brother Anthony [=Antonius Cevallerius] has suggested to me from a certain Rabbi Barbinel ...'

39. Calvin frequently bemoans this fact with reference to his exegetical work. cf. T. H. L. Parker 'Calvin the Biblical Expositor' in ed. G. Duffield Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology No. 1, p. 184.

40. With respect to the second point, it has been argued that, in spite of the fact that the great number of Calvin's Rabbinic references can be found in other authors who wrote in Latin, there is yet, even in these cases, some evidence to suggest a certain amount of independence in his quotations and that he consulted the sources for himself. N. N. Paluku Rubinga, Calvin commentateur du prophète Isaïe, pp. 40f.

41. Commenting, for example, on Psalm 12.9 he refers to 'the most learned Grammarians (doctissimi grammatici)' (CO 31:131). For more references see pp. 196f. (chapter 5).

42. For example see his comments on Deut. 12.6 (CO 24:392) and Numb. 30.9ff. (CO 24:574). The word translated 'skilled' here is the Latin word 'periti' which can also mean 'expert' or 'trained'. Such statements would tend to indicate that Calvin did not place himself within this category. See further notes 63 and 65 of chapter 5.

43. cf. Isa. 13.21 (CO 36:269f). Commenting on Lev. 13.58, Calvin declares that '... it is not my purpose to perform the office of the grammarian.' (CO 24:322)

44. cf. B. Hall op. cit. pp. 43ff.

45. Trans. mine, CO 40:658. For examples of places where Calvin quotes Jewish authors favourably for resolving

grammatical difficulties etc. see Ps. 112.5 (32:174); Jer. 19.1-3 (CO 38:319); Zech. 6.6-7 (CO 44:208) and Mal. 2.3 (CO 44:430).

46. See, for example, Pss. 4.3 (CO 31:59); 5.2 (CO 31:65); 15.4 (CO 31:147) and 17.10 (CO 31:164).

47. For example, Ex. 33.1 (CO 25:101).

48. cf. Amos 5.26 (CO 43:100), 'fabulati sunt suo more Iudeai' and Isa. 38.8 (CO 36:652f.).

49. Obad. v.19 (CO 43:198).

50. Amos 2.1-3 (CO 43:17f.) cf. for other refs. Baron, op. cit. p. 151, n. 19.

51. Dan. 2.44,45 (CO 40:63).

52. Gen. 16.3 (CO 23:230f.).

53. Josh. 2.1 (CO 25:439).

54. The phrase comes from the 17th. Century work entitled A Commentary or Exposition Upon all the Books of the New Testament by the Puritan J. Trapp, but it forms a good summary of Calvin's thought. Commenting on the word 'promised' in Rom. 1.2, Trapp remarks, 'Fore-showed and foreshadowed in the types of the ceremonial law which was their Gospel, it was Christ in figure ...'

55. Serm. Deut. 6.1-4 (CO 26:427) and 6.4-9 (CO 26:442).

56. Of the Jews Calvin says, 'They were a people hard to rule.' Serm. Deut. 15.1-6 (CO 27:313).

57. Isa. 65.1 (CO 37:417).

58. Dan. 2.44 (CO 40:605).

59. On Rom. 11.28 (CO 49:228), Calvin says of the Jews that, 'Their chief crime was unbelief.'

60. Dan. 2.39 (CO 40:598).

61. CO 40:603.

62. Baron, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

63. CO 36:154.

64. Jer. 23.5-6 (CO 38:407).

65. Hence he chides Augustine '... for he entertained a suspicion of the Jews,- that as they were the most invertebrate enemies of the faith, they would have tried to falsify the Law and the Prophets.' Jonah 4.6-7 (CO 43:273).

66. CO 31:228f.

67. Baron goes too far when he states that 'Calvin believed that Jewish scribes, even if supported by all extant Hebrew texts, could not be trusted, particularly wherever an original reading might have had Christological implications.' (*op. cit.* p.148) This is true in the case of Ps. 22.16 (v. 17 in Hebrew), which Baron cites as proof for his statement. But here Calvin believes that he has textual evidence for a corruption having taken place, and he appeals to the LXX rendering. Also he feels that the text as it stands makes little sense, is 'a defective form of expression', and does not fit with the context. On the contrary Calvin has a very high regard for the accuracy of Jewish Scribes. See, for example, his comments on Jonah 4.6-7 (CO 43:273), where he chides Augustine because he '... entertained a suspicion of the Jews, that as they were the most invertebrate enemies of the faith, they would have tried to falsify the Law and the

Prophets.'

68. Inst. I.viii.10 (OS III.79.19f.), 'quos merito Ecclesiae Christianae librarios Augustinus ideo appellat quia nobis subministrarunt lectionem cuius ipsi usum non habent.'

69. See, for example, Ex. 24.29 (CO 25:118); Ezek. 16.61 (CO 40:395); Rom. 10.4 (CO 49:196) and 2 Cor. 3.16 (CO 50:45-46).

70. 'Anabaptism' was one of the four main charges brought against Servetus during his trial. cf. G. H. Williams *op. cit.* p. 609. When sentence was passed on him on the 27 Oct. Servetus was condemned on two counts: anti-Trinitarianism and anti-Paedobaptism, cf. Bainton Hunted Heretic, p. 207f. and compare M-E. Chenevière La pensée politique de Calvin, p. 290. However, Servetus was by no means a typical Anabaptist, his teachings differed from theirs not only in his doctrine of the Trinity, but in other important respects (for details see Bainton *op. cit.* pp. 137-41). See note 3 above. W. R. Estep The Anabaptist Story pp. 15f. distinguishes three major strands in the so called 'Radical Reformation', Anabaptists, Inspirationists and Rationalists. The major difference between them being their attitude to authority. For the Anabaptists the authority was the New Testament. For the Inspirationists it was the immediate inner illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Rationalists placed primary emphasis on reason in the interpretation of Scripture and religious truth. Servetus is placed in the latter category.

71. The charge of blasphemy constantly reoccurs during the course of the trial cf. Bainton *op. cit.* pp. 194f., 203f., 207f. In the sentence pronounced on Servetus the word blasphemy occurs five times in the first paragraph (CO 8:829), see the English translation in Bainton p. 207ff. cf. P. E. Hughes The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva, pp. 18f. and 223ff.

72. R. Willis in his book Servetus and Calvin, pp. 82f., states that Calvin and Servetus had actually met in Paris during 1532-4. cf. Bainton op. cit. p. 81 and G. H. Williams op. cit. p. 608. Calvin states that he had arranged to meet Servetus in Paris, but that the latter had failed to turn up (CO 8:460, 826).

73. Servetus wrote some thirty letters to Calvin, some of which are almost short treatises. Some of these letters were later published so as to furnish evidence against Servetus, though Calvin was reluctant for this to happen and only gave way after great pressure from his friend William de Trie. cf. G. H. Williams op. cit. p. 607.

74. In a letter sent by Calvin to Viret dated Sept. 1548, cf. J. Bonnet (trans. D. Constable) Calvin's Letters Vol. II, p. 33 note 2. The same thing is expressed during the trial when it is said, '... he was known to be altogether beyond all hope of correction.' cf. F. E. Hughes op. cit. p. 223. In the early days of their association Calvin had sought to win Servetus over to the evangelical faith (CO 8:460, 826). Even after the sentence was pronounced Calvin appealed to Servetus to recant and promised that he would 'do his best to reconcile him to all good servants of God' (Bainton pp. 209f.), see also the evidence collected by Hughes op. cit. p. 19.

75. CO 12:283.

76. G. H. Williams op. cit. p. 606.

77. The Articles can be found in CO 8:727-31, an English translation is found in H. J. Hillerbrand, The Reformation: A Narrative History, pp. 285ff.

78. cf. Chenevière, op. cit., pp. 289f.

79. p. 579.

80. The letter can be found in CO 8:860. Servetus had been the house guest of Decolampadius during his stay in Basel during the year 1530, Bainton p. 41.

81. CO 8:497, cf. Newman op. cit. p. 582.

82. ET from Hughes op. cit. p. 283f. The 'Lyon Bibles' refers to the first edition of the Bible edited by Servetus and printed in Lyon in 1542. cf. G. H. Williams op. cit. p. 605.

83. CO 8:745 (trans. mine). Again, this is a reference to the Lyon Bible, which had marginal references and comments many of which - though not all - Servetus was responsible for. Servetus interpreted the 'virgin' in Isa. 7.14 as a reference to the wife of Hezekiah, cf. Bainton pp. 99f.

84. L. I. Newman op. cit. p. 583.

85. *ibid.*, note 205.

86. cf. CO 8:501. Various heretical statements were gathered out of Servetus's writings and collected together as Sententiae vel propositiones excerptae ex libris Michaelis Serveti they were later published as part of the Defensio doctrinae de trinitate.

87. CO 8:566. Quoted in Newman op. cit. p. 584.

88. cf. G. H. Williams op. cit. pp. 609-12 for an account of Servetus's anti-Trinitarianism.

89. J. Friedman, 'Michael Servetus: the Case for a Jewish Christianity', pp. 91f. Bainton compares his doctrine of the Trinity with that of the 3rd. Century heretic Paul of Samosata, op. cit., p. 45. In so doing he is echoing Melanchthon who wrote 'Servetus, a Spaniard, renewed the

heresy of Paul of Samosata, but in a most confused fashion.' (Melanchthonis Opera 21:262).

90. Friedman op. cit. pp. 93ff.

91. Friedman op. cit. pp. 92f. See also Bainton op. cit. pp. 13ff.

92. Quoted in Friedman op. cit. p. 93.

93. Tr. Err. 56b. Servetus is referring to Kimchi's commentary on Ps. 2. Quoted in Friedman's essay 'Servetus and the Psalms: the Exegesis of Heresy', p. 173.

94. Friedman 'Jewish Christianity', p. 93; cf. also his essay 'Michael Servetus: Exegete of Divine History', pp. 466f.

95. 'Exegete of Divine History', p. 461.

96. ibid.

97. Friedman gives a very good account of Servetus's exegetical method in his essay 'Servetus and the Psalms', pp. 167ff.

98. Bainton op. cit. p. 31, 46. See also Friedman 'Exegete of Divine History', pp. 461f.

99. This is spelled out by Friedman op. cit. pp. 463ff. See also 'Servetus and the Psalms', pp. 169f.

100. Quoted in Friedman 'Servetus and the Psalms', p. 170.

101. Restitutio 1f. 318, quoted in Friedman 'Exegete of Divine History', p. 465.

102. Biblia Sacra Isa. 7.14; 19.20; Jer. 23.5, quoted in

Friedman op. cit. p. 465f.

103. Friedman op. cit.

104. Heb. 1.5.

105. Biblia Sacra Ps. 2.7, quoted in Friedman op. cit.

106. Biblia Sacra Ps. 22.17, quoted in Friedman op. cit.

107. CD 8:496f. The translation is Friedman's, 'Case for a Jewish Christianity', p. 98. See also R. H. Bainton op. cit. p. 185.

108. CD 8:620. Friedman remarks, 'It is difficult, however, to exonerate Servetus from the charge of Judaizing since his use of Jewish thought and opinion is fundamental to his Christian belief.' ('Case for Jewish Christianity', p. 110.)

109. This is brought out very clearly in Calvin's comments during a sermon on Deut. 30.6-10 (CD 28:564) where he attributes many of Servetus's errors to his separating the Law from the Gospel.

110. This will be brought out in the next chapter, but see Serm. Deut. 11.8-15 (CD 27:99f.). See also Serm. Job 4.12-19 (CD 33:204) and I Jn. 2.22 (CD 55:325), '... because God has given Himself to us to be enjoyed wholly in Christ, He is elsewhere sought for in vain. Or, if anyone wants it clearer, since all the fulness of divinity dwells in Christ, there is no God apart from Him. From this it follows that Jews, Turks and such like have a mere idol in place of God.'

111. Serm. Deut. 11. 8-15 (CD 27:99), trans. mine.

112. *ibid.*

113. CO 27:99f., trans. mine.

114. CO 28:564.

115. CO 28:564.

116. CO 28:565.

117. For the Anabaptist view of Scripture see J. C. Wenger's essay The Biblicism of the Anabaptists in G. F. Hershberger ed. The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, p. 176 deals with their view of the Old Testament. There are several good accounts of Anabaptist Hermeneutics. See for example, W. Klassen, Covenant and Community and his essay entitled 'Anabaptist Hermeneutics' which can be found in MQR 40 (1966), pp. 83-111. H. Balke's book Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals contains a chapter on Anabaptist Hermeneutics (chap. 12). See also Williams Radical Reformation pp. 828ff.

118. Klassen Covenant and Community pp. 104f., Wenger Biblicism, p. 176, Balke op. cit. pp. 309f. and Williams op. cit. pp. 832ff.

119. For example Sebastian Franck. See R. M. Jones, Spiritual Reformers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century, pp. 46-63, for an account of Franck's views. Even more radical were John B nderlin and Christian Entfelder; R. M. Jones, pp. 39ff.

120. Balke pp. 313ff. See also D. Schellong Das evangelische Gesetz in der Auslegung Calvins, p. 28ff. Calvin picks this theme up in his Briefve instruction contre la secte des Anabaptistes, (CO 7:95f.)

121. Klassen, Covenant and Community, pp. 123, 128, 131. See also Balke pp. 309f.

122. Institutes II.x.1, (OS III.403.20f.).

123. See for example J. C. Wenger, *The Theology of Pilgram Marpeck* in MQR 12, pp. 107f. See also Klassen, 'Anabaptist Hermeneutics', pp. 105ff., and Covenant and Community, pp. 118f.

124. Serm. Job. 4.12-19 (CO 33:204) and Hughes op. cit. p. 283. This would also seem to be the significance of the statement made in Institutes II.ix.3 (OS III.400.23ff.).

125. cf. H. Bender, *Pilgram Marpeck, Anabaptist Theologian and Civil Engineer*, in MQR 38 (1964), p. 261. Marpeck has received quite a lot of attention from students of the Anabaptist movement. Unfortunately most of these studies are not very widely available being found in the Mennonite Quarterly Review. In addition to the works already cited, Volume 12 part 3 of the MQR was wholly given over to Marpeck. Klassen's book Covenant and Community, already cited, is, I understand, a revision of his doctoral dissertation entitled The Hermeneutics of Pilgram Marpeck, (Princeton Theological Seminary, 1960). Many of Marpeck's writings have been translated into English by W. Klassen and W. Klaassen under the title of The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck. Copies of the MQR can be obtained in this country from The London Mennonite Fellowship, 14 Shepherds Hill, Highgate, London N6 5AQ, who also can provide photocopies of articles.

126. Writings, pp. 224f.

127. *ibid.*

128. Klassen, Covenant and Community, p. 126 and Balke p. 100. The Old Testament Patriarchs, according to Marpeck, realized some of the benefits of salvation, but only the temporal ones.

129. Writings, p. 556. cf. Klassen 'Anabaptist Hermeneutics', p. 105.

130. Balke p. 26. Balke finds plenty of evidence for this in the first, 1536, edition of the Institutes itself, cf. his comments on p. 46.

131. See Colladon's Vie de Calvin, CO 21:57 and the editorial comments in CO 5:xxxvff. See also Williams Radical Reformation, pp. 581ff.

132. Balke, pp. 78, 94f. Williams op. cit. p. 580.

133. See the chart on p. 15 of Battles's Analysis, showing the additions of material in the five major Latin editions of the Institutes. See also Balke pp. 99f.

134. Williams *ibid.*

135. Institutes II.x.1 (OS III.403.19ff.).

136. Institutes II.x.1, (OS III.403.20,35).

137. Balke p. 100.

138. Institutes II.x.3 (OS III.404ff.).

139. Institutes II.x.4 (OS III.405.35ff.).

140. OS III.405.31ff.

141. Institutes II.x.23 (OS III.422.22ff.).

142. Isa. 60.9 (CO 37:360).

143. Ex. 28.42f. (CO 24:435f.).

144. Ex. 20.4 (CO 24:376).
145. CO 24:426.
146. CO 24:435.
147. CO 24:436.
148. Isa. 28.7 (CO 36:466); Ex. 28.42,43 (CO 24:435f.).
149. Numb. 18.20 (CO 24:480).
150. Mal. 1.11 (CO 44:421).
151. Serm. Deut. 16. 1-4 (CO 27:370).
152. Ex. 40.12 (CO 25:125).
153. CO 27:370, trans. mine.
154. For example in his commentary on Lev. 27.14 (24:570).
155. Gal. 3.24 (CO 50:220f.); Ezek. 11.19, 20 (CO 40:249f.).
156. See, for example, Jn. 1.1 (CO 47:3), 'And this is the eternal Son who, infinitely before the foundation of the world, was concealed in God (if I may put it like that), and who, after being obscurely outlined to the patriarchs under the Law for many succeeding years (longis annorum successionibus obscure patribus sub lege adumbrata), was at length more fully manifest in the flesh.'
157. Zech. 2.10 (CO 44:163), 'And it ought further to be carefully borne in mind, that the Prophet does here also make a distinction between the ancient types of the law and the reality, which was at length exhibited in Christ; for there is no need now of shadows, when we enjoy the reality, and

possess the completion of all those things which God only shadowed forth under the law.' See also Mal. 4.2 (CO 44:490).

158. Ex. 26 (CO 24:416), 'Besides, it is preposterous, as I have said, forcibly to transfer these rudiments, which God delivered only to his ancient people, to the fulness of time (rudimenta quae nonnisi veteri populo Deus tradidit, ad temporum plenitudinem trahere), when the Church has grown up and has passed out of its childhood.'

159. Mal. 1.11 (CO 44:421).

160. cf. Parker Old Testament, pp. 83-9.

161. Isa. 54.2 (CO 37:270), '... the Church grew from infancy to manhood, till the Gospel was preached (velut a pueritia deinceps adolevit, donec evangelium promulgatum est). This was the actual youth of the Church; and next follows the age of manhood (Haec enim vera ecclesiae adolescentia fuit. Sequitur deinde virilis aetas), down to Christ's last coming, when all things shall be accomplished.

162. CO 27:393-4 (trans. mine).

163. CO 24:415 see also Serm. Deut. 16.9-12 (CO 27:394f.).

164. Ex. 40.12 (CO 25:125), trans. mine.

165. Ps. 33.2 (CO 31:325), see also Ps. 81.3 (CO 31:760).

166. CO 24:441.

Chapter 3

1. Chap. 7 of the 1539 Latin edition, which was entitled, *De similitudine ac differentia veteris et novi testamenti*. In the 1543 edition this became chapter 11 and in the final Latin edition of 1559 this material was expanded to three chapters and occupied chapters 9-11 of book two. The chart which can be found on p. 15 of Battles's Analysis shows the interrelationship between the five chief Latin editions very clearly. That Calvin developed this material - and thus his thinking on the relationship between the two Testaments with which these chapters deal - in conscious opposition to the radicals is clear from the opening section of II.x. Calvin writes there,

Indeed, that wonderful rascal Servetus and certain madmen of the Anabaptist sect, who regard the Israelites as nothing but a herd of swine, make necessary what would in any case have been profitable for us. (II.x.1)

According to O.S III.403.34 the reference to Servetus is not found in any of the editions from 1539 to 1554.

An account of Calvin's interaction with the Anabaptists and other radical groups is to be found in H. Balke Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals, Chapter 4. Balke (p.97ff.) makes the point that Chap. 7 of the 1539 Institutes was a polemic against the radicals' position on the Old Testament.

2. II.x.4, (O.S III.403.35ff.).

3. Rom. 8.15, CO 49:148f. '... in lege foedus gratiae continetur ...' See also Calvin's commentaries on Ps. 111.9 (CO 32:170). Jer. 31.33 (CO 38:692), God's promise to be 'their God' '... contains within it every part of our salvation. Now, today, the same thing is looked at in the Gospel.' [Trans. mine] (... haec promissio sub se continet

omnes partes salutis nostrae. Iam hodie idem etiam spectat in evangelio). See also Jer. 33.15 (CO 39:64) and E. Fuchs 'L'importance de l'Ancien Testament pour l'ethique chrétienne selon Calvin', p. 15.

4. Calvin uses the terms 'Law' and 'Gospel' in a number of different ways. He most often employs them in a general sense to designate the Old and the New Testaments respectively. However, he uses them sometimes in a more specific or restricted sense to designate the distinctive content of each Testament. Here the terms are used to characterize that which makes the two Testaments differ from one another. This will become clearer as we proceed.

5. CO 31:201, (trans. mine). cf. W. Krusche Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin, p. 191 and H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, p. 33. Wolf writes, 'Es ist klar, Gesetz und Evangelium meinen in diesem Sinn nichts grundsätzlich Verschiedenes, sie meinen den einen barmherzigen Gott. ... Nach diesen speziellen Definitionen von Gesetz und Evangelium wird deutlich: Es sind nicht konträre Begriffe, sie sind geradezu auswechselbar.'

6. CO 49:59, 'Hoc addit ne videantur in dispensatione gratuita iustitiae cum lege pugnare evangelium.... Quod si lex gratuita iustitiae testimonium reddit: apparet non ideo traditum esse, ut homines doceret sibi per opera iustitiam comparare.'

7. John Argumentum (CO 47:vii) In a congregation on Jn. 1.1 Calvin emphasizes that although it is possible and indeed customary to use the word 'gospel' with reference to the promises of mercy contained in the Old Testament, yet this is an improper usage. 'Holy Scripture does not speak thus of itself.' Strictly speaking, 'The word gospel indicates that God by sending his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, shows himself to be the father of the whole world.' (CO 47:465)

8. II.ix.2, (OS III.399.26-36) 'Porro Evangelium accipio pro clara mysterii christi manifestatione ... verum per excellentiam aptari dico ad promulgationem exhibitae in Christo gratiae ...'

9. II.x.3, (OS III.405.29f) '... quum sub eo dicit Evangelii promissiones contineri.'

10. II.ix.2, (OS III.399.27ff.).

11. op. cit. (OS III.399.32ff.), 'Unde sequitur, vocem Evangelii large sumendo, sub ea comprehendi quae olim testimonia Deus misericordiae suae paternique favoris Patribus dedit ...' Cf. J. P. Pin's essay, 'La promesse et l'espérance selon Jean Calvin', pp. 16f. and E. Grin 'L'unité des deux Testaments selon Calvin', p. 177.

12. More will be said about Calvin's doctrine of the Old Testament promises later. Much more could be said than there is room for in the present study. Suffice it to say, for now, that Calvin stringently maintained that the Old Testament promises were spiritual in nature. J. P. Pin, op. cit., deals with Calvin's doctrine of the promises.

13. CD 47:vii. On Jer. 31.12 (CD 38:661), Calvin writes, 'The holy fathers had the same hope as we now receive from the Gospel, just as the same Christ was common to them.' (... eadem spes etiam erat quam hodie concipimus ex evangelio, sicuti illis communis idem fuit Christus.) cf. Serm. Dt. 11.8-15 (CD 27:99f.); Jer. 31.33 (CD 38:692) and 1 Cor. 10.11, (CD 49:460), 'For those people foreshadowed the Christian Church in such a way that they were at the same time a genuine Church. Their circumstances so delineated ours that the essential features of a Church were nonetheless already present in those days. The promises given to it adumbrated the Gospel in such a way that it was included in them. ... To sum up, those who made a proper use of the word (doctrina)

and sacraments (signis) in those days were endowed with the same Spirit of faith as we are.

14. Rom.10.8 (CO 49:201), 'Testatur namque in evangelii ministerio sibi cum mose optimam esse consensionem: quandoquidem ille quoque non alibi quam in gratuita promissione divinae gratiae felicitatem nostram locaverit.' Commenting on Jer. 31.34 (CO 38:697f) Calvin says, '... the Law was not destitute of those benefits which we at this day receive under the Gospel, but these benefits were then, as it were, adventitious, and they do not properly belong to the Law (Latin, sed illa beneficia fuisse tunc quasi adventitia, et proprie non quadrare legi); for if the Law were separated from the Gospel, it would be the same as if one was to separate Moses from Christ. If Moses be regarded, not as opposed to Christ, he was the herald and witness of God's paternal kindness towards his people; his doctrine also contained promises of a free salvation, and opened to the faithful the door of access to God. ... God promised salvation to his ancient people, and also regenerated his chosen, and illuminated them by his Spirit. ...whatever God at that time conferred, was, as it were, adventitious, for all these benefits were dependent on Christ and the promulgation of the Gospel.' See also Institutes II.xvi.9; Dt.30.9 (CO 25:56-7).

15. CO 49:273.

16. II.x.4, (OS III.403.19ff.).

17. Serm. Dt. 11.8-15, (CO 27:99), (translation mine). See also Institutes II.xvi.9.

18. *ibid.* See also Calvin on Rom.15.8 (CO 49:273). Calvin conceived of the earthly promises, such as the land, as tokens and types of the spiritual promise of salvation in Christ. There is a strong connection with his doctrine of

the sacraments here. The earthly promises given to believers under the Old Testament functioned in a similar way to sacraments today.

19. See, among others, Doumergue, Jean Calvin: Les hommes et les choses de son temps, vol. IV pp. 85ff. for a discussion of Calvin's theological method. This is not to say that the Institutes is not systematic in another sense. Battles most aptly describes it as, 'Spiritual biography in systematic form.' Analysis p. 14.

20. cf. Forstmann, Word and Spirit, p. 41. Forstmann describes Calvin's doctrine of faith as 'the axis around which the entire work revolves' and 'the high point of the Institutes'.

21. *ibid.*

22. OS IV.16.30-5.

23. CO 49:78.

24. III.ii.7 (OS IV.15.19ff.).

25. *ibid.*

26. cf. III.ii.13-15, 'We must understand that the meaning of the word "faith" is ambiguous. Often faith means only sound doctrine of godliness ...' (OS IV.23.31f.).

27. III.ii.29, (OS IV.39.25ff.), see the whole section.

28. III.ii.7, (OS IV.15.24-8).

29. *ibid.*, God must offer his grace and mercy to us, this he does in the promises.

30. *ibid.*

31. III.ii.29, (OS IV.39.1-9).

32. III.ii.30, (OS IV.40.8f.),

33. *ibid.* (OS IV.40.9ff.).

34. Hence, we frequently find Calvin, in his Old Testament Commentaries and particularly in his Sermons, speaking of the Old Testament promises as the object of his reader's/hearer's faith and exhorting them to receive and trust in them. See, for example, Jer 32.39 (CO 39:39); Serm. Dt. 28.1-2 (CO 28:346), '... all the promises contained in holy Scripture are as many testimonies of God's fatherly love ... by means of them the law becomes sweeter to us.' (Trans. mine); Serm. Gen. 26.6-10, (CO 58:111), '... today we inherit all the promises which were given them [i.e. the Old Testament Fathers].' (trans. mine); Serm. Gen. 26.11-21, (CO 58:117); 21st Serm. on Ps. 119 (CO 32:735f). In his weekday sermons, the Old Testament promises became the spiritual food of those Genevese Christians who were hungry enough to arise at dawn every morning and, before commencing their daily labours, sit under Calvin's pulpit ministry.

35. Hence commenting on Isa. 40.1, (CO 37:4) Calvin can speak of the Gospel as beginning before Christ's incarnation. 'These words ... include the doctrine of the gospel, in which chiefly lies the power of "comforting". ... Nor did it begin at the time when Christ appeared in the world, but long before, since the time when God's favour was clearly revealed.'; Gen. Argumentum (CO 23:11-12), 'Moses ... then adds the history of man's renewal, where Christ, with the blessing of redemption, shines forth.... this is the foundation of our salvation, this is the origin of the Church, that we have been plucked out of deep darkness and have obtained a new life by the pure grace of God; that the fathers (just as it was offered them by God through the

Word) by faith participated in this life ; this Word, moreover, was founded in Christ (verbum porro hoc in Christo fundatum); that, indeed, all the godly who lived afterwards were nourished by that same promise of salvation, by which Adam was raised up in the beginning. Therefore, that the perpetual succession of the Church flowed from this fountain, that the holy fathers, one after another, by faith embraced the promise offered them and were added to the family of God, that they may have a common life in Christ (ut communem in Christo vitam haberent).'; Ps. 19.8 (CO 31:201); Ps. 119.103 (CO 32:258), 'The prophet ... comprehends the whole doctrine of the Law, the chief part of which is the free covenant of salvation.'; Ezek. 16.61 (CO 40:395f.) 'Since, therefore, God at this day exhibits to us nothing in his only-begotten Son but what he had formerly promised in the law, it follows that his covenant is set up again, and so perpetually established ...'; Rom. 10.6 (CO 49:198), 'Moses, therefore, does not mean the law alone but the whole doctrine of God in general, which includes the Gospel (Ergo non legem solam designat, sed totam in genere Dei doctrinam, quae evangelium sub se comprehendit).'; Institutes II.x.1 (OS III.403.30), '... they [the patriarchs] participated in the same inheritance and hoped for a common salvation with us by the grace of the same Mediator.' See also 1 Cor. 10.11 (CO 49:460).

36. Throughout his writings, when speaking of the Old Testament in general, he refers to it as 'the law'. Speaking more specifically, he divides the Old Testament into 'the law' and 'the prophets', in the latter category he includes, what we refer to as, the poetic-wisdom writings or the hagiographa. Again when referring to the New Testament in general he calls it the 'Gospel'. W. Krusche, Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin, points out that Calvin uses the terms 'Law' and 'Gospel' in different and distinct senses. As already indicated 'Lex' can refer to the Old Testament as a whole, but in addition 'Lex', as we shall see, can refer to a form of teaching found throughout

Scripture. The same is true of 'Evangelium'. cf. pp. 190f and 200f.

37. This is clear from the title of Book II. of the Institutes, 'The knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, first disclosed to the fathers under the Law, and then to us in the Gospel.' Commenting on Jn. 5.38 (CO 47:124), Calvin writes, 'Moses' only intention was to call men straight to Christ.' cf. Jn. 5.46, (CO 47:129) and Jn. 10.8, (CO 47:238f.). In Sermon on Deut. 3.11-14 (CO 28:574), Calvin speaks of 'the Gospel in which the law is contained (auquel la loy est contenu).' For Calvin the law, as a rule of life, is not superseded by the Gospel, the law is 'a perfect rule of righteousness' and as such it is 'eternal'. It is the curse of the (moral) law only that Christ has abolished. cf. Gal. 5.23 (CO 50:256); Rom. 6.14-15 (CO 49:113f.); Mt. 5.17 (CO 45:171) etc. God employs two different forms of teaching (formae docendi), that is, Law and Gospel, each of these is to be found throughout Scripture. cf. H.W. Rossouw, 'Calvin's Hermeneutics of Holy Scripture', in Calvinus Reformer, pp.158f., 'As a forma docendi the word lex referred for Calvin to the instruction right through Scripture, of what the righteousness of God demands of mankind. ... Once again, the word evangelium in this sense, did not indicate for Calvin a part of Scripture, but rather its continuous assurance of God's saving grace.' See also Krusche, op.cit. pp. 190f.

38. Mal. 4.2 (CO 44:490), '... God the Father has given a much clearer light in the person of Christ than formerly by the law, and by the appendages of the law. And for this reason also is Christ called the light of the world; not that the fathers wandered as the blind in darkness, but that they were content with the dawn only, or with the moon and stars. We indeed know how obscure was the doctrine of the law, so that it may truly be said to be shadowy.' See also Gen. 48.16 (CO 23:585); Gen. 50.2 (CO 23:613); Serm. Deut. 14. 1-20 (27:282); Serm. Deut. 4.1-2, (CO 26:110) 'For in comparison with us the Jews had a very slender teaching (... une doctrine bien maigre). '

39. Parker, Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, p. 46, referring to this passage in the Institutes, writes, 'It is not simply that the Gospel is manifestation, but that it is the clear manifestation of what in the Old Testament had been the *mystery of Christ*.' Calvin distinguishes between an 'occulta et manifesta revelatio' (Heb. 2.1 [CO 55:21]). In the Old Testament the 'revelatio Christi' was 'occulta', whereas in the New Testament it is 'manifesta'. cf. W. Krusche Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin, p. 192.

40. CO 49:197.

41. *ibid.*

42. cf. note 5. (CO 31:201). W. Krusche Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin, p. 191ff., also notices Calvin's distinction. He writes, p. 191, 'Der terminus technicus für das Gesetz in diesem weitgespannten Sinne ist der Begriff der tota lex, mit dem sachlich die Thora des alttestamentlichen Kanons bezeichnet ist (die tota doctrina Mosis). Für ihn ist dies charakteristisch, dass er Verheissungen des Heils einschliesst.'

43. CO 40:396., 'Ergo si lex in se respicitur, illic non

reperietur quod promittitur in novo foedere, Peccatorum tuorum non recordabor.'

44. *ibid.* (CO 40:396), 'Non potuit igitur legi adscribi, quod Deus regenuit tunc suos electos, quia spiritus regenerationis a Christo erat, ideoque ab evangelio et novo foedere.' cf. the whole passage (CO 40:394ff.). Likewise, Calvin is careful to make a similar distinction when commenting on Jn. 1.16, (CO 47:17), 'From the beginning of the world all the Patriarchs drew whatever gifts they had from Christ. For although the Law was given by Moses it was not from him that they obtained grace.' And on v. 17 of the same chapter, he remarks that it is, '... a great stumbling block' to expect from the Law what can only be obtained through Christ. (CO 47:18)

45. *ibid.* 'adventitium beneficium'. cf. Jer. 31.34, (CO 38:697f.), where the same phrase is used, '... the law was not destitute of those benefits which we at this day receive under the Gospel, but these benefits were then, as it were, adventitious, and they do not properly belong to the Law; for if the Law were separated from the Gospel, it would be the same as if one was to separate Moses from Christ.' In Jer. 31.33, (CO 38:690), a most interesting passage, the same ideas are present, though here he speaks of a 'transferral' of benefits to the Law which properly belong to the Gospel. 'The fathers who were formerly regenerated, obtained this favour through Christ (*id fuisse adeptos Christi gratia*), so that, we may say, it was transferred to them from another source (*illud fuisse quasi translaticium*). The power to penetrate into the heart was not inherent in the Law, but was a benefit transferred to the Law from the Gospel (*Non igitur residebat in lege haec virtus, ut animos penetraret, sed fuit translatum bonum ab evangelio ad ipsam legem*).'

46. Jer. 33.15, (CO 39:64f), 'Adoption, therefore, was the foundation of the covenant, then Christ himself was the earnest and pledge both of the covenant and of gratuitous

adoption.' (translation mine); Institutes II.vii.2. See also H.W. Rossouw, op. cit., pp. 158ff., who writes, 'However, as a forma docendi the Law is not to be viewed in isolation as something standing on its own. The Law which is taught by Scripture is always the Law of God's covenant of grace. It therefore never functions as a nuda lex. On the contrary, the Law is clothed with the gratuita adoptionis foedus. It is communicated to us within the context of God's gratuitous will for our salvation. The Law refers intrinsically to, and functions in conjunction with the evangelium as the second mode of scriptural teaching.'

47. cf. Institutes II.vii.2 (OS III.329.4f.), 'Consequently, to refute their error he was sometimes compelled to take the bare law in a narrow sense (nudam Legem praecise accipere), even though it was otherwise graced with the covenant of free adoption.' Indeed, such a distinction, carried into practice, is viewed by Calvin as a dangerous error, as we shall see.

48. *ibid.*

49. CO 31:201. cf. CO 31:199ff.

50. *ibid.*, where Calvin speaks of, 'nudis praeceptis', 'nudum Mosis ministerium'.

51. *ibid.* translation mine.

52. In a sermon on Deut. 30.6-10, (CO 28:563f), Calvin speaks of, 'ces phantastiques, who ... have never understood the use of circumcision. It seemed to them merely a temporal thing, indeed something ridiculous, that was in no way spiritual for the ancient fathers.' He goes on to speak of, 'that abominable heretic [he is speaking of Servetus] who was punished in this city' who 'ridiculed all the sacraments of the Law of Moses.' For Calvin these 'perverse' understandings of the Old Testament led to 'horrible

blasphemies', thus Servetus said that, '... the fathers did not know God, they worshipped an angel which was there in visible form instead of God.' The root cause was the separation of the Law from the Gospel, hence Calvin says, 'Now see what horrible blasphemies arise when the Law is separated from the Gospel.' (translations mine)

53. See, for example, Serm. Deut. 28.1-2, (CO 28:345ff.).

54. Calvin shows a good deal of caution as his comments in the Argumentum to John's Gospel and the congregation on John 1.1, both quoted above, show. See also Rom.1.2, (CO 49:9), We may gather from this passage what the Gospel is, for Paul teaches us that it had not been preached by the prophets, but only promised. If, therefore, the prophets promised the Gospel, it follows that the gospel was revealed when our Lord was at last manifested in the flesh. Those who confuse the promises with the Gospel, therefore, are mistaken, since the Gospel is properly the appointed of Christ made manifest, in whom the promises themselves are revealed.'

55. cf. Jer. 31.12 (CO 38:661); Jer. 31.33 (CO 38:690); Jer. 31.34 (CO 38:697), see note 46 above; CO 31:201; Habakkuk 2.2-3, (CO 43:524). J. P. Pin 'La promesse et l'espérance selon Jean Calvin', p. 18, describes Christ as the 'object' of the promises. He writes, '... l'objet de la promesse est toujours le même: c'est Jésus Christ.'

56. As we shall see Calvin arrived at this as a result of two, closely related, theological arguments. Moreover, it should be noted that for Calvin Christ was present in the Old Testament in a number of different ways: the whole ceremonial cultus, not only shadowed Christ forth to Old Testament believers, but also mediated him; the appearances of the Angel of the Lord were actually appearances of Christ, the Son of God; finally Christ was present through the prophetic word which predicted him. The point is that the Old Testament fathers actually knew Christ, though in an

obscure way when compared with believers after the incarnation and resurrection of Christ. cf. Gen. 48.16, (CO 23:584f.); Jn. 1.16, (CO 47:17), is worth quoting, 'It is true that all the godly who lived under the Law drew from this same fullness ... From the beginning of the world all the Patriarchs drew whatever gifts they had from Christ. For although the Law was given by Moses it was not from him that they obtained grace.'

57. OS III.321, 31ff., 'Ac proinde veteri populo nunquam se Deus ostendit propitium, nec spem gratiae unquam fecit absque mediatore.'

58. OS III.321,35ff., '... beatum et foelicem Ecclesiae statum semper in Christi persona fuisse fundatum.'

59. OS III.323,28ff., 'Hinc iam satis liquet, quia non potest Deus propitius humano generi esse absque mediatore, sanctis Patribus sub Lege Christum semper fuisse obiectum, ad quem suam dirigerent.'

60. cf. Isa. 6.1, (CO 36:126); Gen. 48.16, (CO 23:584f.), Christ is and was the 'perpetuus mediator', he was always the bond of union of men with God (semper vinculum fuit coniunctionis hominum cum Deo). Christ was mediator even before the entrance of Sin. 'For there was always so great a difference between God and men that without a mediator there could be no communication whatever.' (translation mine)

61. See, for example, Institutes II.xi.1, 'In this way there will be nothing to hinder the promises of the Old Testament and New Testament from remaining the same, nor from having the same foundation of these very promises, Christ.'; Institutes II.x.1; Jer. 23.5-6, (CO 38:408), '... God had from the beginning introduced this pledge whenever he had intended to confirm faith in his promises; for without Christ God cannot be a Father and Saviour to men; nor could he have been reconciled to the Jews, because they had

departed from him.'

62. CO 50:22f.

63. *ibid.*

64. Exod. 13.21, (CO 24:145), '... our heavenly Father then led the Israelites only by the hand of his only-begotten Son. Now, since He is the eternal guardian of His Church, Christ is not less truly present with us now by His power than he was formerly manifest (conspicuous) to the fathers.' Again on Jn. 8.56, (CO 47:214f.), Calvin writes, 'Christ ... was even then (i.e. in the Old Testament period) acknowledged as the mediator by which God was to be appeased. Yet that the grace of the mediator flourished in all ages depended on his eternal divinity.' Jn. 1.16, (CO 47:17), 'It is true that all the godly who lived under the Law drew from this same fullness ... From the beginning of the world all the Patriarchs drew whatever gifts they had from Christ. For although the Law was given by Moses it was not from him that they obtained grace.' Thus, on Jn. 1.18, (CO 47:20), Calvin writes, 'We must also note that, when even the fathers wanted to behold God, they always turned their eyes towards Christ.' See also H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, pp. 25f. Wolf, p. 25, writes, 'Weil Christus gestern und heute und alle Ewigkeit derselbe est, deshalb schauen die Gläubigen des Alten Bundes ebenso wie die des Neuen Bundes denselben Christus an ...'. Wolf goes on to point out, however, that the 'forma et species' of Christ's 'manifestatio' under the Old Testament differs from that under the New Testament. This is a theme which we shall be taking up at length later in the present study. On p. 26 Wolf continues, 'Christus war schon damals der Mittler ... Christus war schon im Bereich des Alten Bundes der Erlöser, ja um es ganz scharf zu sagen, Christus führte die Menschen unter dem Alten Bund zu Gott als der, der ihnen den Weg zum Vater schon eröffnet hatte durch sein priesterliches Werk.' See also E. Grin 'L'unité des deux Testaments selon Calvin',

p. 180.

65. cf. notes 58-61 and W. Niesel The Theology of Calvin, pp. 106-8. See also Institutes II.ix.2; Jer. 23.5-6, (CO 38:406ff.), '... for in him [the Messiah] have all God's promises always been yea and amen. ... the faith of the fathers could not have been complete except they had directed their thoughts to the Messiah. ... neither the love of God could have been made certain to the Fathers, nor the testimony of his his kindness and paternal favour be confirmed without Christ ...' and later in the same passage we read, 'We must now, then, understand that this passage cannot be explained of any but of Christ only. ... for without Christ God cannot be a father and a Saviour to men; nor could he have been reconciled to the Jews, because they had departed from him.' and later still, '...without Christ they could not rely on the promises of Salvation. Rightly, then, have I said that this passage ought to be confined to the person of Christ. '; Hab. 1.3, (43:524), 'As far then as the promises of God in Christ are yea and amen, no vision could have been given to the Fathers, which could have raised their minds, and supported them in the hope of salvation, without Christ having been brought before them. '; See also Hab. 3.13, (CO 43:581) and Gal. 4.1, (CO 50:223ff.).

66. cf. note 61 for refs. Also see Serm. Job 4.12-19, (CO 33:208). There is a connection here with Calvin's doctrine of accommodation. God is so far exalted above man and so beyond the human capacity of knowing that he must 'stoop down' to the human level if man is to know him. Thus all revelation is accommodated. But the supreme act of divine condescension is in Christ the Mediator. This mediation did not begin merely at the incarnation. All this is made clear in Calvin's comments on 1 Pet. 1.20, (CO 55:226). In a sermon on Daniel 9.17-18 (CO 41:555), Calvin asks, 'Who is the "Lord" here? He who should be exalted over the whole empire of God, he before whom every knee should bend, he who

should reign in the name of God over the whole Church, nay, over the angels in Heaven? Now we know that all these things have been accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, although Jesus Christ had not yet been manifested in the flesh, yet he was already Mediator, and all the ancient fathers had no access to God, unless they were conducted to him by the hand of the Redeemer. Moreover, he caused them to find grace with God, and the only support they had on which to found all their prayers, that they might be acceptable to God, was that there was a Redeemer promised them.' (Trans. mine). See also the same sermon (CO 41:558).

67. Gal. 3.19, (CO 50:216), Calvin agrees with 'the ancient expositors' who take the word 'mediator' here as a reference to Christ. However, he disagrees with them 'on the meaning of the word', 'Mediator does not signify here one who makes peace, but a messenger employed in publishing the law.' He draws the conclusion from this that, 'We are thus to understand that since the beginning of the world God has held no communication with men but through the intervention of His eternal Wisdom or Son. ... He has always been the Mediator of all teaching, because by Him God has always revealed Himself to men.' cf. Gen. 48.16, (23:584f.); Isa. 6.1, (CO 36:126); Jn. 1.18, (CO 47:19f.), is explicit, '... since the naked majesty of God is hidden within Himself, He could never be comprehended except in that He has revealed Himself in Christ. Hence God was known to the patriarchs of old only in Christ.' Later in the same passage he writes, 'We must also note that, when even the fathers wanted to behold God, they always turned their eyes towards Christ.'

68. Institutes IV.viii.5, (OS V.137.9ff.), notice that Adam is included in this list.

69. *ibid.* (OS V.137.16ff.).

70. Mt. 17. 3 (CO 45:486), '... the Law and the Prophets

have no other goal than Jesus Christ (non alium legi et prophetis scopum esse quam Christum).’ Isa. 29.11, (CO 36:492). See also W. Krusche, Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin, pp. 188f. and M. Woudstra ‘Calvin Interprets what Moses Reports’, p. 171.

71. Rom. 10.4, (CO 49:196), ‘Imo quidquid doceat lex, quidquid praecipiat, quidquid promittat, semper Christum habet pro scopo: ergo in ipsum dirigendae sunt omnes partes.’ See the same passage further, Calvin affirms that apart from Christ the law cannot be understood. See also Ex. 25.18ff. (CO 24:407), speaking of the Old Testament and the New, Calvin writes, ‘... Christ is their scopus (scopus eorum Christus est).’ A. Ganoczy and S. Scheld in their book Die Hermeneutik Calvins, write, ‘Die ganze Schrift durchzieht nämlich im Grunde nur ein einziger Skopus bzw. Sinn: Jesus Christus.’, pp. 96f.

72. Serm. Deut. 6.1-4, (CO 26:427), ‘...Jesus Christ qui est l’ame de la loy.’ cf. Isa. 29.11 (CO 36:492).

73. (CO 49:196), ‘Habemus autem insignem locum, quod lex omnibus suis partibus in Christum respiciat: itaque rectam eius intelligentiam habere nemo poterit, qui non ad hunc scopum perpetuo collimet.’

74. Hence the Jews could not see, ‘... what the chief thing in the law was, nor give attention to its true end (finem)’, and ‘since the coming of Christ’ they have been blinded, ‘until Moses shall have been turned to Christ (who is the soul of the law) by them.’ The latin reads, ‘donec ad Christum (qui legis anima est) Moses ab ipsis conversus fuerit.’ Exod. 34.29, (CO 25:118) (translation mine). For Calvin it is not a case of reading Christ into the Old Testament. See H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, p. 26f.

75. CO 47:125,

76. CO 9:815, (trans. mine). See also H.P. Stähli, Das Alte Testament in den Briefen Calvins, p. 120.

77. Jn. 5.39, (CO 47:125).

78. CO 54:280, (trans. mine), from the context it is clear that Calvin is using the word 'law' in an inclusive sense, to denote the Old Testament in its entirety.

79. *ibid.*

Chapter 4

1. There would appear to be two main factors which give rise to allegorical exegesis: a). the possession of a sacred book or books which are regarded as inspired and therefore as supremely authoritative; b). such books originated long ago in a culture very different from the one in which the interpreter lives. See K. Fullerton, Prophecy and Authority, pp. 52ff. and 68ff.

2. cf. Fullerton, op. cit. p.51ff. See also R.M. Grant, The Letter and the Spirit, pp. 60ff. and 89. And J.D. Wood, The Interpretation of the Bible, pp. 36f.

3. Grant, The Letter and the Spirit pp. 2ff., Fullerton, pp. 59ff.

4. Grant Letter and Spirit pp. 31ff., Aristobulus, a Hellenistic Jew, seems to have been the first to do this. According to Grant (p. 31) he claimed 'that the Greek Poets and Philosophers used the Old Testament in a pre-Septuagintal Greek version, and that for this reason Greek philosophy agrees with Old Testament theology.'

5. *ibid.* pp. 33ff.

6. R. M. Grant A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible, pp. 58f. See also Fullerton, op. cit. pp. 57-8.

7. Fullerton, op. cit. pp. 66f.

8. Clement of Alexandria was influenced, in his method of interpretation by Philo, Wood, p. 50. Origen, however, went beyond Clement in his use of allegory, though Philo is one influence, according to Grant Letter and Spirit (pp. 101-2), the most important influence lay elsewhere. Thus he writes, 'The sources of these "bold"

allegorizations ...lie... in Greek grammar and rhetoric. His younger contemporary Porphyry pointed out this fact. According to him, Origen was always in the company of Plato ...'.

9. cf. H. de Lubac, Exégèse médiévale, vol. I, pp. 198ff.

10. Grant A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible, pp. 94f.

11. cf. T. H. L. Parker, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, p. 60.

12. *ibid.* pp. 60-1. This is summed up in the well know phrase of Aquinas, '... quod auctor sacrae Scripturae est Deus, in cuius postestate est, ut non solum voces ad significandum accommodet (quod etiam homo facere potest) sed etiam res ipsas. Et ideo, cum in omnibus scientiis voces significant, hoc habet proprium ista scientia, quod ipsae res significatae per voces etiam significant aliquid. Illa ergo prima significatio, qua voces significant res, pertinet ad primum sensum, qui est sensus historicus, vel literalis. Illa vero significatio, qua res significatae per voces, iterum res alias significant, dicitur sensus spiritualis, qui super literalem fundatur, et eum supponit.' (emphasis mine) *Summa Theologica Ia. 1, 10 .*

13. Origen, for example, held that all Scripture has a mystical/allegorical meaning, but only some parts of it have a corporeal/literal meaning. The literal meaning of much of the Mosaic law is not worthy of the 'spiritual' man's attention. See R. M. Grant A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible, pp. 64f. See also the older work by F. W. Farrar, The History of Interpretation, pp. 189-201.

14. Fullerton, *op. cit.* pp. 55f. and see also F. W. Farrar, The History of Interpretation p. 194. For Origen the literal meaning of the Old Testament could lead to carnal views of God, idolatry, heresy and even immorality.

15. Fullerton, pp. 71ff.

16. *ibid.*

17. As we shall see, Calvin recognized these tendencies of allegorical exegesis. See, for example, his comments on Origen as an exegete in his commentaries on 2 Cor. 3.6ff., Gal. 4.22 and Gen. 2.8.

18. P. Stuhlmacher makes this point very well in his book Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture, pp.30ff.

19. The Antiochian school of interpretation, the chief figures of which were Chrysostom (c. 347-407), Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428) and Theodoret (c. 393 - c. 466). These concentrated on the literal/historical meaning of the text. Wood, *op. cit.* pp. 58ff.

20. Nicholas of Lyra, for example, while not rejecting the four-fold sense, laid great stress on the literal-historical sense. For him all the other senses presuppose the literal as their foundation. Lyra also abolished the distinction between the literal and spiritual sense of Scripture which had hitherto prevailed. Rather than finding the spiritual meaning beyond or behind the actual words of Scripture, he found it in the words themselves as literally understood. Parker, New Testament, p.61. To a certain extent Aquinas too sought to break away from the traditional idea of the four-fold meaning and to get back to the literal sense. See G. C. Berkouwer, Studies in Dogmatics: The Person of Christ, pp. 120 ff.

21. See above and notes 11 and 13.

22. OS III.319.9

23. So H. H. Wolf, Die Einheit des Bundes, pp. 106-111, W. Vischer 'Calvin, exégète de l'Ancien Testament', p. 224, and T. H. L. Parker, New Testament, pp. 66f. W. McKane 'Calvin as an Old Testament Commentator', pp. 256f., goes even further than either of these two.

G.L. Sheper, in an Essay entitled, 'Reformation Attitudes toward Allegory and the Song of Songs', is mistaken when on p. 552, he affirms that, 'Calvin himself maintained that it was less harmful to allegorize Mosaic law than to accept its imperfect morality as the rule for Christian men.' He appeals to p. 350 of F.W. Farrar's History of Interpretation as the authority for this assertion. But it is clear that he has totally misread Farrar and in fact inverted his meaning. Farrar is in fact criticizing Calvin for taking the Mosaic law too literally. To quote Farrar himself, 'It would have been a less harmful error if Calvin had allegorized the whole Mosaic law than that he should have accepted the imperfect morality of the days of ignorance as a rule for Christian men.' Thus, Farrar is, in fact, saying the very opposite of what Sheper claims! Another factual error is made on p. 557 of the same essay. The author is seeking to argue that Calvin understood the Song of Songs allegorically. Sheper implies that Calvin had Sebastian Castellio expelled from Geneva because the latter *rejected this allegorical interpretation*. In the first place Calvin did not have the authority to expel anyone from Geneva, this responsibility lay with the city council. It is true that Calvin opposed Castellio and that one of the reasons for his so doing was the latter's attitude to the Song of Songs. However, it was because Castellio called it a lascivious and obscene poem, not because he rejected its allegorical interpretation. See, for example, T. H. L. Parker John Calvin: A Biography, p. 85.

24. For example he uses the word 'anagogê' in Exod. 3.4, (CO 24:37); Lev. 21.16-24, (CO 24:456); Numb. 18.1, (CO 24:464); Numb. 8.24, (CO 24:443); Jer. 33.17-18, (CO 39:71); Haggai 2.6-9, (CO 44:107); and Zech. 9:16, (CO 44:282); 'literalis sensus' is found much less frequently, for example in Ps. 45.6, (CO 31:452); See also Parker, Old Testament, pp. 70ff.

25. For example, Ambrose in Gen. 27.27, (CO 23:378), and Gregory in Ex. 28.31-5, (CO 24:422f.) and Mal. 2.9, (CO 44:439).

26. cf. his comments on Jn. 2.19 (CO 47:47) and Mt. 13.10,35, (CO 45:357, 373).

27. cf. his comments on Dan. 4.10-16, (CO 40:657), an important passage to which we shall return later. See also Isa. 16.8 (CO 36:308); Isa. 27.1 (CO 36:448) and Isa. 30.25 (CO 36:525). For further references see W. Vischer's essay 'Calvin exegete de l'Ancien Testament', p. 224.

28. (CO 40:657).

29. cf. F. Edwards's D.Phil Thesis, The Relation between Biblical Hermeneutics and the Formulation of Dogmatic Theology, pp. 95ff. Cicero, too, saw allegory as a kind of developed metaphor (see p. 97 for quotes).

30. *ibid.* pp.94f. See also C. Ashley's unpublished PhD. dissertation entitled John Calvin's Utilization of the Principle of Accommodation, pp. 50f. and B. Hall, 'Calvin and Biblical Humanism', p. 200 and pp. 205f. Hall states that Calvin's dislike for allegory 'derives ultimately from Valla' and that 'he is unlike Erasmus in avoiding all needless reference to learned authors and occasional allegorizing.' See also J. P. Newport An Investigation of

the Factors etc., pp. 96f.

31. F. Edwards, op. cit. p.96. Edwards, p. 98, goes on to make the point that Calvin allows allegory in two senses: i) as a form of speech used for some particular reason or occasion, as here (Mt. 13.10 and Jn. 2.19) and ii) to illustrate doctrinal points already established by other means. This second usage relates to our next point.

32. Edwards points to 'a lack of precision in Calvin's use of terms' here, op. cit. p. 94, as does Parker, Old Testament, pp. 70ff. Parker writes, 'It is true that he will use the terminology ... But he is not using the words with their classic "four-sense" meaning.'

33. This is summed up in the well known rhyme,
 Littera gesta docet: quid credas allegoria.
 Moralis quid agas: quo tendas anagogia.

34. Parker makes this point, Old Testament, pp. 70ff. This usage of anagogê is especially clear in Calvin's comments on Zech. 9.16, (CO 44:282). See also the other references given in note 24. In all these he is using anagogê in the sense of 'transferral' or 'application'. On Numb. 18.1 (CO 24:464), for example, he writes, 'Hoc etiam per anagogen recte transfertur ad omnes pastores'.

35. CO 23:70.

36. See note 34 and Hag. 2.6-9, (CO 44:107) and Jer. 33.17-18, (CO 39:71).

37. See the references given in note 24. According to Ganoczy and Scheld Die Hermeneutik Calvins, the four-fold method of interpretation is contrary to Calvin's doctrine of Scripture, p. 117.

38. Wood, *op. cit.* p. 90, Parker, New Testament, p. 65.

39. CD 50:40ff., see also H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, p. 104.

40. *ibid.* Many scholars concur in the view that Calvin rejected allegory totally. See, for example, R. C. Gamble 'Brevitas et Facilitas' p. 5, J. P. Newport An Investigation of the Factors etc., p. 108f., H. W. Frei The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, pp. 28-31, and A. Ganoczy and S. Scheld Die Hermeneutik Calvins, pp. 115f.

41. This is the significance of Calvin's frequent stricture that by allegorization Scripture loses all its 'solidity' (*soliditas*). See, for example, Calvin on Ezek. 1.1 (CD 40:26). Calvin affirms that he abstains from allegorizing '... because in this way Scripture would not have its solidity (*quia hoc modo scriptura non habet suam soliditatem*).' It is no wonder that Calvin, considering the importance he places on the authority of Scripture, should, therefore, refer to allegory as being a tool of satan. See also Gen. 2.8 (CD 23:37), where he writes, 'We must, however, entirely reject the allegories of Origen, and of others like him, which Satan, with the deepest subtlety, has endeavoured to introduce into the Church, for the purpose of rendering the doctrine of scripture ambiguous and destitute of all certainty and firmness.'

42. cf. Ex. 28.4 (CD 24:429), where Calvin contrasts, on the one hand, 'speculation' with 'soberness' and 'simplicity', and on the other, 'allegory' with what he calls, '*solida rerum cognitio*', that is, 'the solid knowledge of realities'. See also Zech. 6.1-3 (CD 44:202) and Zech. 14.4 (CD 44:365).

43. cf. Institutes I.v.9 and xiv.1.

44. Serm. Job 15.2 (CD 33:709f.). See also 1 Jn. 2.3 (CD

55:310f.) and Ganoczy and Scheld Die Hermeneutic Calvins, p. 116.

45. Calvin makes this point in his commentary on Gen. 49.1 (CO 23:590).

46. Ezek. 16.10-13 (CO 40:343). cf. Berkouwer, op. cit.

47. CO 24:416.

48. Serm. Deut. 14.1-20 (CO 27:279), in this passage Calvin frequently contrasts the French verb 'speculer' with the noun 'sobriete'.

49. Ex. 26.1-30 (CO 24:417).

50. Edwards, op. cit. p.95, points to Calvin's doctrine of Scripture and what she calls his 'epistemology' as the roots of his aversion to allegory.

51. Jean Calvin vol. IV, p. 60. '... tourmenté par un besoin incomparable de certitude ...'

52. In the 18th. Serm. Ps.119 (CO 32:693) Calvin states, '... that the Word of God is pure and has no blemish or imperfection whatever (ne tache ne macule aucune).' (trans. mine) And in a sermon on Deuteronomy 13.1-3 (CO 27:232), he says, 'God is not speaking to those who have never before heard or been taught, he speaks to those to whom he had given his law; whom he had directed in the right path and to whom he had given an infallible rule (une reigle infallible).' (trans. mine) See also Dowey Knowledge of God, pp. 90ff.

53. 2 Tim. 3.16 (CO 52:383), 'nec quicquam humani habet admixtum'; see also Institutes I.vii.1.

54. Obad. verse 1 (CO 43:179), 'We thus see that the

Prophet, in order that the doctrine he brought forward might not be suspected, made God the author; for what faith can we put in men, whom we know to be vain and false (quos scimus vanos esse et mendaces), except as far as they are ruled by the Spirit of God and sent by him?' See also Ezek. 11. 24-5 (CO 40:252f.) and Institutes I.vi.3 (OS III.63.15ff.).

55. The following passages indicate that Calvin held to a theory of verbal inspiration, though he did not use the terminology. Obad. Preface, (CO 43:178), 'It appears that Jeremiah (chap. 49) and this Prophet made use of the same thoughts and almost the same words, as we shall see later. the Holy Spirit could doubtless have uttered the same thing by employing different forms of speaking (spiritus sanctus poterat diversis loquendi formis eandem rem exprimere), but he wished to join together these two testimonies, that they might obtain more credit.' And commenting on Isa. 9.7, (CO 36:199), he bases part of his exposition on one letter of a Hebrew word! Though it must be admitted that this latter example is rather uncharacteristic of Calvin.

56. See, for example, 2 Tim. 3. 16 (CO 52:383) and Jer. 18.21 (CO 38:314).

57. IV. viii.9 (OS V.141.13).

58. 2 Pet. 1.20 (CO 55:458), '... holy men of God spoke being moved by the Holy Ghost. They did not blab their inventions of their own accord or according to their own judgments. The gist of this is, that the beginning of a proper understanding is when we give His holy prophets the same trust that is due to God. ... He says that they were moved, not because they were out of their minds ... but because they dared nothing of themselves but only in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit who held sway over their lips as in his own temple (sed quia nihil a se ipsis

ausi fuerunt: tantum obedienter sequuti sint spiritum ducem, qui in ipsorum ore, tanquam in suo sacrario, regnabat).’ See also the Argumentum to his commentary on John (CO 47:viii).

59. cf. 2 Tim. 3.16 (CO 52:383). Thus, the writers do not speak ‘ex suo sensu’ nor ‘a humano impetu’ nor ‘a arbitrio suo’, but only utter ‘quae coelitus mandata fuerant’ (2 Tim 3.16 (CO 52:383); 2 Pet. 1.20 (CO 55:458); Institutes I.vi.1).

60. Argumentum to Calvin’s Harmony on the Gospels (CO 45:3). See the phrase ‘dictante Spiritu sancto’ in Institutes IV.viii.6 (OS V.138.12). On 2 Tim. 3.16, Calvin writes, ‘All those who wish to profit from the Scriptures must first accept this as a settled principle, that the Law and the Prophets are not teachings handed on at the pleasure of men or produced by men’s minds as their source, but are dictated by the Holy Spirit. For more see D. More’s essay, ‘Calvin’s Doctrine of Holy Scripture’, especially pp. 58ff.

61. cf. Institutes I.viii.2 (OS III.73.1-3) and Jn. 3.12 (CO 47:61).

62. cf. Dowey, Knowledge, p. 99f.

63. Institutes II.viii.12 (OS III.354.19), before quoting Exodus 20.1 he writes, ‘Nunc Deum ipsum audiamus loquentem suis verbis.’

64. Institutes I.vi.1 (OS III. 60.32f.); cf. 1 Pet. 1.25 (CO 55:230).

65. On 2 Pet. 1.20 (CO 55:458), Calvin, speaking of Scripture, writes, ‘... it is God who speaks with us and not mortal men.’ In the Institutes (I.vi.1 [OS III.60.31--61.1]) Calvin writes, again with reference to Scripture,

'This, therefore, is a special gift, where God, to instruct the Church, not merely uses mute teachers but also opens his own most hallowed lips.'

66. 2 Tim. 3.16 (CO 52:383).

67. cf. F. L. Battles's essay 'God was Accommodating himself to Human Capacity', pp. 21 and 34ff.

68. 2 Pet. 1.20 (CO 55:458).

69. Argumentum to Harmony on Gospels (CO 45:3), 'We should not say that the diversity which appears between the three was consciously simulated, but that as each in good faith determined to put to writing what he accepted as certain and factual, so each arranged it as he thought would be best.'

70. *ibid.*

71. Thus, 'histories' were added to the Prophecies in the Old Testament and these were 'the compositions of the Prophets themselves (quae et ipsae Prophetarum sunt lucubrationes ... compositae)' yet at the same time they were also dictated by the Holy Spirit (sed dictante Spiritu sancti compositae)'. Institutes IV.viii.6 (DS V.138.11-13).

72. Ex. 33.20f. (CO 25:111). Commenting on the words spoken by God to Moses, 'You cannot see my face', Calvin writes, 'Moses had indeed seen it, but in such a mode of revelation, as to be far inferior to its full effulgence. ... Now, however, he obtains something better and more excellent; and yet not so as perfectly to see God such as He is in Himself, but so far as the human mind is capable of bearing (sed quatenus fert captus humanae mentis). ... God, therefore, whilst He holds from a complete knowledge of Him, nevertheless manifests Himself as far as is

expedient; nay, attempering the amount of light to our humble capacity, he assumes the face which we are able to bear (Itaque Deus solida sui cognitione nos arcendo, se tamen manifestat quoad expedit: imo lucis mensuram nostro modulo attemperans, faciem induit quam possimus ferre). cf. Isa. 6.1 (36:126) see also Ashley, op. cit. pp. 28ff. and Battles 'God was Accommodating', pp. 29ff.

73. E. Fuchs in his essay 'L'importance de l'Ancien Testament pour l'éthique chrétienne selon Calvin', p. 13 seems to be making this point. However, he goes too far when (with A. Biéler) he states that 'Calvin at no time thought ... that the Bible was immediately the Word of God.' (trans. mine) See the statement that Calvin himself makes in the Argumentum to his Commentary on the Gospel Harmony, (CO 45:3f.) where he writes, 'We should not say that the diversity which appears between the three was consciously simulated, but that as each in good faith determined to put to writing what he accepted as certain and factual, so each arranged it as he thought would be best. There was nothing fortuitous about it, of course, for it happened rather under the control of divine providence; the Holy Spirit has given such wonderful unity in their diverse patterns of writing that this alone would almost be enough to win them authority if a greater authority from another source did not supply it.' Here Calvin would seem to allow full scope to the freedom of the authors of Scripture while, at the same time, asserting God's complete control over them. This view of Calvin's can be succinctly summed up in his own words from a sermon on Deut. 1.22-8 (CO 26:666). He says, 'Et combien que Moyse ait escrit ce livre: si est-ce que le saint Esprit a use' de luy comme d'une organe (Although Moses wrote this book, nevertheless the Holy Spirit used him as an instrument).' See also Ganoczy and Scheld Die Hermeneutik Calvins, p. 110 and W. Vischer 'Calvin, exégète de l'Ancien Testament', p. 214.

74. This is expressed in a statement Calvin makes in his Congregation on Jn. 1.1 (CO 47:465), 'It is true that we must not rest simply in the words, nevertheless we cannot understand the doctrine of God unless we know the procedure he uses and what his style and language is, thus we have to mark this word ...' (trans. mine)

75. cf. Gen. 25.22 (CO 23:349). See also Dowey, op. cit. pp. 93f.

76. eg. Gen. 28.13 (CO 23:392), '... mute visions are cold; therefore the word of the Lord is as the soul which quickens them.' See also Ex. 33.19 (25:109),

77. CO 23:559f.

78. *ibid.* cf. 20th. Serm. Ps. 119.

79. This distinction has been attributed to Calvin by J. K. S. Reid in his book The Authority of Scripture. See Chapter 2 for his views on Calvin and esp. pp. 36f. and 42ff., where he attributes this distinction to Calvin. See also the reference to Fuchs in note 76. An adequate response to this can be found in J. Murray, Calvin's Doctrine of Scripture and Divine Sovereignty, pp. 37ff. See also the older work by D. Moore op. cit. pp. 51ff.

80. In other words, Scripture does indeed present us with a record of revelation, that is, of God's revelatory acts etc., but it is such a record that the 'recorders'- its human authors - were guided and governed by the Holy Spirit in writing their record. This would seem to be the force of Calvin's frequent assertion that the authors of Scripture 'were not left to their own selves', or that they did not speak 'ex suo sensu' nor 'ab humano impulsu' nor 'sponte sua' nor 'arbitrio suo'. cf. 2 Tim. 3.16 (CO 52:383) and 2 Pet. 1.20 (CO 55:458) and B. B. Warfield, Calvin and Augustine, pp. 61f. Instead, 'their lips are

the mouth of the one true God'. Why? because God has governed them.

81. So Institutes I.vi.2,4 and I.v.12. Actually, to be more accurate, we ought to say the revelation of God the Redeemer; that is, of God's grace. There is a revelation of God in the natural order, but it is of God's justice, true the order of creation should have revealed God as gracious, but it does not do so due to the sin of man. See Dowey op. cit. pp. 81-85 and B. B. Warfield, op. cit. pp. 43-46. As Dowey states, 'There is a "great gulf fixed" in Calvin's theology between the original purpose of the revelation in creation and its actual function.' Originally the revelation in creation was meant to bring man to 'eternal felicity'.

82. See Moore op. cit. p.53.

83. Institutes I.ix.1-3.

84. Creation does not reveal God redemptively, see note 85.

85. This was the conclusion reached, for example, by J. P. Lecoq in The Personalist (1948), p. 260.

86. See esp. Q. Breen 'John Calvin and the Rhetorical Tradition', passim. See also B. Hall 'Calvin and Biblical Humanism' pp. 197-200 and p. 207.

87. CO 49:341, cf. Parker New Testament, p. 55.

88. For example, Ps. 81.5 (CO 31:761), 'Nothing is more disagreeable than to sojourn among a people with whom there is no communication of language, which is the chief bond of society (quae praecipuum est societatis vinculum). Because, indeed, language is as the representation and mirror of the mind (velut character mentis ac speculum),

those who are deprived of the use of language are just like wild beasts and foreigners to each other. (trans. mine); Gen. 11. 1 (CO 23:164); Jer. 9.5 (CO 38:30), 'Language ought to be the representation of the mind (Lingua debet esse character mentis), as is said in the ancient proverb. For why was language created, but that people may communicate with one another? For the thoughts are secret, but they become visible when we speak with each other.' (trans. mine)

89. cf. W. Smith A Latin-English Dictionary, 13th. ed., (1875). See also Parker New Testament, p. 55.

90. *ibid.*

91. CO 23:164.

92. *ibid.* N. N. Paluku Rubinga, observes that 'Calvin ne semble pas dissocier la langue organe corporel, la langue système sémiologique et la raison.' Calvin commentateur du prophète Isaïe, p.45 note 35.

93. Ps. 81.5 (CO 31:761), quoted in note 93 above. On Gen. 11.1 (CO 23:164), he refers to language as 'the sacred bond of society (sacrum societatis vinculum).

94. *ibid.*

95. CO 47:1, 'Nam ut sermo character mentis dicitur in omnibus, ita non inepte transfertur hoc quoque ad Deum , ut per sermonem suum dicatur nobis se ipsum exprimere.'

96. CO 37:339.

97. New Testament, p. 55.

98. CO 10:403. See also R. C. Gamble 'Brevitas et Facilitas', pp. 2f.

99. For example, B. Girardin Rhétorique et théologique, pp. 228ff. and 277ff. A. Ganoczy and S. Scheld Die Hermeneutic Calvins, pp. 111f. and T. H. L. Parker New Testament, pp. 26ff.

100. cf. Ganoczy op. cit., Girardin op. cit. pp. 229 and 277f. Parker New Testament, pp. 50ff.

101. Here I am in disagreement with W. J. Bouwsma when in his essay 'Calvin and the Renaissance Crisis of Knowing', p. 203, he asserts that Calvin was sceptical as to the ability of language to convey objective truth. As far as I am aware, every reference that Calvin makes on this subject points in the other direction. For him language is an adequate medium to convey truth. See also the reference to N. N. Paluku Rubinga, in note 97 above. T. H. L. Parker New Testament, p. 55, points out that there are two basic assumptions that lie behind Calvin's idea of the task of the commentator to discover the mind of the author: (1). 'He assumes that the writer is able to give expression to his thought', and (2). 'he assumes that the expositor is able to understand that expression.'

102. Berkouwer op. cit. pp. 120-2. See also R. M. Grant A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible, pp. 58, 63f.

103. Grant, op. cit., pp. 64-6.

104. *ibid.*

105. So Hugh of St. Victor, cf. J. S. Preus From Shadow to Promise, pp. 26ff.

106. Parker New Testament, pp. 64ff. For Calvin it is the text that is the bearer of God's word. cf H. W. Frei The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, p. 22. Calvin assessed

the commentators and commentaries of the Church Fathers on the basis of how far they had stuck to the literal meaning of the text. It was for this reason that Calvin, of all the ancient commentators, preferred Chrysostom. See Calvin's Fraefatio in Chrysostomi homilias, in CO 9:831-38 and J. R. Walchenbach's Ph.D. thesis Calvin as a Biblical Commentator: An Investigation into Calvin's Use of J. Chrysostom as an Exegetical Tutor.

107. CO 50:237

108. Luther had no problems with taking it as an allegory. See his Commentary on Galatians, ad loc. See also the modern commentary by H. D. Betz Galatians in the Hermeneia series (Philadelphia 1979), pp. 241ff.

109. The Greek word used here is a verbal form.

110. CO 50:237, Calvin writes, 'But what shall we reply to Paul's assertion? He certainly does not mean that Moses deliberately wrote the story so that it might be turned into an allegory, but is pointing out in what way the story relates to the present case. That is, when we see the image of the Church figuratively delineated. And an anagoge of this sort is not foreign to the genuine and literal meaning ...'

111. *ibid.* 'Sed id non facit ut a literali sensu recedatur. ... Et certe Chrysostomus in vocabulo allegoriae fatetur esse catachresin: quod verissimum est.

Chapter 5

1. Beginning, it would seem, with Richard Simon's Histoire critique des principaux Commentateurs du Nouveau Testament, (1693). The 19th. Century saw a flood of essays dealing with Calvin's exegetical works, beginning with A. Tholuck's Die Verdienste Calvin's als Ausleger der heiligen Schrift, in 1839. A glance through the Bibliography at the end of this study will confirm this. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the 19th. Century saw the first complete translation of Calvin's Commentaries and Lectures on the Bible into English. Similar translation projects were carried out in the 19th. Century in French, German and Dutch. The interest has continued in the 20th. Century and has received a great new impetus in the last two decades with the publication of a new translation of Calvin's New Testament Commentaries and particularly the writings of T. H. L. Parker. Thus, for the first time Calvin's exegetical works have been the subject of major publications.

2. This can be seen, for example, in W. Walker's biography John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism, published in 1906. Walker criticizes Calvin for not holding the 19th. Century concept of progressive (in an evolutionary sense) revelation, something for which few would be prepared to criticize him today! Walker writes, p. 370, 'The modern conceptions of a progressive revelation ... to say nothing of such views as regard the Bible as a literature embodying the religious conceptions of many ages and of a variety of writers, were of course unknown to him.' The same '19th. Century' criticism is brought against Calvin by F. W. Farrar in his book A History of Interpretation, pp. 349f. In more recent times, W. Vischer in his article 'Calvin, exégète de l'Ancien Testament' ETR 40 (1965), p. 228, sought to make Calvin a forerunner of the modern Traditionsgeschichte school of Old Testament scholarship! Vischer writes, 'Calvin ne l'a pas développé à partir des

recherches qui de nos jours ont permis à Martin Noth d'écrire son livre <<Die Ueberlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch>> (1948). Mais il a bien ouvert la voie à la méthode moderne qui essaie de retracer l'histoire des traditions dans les livres de l'Ancien Testament.'

3. cf. The Introduction to F. L. Battles and A. M. Hugo Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, pp. 117-24. See also E. H. Harbison Christianity and History, pp. 282ff. and R. C. Gamble 'Brevitas et Facilitas', pp. 10f.

4. B. Hall in his essay 'Calvin and Biblical Humanism' refers to Calvin as a 'Biblical Humanist.' The word 'Humanist' in the context of the 15th. Century refers to one who was concerned with the revival of classical learning and thus the study of Latin and Greek. Hall argues that the Humanism of Italy differs from that of the Low Countries, northern France and Germany. The latter being much more concerned with Christianity and freeing Christianity from the shackles of Church traditions. It is this latter form of Humanism in which Calvin was nurtured and which Hall calls 'Biblical'.

5. Harbison Christianity and History, pp. 273ff.

6. For the Scholastic view of history see Harbison op. cit., pp. 271f., and Calvin's rejection of it, p. 279. For the increasingly secular outlook of humanism, as represented, for example, by Machiavelli see Harbison, pp. 273f. and C. G. Dubois La conception de l'histoire en France au XVIe siècle, pp. 30ff.

7. Calvin's doctrine of providence is expounded in Institutes I.xvi--xvii. See also E. Doumergue Jean Calvin vol. IV, pp. 111-18. Doumergue deals with Calvin's doctrine of Predestination at great length in book 7 of the same vol., pp. 351-418. And, finally, see Dubois op. cit. pp. 478ff., who expounds Calvin's concept of history and divine

sovereignty with respect to Calvin's Lectures on Daniel.

8. This is brought out by Doumergue op. cit. pp. 365-73.

9. See Institutes I.xvii.3-5 and Doumergue op. cit. pp. 130f. See also Harbison op. cit., pp. 282-86. Harbison shows that Calvin's concept of history was 'dynamic' and included a sense of 'destiny' and 'secular activism' and that this sprang precisely from Calvin's doctrine of divine sovereignty and predestination. Man is a participant, not merely an onlooker, in God's purpose.

10. See Harbison op. cit., p. 284. Development is not necessarily something positive for Calvin, in fact in the moral sphere, for the human race in general, it is the exact opposite. There is degeneration. This is clear from his comments on Dan. 2.31-5 (CO 40:590), '... the world is always falling into a worse condition (mundus semper in deterius labitur) ...'. And, he continues, 'Experience demonstrates how the world continuously degenerates and inclines little by little to vice and corruption.' [trans. mine]. See also Dan. 2.36-38 (CO 40:597).

11. F. L. Battles's essay entitled 'God was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity', provides a good introduction to Calvin's doctrine of accommodation.

12. See Calvin's *comments on Gen. 32.29* (CO 23:445f.). Calvin says that 'the Lord manifested himself to them [people under the Old Testament] by degrees (Dominus gradatim se illis patefecit), until, at length, Christ the Sun of Righteousness arose, in whom perfect brightness shines forth.' See the whole passage.

13. See the passage cited in the preceding note.

14. Battles, 'God was Accommodating Himself', pp. 20f. and 27. See also A. Biéler Calvin: prophète de l'ère

industrielle, pp. 22ff.

15. See the reference to W. Vischer in note 2 for one example of an attempt to modernize Calvin. See also M. Woudstra Calvin's Dying Bequest to the Church: A Critical Evaluation of the Commentary on Joshua, pp. 5ff., who also remarks on various attempts to 'modernize' Calvin.

16. See, for example, B. S. Childs's Biblical Theology in Crisis, (Philadelphia, 1970) and his article 'The Old Testament as Scripture' in Concordia Theological Monthly 43 (1972), pp. 709-22. See also J. D. Smart's book The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church, (London, 1970). Finally, a critical discussion of Childs's and other responses to the sterility of Old Testament interpretation can be found in J. Barton's Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study (London, 1984).

17. This challenge is embodied in B. S. Childs's Exodus: A Commentary, (London, 1974), which, on each section of the text, includes a section on the history of its exegesis.

18. See D. C. Steinmetz 'John Calvin on Isaiah 6: A Problem in the History of Exegesis'. Steinmetz writes, 'The principle value of pre-critical exegesis is that it is not modern exegesis; it is alien, strange, sometimes even, from our perspective, comic and fantastical. Precisely because it is strange, it provides a constant stimulus to modern interpreters, offering exegetical suggestions they would not think of themselves nor find in any recent books, forcing them again and again to a re-reading and re-evaluation of the text. Interpreters who immerse themselves, however, not only in the text, but in these alien approaches to the text may find in time that they have learned to see, with eyes not their own, sights they could scarcely have imagined and to hear, with ears not their own, voices too soft for their own ears to detect.'

19. So K. Fullerton Prophecy and Authority, p. 133, who writes, 'Calvin may not unfittingly be called the first scientific interpreter in the history of the Christian Church.' P. Schaff in his History of the Christian Church Vol. VII (1903), p. 532, wrote 'Calvin is the founder of modern grammatical-historical exegesis.' L. Diestel in his Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche, p. 267, calls Calvin the '...creator of authentic exegesis (Schöpfer der ächten Exegese)'. By 'ächt' here I assume he is referring to the 'modern' exegesis of his day. See also J. P. Newport An Investigation of the Factors etc., pp. 33ff. Newport seeks to show how far Calvin recognized and was aware of historical-grammatical principles of exegesis.

20. As did, for example, Melancthon in his Errorematum dialectices, de methodo.

21. cf. H-J. Kraus 'Calvins exegetische Prinzipien' pp. 335f., (ET 'Calvin's Exegetical Principles' pp. 13f.). Kraus refers to Calvin's statement in Institutes IV.xvi.23 (OS V.328.9f.), where, in the context of a discussion on Baptism, Calvin states (according to Kraus's translation), 'Es gibt in der Schrift viele Aussagen, deren Verständnis von den jeweiligen Umständen abhängt.' The ET of Kraus's article has, 'There are many statements in Scripture, the understanding of which depends on the circumstances in which they were made.' See also R. Wierenga, 'Calvin the Commentator', pp. 6f.

22. CO 25:421/2.

23. *ibid.*

24. CO 25:421/2.

25. *ibid.* He speaks of it as 'quod nobis compertum non est.' See also V. Forestier's dissertation Calvin exégète de l'Ancien Testament, p. 8.

26. CO 25:398. It is on such statements as these in Calvin's Commentaries that W. Vischer, *op. cit.* p. 228, bases his statement that Calvin, '... opened the way for the modern method which attempts to retrace the history of traditions in the books of the Old Testament.' (trans mine)

27. CO 23:591.

28. *ibid.*

29. *ibid.* 'Adde quod inter multa alia quae sancti patres per manus tradiderant, haec praedictio tunc passim nota esse potuit.'

30. *ibid.*

31. See, for example, Gen. 39.20 (CO 23:508); Gen. 46.3 (CO 23:560); Ex. 3.6 (CO 24:38); Ex. 3.13 (CO 24:43); Ex. 12.25 (CO 24:136f.); Deut. 31.10 (CO 24:230f.) etc.

32. See the reference to W. Vischer in notes 2 and 26.

33. For example, he speaks of the arrangement and order of the Pentateuch as having been 'prescribed to us by the Holy Spirit (*quem spiritus sanctus nobis praescribit*).' [CO 24:5/6] The Pentateuch as a whole was 'dictated to Moses (*dictatam fuisse Mosi*)'. Similar statements are found in the argumentum to his Commentary on the Book of Joshua (CO 25:421/2).

34. See Chapter 4, pp. 156-60.

35. CO 36:24. See also his comments on Isa. 8.1 (CO 36:165); Isa. 30.8 (CO 36:512) and Hab. 2.2 (CO 43:524), where the same ideas are expressed.

36. CO 36:24, '*Singulari autem Dei providentia effectum*

est ...'

37. *ibid.*, 'Huic quaestioni nullus interpretum cuius quidem scripta legerim hactenus, respondet.'

38. Ps. 48, argumentum (CO 31:472).

39. CO 31:690f.

40. Ps. 78.1 (CO 31:721).

41. Ps. 79 inscription, v. 1 in Calvin's translation as it is in the Hebrew text, (CO 31:746).

42. *ibid.*, 'Neque enim ita in suis vaticiniis historice loqui prophetae solent.'

43. CO 31:746f.

44. Ps. 44, inscription, v. 1 for Calvin, (CO 31:436).

45. Introduction to his Lectures on the Book of Joel (CO 42:515).

46. *ibid.*

47. For further examples of this sort of thing in Calvin's exegesis see H. J. Forstman Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority, pp. 106ff. J. P. Newport in his Ph.D. thesis An Investigation of the Factors etc. seeks to show that Calvin's use of grammatical-historical exegetical principles was conditioned by the age in which he lived. See especially pp. 236ff.

48. CO 40:402, 'Sed quia aliter non potest intelligi prophetae concio, quam si teneamus historiam, hinc igitur faciam exordium ...'

49. See, for example, Ps. 34 inscription [v. 1 in Hebrew and therefore in Calvin who expounds the Hebrew] and throughout his commentary on the whole of the Psalm (CO 31:334-45); Ps. 56 inscription [v. 1 in Hebrew] (CO 31:547); and Ps. 60 inscription [v. 1 in Hebrew] (CO 31:573f.).

50. cf. the argumentum of Ps. 47 (CO 31:466), speaking of the occasion for which this Psalm was composed Calvin rejects the idea that '... this Psalm was composed at the time when the temple was dedicated, and the ark of the covenant placed in the sanctuary.' as '... a conjecture which has little to support it.' He then goes on to give us his idea. 'It was no doubt appointed', he writes, 'for the stated holy assemblies, as may be easily gathered from the whole tenor of the poem (Dubium quidem non est ad solemnes conventus fuisse destinatum: quod ex toto contextu colligere promptum est) ...' For this and the following see also Kraus op. cit. p. 336 (ET p. 14).

51. Ps. 22.23 (CO 31:231); Ps. 118.15 (CO 32:206).

52. Ps. 50.5 (CO 31:497); Ps. 81.2ff. (CO 31:760), 'This Psalm, it is probable, was intended for the festival days on which the Jews kept their solemn assemblies (Hunc Psalmum probabile est festis diebus, quibus solennes suos conventus agebant Iudaei, fuisse destinatum - trans. mine). ... They were not to stand deaf and dumb at the tabernacle ... but they were ... to hold fast to the sacred covenant (in sacro foedere retinerentur) by which God had adopted them to himself.'

53. See H. P. Smith, 'Calvin as an Interpreter of Ezekiel', p. 271. Commenting on Ezek. 3.10-11 (CO 40:83), Calvin compares Ezekiel's style with that of Isaiah and Jeremiah. He is 'more verbose' than they are, his style is not 'so compact or polished (restrictus nec politus)' as theirs. The language had degenerated in Ezekiel's time. Hence, Ezekiel 'turns aside from the elegance of the

language (elegantia linguae).'

54. Ezek. 3.10-11 (CO 40:83).

55. Zeph. 1.2-3 (CO 44:2f.). See also M. Woudstra's essay 'Calvin Interprets what Moses Reports', p. 155.

56. For example in his comments on Isa. 59.16 (CO 37:348), Calvin writes, 'Thus it is necessary to observe the intention of the prophet (prophetarum consilium); for whenever we read the prophets and apostles we must consider not only what they say, but for what purpose and with what intention (solummodo quid, sed quem in finem et quo consilio dicant). Therefore, above all else we must here attend to the intention of the prophet (Hic igitur potissimum attendere debemus consilium prophetarum)...' [trans. mine] See also T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, pp. 81f. In his Lectures Calvin very often brings his exposition of a verse to an end with the phrase, 'Now we understand the intention of the (Nunc tenemus consilium) ...', or some similar phrase. Sometimes it is '... of the Prophet', for example see Amos 5.26 (CO 43:100) (Nunc tenemus prophetarum consilium). See also Ez. 12.19 (CO 40:267) and Zech. 1.18-21 (CO 44:150). At other times it is '... of the Holy Spirit or God', for example, Zech. 5.1-4 (CO 44:194), here Calvin criticizes 'Interpreters [who] have touched neither heaven nor earth in their explanation of this whole prophecy' and the reason 'because they have not regarded the intention of the Holy Spirit.' See also Ezek. 12.16 (CO 40:265); Ez. 14.14 (CO 40:320) and Zech. 2.1-4 (CO 44:153). Finally, that Calvin saw these two as identical, that is, that the meaning intended by the divine author is expressed through that of the human author, is evident when Calvin uses 'consilium prophetarum' and 'consilium Spiritus sancti' interchangeably. Thus on Ez. 16.1-3 (CO 40:336), Calvin writes, 'Now we understand the intention of the Prophet, or rather of the Holy Spirit (Nunc ergo tenemus consilium prophetarum, vel potius Spiritus sancti).' Interestingly, for Calvin, though

the 'consilium Dei vel Spiritus sancti' cannot be reached apart from the verba of a text, yet it may go beyond them. Indeed, to adhere rigidly to the words of a verse without taking into account the consilium of its author may lead to a false interpretation. Thus on Jer. 6.6 (CO 37:647), Calvin states, 'In this way he calls it a "city of visitation". Therefore, those who translate it "that it may be laid waste" or "it is laid waste" pervert the meaning (sensus). Indeed, they touch neither heaven nor earth, because they do not weigh the prophet's intention (consilium prophetae), and stop merely at the words (et tantum subsistunt in verbis).' [trans. mine]. See also Calvin's exposition of the laws regarding unclean animals in Lev. 11.13ff. (CO 24:350). Calvin comments that these laws at their face value are 'unimportant', 'superfluous', even 'trifling'. However, we must seek God's intention (Dei consilium) in giving them. When this is done the laws become 'acts of discipline by which God accustomed them to the study of purity which is so generally neglected and omitted among men.'

57. In the Sermons on Isaiah 13--29 (SC II), for example he discusses the word bdm in a sermon on Isa. 22.1 (SC II.120.36-7). On Isa. 16.12 (SC II.128.45) he discusses the word ygd. On Isa. 14.20,21 (SC II.62.24ff.) he mentions the fact that the '... word which the prophet uses [rfm] has some ambiguity in its pointing (car le mot dont use le prophete, selon qu'il est punctué, a quelque ambiguïté)'. Finally on Isa. 28.5-7 (SC II.517.44ff.), he discusses the word skr. However, he does not baffle his audience, nor show off his knowledge by actually quoting the word in Hebrew, rather he speaks of it indirectly by some such phrase as 'le mot dont use le prophete...'

58. Congrégation sur la divinité de Christ (on John 1.1) [CO 47:465]. '... car c'est beaucoup de cognoistre l'usage de l'Escriture sainte quant aux mots. Il est vray qu'il ne nous faut point arrester aux mots simplement, sed tant y a que nous ne pouvons pas comprendre quelle est la doctrine

de Dieu, si non que nous sachions la procedure dont il use, et quel est son style et son language ...' cf. P. T. Fuhrmann 'Calvin, the Expositor of Scripture', p. 198.

59. See A. Baumgartner Calvin hébraïsant et interprète de l'Ancien Testament, p. 9.

60. Baumgartner op. cit. pp. 25f., writes, 'Il avait dû en acquérir pour lui-même une connaissance vraiment sérieuse et détaillée, ses commentaires le montrent assez clairement ...' (trans. mine).

61. p. 267, '... die durch jeder Seite seiner alttestamentlichen Exegesen widerlegt wird.' (trans. mine). See also Kraus op. cit. p. 336, note 44. Referring to Diestel, Kraus writes, 'Die Behauptung Richard Simons, Calvin habe kaum mehr als die hebräischen Buchstaben gekannt, ist eine Verleumdung, die durch jeden seiner alttestamentlichen Kommentare widerlegt wird.' (This comment was omitted from the ET of Kraus's article in Interp 31).

62. Baumgartner, op. cit., p. 26, concludes, '... mais, nulle part, il ne se donne pour en avoir fait une étude spéciale, et ce n'est pas là non plus ce que nous avons voulu prouver par le présent travail; il était trop foncièrement consciencieux pour s'ériger en maître dans une branche des sciences humaines où il se savait surpassé par d'autres.' See also p. 61.

63. For example, on Amos 8.8 (CO 43:148), he speaks of 'those skilled in the Hebrew language (linguae hebraicae periti)'; on Jer. 19.1-3 (CO 38:320), commenting on the Hebrew word rendered by him 'east gate', he writes, '... others translate it "of the earthen gate", I do not see the reason (non video rationem); I leave this to be examined by those who are more practised in the language (relinquo hoc excutiendum magis exercitatis in lingua).' [trans. mine]; and on Isa. 3.17 (CO 36:92), with reference

to the items of jewelry mentioned, writes 'As to the particulars, I shall not stay to explain them, especially as the best Hebrew scholars (*peritissimi Hebraeorum*) have doubts about some of them, and cannot distinguish with certainty the forms of these ornaments.' See also Isa. 13.21 (CO 36:296).

64. See T. H. L. Parker Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, pp. 129-42 for details.

65. See references in note 63 above.

66. This conclusion is also reached by P. A. Verhoef in his article 'Luther's and Calvin's Exegetical Library'. On pp. 16f., he writes, 'My own observations would endorse this statement as being correct. It is quite evident that Calvin had a good working knowledge of Hebrew. ... On the other hand it is also clear that he was not a distinguished authority in Hebrew.' This is further endorsed by B. Hall in his essay 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries' which is found in The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, ed S. L. Greenslade, pp. 38-93. On p. 89, Hall writes, 'He [Calvin] was competent in Hebrew without being a distinguished Hebraist ...'

67. Hall, 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries', *op. cit.*, p. 43.

68. See the article by J. Friedman entitled 'Sebastian Münster, the Jewish Mission, and Protestant Antisemitism', pp. 238-59.

69. A monk of Freiburg in 1521 is reputed to have said, 'Those who speak this tongue are made Jews.' Quoted in Hall, 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries', *op. cit.* p. 43. See also R. G. Hobbs, 'Martin Bucer on Psalm 22 etc.', pp. 144f. Luthers fear of Judaizing is described by

J. Friedman op. cit. See also the same author's essay 'Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica', p. 68.

70. G. Breen in his John Calvin: A Study in French Humanism, p. 65, writes, 'Even the enlightened Erasmus feared that the study of Hebrew would perhaps cause a revival of Judaism, just as the study of the classical languages had issued in much paganism.' He refers to a letter written by Erasmus to Capito, Feb. 26, 1517.

71. Baumgartner, op. cit., pp. 11ff. H.-J. Kraus 'Calvins exegetische Prinzipien' p. 336 (ET p. 14), writes, 'Sind die *circunstantia* ins Licht gerückt, so muss, damit die Meinung des Autors klar erkannt werden kann, der sensus genuinus einer Aussage bzw. des Vorliegenden Textes ermittelt werden. ... Nur mit soliden hebräischen und griechischen Sprachkenntnissen kann die angezeigte Aufgabe erfüllen werden.'

72. CO 40:23/24, 'Cur autem contextum hebraicum latinae versioni addere visum fuerit, ne tibi forte mirum videatur, paucis accipe ... Huc etiam accedit, quod idem doctissimus interpres Calvinus solet primum singulos versos hebraicos recitare, deinde in latinum sermonem convertere.'

73. cf. T. H. L. Parker's Calvin: A Biography, p. 92. See also the references given in note 57 above.

74. They were: (1). The Rabbinical Bible printed by Dutch Christian printer, Daniel Bomberg, in Venice, 1516/17. This had the Hebrew text and was accompanied by Targums and Rabbinical Commentaries. The Qere-Kethib were present in the margins along with other variant readings. A later edition (1524/5) included the Massorah of Jacob ben Chayim. (2). The *Biblia Polyglotta Complutensia*, printed at Alcalá, 1514-17, though it was not published till 1520 or 1522. This Bible had the Hebrew Text, the LXX, and the Vulgate in parallel columns. In addition it included a Hebrew vocabulary and the

Targum of Onkelos. (3). The Hebrew Bible of Sebastian Münster, from whom Calvin may have learned some of his Hebrew, printed in Basel 1536. (4). The Hebrew Bible of Robert Estienne, printed in Paris, 1539-44. This included David Kimchi's Commentary on the Minor Prophets, the Massorah on Daniel, and, in places, the Qerê-Kethib. See G. Johnson 'Calvinism and Interpretation', pp. 161-72 and for more detail B. Hall, 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries', op. cit. pp. 48-55. N. N. Paluku Rubinga Calvin commentateur du prophète Isaïe, thinks that Calvin probably used primarily Münster for Isaiah, pp. 35-6. The footnotes to the CTS translation of Calvin's Harmony on the Last Four Books of Moses by C. W. Bingham also point in this direction for Calvin's work on the Pentateuch.

75. See, for example, Ps. 11.1 (CO 31:121), 'Verbum nâr quod vertimus migrare, scribitur in numero plurali: in singulari tamen legitur: quod corrupte fieri arbitror.' See also Jer. 2.20 (CO 37:518); Amos 8.8 (CO 43:49). Commenting on Jer. 49.23 (CO 39:374), Calvin speaks of 'multi codices'. He states, '... mûg means to be dissolved or melted. But there is here a different reading; many copies have bîm d'gh connected with this ...'

76. Bomberg's Hebrew Bible (1516/17) was the first printed text to have the Qerê readings in the margin, it also included many other variant readings. The second edition (1524/5) also had the Massorah Parva. The other Hebrew Bible containing Qerê-Kethib was that of Estienne (1539-44), though only a few sections had the Qerê and only Daniel the Massorah. See Hall 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries', op. cit. pp.51-54.

77. Calvin frequently refers to the LXX as the 'graeci interpretes'. See, for example, Ex. 9.16 (CO 24:112). Most frequently Calvin criticizes the LXX rendering, for example, Ex. 13. 18 (CO 24:144); Ezek. 10.1 (CO 40:208); Amos 5.26 (CO 43:99); Joel 2.28 (CO 42:566) etc.

Occasionally, however, he commends it, see Isa. 9.6 (CO 36:197).

78. See chapter 1 and T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, pp. 9, 13ff., and 29.

79. See A. Baumgartner Calvin hébraïsant, p. 31 and Parker, op. cit., p. 23.

80. See, for example, Dan 1.7 (CO 40:542) and Dan. 2.1 (CO 40:557). In the course of his exposition of the latter passage Calvin writes, 'The clause at the end of the verse which they usually translate "his sleep was interrupted", does not seem to have this sense; another explanation which our brother D. Antonius gave you suits it better ...'. 'Antonius' here is Antoine Chevallier who had been appointed to teach Hebrew by the Academy at Geneva in March 1559 (see Parker, op. cit. p. 23).

81. See, for example, R. K. Harrison The Dead Sea Scrolls, London (1961), p. 49.

82. See, for example, his comments on Isa. 9.7 (CO 36:199), where, speaking about the integrity of the text, he states that '... the Rabbins were so close observers of the minutest portion of a letter (et tam diligentes vel minimi cuiusque apicis observatores fuerint Rabbini) ...'

83. Luther, for example, held this view, see H. Bornkamm Luther and the Old Testament, pp. 3f.

84. Jonah 4.6-8 (CO 43:273).

85. In his translation of Calvin's Commentary on the Psalms Vol. 1, p. 257. (nb. this was meant to be a four volume set covering Calvin's entire commentary, but the other volumes never appeared. Vol. 1 covers Psalms 1--33).

86. CO 31:228f.

87. See, for example, Ps. 17.3 [v. 4 in Hebrew] (CO 31:160f.); Jer. 49.23 (CO 39:374f.); Ez. 14.4 (CO 40:301f.); Amos 2.7 (CO 43:25) and Amos 5.16 (CO 43:88).

88. For example, Ps. 19.3 (CO 31:196) and Isa. 5.27 (CO 36:122).

89. Amos 2.7 (CO 43:25) and Ex. 14.1 (CO 24:147).

90. In the 17th. Century, for example, see J. Owen Works ed. Goold Vol. 16 pp. 320ff.

91. Commenting on Heb. 11.21 (CO 55:159), for example, he refers to the LXX translation of Gen. 47.31. He writes, 'This is one of the places where we can conjecture that originally the Hebrews made no use of pointing (*puncta olim apud Hebraeos non fuisse in usu*), because if they had had the same way of writing as today the Greek translators would not have made the mistake of rendering "staff" instead of "bed". See also Zech. 11.7 (CO 44:306), where Calvin states that the points were not in use in Zechariah's time. However, he argues that the points cannot be ignored or rejected, but that on the other hand one should not be slavishly bound to them. He writes, 'He says that he took two rods, that he called one n'm, "beauty", and that he called the other hblfm, "chords", rendered "destroyers" by those who adhere to the Hebrew points (*in punctis haeremus*); but as hbl, both in the singular and plural, has the meaning of a rope or cord, the Prophet, I have no doubt, means by hblfm, ropes or bindings. Grammar, indeed, does not allow this; but Zechariah did not set down the points, for they were not then in use. I, indeed, know with how much care the old scribes contrived the points, when the language had already ceased to be in common use. They then who neglect, or wholly reject the points, are certainly void of all judgement and reason; but yet some discrimination ought to

be exercised; for if we read here "destroyers", there is no meaning; if we read "cords", there is no letter changed, but only two points are altered. As then the subject itself necessarily demands this meaning, I wonder that interpreters suffer themselves to be servilely constrained, so as not to regard the design of the Prophet.' However, it would seem that Calvin thought that, although the vowel signs were not always used in writing, they yet did always exist among the Hebrews. Thus, in his commentary on Ps. 15.4 (v. 5 in Hebrew), Calvin states that, 'The Greek translation would agree very well, were it not for the Hebrew points (*nisi puncta obstant*); which, although the Hebrews were never without, yet it is plausible that they were not always expressed by them when they wrote (*quibus tametsi nunquam caruerunt Hebraei, credibile tamen est non semper scribendo ab illis fuisse expressa*).' (trans. mine)

92. See the quotation from Zech. 11.7 in the previous note. See also his comments on Ez. 1.7 (CO 40:34) where Calvin suggests that the points for the word gl should be emended. On Isa. 41.14 (CO 37:44), we meet one of the rare occasions on which he agrees with Jerome, 'On this account I agree with Jerome, who ... attaches no importance to the circumstance that the first syllable of mtîm is here written with S^wwa instead of S^erê; for points so closely allied might easily have been interchanged.' And, finally, on Isa. 45.9,10 (CO 37:136), speaking of the possibility of shin being read instead of sin, writes, '... I acknowledge that such diversity and change may easily occur ...'.

93. See, for example, once again Zech. 11.7 quoted in note 109. See also his comments on Ps. 22.16 [v. 17 in Hebrew] (CO 31:228f.). In cases where he is willing to amend the consonantal text it is usually only on a very minor scale, such as a daleth to a resh, and vice versa (for example, Ez. 6.14 [CO 40:152]; Ps. 86.14 [CO 31:796]), or a he to a heth and vice versa (eg. Jer. 16.7 [CO 38:242]; Ex. 14.1 [CO 24:147]), or a beth to a kaph and vice versa (Jer.

49.23 [CO 39:374]), or a sameq to a mem (Isa. 49.12 [CO 37:203]), or as we have seen, sin to shin and vice versa (Isa. 45.9,10 [CO 37:136]). Occasionally Calvin is ready to make larger changes, thus on Ez. 16.45 (CO 40:376) he thinks that the word 'hwtk ought to be emended to 'hwtkk.

94. Sometimes Calvin concludes that it cannot, so he suggests an emendation. An example of this is found in his commentary on Jer. 49.23 (CO 39:374), Calvin argues that the text as it stands makes little sense, thus he suggests reading kaph instead of beth. See also Ex. 14.1 (CO 24:147),

95. For example, in his commentary on Psalm 86.14 (CO 31:796), 'Some read zrfm which means 'strangers'. Indeed Scripture often denotes barbaric cruelty by this word. I, however, preferred following what was more widely received (Ego tamen quod receptius erat sequi malui). For since the Hebrew word for 'the proud' is zdfm, it is quite possible, on account of their similarity (propter similitudinem), that daleth was changed into (mutatem fuisse in) resh. Moreover, in this way the context would flow better ...' (trans. mine). See also the references given above.

96. Thus commenting on Amos 5.16 (CO 43:88) he writes, 'However, as all the Hebrews (omnes Hebraei) agree concerning the significance of this word, I am not willing without authority (sine autoritate) to make any changes (quidquam mutare).'

97. On Jer. 49.23 (CO 39:374), he mentions 'multi codices'; Isa. 49.12 (CO 37:203), he speaks of a 'varia lectio'; Ps. 17.11 (CO 31:164), he speaks of 'some codices (nonnulli codices)' as having a 'different reading'. We have already mentioned the fact that the second edition of Bomberg's Bible had other variant readings besides those of the Qerê-Kethib and the Massorah. However, Calvin may also have taken them from one of the Grammars (see note 102) or even a Commentary.

98. cf. Ps. 86.14 (CO 31:796), quoted in note 112.

99. Baumgartner Calvin hébraïsant, pp. 48ff., deals with Calvin's use of etymologies.

100. T. H. L. Parker Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, pp. 56-68.

101. cf. Kraus, 'Calvins exegetische Prinzipien', pp. 333f. (ET p. 12), 'In his exegetical work Calvin made use of all the fields of scholarly endeavour of the Reformation period: Hebrew and Greek linguistics, geography, classical studies, medicine, and philosophy. All available research and knowledge was called on to aid in the explanation of biblical texts.'

102. Grammars by Christian Hebraists included: (1). Conrad Pellican's Hebrew Grammar of 1503/4 De modo legendi et intelligendi Hebraea. According to Kraus Calvin was 'primarily indebted' to this book for his training in Hebrew (op. cit. p. 336, ET p. 14). (2). Johann Reuchlin's De Rudimentis Hebraecis Linguis of 1506. (3). S. Münster's Epitome Grammaticae Hebraicae, 1520 and his Institutiones Grammaticae of 1524. (4). W. F. Capito's Institutiones Hebraicae, 1526. See Hall 'Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries' in The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day, ed S. L. Greenslade, pp. 43-47 and see Appendix I, pp. 520f. See also N. N. Paluku Rubinga Calvin commentateur du prophète Isaïe, p. 48 and note 44.

103. On Amos 8.8 (CO 43:148), he speaks of 'those skilled in the Hebrew language (linguae hebraicae periti)'. On Isa. 3.17 (CO 36:92) he mentions the opinion of 'the most learned Hebrew scholars (peritissimi Hebraeorum)'.

104. Commenting on Dan. 9.24 (CO 41:167), Calvin writes,

'I do not usually refer to conflicting opinions, because I take no pleasure in refuting them, and the simple method which I adopt pleases me best, namely, to expound what I think delivered by the Spirit of God.' See also T. H. L. Parker's Supplemeta Calviniana, p. 17, and R. C. Gamble 'Brevitas et Facilitas etc.', p. 3.

105. See chapter 2, pp. 76-78, and the comments made there.

106. See the references given in Chapter 2, notes 46-53.

107. Dan. 4.10-16 (CO 40:658).

108. See Ps. 112.5 (CO 32:174), '... David Kimhi, qui fidelissimus est inter Rabbinos.'

109. CO 42:560, (trans. mine).

110. CO 42:560f., (trans. mine).

111. CO 42:560, (trans. mine).

112. See, for example, Ps. 86.11 (CO 31:795) and Jer. 23. 38-9 (CO 38:455), 'Now with respect to the meaning of this word, interpreters generally derive it from the root nsh as if he were the final letter. However, I doubt the soundness of this. ... I, rather incline to a different explanation ... Now it must be noted that the word ms', which has occurred many times now, is derived from the same root. ms', therefore, which means 'burden', comes from ns', which means 'to lift up'. (trans. mine)

113. See, for example, Ps. 81.5 (CO 31:760f.).

114. For example, on Ezek. 14.7 (CO 40:304), Calvin derives the word nzr from the root zwr. See further Ezek. 6.4 (CO 40:139) and Ezek. 6.6 (CO 40:142). See A.

Baumgartner Calvin hébraïsant, p. 50, for further examples.

115. See, for example, Numb. 24.6 (CO 25:289), 'hlfm; Ps. 81.5 (CO 31:760f.), 'dôt; and Ezek. 7.19 (CO 40:167), ndh (here Calvin appeals to the parallelistic structure of the verse).

116. See, for example his statements in Institutes I.viii.10 (OS III.79.10-16).

117. F. Edwards The Relation between Biblical Hermeneutics and the Formation of Dogmatic Theology: An investigation in the Methodology of J. Calvin (Oxford D.Phil. Thesis, 1967), pp. 149f. See also the introduction to F. L. Battles and H. M. Hugo, Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, pp. 80-81, where a list of rhetorical terms as found in Calvin's commentary on the De Clementia is given.

118. Calvin was born in 1509, his commentary on the De Clementia was published in April 1532, this means it was probably written in 1531. See the introduction to F. L. Battles and H. M. Hugo, Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia pp. 1-11 and 76-81.

119. F. Edwards op. cit.

120. CO 31:195 (trans. mine).

121. CO 32:171f, (trans. mine).

122. CO 37:44 (trans. mine).

123. CO 31:91f. The translation is T. H. L. Parker's.

124. Institutes I.xiii.15 (OS III.129.17-25). L. P. Smith, in his essay 'Calvin as an Interpreter of Ezekiel',

p. 269, shows something of Calvin's use of parallelism in his Lectures on the First Twenty Chapters of Ezekiel.

Chapter 6

1. The full title is Calvinus judaizans h. e. judaicae glossae et corruptelae quibus J. Calvinus illustrissima S. S. loca et testimonia de gloriosa trinitate, deitate Christi et Sp. S. cumprimis autem vaticinia prophetarum de adventu Messiae, nativitate eius, passione, resurrectione, ascensione, in coelos et sessione ad dextram Dei detestandum in modum corrumpere non exhorruit, per Aegidium Hunnium. As can be seen it is rather comprehensive in its criticism of Calvin! Unfortunately, I have not had access to the work itself.

2. Isa. 16.1 (CO 36:300).

3. CO 37:245.

4. CO 37:392.

5. CO 23:14.

6. CO 23:15.

7. CO 38:680.

8. See, for example, *Calvin on Isa. 52.3* (CO 37:245); Isa. 53.8 (CO 37:260f.); Ps. 33.6 (CO 31:327). See also A. Baumgartner Calvin hébraïsant et interprète de l'Ancien Testament, pp. 37ff., E. Reuss 'Calvin considéré comme exégète', p. 246, and W. Vischer 'Calvin, exégète de l'Ancien Testament', p. 225.

9. Isa. 4.2 (CO 36:96), 'They who limit this passage to the person of Christ make themselves ridiculous to the Jews (ridiculos se faciunt Iudaeis), as if it were because of scarcity that they tortured passages of Scripture for their own convenience (ac si prae inopia scripturae locos in suum commodum torquerent). But there are other passages of

Scripture from which it may be more clearly proved that Christ is true God and true man, so that there is no need of ingenious glosses.'

10. A defence of Calvin's position on the Old Testament was written in reply to Hunnius by David Pareus of Heidelberg in 1596. It was entitled, as we might expect, Calvinus Orthodoxus.

11. Thus, for example, on Isa. 7.14 (CO 36:154-7), Calvin strongly argues against applying this to Hezekiah. He writes, '... it contains an illustrious prediction concerning the Messiah, who is here called Immanuel ... Some allege that the person here mentioned is Hezekiah; and others, that it is the son of Isaiah. ... Others think ... that the Prophet spoke of some child who was born at that time, by whom, as by an obscure picture, Christ was foreshadowed. ... Now it is certain, as we have already said, that this name Immanuel could not be literally applied to a mere man; and, therefore, there can be no doubt that the Prophet referred to Christ.' See also Calvin on Isa. 9.6-7 and Mal. 3.1 (CO 44:461ff.). V. Forestier in his dissertation entitled Calvin exégète de l'Ancien Testament, pp. 17, 20, also notes that the passages of the Old Testament which Calvin relates directly to Christ are small.

12. See, for example, Gen. 18.2 (CO 23251); Ex. 3.2 (CO 24:35f.); Hos. 12.3-5 (CO 42:455). See further H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, pp. 138ff.

13. Thus on Josh. 5.14 (CO 25:464), he writes, 'We have said that in the books of Moses the name of Jehovah is often attributed to the presiding Angel, who was undoubtedly the only begotten Son of God. He is indeed very God, and yet in the person of the Mediator by dispensation, he is inferior to God. I willingly receive what ancient writers teach on this subject, - that when Christ anciently appeared in human form, it was a prelude to the mystery which was afterwards

exhibited when God was manifested in the flesh. We must beware, however, of imagining that Christ at that time became incarnate ...'

14. Rom. 10.4 (CO 49:196), trans. mine. According to W. Vischer, 'Calvin, exégète de l'Ancien Testament', p. 223, Calvin saw Christ everywhere in the Old Testament.

15. The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, p. 3.

16. Commenting on 1 Jn. 3.2 (CO 55:331f.), and the perfection of our spiritual capacities in glory, Calvin writes, 'Yet the perfection of glory will not be so great in us that our seeing will comprehend God totally, for the diversity of proportion between us and Him will even then be very great (Longa enim tunc quoque erit inter nos et ipsum proportionis distantia).' Again on 1 Jn. 3.8, he states that, 'there is a wide difference between God and creatures (longe diversa ratio in Deo et creaturis).' F. Edwards remarks that Calvin's doctrine of accommodation is a 'logical correlate' of his doctrine of God and man, The Relation between Biblical Hermeneutics and the Formation of Dogmatic Theology, p. 240.

17. cf. Ex. 3.2 (CO 24:35), 'It was necessary that he should assume a visible form, that he might be seen by Moses, not as he was in his essence, but as the infirmity of the human mind could comprehend him (non qualis erat in essentia, sed qualem capere poterat humanae mentis infirmitas). For thus we must believe that God, as often as he appeared of old to the holy patriarchs, descended in some way from his majesty (descendisse quodammodo ex sua altitudine), that he might reveal himself as far as was useful, and as far as their comprehension would admit (et ferebat eorum captus).' See Dowey The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, p. 4 and F. L. Battles's essay on this subject, 'God was Accommodating Himself', p. 32.

18. Ezek. 9.3,4 (CO 40:196), 'quia non potest a nobis

comprehendi Deus, nisi quatenus se attemperat ad nostrum modulum.'

19. 'God was Accommodating Himself', p. 32.

20. Commenting on Isa. 6.1, Calvin writes, '... since the understandings of men cannot rise to his boundless height, how can he be seen in a visible shape? But we ought to be aware that, when God exhibited himself to the view of the Fathers, he never appeared such as he actually is, but such as the capacity of men could conceive (nunquam apparuisse qualis est, sed qualis hominum sensu capi poterat). Though men may be said to creep on the ground, or at least dwell far below the heavens, there is no absurdity in supposing that God comes down to them (Deum ad ipsos descendere) in such a manner as to cause some kind of mirror to reflect the rays of his glory. There was, therefore, exhibited to Isaiah such a form as enabled him, according to his capacity, to perceive the inconceivable majesty of God...' (CO 36:126). And on Ezek. 1.13 (CO 40:41), he writes, 'And hence we gather, how humanely, nay, how indulgently, God deals with us. For, as on his part, he sees how small is our comprehension, so he descends to us (Nam ab una parte videt quam exiguus sit noster modulus, ideo ad nos decendit) ...'. See also C. Ashley, John Calvin's Utilization of the Principle of Accommodation, p. 25.

21. cf. Institutes I.v.6; Gen. Argumentum (CO 23:7/8), 'This is the reason why the Lord, that he might invite us to the knowledge of himself, places the fabric of heaven and earth before our eyes, rendering himself, in a certain manner, manifest in them.' In the Catechism of the Church of Geneva of 1545 in answer to the question 'Why do you add "Creator of Heaven and Earth", the pupil was meant to answer, 'As he has manifested himself to us by works, (Rom. 1.20) in these too we ought to seek him. Our mind cannot take in his essence. The world itself is, therefore, a kind of mirror in which we may view him in so far as it concerns us to know.'

See also Battles op. cit. p. 21.

22. Battles op. cit. p. 21

23. CO 23:5/6.

24. CO 23:7/8.

25. See Dowey The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, p.4, who speaks of 'two varieties' of accommodation.

26. Institutes II.ii.19 (OS III.261.15ff.), '... our own insight ... is utterly blind and stupid in divine matters (in rebus divinis caecam prorsus esse et stupidam).' See also Institutes II.vi.1 and Jn. 1.5 (CO 47:5f.). cf. O. Breen J. Calvin: A Study in French Humanism, pp. 159-61.

27. This is true of what Calvin calls the 'semen religionis' implanted in man by virtue of his creation in the image of God (Institutes I.iv) and of the knowledge of God in nature (Institutes I.v.11-15).

28. D. Wright's essay 'Calvin's Pentateuchal Criticism', deals with accommodation as it effects the *content of God's* revelation of law in the Pentateuch, see especially pp. 39ff.

29. Battles op. cit. pp. 20f. and 34ff.

30. For Calvin 'The natural order was that the frame of the universe should be the school in which we were to learn piety, and from it passover to eternal life and perfect felicity.' (Institutes II.vi.1, [OS III.320.13-15]) But in the state of sin into which the human race has fallen the knowledge of God in nature no longer achieves this end, rather 'after man's rebellion, our eyes - wherever they turn - encounter God's curse' (OS III.320.15-17). See also Dowey Knowledge of God, pp. 81-85.

31. Institutes II.vi.1 (OS III.320.37ff.), 'Surely after the fall of the first man no knowledge of God apart from the Mediator has had power unto salvation.'

32. There has never been, in any of Calvin's three periods of the history of revelation, any knowledge of God as gracious outside of Christ. We saw this in the third chapter of the present study. cf. references in note 35 of the present chapter.

33. cf. Dowey Knowledge of God, p. 165.

34. For an account and criticism of the 19th. Century concept of 'Progressive Revelation' see J. Rogerson's essay, 'Progressive Revelation: Its History and its Value as a Key to Old Testament Interpretation' in The Epworth Review 9 (1982), pp. 73-86.

35. Institutes II.vi.4 (OS III.325.41ff.), 'In this sense Irenaeus writes that the Father, himself infinite, becomes finite in the Son (in Filio esse finitum), for he has accommodated himself to our little measure lest our minds should be overwhelmed with the immensity of his glory (quia se ad modulum nostrum accommodavit, ne mentes nostras immensitate suae gloriae absorbeat).' See also 2 Cor. 4.4 (CO 50:51) and Col. 1.15 (CO 52:84f.).

36. Gen. 32.29 (CO 23:446).

37. Dowey speaks of the content of the knowledge of God the redeemer, which is Christ, as being 'involved in successive forms of historical presentation' (Knowledge of God, p. 205).

38. Thus in Institutes II.vi.2 (OS III.323.30), Calvin writes, '... under the law Christ was always set before the holy fathers as the end (obiectum=object) to which they should direct their faith.' And on Isa. 40.21 (CO 37:21), he

writes, 'We indeed have one and the same faith today as the the fathers had (una vero et eadem nobis hodie fides cum patribus), since they acknowledge the same God as we do, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (trans. mine).

39. cf. D. Wright 'Calvin's Pentateuchal Criticism', pp. 37ff.

40. This tendency in his exegesis of the Old Testament can be seen in Calvin's interpretation of the Sabbath Command as found in the Harmony on the Last Four Books of Moses (CO 24:575-602) and especially Institutes II.viii.28-34. See also Doney Knowledge of God, p. 226, who speaks about a process of 'universalization' in Calvin's exegesis of the decalogue. This process involves 'a freeing of the command from its accommodated form, so that its eternal truth may be seen.'

41. Calvin's view has little to do with that of modern day dispensationalists. Calvin makes use of the word 'administration (administratio)' as well as 'dispensation (dispensatio)'. However, there is an overlap of ideas inasmuch as by 'administration' Calvin means a definite period in God's dealing with mankind which has its own distinctive characteristics. Thus, in Institutes II.vii.2 (OS III.328.1f.), Calvin writes, 'We must here note in passing that the kingdom finally established within the family of David is a part of the law, and contained under the administration of Moses.' The word translated 'administration' here by F. L. Battles is the Latin word 'ministerium'. Beveridge translated it 'dispensation'. In Institutes II.x.2, Calvin states that although the Covenant made with the Patriarchs is substantially the same as that in the New Testament, yet 'administratio variat' (OS III.404.7). The word 'administratio' here is translated 'dispensation' by Battles.

42. cf. Gen. 32:29-30 (CO 23:445-7).

43. See Calvin on Gal. 3.19 (CO 50:216); 3.23 (CO 50:219) and 3.24 (CO 50:220).

44. cf. Dowey Knowledge of God, pp. 164f. By 'mode' here is what Calvin refers to as 'mode of administration' (modus administracionis) which refers to a distinct way or manner of dealing within a particular period in the history of God's revelation. See, for example, Institutes II.xi.1 (OS III.423.12), where Calvin contrasts the 'modus administracionis' with the 'substantia' of the Old Testament and the New. In the same section of the Institutes he refers to the Old Testament and the New as differing in their 'mode of training' (modo exercitacionis [OS III.423.22]), a variation on the same idea.

45. CO 23:446.

46. CO 23:445-6, 'se Deus patefecerat sub multis involucris, ut nondum familiaris esset nec liquida cognitio ... licet pium sit votum Iacob, non obtemperat, quia nondum maturum erat tempus plenae revelationis. Nam patres initio oportuit in exigua aurorae luse ambulare ...'

47. CO 24:230, (trans. mine). See also the argumentum to Calvin's Commentary on Genesis (CO 23:6/5).

48. CO 23:446, '... se magis conspicuum exhibuerit Mosi ...'

49. CO 23:446, 'Sed quia inter patriarchas et apostolos medius erat ...' Here Calvin's threefold division of history is quite clear.

50. *ibid.* '... Deum, qui patribus absconditus fuerat facie ad faciem vidisse prae illis dicitur.' Calvin continues in this passage, as we shall see, by comparing the clarity of the revelation given to Moses, the second period, with that available to us in the third period.

51. Gen. argumentum (CO 23:7/8), 'Verum quia nihil magis proclive est quam corrumpi ab hominibus Dei veritatem, ut longo temporis successu quasi a se ipsa degeneret: quo pura historia retineretur eam Dominus scriptis commendari voluit.'

52. See, for example, Isa. 1.13 (CO 36:40), 'For the worship of God since the very beginning of the world was spiritual; that there were other practices under the Old Testament that were different from ours was done with respect to men, not God. For in God there is no change. However, he accommodates himself to the weakness of men (sed ad imbecillitatem hominum sese accommodat). Thus that form of government (ea gubernatio) was fitting for the Jews, just as pedagogues are for young children (ut pueris sua paedagogia).' [trans. mine] See also Lev. 11.3 (CO 24:348).

53. On Jer. 33.15 (CO 39:67), Calvin speaks about the land and Israel as a political institution as a form of accommodation. He says, 'It is, at the same time, necessary to bear in mind the character of Christ's kingdom. It is, we know, spiritual; but it is set forth under the image or form of an earthly and civil government; for whenever the Prophets speak of Christ's kingdom, they set before us an earthly form, because spiritual truth, without any metaphor, could not have been sufficiently understood by a *rude people in their childhood* (a rudi populo in illa pueritia). There is no wonder, then, that the Prophets, wishing to accommodate their words (sermonem suam accommodare) to the capacity of the Jews, should so speak of Christ's kingdom as to portray it before them as an earthly and civil government (proponerent visibilem eius imaginem in terreno et politico imperio).' See also Joel 3.18,19 (CO 42:598).

54. II.vii.1 (OS III.326.29f.).

55. *ibid.*

56. II.vii.1 (OS III.326.22-27).

57. II.vii.1 (OS III.326.37-327.15). See also Serm. Deut. 5.28-33 (CO 26:418f.), 'For the sacrifices which were ordained in the law were not meant to draw the people away from the salvation which we have in Jesus Christ, on the contrary they were meant to lead them to him. God intended to signify that men are condemned and that they have no way of being reconciled with him except by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (trans. mine)

58. II.vii.1 (OS III.327.15-19). See also Serm. Deut. op cit. (CO 26:418f.).

59. II.vii.1 (OS III.327.25), '... legem Christo non fuisse vacuum.'

60. CO 50:221.

61. CO 49:197f.

62. This idea is worked out at length in Calvin's Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, especially in his comments on Chapter 3.19-24. Commenting on Gal. 3.24 (CO 50:220), Calvin writes, 'A schoolmaster (paedagogus) is not appointed for a person's whole life, but only for childhood, as the etymology of the word shows. Besides, in training a boy, the object is to prepare him by childish elements for greater things. The comparison applies in both respects to the law, for its authority was limited to a fixed age and its purpose was to advance its scholars only to the stage where, when the elements had been learned, they could make progress in further education. And so he says, unto Christ. The grammarian trains a boy and then hands him over to someone else who then polishes him in the higher disciplines. Thus the law was as it were the grammarian who started its pupils off and then handed them over to the theology of faith for their completion.' On Gal. 3.19 (CO

50:216), he writes, 'I reply that the whole of that administration was temporary and was given for the purpose of keeping the ancient people in the faith of Christ.'

63. See the reference to Gal. 3 in the preceding note. Parker, Old Testament, pp. 63f., points out that Calvin's interpretation of the Pauline concept of the pedagogue was controlled by the educational system of his own day. A student, before proceeding to the more advanced stage of his studies, had to pass through what was known as the trivium. This meant learning and memorizing the rules of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic largely 'parrot fashion'. All this was thought to be necessary in order to be able to pursue more advanced studies.

64. II.xi.2 (OS III.424.11ff.).

65. OS III.424.18, 'Eadem inter illos Ecclesia: sed cuius aetas adhuc puerilis erat.' See also F. Edwards The Relation between Biblical Hermeneutics and the Formulation of Dogmatic Theology, p. 293.

66. CO 50:220.

67. Joel 3.18,19 (CO 42:598). On Lev. 11.2 (CO 24:347), Calvin describes the Jews in the Old Testament as 'rudes et indomitos', 'uncultured and untamed'.

68. For example, Serm. Deut. 15.1-6 (CO 27:313).

69. Heb. 7.2 (CO 55:89). See also Ex. 30.23 (CO 24:445), God '... set before this ignorant people a light in the sacred symbols (obiectum fuisse rudi populo splendorem in sacris symbolis) that it might affect their external sensations (externos sensus) and gradually as it were by stages lift them up to the knowledge of spiritual realities (ad rerum spiritualium notitiam attollerentur).' [trans. mine] On Ezek. 11.22f. (CO 40:251f.), Calvin states that,

'The Jews were fixed on external symbols (defixi Iudaei in symbolis externis).'

70. II.xi.5 (OS III.429.4-8).

71. II.xi.5 (OS III.427.37f.).

72. II.xi.4 (OS III.427.24f.).

73. II.xi.5 (OS III.427.34ff.).

74. Isa. 1.13 (CO 36:40), 'Nam cultus Dei ab initio mundi, spiritualis fuit: quod autem alia fuerunt exercitia sub veteri Testamento, et diversa a nostris, hoc hominum, non Dei respectu effectum est. In Deo enim nulla est mutatio, sed ad imbecillitatem hominum sese accommodat. Itaque ea gubernatio Iudaeis, ut pueris sua paedagogia, conveniebat.'

75. See, for example, Ex. 29.38-41 (CO 24:495); Lev. 3.1ff. (CO 24:512) and Lev. 6.1ff. (CO 24:526).

76. CO 32:159.

77. On Ps. 2.1-2 (CO 31:43) he appeals to the use made of v. 2 in Acts 4.24. See also Ps. 16.10 (CO 31:156f.) and Ps. 109.8ff. (CO 32:150). For references to Hebrews see Ex. 26 (CO 24:415), Ex. 28 (CO 24:426,428) and see E. Reuss 'Calvin considéré comme exégète', p. 247. See also W. Vischer's article 'Calvin, exégète de l'Ancien Testament', p. 223.

78. Continuing Calvin's comments on the inscription (v. 1 in Hebrew) of Ps. 110 (CO 32:159) where we left off in note 74, Calvin writes, '... and, even supposing we neither had his authority, nor the testimony of the apostle, the psalm itself would admit of no other interpretation; for although we should have a dispute with the Jews, the most obstinate people in the world, about the right application of it, we are able by the most irresistible arguments, to compel them

to admit that the truths here stated relate neither to David not to any other person than the Mediator alone.'

79. See, for example, his comments on Joel 3.7 (CO 42:588) and Joel 3.8 (CO 42:589).

80. Isa. 16.5 (36:303f.).

81. CO 36:198. See also Calvin on Pss. 2.9 (CO 31:48) and 89.3 [v. 4 in Hebrew] (CO 31:812f.). And S. H. Russell's essay 'Calvin and the Messianic Interpretation of the Psalms', pp. 39f.

82. CO 37:18.

83. So K. Fullerton in Prophecy and Authority, p. 135.

84. E. Auerbach Mimesis, pp. 73 and 555.

85. P. Fairbairn The Typology of Scripture, pp. 2ff. See further D. L. Baker's book Two Testaments One Bible, p. 258 (Baker also provides a helpful discussion of the place of typology in the modern context, pp. 239-72), and see also The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia vol. I, Grand Rapids, 1979, p. 25b.

86. *ibid.*

87. H. W. Frei The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, p. 31.

88. The Greek word τύπος occurs a number of times in the New Testament (Acts 7.43 and 44; Rom. 5.14; Heb. 8.5). However, only in Rom. 5.14 is it used in the sense of christological typology. Here Adam is seen as a 'type' of Christ. In its original sense the word means a mark or impression made on some soft substance - such as wax - by pressing something into it - such as a seal - or by a blow from something. Next it means a copy or image like that on

coins. In the context of biblical interpretation 'τύπος' means a type or a pattern. The word ἀντύπος occurs in 1 Pet. 3.21 and Heb. 9.24. See further D. L. Baker Two Testaments One Bible, pp. 252f., who provides helpful charts of the use of τύπος and its derivatives in the New Testament and the Septuagint.

89. CO 49:460.

90. CO 39:45.

91. CO 36:542.

92. CO 44:282f.

93. *ibid.*

94. CO 31:627f. See K. Fullerton Prophecy and Authority, pp. 143-49.

95. CO 31:628. See also Calvin on Heb. 1.8 (CO 55:17), where, speaking of the author's use of Ps. 45, he writes 'It must be admitted that this psalm was composed by Solomon to give a picture of marriage, because he is here celebrating his marriage to the daughter of the king of Egypt. But again it cannot be denied that the reference is to something much loftier than simply to Solomon. To avoid having to recognize Christ as God, the Jews make specious objection to the effect that it is the throne of God that is spoken of, or that the verb 'established' is to be understood. ... After that the sceptre of Christ's kingdom is called the sceptre of righteousness. There was some prototype (lineamenta) of this in Solomon though obscurely (obscura)...' See further his comments on v. 9 (CO 55:18). cf. V. Forestier Calvin exégète de l'Ancien Testament, pp. 18f.

96. CO 31:664.

97. Ps. 22 inscription (v. 1 in Hebrew) [CO 31:219].

98. 31:219.

99. *ibid.* See also his comments on v.1 (v. 2 in Hebrew) [CO31:222], '...this psalm was composed under the influence of the Spirit of prophecy concerning David's king and Lord.' On v. 6 (v. 7 in Hebrew) [CO 31:224], he writes 'We ought, however, principally to call to remembrance the Son of God, in whose person we know this also was fulfilled ...' etc.

100. CO 36:572.

101. CO 24:414-417.

102. CO 24:414f. See also K. Fullerton Prophecy and Authority, pp. 143-46.

103. Thus, commenting on Ex. 25.8 (CO 24:405), whilst allowing a typological interpretation of the ark of the covenant, he warns against an over concentration on the minutiae. He writes, '... we are reminded that all the ancient figures were sure testimonies of God's grace and eternal salvation; and thus Christ was *represented* in them, since all the promises are in Him, yea, and amen. (2 Cor. 1.20) Yet it by no means follows from hence that there were mysteries hidden in all their details, since some, with mistaken acuteness, pass over no point, however trifling, without an allegorical exposition; as, in this passage, for instance, the dimensions of the ark afford them matter of speculation.' See also Ex. 2.4 (CO 24:24); Ex. 26 (24:416f.) and Zech. 14.8 (CO 44:371f.).

104. CO 24:415.

105. See Ex. 28.31-5 (CO 24:422f.), Calvin actually refers to his interpretation of this passage as '*haec allegoria*'! It would seem, however, from his interpretation of Mal. 2.3 (CO

44:439), that Calvin derived this interpretation from Gregory. See also the way in which Calvin interprets the Feast of Tabernacles in Serm. Deut. 16.13-17 (CO 27:400f.). Finally, his interpretation of the clean and unclean animals in Lev. 11.3ff. (CO 24:347f.), is often taken as an example of Calvin's allegory (for example, H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, p. 109; and T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, p 149). However, in the parallel passage in Deuteronomy 14.1-20, Calvin explicitly rejects an allegorical interpretation of the clean and unclean animals! cf. Serm. Deut. 14.1-20 (CO 27:279). Moreover, it may be that Parker's and Fullerton's assessment is based on a misunderstanding of what Calvin is actually saying. The CTS translation, I believe, distorts what Calvin is trying to say. The Latin reads, 'Sicuti vereor ne allegoriis, quibus se multi oblectarunt, insistere parum firmum sit: ita non insector, neque etiam repudio quod traditum fuit a veteris ...'; then follows the allegory. The Latin could be translated, 'Since, I fear, there is little solidity to stand upon in the allegories with which many amuse themselves, accordingly I do not attack, nor even scorn what has been handed down by the ancients ...'. In other words, Calvin does not even think such allegories worth his while to refute! If this is the case, it can hardly be taken as a commendation of allegory.

106. See, for example, Serm. Deut. 1.19-21 (CO 25:656f.) and Institutes II.viii.15.

107. See, for example, Gen. 46.1 (CO 23:559), the promised land '... was an image and pledge of the heavenly country (coelestis patriae imago erat et pignus).' Commenting on Heb. 4.8 (CO 55:47), '... the land of Canaan was only thought of as of value for the reason that it was the type and the symbol (imago ac symbolum) of our spiritual inheritance.'

108. See, for example, Hab. 3.13 (CO 43:581) and Ps. 110.1 (CO 32:160).

109. Ex. 26.1ff. (CO 24:415). In the argumentum to his Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (CO 55:8), he speaks of the 'similitude and symmetry between the shadows and the reality exhibited in Christ (similitudine congruentiaque umbrarum et veritatis in Christo exhibitae)'. H. W. Frei The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, pp. 27-31 and 37, speaks of a 'coherence' between the literal and the typological - type and anti-type - in Calvin's typological interpretations.

110. CO 25:656.

111. CO 24.420f.

112. CO 31:448.

113. CO 31:452.

114. CO 31:453.

115. CO 31:448.

116. CO 31:449.

117. CO 31:455.

118. CO 31:456.

119. *ibid.*

120. S. H. Russell 'Calvin and the Messianic Interpretation of the Psalms', p. 43.

121. Lev. 2.1-4 (CO 24:507).

122. Institutes II.xv.1-2.

123. J. F. Jansen Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ, (London, 1956), pp. 59ff., 74.

124. In Institutes II.vii.2, for example, Calvin writes, 'We must here note in passing that the kingdom finally established within the family of David is a part of the law, and contained under the administration of Moses. From this it follows that both among the whole tribe of Levi and among the posterity of David, Christ was set before the eyes of the ancient folk as in a double mirror.' Calvin says nothing of the Prophets as fulfilling this function.

125. See D. W. Wright 'Calvin's Pentateuchal Criticism', pp. 33-36 and T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, Chapter 4 for an explanation of the organization and structure of Calvin's Harmony.

126. Ex. 20.4-6 (CO 24:376).

127. See, Ex. 28 (CO 24:426), for example.

128. Ex. 28 (CO 24:426), 'Tenendum enim memoria quod diximus, tria considerata esse, tabernaculum, munus sacerdotale, et sacrificium.'

129. Ex. 26 (CO 24:414), '... ecclesiae imago tabernaculum fuit.'

130. CO 24:426, (trans. mine). See H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, pp. 128-33, for another account of Calvin's typological interpretation of the Old Testament Priesthood.

131. CO 24:427 (trans. mine).

132. CO 24:427.

133. *ibid.* It is interesting to note that there is no mention of the prophetic office here which confirms what was said above as to the absence of the prophet in Calvin's Old Testament christological typology.

134. *ibid.* (trans. mine).

135. Ex. 28.2 (CO 24:428).

136. *ibid.* (trans. mine).

137. *ibid.* (trans. mine).

138. Calvin's typology is here founded on what he considers the literal meaning of the text.

139. CO 24:429, (trans. mine).

140. *ibid.*

141. *ibid.*

142. *ibid.* (trans. mine).

143. CO 24:429-30.

144. CO 24:430.

145. *ibid.* (trans. mine).

146. CO 24:431 (trans. mine).

147. *ibid.*

148. CO 24:432 (trans. mine).

149. *ibid.* (trans. mine).

150. *ibid.* (trans. mine). /

151. CO 24:433.

152. CO 24:433-34.

153. The moderation of Calvin's typology can be seen in what he does not typologize, as here. cf. K. Fullerton Prophecy and Authority pp. 144ff.

154. CO 24:488.

155. Lev. 1.1 (CO 24:507).

156. Institutes II.xvi.6 (OS III.489.32f.), 'Quod autem in Mosaicis sacrificiis figurate repraesentatum fuit, id in Christo figurarum archetypo exhibetur.'

157. Ex. 29.38 (CO 24:489).

158. CO 24:490 (trans. mine).

159. CO 24:418 (trans. mine).

160. CO 24:491.

161. *ibid.*

162. *ibid.*

163. Lev. 16.2 (CO 24:501).

164. CO 24:502 (trans. mine). Calvin goes on to reject 'more subtle speculations'. He writes, 'A more subtle speculation might indeed be advanced, viz., that after the goat was presented, its sending away was a type of the resurrection of Christ (resurrectionis Christi figuram); as if the slaying of the one goat testified that the satisfaction for sins was to be sought in the death of Christ; whilst the preservation and dismissal of the other showed, that after Christ had been offered for sin, and had borne the curse of men, He still remained alive. I embrace,

however, what is more simple and certain (simplicius et certius) ...'

165. CO 24:507.

166. Lev. 1.5ff. (CO 24:508).

167. CO 24:507.

168. In Institutes II.vii.16 (OS III.341.1ff.), Calvin writes, 'The ceremonies ... have been abrogated not in effect but only in use.' See also Ex. 29.38-41 (CO 24:490f.); Serm. Deut. 16.9-12 (CO 27:384f.).

169. Ps. 68.19 (CO 31:628), trans. mine.

170. CO 38:290, (trans. mine). cf. H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, p. 127.

171. Ps. 45. inscription [v. 1 in Hebrew] (CO 31:449) and passim.

172. For example, Isa. 33.17 (CO 36:572).

173. See what was said above pp. 260-62 and Russell 'Calvin and the Messianic Interpretation of the Psalms', pp. 42f.

174. CO 23:598. See also Ps. 68.18 [v. 19 in Hebrew] (CO 31:627f.).

175. Ps. 110 inscription [v. 1 in Hebrew] (CO 32:159).

176. Ps. 110.1 [v. 2 in Hebrew] (CO 32:160).

177. CO 43:581 (trans. mine).

178. Isa. 32.1 (CO 36:542), (trans. mine).

179. Isa. 32.3,4 (CO 36:544).

180. CO 36:572, (trans. mine).

181. Ps. 72 inscription [v. 1 in Hebrew] (CO 31:663f.).

182. CO 31:211, (T. H. L. Parker's trans.).

183. *ibid.*

184. Ps. 63.11 [v. 12 in Hebrew] (CO 31:598f.).

185. See J. R. Walchenbach The Influence of David and the Psalms on the Life and Thought of J. Calvin, p. 59.

186. Ps. 68. 19 (CO 31:627f.).

187. See D. C. Steinmetz 'Hermeneutic and Old Testament Interpretation in Staupitz and the Young Martin Luther', pp. 55ff. Calvin comments on Ps. 69.5 show that he was familiar with the fact that Augustine employed this method of interpretation. He writes, 'Augustine has laboured to little purpose to show in what way these words are applicable to Christ; and at length he transfers to his members that which could not be properly said of the Head.'

188. CO 31:637 (trans. mine), '... Davidem non tam privato nomine scripsisse hunc Psalmum, quam in totius ecclesiae persona, quum gestaret capitis imaginem ...'.

189. *ibid.*, (trans. mine).

190. CO 31:638, (trans. mine), 'Iam quum loquutus fuerit David quasi ex ore Christi, et ex ore piorum omnium, quatenus sunt Christi membra, videri nobis absurdum non debet si quando morte obrutis nulla apparet vitae scintilla: imo dum nobis parcit Deus, mature ad hanc meditationem accingere nos

discamus, ut in profundissimis quibusque malorum gurgitibus fides nos sustentet, imo ad Deum erigat.' See also v. 4 [Hebrew v. 5] (CO 31:638f.).

191. CO 31:642, (trans. mine). See also v. 12 [v. 13 in Hebrew].

192. CO 31:646, (trans. mine). Note, Calvin sees this as not being inconsistent with the 'natural meaning' of the Psalm, see what he goes on to say.

193. *ibid.*, (trans. mine). W. Vischer 'Calvin, exégète de l'Ancien Testament', p. 230, writes 'Calvin a fortement réagi contre cette tendance, et ses commentaires sont un grand exemple pour démontrer que l'exégèse littérale n'est pas seulement compatible avec la recherche du sens christologique de l'Ancien Testament, mais qu'elle lui est indispensable.'

Chapter 7

1. Institutes II.x.1 (OS III.403.24--404.1).

2. *ibid.* (OS III.404.1-4).

3. OS III.404.5-7. See also W. Krusche Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin, pp. 189f.

4. CO 38:688, (trans. mine). 'Iam quod ad novum foedus spectat, non sic vocatur quia aliud sit a primo foedere. Deus enim secum non pugnat: neque est sui dissimilis. ... Nunc videndum est cur promittat foedus novum populo. Non dubium est quin hoc referatur ad formam, sicuti loquuntur. Forma autem haec non tantum posita est in verbis, sed primum in Christo, deinde in gratia spiritus sancti, et tota docendi ratione externa: substantia autem eadem manet. Substantiam intelligo doctrinam, quia Deus in evangelio nihil profert, quod lex non contineat. Videmus ergo Deum ab initio sic loquutum esse, ne syllabam quidem postea mutaverit, quantum attinet ad doctrinae summam.'

5. Calvin argues that there are three main points on which 'we must take our stand' (Institutes II.x.2): (1). The Jews did not set their hopes merely on earthly blessings rather 'they were adopted into the hope of immortality' as we are. (2). The covenant which bound them to God was based, not on their own merits, but on 'the mercy of the God who called them'. (3). The Jews 'had and knew Christ as Mediator, through whom they were joined to God and were to share in his promises.' Calvin seeks to illustrate and confirm these points in the sections that follow by referring to the Old and New Testaments.

6. On Ezek. 16.60 (CO 40:393), Calvin says, 'Thus we see that the New Testament flows from that covenant which God made with Abraham, and afterwards sanctioned by the hand of

Moses. That which is promulgated for us in the Gospel is called the New Covenant (*novum foedus*), not because it had no beginning previously, but because it was renewed and better conditions added ...'

7. See H. H. Wolf Die Einheit des Bundes, pp. 15ff. Calvin's understanding of the covenant differs from that of later Federal theology which posited the existence of a covenant of works made with Adam. For Calvin the covenant is first given to Abraham and it is a covenant of Grace. He sees the subsequent covenants mentioned in the Old Testament simply as ratifications of this covenant. In other words, they represent the same covenant restated and reaffirmed. Thus on Ezek. 16.8, Calvin speaks of 'a renewal of the covenant' that God had made with Abraham. See also Calvin's comments on Jer. 31.31 (CO 38:688), where he says, 'It follows, therefore, that that first covenant was inviolable; further, God had formerly made his covenant with Abraham, and the Law was a confirmation of that covenant. Since, therefore, the Law depended on that covenant which God made with his servant Abraham, it follows that it could never happen that God could make a new covenant in the sense of a different or contrary covenant. ... God has never made a covenant different from that which he made in the beginning with Abraham and then testified by the hand of Moses.' See further Ex. 19.1 (CO 24:192f.); Serm. Deut. 1.1-3 (CO 25:611); Serm. Isa. 16.5-6 (SC II.113.15ff.); Isa. 55.3 (CO 37:285), Rom. 3.2 (CO 49:46) and M. E. Oosterhaven 'Calvin on the Covenant', p. 136.

8. W. Niesel The Theology of Calvin, p. 105, see also E. Grin 'L'unité des deux Testaments selon Calvin', pp. 175 and 180. Grin says that for Calvin the person of Christ forms the link between the Old Testament and the New.

9. Institutes II.xi.1 (OS III.423.15).

10. Wolf Die Einheit, p. 19, see Gen. 12.3 (CO 23:177).

11. Institutes II.xi.1 (OS III.433.13). Commenting on Isa. 55.3 (CO 37:285), Calvin writes, 'Whenever, therefore, the word "covenant" occurs in Scripture, the word "grace" ought simultaneously to come into our minds.' (trans. mine).

12. Wolf Die Einheit, p. 19, writes that '... the substantia and res of the covenant is a question of Christ himself (es handelt sich bei substantia und res des Bundes um Christus selbst).' See also pp. 23-28 of the same work.

13. Institutes IV.xiv.1 (OS V.259.4-8).

14. Institutes IV.xiv.6 (OS V.263.1-3).

15. Institutes IV.xiv.16 (OS V.273.15-17).

16. OS III.404.7.

17. Institutes II.xi.1 (OS.III.423.5-7).

18. Institutes II.xi.9 (OS 431.29-35).

19. Institutes II.xi.1 (OS 423.8-11) and II.xi.11 (OS 433.11).

20. See Niesel The Theology of Calvin p. 107 and E. Grin 'L'unité des deux Testaments selon Calvin', p. 178.

21. See T. H. L. Parker Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, p. 74 and E. Fuchs 'L'importance de l'Ancien Testament pour l'éthique chrétienne selon Calvin', p. 15.

22. Niesel op. cit. p. 108. See also Parker, op. cit., pp. 45ff. and Calvin's comments on 1 Jn. 1.2 (CO 55:301f.) and Rom. 3.26 (CO 49:64).

23. Wolff Die Einheit, pp. 29ff. See also W. Krusche Das

Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin, pp. 189f. the two Testaments are the same in substance, but differ in their historical forms of manifestation, or in their forma/ratio docendi. Krusche writes (p. 190), 'Der Dialektik von Einheit und Unterschiedenheit des Alten und Neuen Bundes versucht Calvin - wie wir sehen - mit den Begriffen substantia und forma gerecht zu werden: hinsichtlich der Substanz sind Alter und Neuer Bund ein und derselbe Bund, hinsichtlich der geschichtlichen Gestalt (forma) bzw. der Weise der Verwirklichung in der Geschichte (oeconomia, dispensatio, administratio) sind es zwei verschiedene Bünde.'

24. Institutes II.xi.13.

25. Serm. Deut. 16.1-4 (CO 27:367). God has revealed the promises and the covenant of grace to the fathers in the Old Testament under 'earthly forms'. cf. J. P. Pin 'La promesse et l'espérance selon Jean Calvin', pp. 17f.

26. II.x.2 (OS III.404.7).

27. *ibid.*

28. OS III.404.5f. (trans. mine).

29. CO 38:688.

Chapter 8

1. Calvin as Biblical Commentator: An Investigation into Calvin's Use of John Chrysostom as an Exegetical Tutor, p. 77.

2. p. 32.

3. p. 25.

4. p. 26.

5. Der evangelische Glaube, III, pp. 13, 30 and 268, cited in W. Niesel The Theology of Calvin, pp. 104f.

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