

AN EXAMINATION OF THE FORM AND CONTENT
OF JOHN CALVIN'S PRAYERS

by

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A dissertation submitted to the University
of Edinburgh in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Edinburgh, Autumn, 1959



To the

BOARD OF THE BASEL MISSION

FOREWORD

The writer regards it as a special privilege that this study can be submitted in the year when the Protestant world of the Calvinistic tradition celebrates the 450th anniversary of the great Reformer's birth. At the time when special interest is being taken in the Reformer's personality, the prayers have provided the writer with much material for a deeper understanding of Calvin the real man and of what was important to him.

The reader is kindly invited to excuse the English of this writing, which is surely unorthodox, since the writer's mother tongue is not English but a Swiss dialect. It is hoped that the reader may accept any free or difficult expressions as effects of the writer's German-Swiss background.

Hans W. Maurer

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INTRODUCTION

The writings on the life and work of John Calvin are numerous. Calvin's importance has always been recognised by the theologians both those who have been interested in the history of the Church and those who have been dealing with the trend of theology since the days of the Reformation. Special interest in Calvin has been shown by recent writers. There is the enlightening book by R. Stickelberger, who, in his biography of Calvin, has drawn a better balanced picture of the Reformer than others before. More important still are the works on Calvin's theology. Of the most outstanding ones, there may be mentioned: Erwin Mülhaupt's 'Die Predigt Calvins', which is a study of form and basic thoughts of Calvin's sermons; T.F. Torrance's 'Calvin's doctrine of man', a careful study of Calvin's understanding of man as he is in relation to God; Wilhelm Niesel's 'Die Theologie Calvins', which is a concise outline of the Reformer's theology; Heinrich Quistorp's 'Die letzten Dinge im Zeugnis Calvins', and others. 1)

However, in spite of all the many extensive investigations by so many theologians, very little attention has actually been paid to the p r a y e r s of John Calvin. Even an expert on

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- 1) W.F. Dankbaar : 'Calvin, sein Weg und sein Werk'.
Hans Heinrich Wolf : 'Die Einheit des Bundes'.
Peter Brunner : 'Vom Glauben bei Calvin'.
Alfred Göhler : 'Calvins Lehre von der Heiligung'.
Hermann Bauke : 'Die Probleme der Theologie Calvins'.
Karlfried Froehlich: 'Gottesreich, Welt und Kirche bei Calvin'.
Hermann Weber : 'Die Theologie Calvins, ihre innere Systematik im Lichte struktur-psychologischer Forschungsmethode'.
Alfred de Quervain : 'Calvin, sein Lehren und Kämpfen'.

Reformed theology like Alfred de Quervain, who has written an excellent book on prayer, refers very little to Calvin. 1)

So far there are only two books dealing with Calvin's prayers. One is by an English writer the other by a German. 'Devotions and prayers of John Calvin' by E. Edwards, a small compilation of prayers and extracts from sermons. Then 'Johannes Calvin: Gebete zu den Vorlesungen über Jeremia und Hesekiel' by Werner Dahm, also a small compilation of prayers. Except in each case for a short preface the writers make no comments on the prayers.

An investigation into the form and content of John Calvin's prayers is therefore a fairly new undertaking. Admittedly, the ecclesiastical prayers, or parts of them, have been used for centuries by various churches, especially of the Reformed tradition of the French language. But also in other traditions was this the case. For instance, when the German speaking Reformed Church of the Canton of Aargau, Switzerland, introduced a new liturgy in 1950, more elements of Calvin's ecclesiastical prayers have been taken over than was the case in the earlier liturgies. However, the ecclesiastical prayers form actually only a small part, although an important one, of the many hundreds of prayers by the Reformer.

Now as far as the sources are concerned some difficulties have arisen. The Corpus Reformatorum, which normally provides the student with the writings of Calvin, proved to be of little help. Strange enough, the editors omitted the vast majority of Calvin's prayers which were attached to his lectures and sermons, except for some few. It was therefore necessary to go back to old editions which, very fortunately, have printed those prayers throughout. Most of the citations given in this study are taken

1) Alfred de Quervain: 'Das Gebet'.

from the Amsterdam edition, 1667, the *Recueil des Opuscules*, 1566, 200 sermons on Deuteronomy, 1567, then from Arthur Golding's translation, 1583 and 1584. Of great help were also the volumes of the Calvin Translation Society, which, fortunately, printed the prayers throughout. 1)

A further valuable source has been the manuscripts of yet unpublished sermons and prayers which are to be found in the *Bibliothèque Publique* in Geneva. The history of those manuscripts is a very lamentable one. 2) According to Gagnebin some 43 volumes containing 2023 sermons in manuscript disappeared from the *Bibliothèque Publique* at the beginning of the 19th century. Apparently, they were sold to various people because the library was short of space. In 1823 eight of those volumes have been rediscovered in a second-hand dealer's shop by two students of theology who handed them back to the library. 3) As the situation is at present, out of 44 volumes that were originally in possession of the *Bibliothèque Publique* only twelve have been discovered and regained. 4) Some of them are now being printed and published under the supervision of Hanns Rückert. 5)

This means that our investigation of Calvin's prayers will be incomplete in the sense that not all prayers that were originally written by Raguenier and his companions could be looked up for the simple reason that over one thousand sermons, together with the attached prayers, are still missing. 6) But although we cannot alter the fact that so many sermons and prayers are lost, perhaps beyond rediscovery, there is still a vast

1) See those prayers in English in the appendix.

2) Bernard Gagnebin: *L'incroyable histoire des sermons de Calvin*.

3) *ibidem* p. 14.

4) *ibidem* p. 21.

5) *ibidem* p. 25.

6) *ibidem* p. 5 f.

number available in print and also in manuscript. That should provide us with material enough to draw a fairly adequate picture of the form and content of John Calvin's prayers.

As to the order of this study, it seemed expedient to give an outline of Calvin's doctrine of prayer. This will be done in the first chapter which is based mainly on the Institutes. It is supposed to provide the reader with the basic thoughts of Calvin on the subject of prayer. Thus an appropriate starting point will be made for our investigations in the actual prayers. Chapter two and three will deal with the form and the use of metaphor, simile, and illustrations. Chapter four to nine deal with the content where the main points of the Reformer's theology will be worked out. The final chapter will be of a critical survey of the matter treated, and certain conclusions will be drawn.

One great problem must be mentioned here, namely: What is the better test of what a man really believes, systematic writings or prayers? There may well be a discrepancy between the content of Calvin's systematic theology as set forth in the Institutes and the content of his prayers which were mainly spoken *ex tempore*. Which of the two is more genuine in the sense that it represented more closely what was really important to Calvin? Can one be held against the other? Or should both be seen together in order to reach a balanced view? These questions are most important in the case of Calvin as he was not only a theological writer but also one of the great public preachers of all time, and a man who played a leading part in the whole life of the Church. Many of his opponents who judged Calvin predominantly, if not solely, by the Institutes, and in fact by the least attractive things that he said in the Institutes, have wondered at the influence exercised by such a repulsive man on his Christian contemporaries.

It would throw some light on the matter if we remember that a man in Calvin's position would exercise just as much influence through, for instance, his conduct of public worship as he did through such writings as the Institutes. For this reason it is doubly important to examine carefully such things as Calvin's public prayers and we are indeed fortunate that in spite of serious losses mentioned above so much of this material has survived. As it will be shown below it is the belief of the writer that Calvin's prayers do in fact not only correct some of the mistakes in emphasis but furnish us with new insight into many of the features of the Christian faith that are not adequately expressed elsewhere.

Chapter One

CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF PRAYER

1. The presupposition of prayer

The presupposition of prayer is not rooted in man, but in God. It is God, and He alone, who makes it possible that man's prayer has any sense, object, and goal, at all. More precisely, it is the grace of God manifest and revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son, through He communicates to man and through whom He opens, and offers, all treasures of His heavenly riches.

'Hoc postea explicatum est, Dominum sese ultro ac liberaliter in Christo suo exhibere, in quo pro nostra miseria omnem foelicitatem, pro nostra inopia opulentem offert, in quo caelestes thesauros nobis aperit, ut dilectum Filium suum tota fides nostra intueatur, ab ipso tota nostra expectatio pendeat, in ipso tota spes nostra haereat et acquiescat'.

1)

This Calvin calls a secret and hidden philosophy - 'secreta est absconditaque philosophia' - which, on the side of man, can only be comprehended by faith, which is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit. Faith and prayer are, therefore, very closely bound together, i.e. faith unaccompanied with prayer is not genuine.

The relationship God - man is marked by the spirit of adoption. It is God in Christ who in His great mercy has adopted man in order to make him His child and as such

1) Instit. III. 20, 1.)

summons him to call upon His name. Because God has adopted man and given him the privilege of calling upon His name, man is also given the courage to make his requests known to God.

'Atque hoc ipsum est quod aliquanto ante dixerat, Spiritum adoptionis, qui testimonium Evangelii cordibus nostris obsignat, erigere spiritus nostros ut vota sua exponere Deo audeant, excitare gemitus inenarrabiles (Ro. 8. e. 26), clamare cum fiducia, Abba, Pater'.

1)

The relationship God - man as Father - child relationship is based on the miraculous election of man, which has taken place in Jesus Christ. It is the miracle of grace by which God in a special way turns Himself to man so as to bestow upon this particular man the gift of childhood. Adoption, therefore, is to be understood as the free act of God's love. Any idea of adoption as a necessary act of God is repudiated. Also repudiated is any idea of man having any special qualities that would please God. God speaks to man through Jesus Christ and thus calls man up to respond to Him. In Jesus Christ God calls man to be His child and thus bestows dignity upon him, for man is now given the possibility and permission to respond as a child to his Father in heaven. In the relationship Father - child there are two points to be well marked.

Firstly, God is the creator of all things. But He is not only the creator, He is also the possessor and disposer of all things. Thus He is the true and sovereign Lord holding all riches and treasures in store. The expression 'sovereign' must be stressed here, for God is in no way bound to share His riches with anyone. If He does so, it is His pure act of free grace and love. And this is just the thing God wants

1) Instit. III, 20, 1.

to do: To assign to man some of His treasures, to communicate to man and let him have part of it, to sustain, help, and bless, man day by day by His manifold gifts.

'Ergo id orationis obtinemus beneficio, ut ad eas quae nobis apud caelestem Patrem repositae sunt opes penetremus. Est enim quaedam hominum cum Deo communicatio: qua sanctuarium caeli ingressi, de suis promissis illum coram appellant: ut quod verbo duntaxat annuente crediderunt non fuisse vanum, ubi necessitas ita postulat, experiantur'.

1)

Though Calvin's conception of God is a very majestic one, yet in his prayers, and in his doctrine of it, he speaks very profoundly of God being the loving heavenly Father. God is not only the elevated, exalted, transcendent God far away, though all that must be said of God too, nor is He to be thought of as an impersonal transcendent power, but rather the God who in loving kindness condescends to man and thus becomes the God who is near, the Father who mercifully grants His gifts to His children.

Secondly, man, on the other hand, is not creator but creature. As such he is neither possessor nor disposer of anything. Man is fully and completely dependent on God. His whole life and existence depends on the grace of God. His origin, existence, and destination rest in God his creator. Moreover, man is a fallen creature. Man by his pride, haughtiness, arrogance, and disobedience has rebelled against God and brought misery and destitution upon himself, for by rebellion against his creator he has placed his very existence in jeopardy. This grave fact Calvin recognises right at the beginning of his

1) Instit. III, 20, 2.

exposition on prayer by writing:

'Ex his quae hactenus disputata sunt, non obscure perspicimus quam sit homo bonorum omnium egenus ac inanis: utque illi omnia desint salutis adiumenta. Quare si praesidia quaerit quibus inopiae suae succurrat, extra se exeat, et aliunde ea sibi comparet'.

1)

It must be remembered, therefore, that the relation between God and man has been radically disturbed through the fall of man. The breaking-away of man from God makes his situation before God totally different. He is no more entitled to enter into free fellowship with God, nor has he any right to place his requests before the Lord, no matter how great his necessity, how profound and elevated such a prayer may be. In short, the gravity of his depravity makes his situation hopeless. That is why man, being completely destitute of all good and devoid of every means of procuring his own salvation, has to go beyond himself - extra se exeat oportet - and receive it from some other quarter.

It is that hopeless human situation that calls for an entire and total transformation in the sphere of God-man relationship. It must be understood that, due to man's depravity, there is no power or action, on his side, that would bring about such a transformation in an effective way. On the contrary, man having gone once astray does not turn back to his Father but rather goes further and further away. The power that restores the Father-child relationship is indeed outside man - extra se - , it is in God. It is God who has taken the initiative and wrought an eternal salvation for man. If we ask how, the answer is: in Jesus Christ. It is Christ through whom

1) Instit. III, 20, 1.

man is forgiven his sins, it is Christ through whom the relationship God - man is restored for ever, it is Christ: the perfect obedient Son in whom the Father is well pleased. It is Christ again: the origin, medium, and destination of all the works and ways of God towards man. As we stated at the beginning of this chapter, the pre-supposition of prayer is rooted in God. This has been set forth now, for it is the new man, the true and perfect obedient Son of God, and the new situation created by Him, which makes it possible on the side of man that his prayers may not be in vain. For in Christ, in the new situation, man is now addressing not a hidden, obscure God, but a revealed God who is now well pleased in His Son not only to allow man to pray but also to hear and answer his requests. We shall deal with this more particularly in the chapter on 'Legitimate prayer'. What we want to keep in mind is this: The pre-supposition of prayer is rooted in God. It is only the forgiven, healed, and restored man whose prayers are acceptable before God, that is to say, the prayers of the adopted man. Adoption has taken place in Jesus Christ who is not only the Mediator of man's salvation but also of his prayers.

'Quando vero nemo est hominum dignus qui se Deo re-
praesentet, ac in eius conspectum prodeat: ipse
caelestis Pater, ut nos pudore simul et metu eximeret,
qui nostros omnium animos deicere debebant, Filium
nobis suum donavit Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum: qui
apud ipsum nobis sit advocatus (1. Iohan. 2.a.1.) et
mediator (1. Tim. 2.b.5.), cuius ductu ad ipsum se-
cure accedamus; tali intercessore confisi, nihil,
quod eius nomine petierimus, nobis denegatum iri: ut
illi a Patre nihil denegari potest'.

1)

1) Instit. III, 20, 17.

There is one further point which must be dealt with now. As it has been stated, Christ is the Mediator of man's prayers and thus the only way by which man may approach God. Unless his hope is founded on Him, it deprives him of the privilege of prayer. The right prayer, i.e. the prayer that is acceptable before God, is therefore the prayer that is offered in the name of Jesus Christ.

'Atque ut lex de invocando Deo posita est, ut promissio data, exauditum iri qui invocaverint: ita in nomine Christi invocare peculiariter iubemur: et promissionem habemus propositam, impetraturos quod in eius nomine petierimus'.

1)

To pray to God not in the name of Christ, or in any other name, means to pervert His orders, to disregard His will with the result that such a prayer will not be heard, nor will it be answered.

'Hinc sine controversia clarum est, eos qui in alio quam Christi nomine Deum invocant, illius iussa contumaciter preavaricari, ac voluntatem pro nihilo reputare: nullam vero promissionem habere quae uquam impetrandi'.

2)

This will lead us now to a very burning question: What about those prayers which are offered by people who do not know Christ, who might have never heard of Him yet who may offer their prayers in sincerity and humility even to the 'unknown God' ? Calvin gives a straight answer: All the prayers that are heard and answered, are heard and answered only for the sake of the Mediator Jesus Christ.

1) Instit. III, 20, 17.

2) ibidem.

'Certum quidem est ab initio non fuisse exauditos quicumque precati sunt, nisi Mediatoris gratia ...Hinc colligitur, Deum ab initio Christi deprecatione fuisse placatum, ut piorum vota susciperet'.

1)

The intercession of Christ as the Advocate of man is of great significance. For it is the intercession of Christ that makes it possible that even a prayer offered by a heathen in ignorance is answered by God. It was also Christ's intercession that made the prayers of the holy men in the Old Testament effective, though the Mediator was still to come. God acted in anticipation of the work of Christ who would appear in His presence offering His death to the Father and thus having the effect of a perpetual intercession for man.

2. The necessity of prayer

Since Calvin has been so universally known both inside and outside the Church for his doctrine of predestination, it would be of great interest to read his opinion of the necessity of prayer. In this context we shall not deal in full with his doctrine of predestination. May we only mention one point: That, in the writings of Calvin themselves, the doctrine of predestination plays a comparatively subordinate role. The Reformer in book three, chapter twenty, section three of the Institutes gives a clear answer to the question as to the necessity of prayer. He states that God is truly the omniscient One and as such is in no need of being told the requests of man. He is indeed the Lord to whom all hearts are open and all desires known. What then is the reason that

1) Instit. III, 20, 18.

makes prayer necessary ? Two main reasons are given. Firstly, God wills that due honour be paid to Him by acknowledging that all which men have or desire derive from Him. Again, God is creator, man is creature, the latter completely dependent on the former. It is His right to claim on Man's reverence towards Him. On the other hand, man has no right to go his own way and behave as though he were the independent possessor and disposer of all things; on the contrary, he in humility, lowliness, and with a penitent heart has to expect, and ask, from the Lord everything. Secondly, prayers are not so much for God's sake as for man's. It is chiefly for man's interest to be constantly supplicating Him. The purport of it is three-fold: 1. Excitation of the heart to seek, love, and worship Him. 2. Defence against desires which are not acceptable before Him. 3. Preparation for true gratitude.

'Sed enim, dicet quisquam, annon sine monitore etiam novit et q ua parte urgeamur, at q uid nobis expediat: ut supervacuum quodammodo videri q ueat ipsum precibus nostris sollicitari,perinde atque conniventem,aut etiam dormientem,donec voce nostra expergefactus fuerit? Verum qui sic ratiocinantur,quem in finem suos ad orandum instituerit Dominus non animadvertunt;neque enim id tam sua ipsius,quam nostra potius causa ordinavit.Vult quidem, ut aequum est,sibi ius suum reddi,dum ei acceptum fertur quicquid expetunt homines,et sentiunt ad suam utilitatem facere,idque votis testatum faciunt.Sed huius quoque sacrificii quo ipse colitur utilitas ad nos redit..... nostra tamen plurimum interest assidue ipsum a nobis implorari,ut serio ardentique eius semper quaerendi, amandi,colendi desiderio cor nostrum inflammetur,dum assuescimus as ipsum,velut ad sacram anchoram in omni necessitate confugere.Deinde ut nulla cupiditas,nullumque omnino votum animum nostrum subeat,cuius ipsum testem facere pudeat:dum vota nostra omnia coram eius oculis sistere,adeoque totum cor effundere discimus.Tum ut ad beneficia eius vera animi gratitudine atque gratiarum actione excipienda comparemur:quae ab eius manu nobis provenire nostra precatione admonemur'.

1)

1) Instit.III,20,3.

It is quite obvious that prayer has a pedagogical function. We mentioned already man's dependence on God his creator. Man should, therefore, be ever mindful of his creator remembering that his eyes should be always cast upon Him; since connection with Him means life and salvation for him, but separation death and condemnation. However, man being constantly oblivious of his Lord is in dire need of being lifted out of his indolence and torpidity. It is to be noted well that man is not at all inclined to prayer by his own initiative. Man by nature tends to slothfulness, 'nos torpentes ac mutos videt' as Calvin puts it. Again it is God's grace that stirs him up so as to become aware of what he owes to his Lord.

The necessity of prayer is grounded in God calling man into fellowship and communion with Him. The pedagogical function of prayer can be described as an exercise through which man's communion with God is being put into practice. Because it is the practice of man's communion with God, it is the very centre of the Christian's life. It is the true and real worship, for it is man's response to God's calling. Through prayer man is able to pay proper homage and honour to his Creator by calling upon His name and thus acknowledging that all good things do proceed from the Father. It is the act of man which has only one sole aim: the glorification of God, the praise of His grace and love. Through prayer - as an exercise we understand it now - man is to undergo a transformation in which his state of adoption is realised, '...cor nostrum inflammetur...'. Accordingly, it cuts off those desires and wishes that would be unbecoming to man standing before the Almighty God. Finally, the exercise of prayer redounds to gratitude, because prayer, so far as it is according to God's will and offered in sincerity of heart, will be heard and the petitions granted. The latter experience will move the

worshipper to long more earnestly for His favour, and to accept all His benefits with true thanksgiving. Withal, it confirms the thought of His providence in the mind of him who prays, which makes him understand that He will never fail him but rather give him free access to approach Him in every time of need. Thus divine providence does not remain an abstract notion but proves to be relied upon in the actual human life.

3. The requirements of legitimate prayer

'Legitima oratio' is an expression used by John Calvin and it indicates how profoundly his mind was bound to Scripture. For this reason he is led to the making of a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate prayer. Such a distinction makes it clear that before the Almighty God there are some things for which man should pray and others for which he should not, some ways in which he should pray and again others in which he should not. This is a very important point. For man by himself does not know what to pray: therefore, he needs to be directed. It is for the good of man, through the act of sheer grace, to be directed in prayer. Man is not left in the darkness and obscurity of his own complacency and selfishness with all his arbitrary desires and fancies. The grace of God proves to be an ever present help in that very human situation, which is so full of man's futile attempts at selffulfillment and selfglorification, for it sets man free from his blindness, convinces him of his abysmal foolishness, and makes him receptive of God's will.

What then does Calvin exactly mean when he speaks of legitimate prayer? The answer is this: Legitimate prayer is

that which is lawful before God. In other words, the prayer that is in accordance with His will. It is the prayer that God permits.

'Alterum proposuimus, ne petamus nisi quantum nobis Deus permittit'.

1)

Thus a sharp distinction is made between legitimate and illegitimate prayer, the criterion being the will of God. First and foremost it behoves man well to attend carefully to the will of God the knowledge of which can only be acquired from the Scriptures. Moreover, in the Scriptures the will of God which is to determine man's prayer is set forth not merely in general but also in detail. For the prayer that is right and acceptable in the eyes of God is the prayer which has been taught by His Son Jesus Christ.

'Nunc certior orandi non modo ratio, sed forma quoque ipsa discenda est: ea scilicet quam per dilectum Filium suum nobis caelestis Pater tradit (Matth. 6. b. 9.); (Luc. 11. a. 2.) ubi immensam bonitatem ac mansuetudinem agnoscere licet'.

2)

To summarise, it follows from what we have said that prayer acquires its legitimacy only by being subject to God's will. As such it must be bound to the Scriptures and related to the Lord's Prayer.

'Praescripsit enim nobis formulam, qua velut in tabula proposuit quicquid a se expetere licet, quicquid in rem nostram conducit, quicquid postulare necesse est. Ex qua eius benignitate magnum consolationis fructum percipimus, quod nihil absurdum, nihil alienum aut impotunum, nihil denique non illi acceptum postulare nos intellegimus, qui pene ex eius ore rogamus'.

3)

1) Instit. III, 20, 5.

2) Instit. III, 20, 34.

3) ibidem.

The legitimacy of prayer is not to be understood as a narrow restriction and impoverishment of the God - man relationship. On the contrary, it means the calling of man to the highest office, the assignment of a peculiar dignity to him. It is not a small favour grudgingly granted, but rather the bestowal of the fullness of God's grace, love, and goodness. It is the handing over of the keys to the Lord's treasure stores. Man is not supposed to remain in that dim confusion, perplexity, and embarrassment of knowing not what to pray. He is given a clear orientation, an unmistakable direction of praying in such a way as it is acceptable before the Lord. It fills the devotee with real comfort and with a sure hope that his prayers will not be in vain but will be heard and answered. Moreover, the legitimate prayer is the prayer of the free man, the prayer offered in confidence by the beloved child of the Father.

However, it does not leave any place for the prayer in mystical sense as the mystics understood it. There is no mystical fusion between the divine and the human, let alone a kind of magical incantation by which the devotee would be capable of forcing his own will and wishes upon the divine power, thus making it subject to him. Legitimate prayer involves the clear distinction between God and man, God remaining the sovereign Lord, man the completely dependent human being. It also marks the prayer of the obedient child. It is not the prayer originating simply out of great need, want, difficulty, trouble, or danger. It is the prayer of the free child of God offered in obedience and thankfulness. It forms the chief element of true worship, it is the act of man in the service of God.

'Nam et praecipuam cultus sui partem hac voce docuit esse precandi officium'.

1)

1) Instit. III, 20, 29.

Legitimacy of prayer must not be understood in the sense of legalism. It would be quite false to interpret Calvin's conception of prayer in that sense. Rather, legitimate prayer makes man free from legalism, and from the resulting anxiety in thought and deed. Through this prayer he pays due homage to the Lord and renders Him his love and affection. Thus he fulfills the command of loving God above all, giving evidence of his reverence towards, and trust in, Him in this world and in the concrete situation of human life.

In regard to the requirements for legitimate prayer it is of great importance to observe the place of penitence. For penitence is man's first step to be taken if he wants to come into line with legitimate prayer.

'Itaque poenitentiam legitima oratio postulat. Unde illud tritum in scripturis, Deum sceleratos non exaudire, et preces eorum esse execrabiles, sicuti et sacrificia: quia aequum est ut Dei aures clausas inveniant qui obserant corda sua, nec Deum flexibilem sentiant qui sua duritie provocant eius rigorem.... Unde sequitur nec rite precari, nec exaudiri nisi synceros Dei cultores. Displiceat igitur sibi in suis malis quiquis se ad orandum comparet: et (quod sine poenitentia fieri non potest) induat mendici personam et affectum'.

1)

The penitent man only shall have access to the throne of grace. Without penitence his prayers will not be acceptable before the Almighty God. We have already stated that man is a fallen creature and void of every good, ever inclined to rebel against God, his Creator. By nature his pride, arrogance, and haughtiness prevents him from submitting himself to the Lord. He still trusts his own strength believing that he would need no prayer, or, if he comes to pray at all, he still prays in his own name.

1) Instit. III, 20, 7.

Penitence, therefore, means a thorough insight, a real conviction of his own failure, that, being devoid of every good and completely destitute through his sins, he has nothing to present unto God but his depravity, and that the only way left be the calling upon His name. Such an insight and conviction is ultimately not an operation of man's power and intellect. It is from the very beginning the work of the Holy Spirit that prepares the suppliant to feel dissatisfied with his condition before the Almighty God. Of what great importance penitence appears to be and how sincerely Calvin was concerned with it comes to expression in most of his prayers which, in most cases, start with a confession of sin. Although we shall deal with his prayers more in extenso later on, few examples may be given below.

'Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant sa maiesté en reconnaissance de tant de fautes et offences dont nous sommes coupables, le prians quil nous les fasse tellement sentir, que nous puissions en toute humilité nous remettre a toutes les punitions quil nous enuoye, et tousiours reconnoistre quil est iuste iuge, en confessant moz iniquitez, lesquelles nous rendent redeuables deuant luy..'

1)

'Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en cognoissance de nos fautes, le prians qu'il nous les face tellement sentir, que ce soit non seulement pour luy demander pardon avec une vraye repentance, mais aussi pour le prier qu'il nous supporte tout le temps de nostre vie, iusques à ce qu'il nous ait retirez en son royaume...'

2)

'Let us now prostrate ourselves before the majesty of our good God, in acknowledging our offences, beseeching Him so to touch us with them that we may be humbled before Him, and be grieved with ourselves and ashamed, to the end we may put our trust in His mercy which He hath shown unto us in His only Son...'

3)

1) H.R.p.476.
2) C.R.50,495.

3) 3rd sermon on the history of Melchisedech.

Chapter Two

THE FORM OF PRAYER

1. Occurance, style, and language

We shall now proceed to the consideration of the form of John Calvin's prayers. Since the number of prayers that were written by hand and partly printed amounts to far more than two thousand - more than one thousand in manuscripts are still missing (see Introduction p. 3) - it would be too far reaching a task to deal with every prayer in particular. We shall, therefore, try to get a good cross section of them, as far as they are available. To put them in order it is suggested to make three distinct groups as follows:

- a. Free prayers said at the end of sermons and lectures (altering each time).
- b. Ecclesiastical prayers (following the free prayers at the end of the sermons remaining unchanged in set order).
- c. Prayers for special occasions.

The first group consists of the vast number of prayers that were said spontaneously immediately after the sermon had been finished. Their content, though as a whole similar among the many hundreds of prayers, shows interesting variations as they

sometimes refer to the content of the sermons previously delivered. Fortunately, the writers of the manuscripts wrote them down carefully. Those prayers, which were said by Calvin *ex tempore*, disclose some particular features of his theology, and also of his teleological thinking. No doubt they all are of great value and it is a lamentable fact that such an enormous number of them, together with the sermons, has disappeared. It is hoped that one day at least part of the big loss may be made up by some rediscoveries, something that is not beyond all possibilities. For the time being we have to be content with what is available.

The second group comprises the smallest in number but the most important in content. The name 'Prieres ecclesiastiques' indicates their use for worship at the divine service. For such purpose they were set in a fixed order and remained unchanged. Additional ecclesiastical prayers in set order were offered when the Lord's Supper or the Sacrament of the Holy Baptism were celebrated.

The third group embraces a small number of prayers that were used on special occasions. They are also set in a fixed order and as such remaining unchanged. Those occasions were: In the morning after waking up; in the evening before going to bed; before studying lessons; before and after meals. The special prayers for a wedding ceremony and for the visiting of the sick appear under the ecclesiastical prayers.

In regard to the language in which Calvin's prayers were said and written, we find that two were used, namely: Latin and French. They correspond to the languages in which the lectures and sermons were delivered respectively. As the Reformer used to deliver his lectures in Latin and the sermons in French, accordingly, the prayers following his lectures

are in Latin whereas those following his sermons are in French. The Latin is of high standard, as is generally known and admitted. The French, being middle French with partly different spelling from modern French, still provides a wide range for investigation to those who are especially interested in Romance languages.

The style is simple with use of plain words which the hearer can easily understand, though there are occasionally long phrases containing several subordinate clauses which sometimes give a slight impression of circumlocution. The following example taken from an ecclesiastical prayer shows well Calvin's phraseology, for the full stop does not come until after one hundred and six words.

'Toutesfois, Seigneur, puis qu'il ta pleu par ta misericorde infinie, de nous commander que nous t'invoquions, mesme du profond des enfers: et d'autant plus que nous defaillons en nous mesme, que nous ayons nostre refuge à ta souveraine bonnté: puis aussi que tu nous as promis de recevoir nos requestes et supplications, non point en considerant quelle est nostre propre dignité, mais au nom et par le merite de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, lequel tu nous as constitué Intercesseur et Advocat: renonçans à toute fiance humaine, nous adresser devant toy: et invoquer ton saint nom, pour obtenir misericorde'.

1)

However, Calvin was a master of clarity in thought and word. The logical construction of thought and its inherent consistency would keep the meaning clear. By using the Vernacular, i.e. Latin at the Academy and French in the pulpit, the Reformer demonstrates, and puts into practice, what he states in his doctrine of prayer, that prayers are to be offered in the common tongue, so that all present may understand

1) RO. p. 245.

them, since they ought to be used for the edification of the whole Church, which cannot be in the least benefited by a sound not understood. 1)

As to the size of prayer it must be stated that they are remarkably short, especially those offered ex tempore. This can, of course, be accounted for the fact that there would always follow an ecclesiastical prayer in continuation. That would, however, only apply to the prayers at the end of the sermons. For those ending the lectures were not followed by an ecclesiastical prayer but formed the conclusion of the lecture. One important point is expressed by their shortness. Calvin was a man of strong discipline, a characteristic which is well reflected in his prayers. Humility and simplicity seem to have been the guiding rule. They are void of unnecessary sentences as well as of ornamental additions that might obscure the proper meaning or distract from disciplined thoughts. It can be gathered from their plainness and conciseness that they were entirely subordinate to their content, as far as their form and language are concerned.

As a whole, the size of the prayers is such that they would last about one or two minutes, even when spoken very slowly, so as to make it easy for the congregation to follow. The ecclesiastical prayer that followed would take six to eight minutes at the longest. So the time spent altogether for prayers after the sermon amounted to about eight to ten minutes.

This leads us to the conclusion that, due to their conciseness and due to their strict, clear structure, as well as to the logical consistency of thought, the prayers of John Calvin left little chance, if any, to the devotee to engage in any sort of mystical contemplation. His mind and thoughts were

1) Instit. III, 20, 33.

directed and kept in a certain order of discipline. The pedagogical function of prayer, therefore, comes to expression already in regard to the size and shape. For man, standing in the presence of the Almighty God, should not let his thoughts wander wherever his own imaginations might lead them, but rather concentrate on his prayers in such a way as to fall into line with the will of God.

2. Prayers ex tempore.

Let us now have a closer look at the actual form of John Calvin's prayers. We shall start with the prayers belonging to the first group, i.e. the prayers offered ex tempore and which comprise the largest number. They again are to be divided into two sections:

1. Prayers attached to the lectures which formed the conclusion without any additions.
2. Prayers attached to the sermons which did not form a whole but lead over to the ecclesiastical prayer that followed.

It is amazing to read the hundreds of Latin prayers belonging to the first section. Calvin seems to have used one single, uniform structure throughout all of them. No matter how short or how long such a prayer may be, we find again and again the same form governed by the same principle. They reveal a well developed form of structure, according to which they clearly are divisible into three main parts and resemble the well known form of the Roman collect with slight modifications:

1. Meditation
2. Petition
3. Prospect

The following prayer attached to Calvin's lecture on the book of Jeremiah 35;8 - 16 shows beautifully the three-fold structure or division. It starts, as all the Latin prayers do, with the petition worded: 'Da omnipotens Deus...' but then the petition is interrupted by a short meditation which actually forms the first part. It is followed by the remainder of the petition and the prayer ends with the prospect.

Petition

Da omnipotens Deus,

quando non tantum semel nobis ac
saepius etiam testatus es per servos
tuos quaenam esset recta salutis via,
Meditation
sed Filium tuum unigenitum misisti,
qui nobis esset doctor perfectae
sapientiae:

Petition

da, inquam, ut sic nos tibi subjiciamus,
& ita consecremus tibi vitam nostram,
ut qui mortuus est propter salutem
nostram, & resurrexit, nos placide re-
gat Euangelii sui doctrina: & sic stude-
amus te glorificare in hoc mundo,

Prospect 1)

ut tandem perticipes simus caelestis
gloriae, quam nobis acquisivit idem
Filius tuus Dominus nostre, Amen.

1) The word 'prospect' here means looking into the future, to the ultimate destiny of the believer which, in Calvin's view, was the inheritance of the Kingdom of God.

The second section includes an even greater number of *ex tempore* prayers as they amount to over two thousand. They are attached to the sermons and lead over to the main prayer, i.e. the ecclesiastical prayer which followed. The language is middle French. In size they correspond with the Latin ones. With regard to their structure we notice a considerable difference. First of all, the direct address to Almighty God has been abandoned and replaced by indirect speech. At first sight one could easily get the impression that they are not prayers in the true sense of the word, but rather a call to prayer connecting the sermon with the actual prayer. However, if we consider their content we shall be led to the conclusion that they must be classified as prayers properly. It must also be grasped that they were meant to be prayers in the real sense. Evidence can also be drawn from the fact that the writers of the manuscripts distinguished them from the sermons by using capital letters for the first two or three words at their beginning, thus indicating the commencement of the prayers. Secondly, there is no more the clear cut three-fold structure of meditation, petition, and prospect as we have found in the Latin prayers. Here we find that the prayers cannot so easily be divided up into various parts, as was the case with the others. Yet here too it can be discerned that a certain principle has guided the arrangement of the prayers.

The opening of the prayer is generally a call to confession of sin: 'Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la Maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissons de nos fautes...'. Then comes the middle part which can be best described as a meditative petition, for meditation and petition are closely woven together. It is mainly a kind of summary of the scripture portion, and the sermon on it, previously delivered. Such meditation contains the petition that the Lord would grant a better understanding of the sins

and of the graces, as expounded, to the worshipper. It concludes with the request that those graces as promised in Scripture may be extended not only to the congregation present, but to all peoples and nations of the earth. The phrase: 'Mais non seulement il nous face ceste grace mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre..' is the one most frequently used in this connection. Occasionally it is replaced by the following: 'Ainsi nous dirons tous: Dieu tout puissant, pere celeste, etc...'

Now and then there is also a prospect included. It occurs in phrases like these: '..iusques à ce que nous parvenions à la gloire immortelle qui nous est apprestee au ciel, et laq uelle nous a esté acquise par nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ..'

Now here is a good example of a prayer following a sermon. It demonstrates clearly the structure and style. The language is middle French as it is written in the manuscripts.¹⁾ It is attached to Calvin's sermon on the second book of Samuel, chapter seven, preached on 18th July, 1562.

Call to confession of sin.	Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en re- cognoissance des fautes dont nous sommes coupables deuant luy,
-------------------------------	--

Meditation and Petition	le prians qu'il luy plaise nous faire participans des graces qui nous sont icy promises, et que nous puissions tousiours auoir nostre recours a nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, et qu'il nous
----------------------------	---

1) The peculiar variations of spelling make it sometimes difficult to read it fluently. Frequently the 'u' is being used instead of 'v', the 'z' instead of 's', the 'y' instead of 'i', the 'i' instead of 'j', etc.

recoiue en son Nom. Et combien que nous soyons pouers pecheurs, que nous obtenions tousiours misericorde, et que les graces qui nous esté promises en luy, non seulement nous soyent accomplies, mais que ce soit pour nous confermer en l'esperance du royaume eternal, iusques a ce que nous y soyons paruenus. Et que nous apprenions de plier le col souz ses verges, sachans qu'elles sont a nostre proffit, et que noz tristesses soyent tellement adoucies, que ce qui nous semblera estre amer, ne nous desgouste de sauouer sa bonté au milieu de noz afflictions, puis que nous scauons que le tout sera conuerti a nostre salut

Lead over to the ecclesiastical prayer.	Que non seulement il nous face la grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc.
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La fin.

The characteristic of indirect speech is obvious. One might wonder whom the Reformer is addressing. Does he address God ? - in which case it would be a prayer in the true sense. Or does he address the people of the congregation ? - in which case it would not. There is a strong suggestion of the latter interpretation. Yet a closer examination would lead us to modify this conclusion. The invitation at the beginning of the prayer no doubt extends to the congregation, the preacher himself included as can be gathered from the use of the first person plural in 'Or nous-nous prosternerons..'. The continuation which follows 'deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance des fautes dont nous sommes coupables deuant luy' signifies that what is going to happen will happen in the presence of the good

God.

However, the remainder of the prayer beginning with the words 'le prians qu'il luy plaise nous faire..' changes the orientation of the prayer. Although the indirect speech is still maintained, i.e. God is referred to by personal pronouns like 'il' and 'luy', it can be stated that, at this stage, it is now God who is being addressed. What actually takes place is a kind of double-view. On the one hand, introspection with a consideration and confession of sin: 'Et combien que nous soyons pouers pecheurs..', and, on the other hand, looking away from one's sinfulness and frailty to the promises of God: 'et que les graces qui nous ont esté promises en luy, non seulement nous soyont accomplies, mais que ce soit pour nous confermer en l'esperance du royaume eternal..'. Hence, we can conclude that Calvin is addressing the congregation as well as God. He does extend his invitation to confession of sins to the congregation, himself always included, and he does remind it of the promises of God. But at the same time he indirectly calls upon God beseeching Him to pardon all offences, to grant His grace according to His promises: 'qu'il luy plaise nous faire participans des graces qui nous sont icy promises..'. Thus from the above we can see that this is at first sight itself a complete specimen of prayer. Yet, to be more precise, we would better call them preparatory prayers, since they are always related to the preceding sermon and finally lead over to the ecclesiastical prayer.

As the ecclesiastical prayers remain the same, whilst those preparatory prayers vary considerably from sermon to sermon, it is needless to say that they are of great importance in our further investigations of Calvin's practice in this regard. Together with the Latin prayers they form the bulk of all of Calvin's prayers and we shall try later to obtain a good cross section of them with regard to their theological content and

significance.

3. Ecclesiastical prayers.

The form of the ecclesiastical prayer shall now be dealt with in this paragraph. As has already been mentioned, the ecclesiastical prayers are in size and structure the most extensive ones. Their usual length is about 1500 words. The course of the prayers again reveals an impressive clarity of thought, a logical consistency in structure and a mind firmly under divine discipline. The most striking characteristic of these prayers is their adherence to the Holy Scriptures. Here, as in no other type of prayer, Calvin's teaching, according to which every prayer must be bound to Scripture and related to the Lord's prayer (see p. 16), is evidently being put into practice. As these prayers were offered at every divine service they must be given the first place in importance.

The structural arrangement is not as simple as is the case with the other prayers. Here we find not a three-fold structure but a seven-fold one. Of course it could be subdivided into more parts. As it appears, each subdivision is concerned with one particular field.

1. Meditation, comprising the calling upon the Lord and asking for forgiveness of sins as He has promised us.
2. Intercession for the rulers.
3. Intercession for the ministers of the Church.
4. Intercession for all men.

5. Commendation to God of all those who are afflicted by various calamities.
6. Commendation of all those who are persecuted for the sake of the Gospel.
7. Final prayer based on the Lord's Prayer.

The most impressive part is no doubt part seven. A careful reading discloses that Calvin has used the Lord's Prayer as a kind of skeleton which determines the whole trend of thought in those petitions of part seven. Here, more than anywhere else, adherence to the Scriptures so typical of the prayers of John Calvin is apparent. If we ask for the source of this form of prayer, the correct answer will be: from Scripture. Now this must not be regarded as a narrow limitation of the possibilities of prayer. The adherence to Scripture does not mean that only a part of human need would be involved in its presentation before the throne of grace, whilst an other part, as it were, would remain unrepresented and thus unanswered. On the contrary, it means, as the Reformer sees it, that a special gift is given to man who by nature does not know what to pray. The prayer which is directed by the Scriptures signifies that God loves man through His Son Jesus Christ and by thus loving him He assigns to him the possibility of enjoying His love and responding to Him through prayer. By that a wide door is open to the heart of God the Father who will mercifully grant His favour to those who approach Him according to His will which is revealed in Scripture. A close consideration of the ecclesiastical prayers discloses the wide range of possibilities these prayers include. Within the all-embracing totality of God - man relationship with its two poles, the glory of God and man's need, there is no sphere which would

not be included. The seven parts of which they consist have, taken together, a universal aspect. If we take the first part as the opening, part two, intercession for rulers, embraces the whole of political life and state affairs. Part three, intercession for the ministers of the Church, includes not only the ministers but the Church as a whole. Part four, intercession for all men, has a missionary aspect aiming at the conversion of the whole world (*tout le monde*) to the end that all may pay due homage to Christ. Part five, commendation of all those who are afflicted, covers the vast range of manifold tribulations such as war, famine, sickness, poverty, prison, bannishment, or any other calamity be it corporeal or spiritual. Part six, commendation of the persecuted, contains an ardent commendation of all those who are persecuted for the Gospel's sake, reflecting the concrete situation of the Church which is never at ease but ever on the road.

The seventh part deserves to be treated more extensively. As we stated, Calvin used the Lord's Prayer as a kind of skeleton for the forming of the final portion of the ecclesiastical prayer. He starts off with a humble yet fervent 'O God and Father, grant to us, who are here assembled in the name of thy Son Jesus, that we may rightly and without hypocrisy acknowledge in what state of perdition we are by nature'. This is followed by a short meditation on the corrupt estate of man that makes him worthy to be condemned, even more so as he never ceases to make it worse by adding day by day more sins through his wicked and disordered life, which makes it impossible for him to inherit the Kingdom of God. Then the meditation changes over to a dedication to the Lord Jesus Christ through whom, by His dwelling in man, the old Adam may be mortified and man be renewed to a better life that glorifies and exalts His name. The following table contains part seven of the ecclesiastical

prayer. 1) Some words in the French have been intentionally written in capital letters in order to show the close relation to the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, which art in heaven.

Finalement, ô Dieu et Pere, ottroye-nous aussi à nous qui sommes ici assemblees au nom de ton Fils Iesus, à cause de sa Parole, que nous reconnoissons droitement et sans hypocrisie, en quelle perdition nous sommes naturellement: et quelle condamnation nous meritons et amassons de iour en iour sur nous, par nostre mal-heureuse vie et de desordonnee, à fin que voyans qu'il n'y a rien de bien en nous, et que nostre chair et nostre sang ne sont point capables de posseder en heritage ton Royaume, de toute nostre affection et en ferme fiance nous-nous rendions entierement à ton cher Fils Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur seul Sauveur et Redempteur,

Hallowed be thy name.

à fin que luy habitant en nous, mortifie nostre vieil Adam, nous renouvelant en une meilleure vie, par laquelle TON NOM, selon qu'il est saint et digne, SOIT EXALTE et glorifié par tout et en toutes places.

Thy Kingdom come.

Pareillement, que tu ayes la seigneurie et le gouvernement sur nous tous: et que iournellement et de plus en plus nous

1) For the complete ecclesiastical prayer see appendix pp. 2 - 4.

apprenions de nous submittre et assubiettir à ta Maiesté: tellement que tu sois Roy et Dominateur par tout, conduisant ton Peuple par le sceptre de ta Parole, et par la vertu de ton Esprit, confondant tes ennemis par la force de ta verité et iustice. Et ainsi, que toute puissance et hautesse contrevenante à ta gloire soit de iour en iour destruite et abolie, iusqu'à ce que l'accomplissement de TON ROYAUME VIENNE, et la perfection en soit du tout etablie, quand tu apparcoistras en iugement en la personne de ton Fils.

Thy will be done.

Que no'avec toutes creatures te rendions vraye et parfaite obeissance, ainsi que tes Anges celestes ne demandent sinon d'executer tes commandemens: et par ce moyen que TA VOLONTE SOIT ACCOMPLIE sans quelque contradiction, et que tout se rengent à te servir et complaire, renonçans à leur propre vouloir, et à tous desirs de leur chair.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Que nous cheminans en l'amour et en la crainte de ton nom, soyons nourris par ta bonté: et que tu NOUS DONNES toutes choses qui nous sont necessaires et expedientes, pour manger NOSTRE PAIN paisiblement: à fin que voyans que tu as soin de nous, te reconnoissons mieux nostre Pere, et attendions tous biens de ta main, ostans et retirans nostre fiance de toutes creatures, pour la mettre entierement en toy et en ta benignité.

Forgive us
our debts.

Et pource que durant ceste vie mortelle nous sommes pures pecheurs, si pleins de fragilité que nous defaillons assiduellement, et nous fourvoyons de la droite voye, qu'il te plaise NOUS PARDONNER NOS FAUTES, par lesquelles nous sommes redevables à ton iugement: et que par ceste remission tu nous delivres de l'obligation de mort eternele, en laquelle nous sommes. Qu'il te plaise donc ne nous imputer point le mal qui est en nous, tout ainsi que par ton Commandement,

As we forgive
our debtors.

Nous oublions les iniures qu'on nous fait, et au lieu de chercher vengeance, procurons le bien de nos ennemis.

And lead us not
into temptation
but deliver us
from evil.

Finalement, qu'il te plaise pour advenir nous soustenir par ta vertu, à fin que par l'infirmité de nostre chair nous ne trebuschions. Et d'autant que de nous-mesme nous sommes si debiles, que nous ne pourrions demeurer fermes une minute de temps: d'autrepart, que nous sommes ciruis et assaillis continuellement de tant d'ennemis, que le diable, le monde, le peché, et nostre propre chair, ne cessent de nous faire la guerre, vueille-nous fortifier par ton Saint Esprit, et nous armer de tes graces, à fin que puissions constamment resister, à toutes tentations, et perseverer en ceste bataille spirituelle, iusqu'à ce qu'obtenions pleine

victoire, pour triompher une fois en ton Royaume, avec nostre capitaine et protecteur nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ. Amen.

So far we have well observed how accurately Calvin follows the petitions of the Lord's Prayer. Now the question may arise, why did he not just offer the Lord's Prayer in its original? Why did he paraphrase it? Evidently, the use of paraphrase has expository value. By that the prayer achieved greater depth of meaning and thus became easier to understand by the members of the congregation. It also is suggested that Calvin paraphrased the Lord's Prayer in order to prevent it from degenerating into the very sort of meaningless routine, which it was designed to prevent and against which Christ so signally warns us.

There are two more questions to be discussed. The first concerns confession of sin and the second adoration. We have noticed that in the ecclesiastical prayer confession of sin is left out, though twice forgiveness is asked for, namely at the beginning 'vueille-nous par ta clemence infinie gratuitement pardonner nos offences..', and then in the last part under the petition 'forgive us our debts'. The actual confession of sin however precedes this prayer as a separate part, i.e. it even precedes the sermon, and is placed at the beginning of the divine service immediately after the exhortation. It consists of two parts: The confession of sin before the Lord, the Almighty and eternal Father 'Seigneur Dieu, Pere eternal et tout-puissant, nous confesson..' and the asking of forgiveness 'Vueille doncques avoir pitié de nous, Dieu et Pere tres-benin, et plein de misericorde, au nom de ton Fils Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur...'.¹⁾

Here, again, Calvin's order makes manifest what he has set forth in his doctrine of prayer that only the reconciled and forgiven man shall have access to the Lord in prayer. 1) Hence,

1) See chapter one, p. 10, also section 3 on the requirements of legitimate prayer.

confession of sin plays a vital part in prayer and has to precede the petitions, supplications, commendations, etc. God calls man whose first reaction achieves confession of sin so as to see his own unworthiness and misery in the light of God. As reconciliation and forgiveness of sin have taken place once for all in Jesus Christ, he may no more despair but come before God in the Name of His Son.

The second question concerns adoration. We have so far identified that the chief elements of the prayers are: Meditation, petition, commendation, and prospect. We did, however, not discover the element of adoration. This appears rather strange especially, when we consider that Calvin's highest aim was the glorification of God. Why did he not assign a proper place to that element in the ecclesiastical prayers? It is unlikely that the Reformer did not pay much attention to that particular element. But we must take into consideration that the ecclesiastical prayers were part of the whole divine service. This we must take into account before we make any statements. And taking the whole service in view, we shall come to the conclusion that this particular element is well represented in the singing of the Psalms which was one of the most significant characteristics in the services of the Genevan Church, and, as a matter of fact, still is.

4. Prayers for special occasions.

To continue our investigation we shall now look at the third group of prayers, i.e. the prayers for special occasions. This group contains only a small number, yet rather interesting ones as they reveal partly a different aspect of Calvin. In the prayers so far treated we got aware of his conception of God-man

relationship as being marked by an impressive distinction between God and man. It showed us the distinction between two very unequal partners. On one hand, God the Almighty, exalted, sovereign Lord and, on the other hand, man being the poor, sinful, corrupt creature who is completely dependent on his God. In this third group that distinction is by no means obscured or obliterated, but it is supplemented by a stronger stress on the Father - child relationship. Here some more tender phrases are being used than in the other prayers. God is more often referred to as the Father. In some prayers there is also the first person singular being used instead of the plural. This gives them a more familiar aspect.

In his morning prayer the opening phrase goes like this: 'Mon Dieu, mon Pere et mon Sauveur...', and it closes with: 'Exauce moy, Pere de misericorde...'. 1) In the prayer to be used before the meals we find: '...et par ce moyen te reconnoistre Pere et autheur de toute benignité...'. 2) The latter passage also reveals beautifully the ultimate purpose of the meals. It is not just the feeding of the hungry, nor is it only an analogy of the nourishment of the soul, though this is also involved, the ultimate purpose of the meals is the acknowledgement of the fact that God is the Father, and as such the author of all goodness. A similar statement can be made in regard to knowledge. In the prayer to be said before studying the lesson it is made clear what the ultimate purpose of knowledge would be: 'c'est de te cognoistre en nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ...'.3) In the commencing phrases God is referred to as the fountain of all wisdom and knowledge: 'Seigneur, qui es la fontaine de toute sagesse et science...' 4), and the ultimate aim of all learning is the knowledge of that God.

1) RO p. 237.

2) ibidem p. 239.

3) ibidem p. 238.

4) ibidem p. 238.

As far as the actual form of these prayers is concerned the first thing that must be said is again that they are according to Scripture. For Scripture passages, especially from Psalms, are being used as a kind of framework and the thoughts expressed in the prayers are derived from them. Thus the morning prayer is based on Psalm 143, the evening prayer seems to be connected with Psalm 104, though there is no mention of it. The prayer used before studying the lesson is preceded by Psalm 119:9 and 18 and followed by Psalm 25:14. Psalms 104 and Deuter. VIII are the bases of the prayer before the meals and Psalm 117 stands at the head of the prayer after the meals.

The form then of these prayers varies to some extent according to their nature and purpose. For instance there are the prayers before and after the meals. The one before the meals consists just of one petition, namely, that the Lord, in whom rests the fullness of all good things, may extend His benediction to His poor servants and sanctify the gifts He graciously assigns to them, so that they may be used soberly and purely (*sobremment et purement*) according to His good will. The petition then goes on asking that through the gifts of the meals the Lord may be acknowledged as Father and author of all goodness and that people may seek first the spiritual bread of His word, so that their souls may be nourished eternally through Jesus Christ.

The prayer after meals starts off with thanksgiving not only for the meal just received but for the Lord's constant provision and sustenance of this corporeal life as well as for its necessities. Next follows a thanksgiving for the hope of a better life as revealed in the Gospel. The prayer concludes with a petition that human affections may not take root in those corruptible things but be lifted higher up as to wait

upon the Lord Jesus Christ until He shall appear for man's final redemption.

The two prayers do not much differ from one another. The only distinction to be made is that the first is made up of one petition, while the second of two parts, namely thanksgiving and petition. What is of more interest is the fact that they have one aspect in common, which is the analogy of the corporeal to the spiritual, the earthly things to the heavenly things. As the Lord provides all necessities for the body so He provides all that which is necessary for the nourishment of the soul. This leads us to a notable conclusion: The meals have no qualities whose ultimate significance rests in themselves, rather do they point to a deeper meaning which is the feeding of the spiritual man by the bread that comes from heaven in the power of the Word of God.

It is not difficult to trace Calvin's analogy to its source. If we consider the two Scripture passages that form a framework of the first prayer we discover it there. Thus Psalm 104, 27 - 28 'These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good' corresponds with the corporeal needs. On the other hand, Deuteronomy VIII, 3 is concerned with the spiritual need: '..man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live'. However, man as such ever tends to be oblivious of the fact that he lives exclusively by the Word of God. He, therefore, must be reminded of it as is well shown by the concluding sentences of both prayers. 1)

There are two lovely prayers for the beginning and the closing of the day. 2) They are in many ways similar to each

1) see appendix p.8.

2) see appendix pp. 6 and 7.

other and they also present an inner relationship in regard to their content. The morning prayer shows well the Father - child relationship as it starts with 'Mon Dieu, mon Pere et mon Sauveur..'. Here we do not meet the majestic, exalted God far away but the Lord who is near as the Father and Saviour. It is noteworthy to consider the three-fold use of the possessive pronoun 'mon' as in 'mon Dieu', 'mon Pere et mon Sauveur'. This use of addressing God presupposes a profound sense of the spiritual relationship between God and man. God is the Father of man because He wanted to be his Father, and He made it manifest by being his Saviour. As such He wanted particularly to be m a n 's God, m a n's Father, and m a n's Saviour. Again we may ask where Calvin got this assurance from, how could he call upon God with such confidence as his God ? It is obvious that he refers to the preceding Scripture passage taken from Psalm 143,10: 'Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God, thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness'. The prayer then, it is one great petition, follows the Scripture passage very closely. We find wordings that resemble those in the passage, although the order is a little bit different from that of the Scripture passage. Thus 'Vueille-moy par la clarté de ton esperit illuminer mon entendement et mon coeur, pour me diriger en la droite voye de ta iustice' refers to verse ten; whereas for instance 'tellement que ie ne pense, ne die, ne face rien, sinon pour complaire et abeir à ta bonne volonté', though it also refers to verse ten, occurs almost at the beginning of the prayer. The request for deliverance from the enemies is represented by this: 'qu'il te plaise et selon le corps et selon l'ame estre protecteur, me fortifiant contre toutes les tentations du diable, et me deliverant de toutes les dangers terriens qui me pourroyent advenir'.

This confirms our affirmation that Calvin's prayers are in form and content determined by the Holy Scriptures. The same can be said in regard to the evening prayer which is also related to Scripture passages as Psalm 143 and Psalm 104.

As with the prayers before and after the meals, here there is also an analogy between the corporeal and the spiritual. As the sun is shining upon the earth and enlivening the body, so may the power of the Holy Spirit enlighten the spirit and heart of man. Or as the body takes rest during the night, so may the conscience be at peace through God's grace. There is a formal difference between the morning and evening prayers in that in the latter prayer the first person singular is replaced by the first person plural. It is also a little shorter but for the rest shows much similarity to the morning prayer. In both prayers stress is laid on the glorification of the name of the Lord. In the morning there are the works to be done for that purpose 'toutes mes oeuvres soyent à la gloire de ton nom' 1) and in the evening the same is said of the sleep 'que nostre dormir mesme soit à la gloire de ton nom'. 2) In like manner the life of service to the Lord is remembered in phrases like this: 'que tousiours ma principale fin et intention soit de cheminer en ta crainte, te servir et honorer..', and similar in the evening: '...à fin de nous disposer à ton service...', the latter referring to the repose of the body during the night. How man has always to be on the alert is shown by a phrase that contains a warning against excessive rest and preoccupation with one's own flesh: 'que nostre dormir ne soit point excessif pour complaire outre mesure à l'aise de nostre chair...'. It reflects well Calvin's utter mistrust of human nature which is far from being willing to serve God.

1) see appendix pp. 6 and 7.

2) ibidem.

Both prayers conclude with a petition for pardon of sin; this is noteworthy as confession of sin normally occurs at the beginning of prayers. It seems that the Reformer put it in the last part on the analogy of the Lord's Prayer in which the forgiveness of sin is also asked for at the last part. Those petitions for forgiveness of sin are phrased in a peculiar style that reveals something extraordinary in simplicity and beauty if we may say so: '..vueille oublier toutes mes fautes passees, me les pardonnant par ta misericorde infinie..' (morning prayer). Especially impressive is a phrase in the evening prayer whereby the expression is made more profoundly eloquent by the use of simile. As all things are now covered by the darkness which the Lord sends upon the earth, so may all faults be wrapped and buried in His mercy: 'ainsi que tout est maintenant caché les tenebres que tu envoyes sur la terre vueille aussi ensevelir toutes nos fautes par ta misericorde, à fin que par icelles nous ne soyons reculez de ta face'. Such phraseology discloses a tenderness which so often has been denied to Calvin.

Chapter Three

THE USE OF METAPHOR, SIMILE, AND ILLUSTRATION IN JOHN CALVIN'S PRAYERS

1. Terms denoting parental relationship.

A careful reading of Calvin's prayers makes the reader very soon aware of the fact that metaphor, simile, and illustration are being used quite often. It is most interesting to see how the Reformer used them. Apparently, he did not like long and extensive illustrations. This we can easily notice in his sermons. 1) The same can be said in regard to his prayers. Metaphor, simile, and illustration take a very subordinate place in them, and it seems that their use has a purely serving purpose. The thoughts of the devotee should never stick to the illustrations which have no value for themselves. They occur like flashlights as it were to lighten up the object and vanish away. Thus their purpose is to lighten up the actual situation and, by this way, making it more comprehensible to the understanding of the devotee. Calvin surely went his own way in this respect. When we think of the exaggarative and allegorical phraseology of the middle ages, we discover that Calvin has departed completely from that sort of metaphorical expressions. He utterly disliked any sort of extravagance or want of modesty. So he disliked any bombastic phraseology in his sermons as well as in his prayers. His use of metaphor, simile, and illustration is

1) cf. Erwin Mülhaupt: 'Die Predigt Calvins', part I, section 3.

rather signified by a natural simplicity and simple beauty. The question of derivation of such use may be answered in this way that it was due to the Scriptures which determined his prayers and also partly due to his personality, which was so strongly hostile to any sort of conceit and arrogance. It seems that Calvin had a peculiar sense for all that which is simple, clear, logical, modest, and concise. The way he uses metaphor, simile, and illustration confirms our affirmation. In order to give evidence we shall, in this chapter, quote some of the most frequent illustrations the usage of which will give us some more insight into the thinking of the Reformer. We shall also have a look at some rare occurrences which, perhaps just because they are rare, will be very interesting and valuable.

The most frequent metaphor and simile which are being used by Calvin are derived from the Holy Scriptures. First and foremost there are the terms that refer to the parental relationship, especially in regard to God being the Father and Jesus Christ His Son. Thus God is very often referred to as the Father Almighty, eternal Father, Father of mercy, the true Father, the very kind Father full of mercy, the very heavenly Father. Jesus Christ as the Son is referred to as the well beloved Son, the only begotten Son, the true and obedient Son. Here are some examples given:

'Exauce-nous, Pere de misericorde, par nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ ton tres-cher Fils'. 1)

'Nous te prions aussi, Pere celeste... aussi nous te prions, Pere veritable et Sauveur...'. 2)

'...semper certo persuasi simus, te sic nobis fore in Patrem, ut tandem fruamur beata illa quiete, quae nobis parta est sanguine unigeniti Filii tui...'. 3)

1) Prayer on the occasion of a wedding RO. p. 256.

2) RO. p. 241.

3) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 418.

But the terms of parental relationship do not only refer to God the Father and His Son. They are extended to the relationship God and man, owing to man's adoption through the mediating work of the Son.

An interesting phrase is being used in an ecclesiastical prayer, and it is taken over straight from a passage in the 64th chapter of Isaiah:

'Toutesfois Seigneur, tu es nostre Pere, et nous sommes que terre et fange: tu es nostre Createur, et nous sommes les oeuvres de tes mains: tu es nostre Pasteur, et nous sommes ton troupeau: tu es nostre Redempteur, et nous sommes le peuple que tu as racheté: tu es nostre Dieu, et nous sommes ton heritage'. 1)

Obviously, not only a term of parental relationship is being used but some further expressions are added connected with ideas of creator and creature, of shepherd and his flock, of redeemer and his freed men. Very frequently the idea of God and His people Israel has been used as a pattern illustrating the situation here and now, asking the Lord for forgiveness as He graciously pardoned His people all offences when they turned to Him in repentance:

'Ton peuple d'Israel t'a provoqué à ire plusieurs fois par son iniquité, tu l'as affligé par ton iuste iugement: mais quand il s'est réduit à toy, tu l'as tousiours recue à pitié'. 2)

Likewise the patriarchs, with whom the Lord made a covenant, appear in the same prayer. The covenant is being compared with the covenant in Christ and Calvin stresses the fact that this covenant in Christ is far better even than the one God made

1) Recveil des Opuscules p. 246.

2) ibidem.

with the patriarchs. It is worth while to quote this portion of the prayer here in full:

'Et quelques griefues que fussent ses offences, pour l'amour de ton alliance que tu avois faite avec tes serviteurs Abraham, Isaac, et Iacob, tu as destourné tes verges et maledictions, lesquelles leur estoyent preparees de toy: tellement q ue leur oraisons n'ont iamais esté re-
poussees de toy. Nous avons par ta grace, une alliance beaucoup meilleure que nous te pouvons alleguer, c'est celle que tu nous as faite et establee en la main de Iesus Christ nostre Sauveur: laquelles tu as voulu estre escrite de son sang, et ratifiee par sa mort et passion'.1)

However, the terms of parental relationship must not be misunderstood. The partnership of two very unequal partners is still maintained as Calvin puts it:

'Nous ne l'aimons pas...comme nostre compagnon et pareil: mais comme nostre Pere' 2)

2. Terms of government and administration.

Another great group of terms that occurs throughout all prayers is connected with government and administration. Again, they are partly taken from the Scriptures. There is a group of titles often used for Christ which describe His royalty: king of kings, prince of peace, king and legislator, lord, protector, and governor. 3) Linked up with these expressions are those words that refer to His realm as kingdom and dominion; His government is carried out by the sceptre of His word and is extended to all peoples and nations of the earth; 4)

1) Recueil des Opuscules, p. 246.

2) CR. 51, 775.

3) Especially in Eccl. Prayers.

4) ibidem, and prayers on Deut..

His enemies are overcome by the force of His truth and justice. 1) Under His rule princes and lords are His servants to whom He has assigned the dispensation of His justice. 2) They have to execute His orders and acknowledge that He alone is Lord over all. It is their task to seek to serve Him and to exalt His reign above their own domination over their subjects as they primarily are the creatures of His hand. 3) His special government over the Church is made manifest by His being the Principal Pastor and the Prince of the bishops. 4) His people's aim is the glorification of His Name on the earth and the taking part in the triumph in His eternal Kingdom. Majesty, glory, dignity, and all highness are attributed to Him as He governs heaven and earth, the whole universe.

Closely connected with the concept of government is the idea of jurisdiction. Thus Christ is the Advocate and Intercessor on behalf of man before the Almighty God. Through the government by His word He proves to be not only the King but also the Legislator. The combination 'Roy et Legislatteur' occurs twice in the ecclesiastical prayers. Man's guilt is guilt before the judgment of God and he can only approach Him on the ground of Christ's intercession as Advocate.

In his prayers, Calvin's language is deeply influenced by legal terminology. Expressions like 'praeveniamus tuum iudicium' or 'expendamus tua iudicia' 5) are frequently used. Numerous are terms which express legal activities like to procure, to acquire, to seal, to keep a promise, etc..

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- 1) Eccl. Prayers, Appendix p. 4.
 - 2) Appendix p. 2.
 - 3) ibidem.
 - 4) ibidem p. 24.
 - 5) Lect. on Amos, Tom. V. p. 227.

'Donec tandem nos colligas in regnum tuum coeleste,
quod acquisitum est ejusdem Filii tui sanguine..' 1)

'Semper tamen reconciliationem teneamus quam nobis pollicitus es in Christo Filio tuo..' 2)

To this group also belong the commonly used verbs to purchase, to redeem, to ransom, which connote the legal purchase of the sinner by the blood of Christ. Legal terminology the also lies behind nouns like: Heritage, pledge, punishment and its correlatives.

'..et collecti in aeternam illam hereditatem, quam nobis idem Filius tuus acquisivit sanguine suo..' 3)

'..quando hodie nobis proponis vetera exempla in quibus cernimus quam gravibus poenis castiges eos etiam adoptasti, ut discamus in nos respicere..' 4)

The latter instance shows, of course, parental as well as legal phraseology. There are again two sources from which those terms were derived. On one hand, there is the Bible which is so concerned with Jewish law, order, and jurisdiction and which has always provided theologians with a great amount of legal vocabulary. On the other hand, there is the fact that Calvin was a well trained lawyer who tended to think along such lines anyway.

The widest range, however, of metaphorical expressions is connected with military affairs.

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- 1) Lect. on Hosea, Tom. V. p. 86.
 - 2) Lect. on Hosea, Tom. V. p. 28.
 - 3) Lect. on Habakkuk, Tom. V. p. 376.
 - 4) Lect. on Lamentations, Tom. IV. p. 610.

3. Military terminology.

Of the hundreds of prayers there are not many which do not, in some way or other, contain words that refer to military life and warfare. They seem to have been the favourite expressions by Calvin. No matter whether he speaks of Christ, of man, of human life, of the Church, of the world, of sin or virtue, of faith or unbelief, he always has some military terms in store which he frequently uses. Fighting, struggling, assault and defence, defeat and victory were the marks of the Reformation times. It is therefore no surprise that the Reformer of Geneva gave, probably unintentionally, so much preference to those terms in his prayers. It also shows that the struggle of the Reformers was not only on the level of intellectual insight and comprehension, but a battle that involved the whole of man's personality and which went to the depth of the spiritual life, to the heart that cried to Almighty God in prayer.

Military terms then attributed to Christ are chiefly words that denote ranks of military command like captain, protector, chief, prince, victor; all of them pointing to Christ's leadership and superiority. In his description of the Christian's life words linked with warfare are numerous. The whole life is seen as warfare and battling, the Church as well as the individual Christian constantly being encircled by enemies. The evil one, the sin, the world, and the flesh never make a truce but wage incessant war against man who will lose the fight if he does not get the reinforcing strength of the Holy Spirit. The goal of man's life is also seen under that aspect. Thus his ultimate destination is to gain complete victory over his spiritual enemies, and to triumph one day in the Kingdom of God. An amazing accumulation of military terms within a very few sentences is to be found in the last part of an ecclesiastical prayer:

'...que nous sommes circuis et assailis continuellement de tant d'ennemies, que le diable, le mond, le peché, et nostre proper chair, ne cessent de nous faire la guerre, vueille-nous fortifier par ton Saint Esprit, et nous armer de tes graces, à fin que puissions constamment resiter, à toutes tentations, et perseverer en ceste bataille spirituelle, iusqu'à ce qu'obtenions pleine victoire, pour triompher une fois en ton Royaume, avec nostre capitaine et protecteur nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, Amen'. 1)

To the same category belong passages that express the necessity of man's being on the alert and guarding himself against the insidious assaults of Satan and his supporters. But though he has to fight all his life through, he need not to have any doubts as in regard to the final result, for Christ has already fought for him and won the victory. The end shall be the access to the fellowship of that victory of His.

'...que nous puissions nous garder de toutes les astuces de Satan et de ses suppostz...'. 2)

'quando toto vitae nostrae curriculo nobis pugnandum est.. neque dubitemus, quin sic pugnet pro nobis Christus Filius tuus, in cujus manu et virtute est nostra victoria, ut semper admissurus sit nos in societatem ejus victoriae..'. 3)

'...da, inquam, ne etiam fatigemur, sed semper simus in pro-cinctu parati ad pugnandum...'. 4)

Many such phrases indicating military terminology have their sources in the Scriptures. Thus when Calvin mentions the trumpet of the last judgement, the sword of the spirit, or when he mentions that man's enemies are not of only one sort but of many,

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- 1) Recveil des Opuscules p. 243.
 2) Sermon 48 on 2. Samuel, HR. p. 424.
 3) Lect. on Daniel, Tom. V. p. 202.
 4) ibidem, p. 206.



not flesh and blood only, but the devil who is the prince of darkness, he is obviously using the language of St. Paul and St. Peter. 1) As the following example shows, much stress is also laid on steadfastness and perseverance, again thoughts taken from biblical phraseology.

'...Da omnipotens Deus, quando in hoc mundo militandum nobis perpetuo est, non tantum cum uno genere hostium, sed cum innumeris: neque etiam cum carne et sanguine, sed cum diabolo principe tenebrarum: da, inquam, ut armati tua virtute stemus constanter in hac militia...'.2)

4. Educational terminology.

Another common group of metaphorical phrases concerns educational terminology. In many variations recur the ideas of teaching and studying, instructing and learning, searching and gaining wisdom. Also tests, trials, and examinations are seen under the same aspect. Thus the Holy Spirit is the most perfect doctor who expounds the counsel of the Lord to His people. The latter are daily dignified by receiving the light of heavenly doctrine and therefore called up to enter His school in humility and modesty, in which appears true culture.

'...da, inq uam, ut hodie postquam apparuit nobis optimus ille et perfectissimus doctor, et familiariter nobis consilium tuum exposuit, ne ita ignavi simus vel socordes, ut evanescat nobis tanta manifestationis claritas, quae hodie nobis objicitur in Euangelio...'.3)

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando quotidie familiariter nos dignaris luce caelestis doctrinae, ita venire in scholam tuam cum vera humilitate et modestia, ut appareat nostra docilitas...'. 4)

1) cf. I. Cor. 15:52; I. Thess. 4:16 I. Peter 5:8.

2) Lect. on Joel, Tom. V. p. 168.

3) Lect. on Daniel, Tom. V. p. 108.

4) ibidem p. 170.

The Christian's life is not only seen under the aspect of warfare, as we have discovered in the previous part, but also under the aspect of going to school throughout one's life. Since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom, the Christian should always be quick and willing to receive instruction from Him. The many afflictions then, such as war, famine, illness, poverty, imprisonment, and the like are the great tests in life and also means of correction. Hence, in the prayer the request is not for immediate relief from the tribulations but rather for strength to endure them in good patience. This thought is well expressed in a portion of ecclesiastical prayers which reads like this:

'Vueille donc regarder en pitié toutes tes Eglises, et tous peuples que tu as maintenant affliges, ou par peste, ou par guerre, ou par tes autres verges: les personnes battues de tes verges; soit de maladie, prison, ou poverté, selon que tu cognois qu'ils en ont besoin: et en leur faisant profiter tes chastimens a leur correction, les confermer en bonne patience, et moderer ta rigueur: et en la fin, en les delivrant, leur donner pleine matiere de se resiouir en ta bonté, et benir ton saint nom'. 1)

The educational aspect is evident as it can easily be seen. It belongs to those characteristics which mark Calvin's prayers throughout. Such frequent use of educational terms discloses an interesting point in his theological understanding. Religion is not a rigid, inflexible system of readymade thoughts about God, the world, and man's place therein. True religion is to be found where man is willing and ready to hear the Word of God as it is set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Accordingly, the task of theology is not the maintenance or defence of the inherited ecclesiastical tradition, but rather the continual

1) Recveil des Opuscules, p. 247.

acquiring of knowledge from the Word of God, i.e. from Scripture. This does not necessarily mean a negative judgment on tradition, but it makes it subject to constant examination by the Scriptures. Acquisition of knowledge and power of intellect is therefore heavily stressed and it is one of the chief elements in Calvin's theology. A comparison with the Old Testament and its Jewish background would also suggest that he followed the pattern of the pharisees and scribes at their best over against the priestly tradition. The former being dynamic in its stress on Scripture reading in the synagoge, the latter being static in attributing the highest importance to the maintenance of the Temple ritual.

The idea of teacher and pupil as an illustration of the true relationship between God and His people has penetrated Calvin's mind very much. God the Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit, all three Persons of the Trinity, are referred to as the Sole Masters who alone can teach the true religion for the glorification of His holy name and the benefit of His people.

'...sed perstemus in Lege tua, et simul etiam in ea doctrina, quam nobis tradidit Filius tuus unicus Magister noster, quo magis ac magis proficiamus in cognitione ejus gloriae..' 1)

5. Terms referring to nature.

We shall now investigate some of the less frequent illustrations and uses of metaphorical phrases. They could be classified under a section of natural terminology, because they are taken from the observation of nature. It is important, though, to notice that many of these metaphors, in

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV. p. 234.

addition, are genuinely scriptural as they play a big part there. 1)

Calvin's favourite natural metaphor, which is used more often than any other, is the sun. This metaphor of the sun is time and again applied to Christ who is the Sun of Righteousness. And in an even more striking way the working of the Holy Spirit is illustrated by the working of the sun. Calvin prays that as God makes the sun shine upon the earth for the enlightening and quickening of the corporeal world, so may He by the clarity of His Spirit illumine the understanding and heart of man, and lead him on the right way of His justice. This analogical usage we find for instance in the morning prayer in which Calvin also refers to Christ as being the sun of the souls which never ceases to shine either by day or by night. The idea apparently is that no state of the human soul, no matter how dark the implications may be, shall be able to alter the fact that God's grace is ever present. It indicates a safe assurance and trustworthiness on the side of God.

'...Filius etiam tuus, qui est Sol justitiae...'. 2)

'Et comme il te plaist de faire luire ton soleil sur la terre, pour nous esclairer corporellement, aussi vueille-moy par la clarté de ton Esperit illuminer mon entendement et mon coeur, pour me diriger en la droite voye de ta iustice...'. 3)

'...continuant et augmentant iournellement ta grace en moy, iusqu'à ce que tu m'ayes amené à la pleine conionction de ton Fils Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur, qui est le vray soleil de nos ames, luisant iour et nuict, sans fin, et à perpetuité'. 4)

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- 1) Similar terms appear often in the Reformer's sermons.
Cf. Mülhaupt: Die Predigt Calvins.
- 2) Lect. on Amos, Tom. V. p. 224.
- 3) Recveil des Opuscules, p. 237.
- 4) ibidem.

Corresponding to the metaphor of the sun is the idea of the shade. Not as a negative counterpart but as a positive correlative. Shade is applied to the mercy of God which is a refuge to those in troubles and miseries.

'... da, inquam, ut confugiamus semper in umbram misericordiae tuae, et haec nobis unica sit tranquillitas in rebus miseris et turbidis...'. 1)

Another metaphor, which recurs now and then and which has a fascinating aspect, represents ideas connected with the sea, storms, and navigation. Thus the course of man's life is compared to a journey on the sea, the Church as a boat which is often being tossed to and fro by the tempests of its enemies. The tempests and the waves occasionally also refer to man's passions, to the temptations of his flesh. The salvation in both cases lies in the calling upon, and acknowledgement of, the true Helmsman which is Jesus Christ. But not only the Church or the individual Christian are seen under the aspect of seafaring, the whole world is referred to as a place of unrest, of confusion, and perplexity. This, at times, would tend to create some doubts in the believers as to who is ultimately Lord of the world and its history, even more so as Protestant communities suffered severe persecution. Here Calvin with steadfastness prays for strength of faith which holds firm that God is the Steersman of the affairs of the world and also the righteous Judge.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando fieri non potest, quin pro infirmitate carnis nostrae inter tot turbulentos hujus mundi motus vacillemus saepe et turbemur: da, inquam, ut fultura hac sustineatur fides nostra, te esse gubernatorem mundi, neque homines semel duntaxat abs te esse

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV. p. 468.

creatos, sed etiam conservari sub manu tua, et te etiam eundem esse justum judicem, ut nobis ipsi quoque frenum injiciamus...'. 1)

On the other hand, whereas the sea and its waves represent unrest, there is the idea of the fountain. Thus God is referred to as the fountain of all wisdom and knowledge. Christ, then, is denoted as fountain of man's propitiation before God Almighty.

'Seigneur, qui es la fontaine de tout sagesse et science..'.2)

'Agnoscamus non esse nostri similem, sed fontem omnis propitiationis, ut intrepide ad spem salutis evehamur...'. 3)

We noticed that the sea and the tempests are being used as metaphors of God's adversaries, whereas the image of the fountain refers to the activities of God and His Christ. The pattern Calvin had in mind was most probably taken from biblical events, i.e. Christ appeasing the tempest on the sea of Galilee and His conversation on living waters with the Samaritan Woman, respectively. 4)

6. Some rare occurrences.

Some of the very rare metaphorical usages may here be mentioned as they also show some interesting characteristics of Calvin's understanding. In his lecture on Ezekiel chapter two he refers to the stiffheartedness of the people of Israel. In this context he prays at the end of the lecture that God may help that His word may not meet a stony heart or iron mind, but a docile mind that willingly submits to the teaching of His word. For by

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- 1) Lect. on Habakkuk, Tom. V. p. 380.
 - 2) Prayer before studying the lesson RO. p. 238.
 - 3) Lect. on Hosea, Tom. V. p. 104.
 - 4) St. Mark 4:35-41, St. John 4:1-26.

total submission man shall truly experience that God is the Father.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando hodie dignatus es nos hac praerogativa, ut quotidie sermo tuus auribus nostris insonet: ne reperiat corda lapidea, et mentes ferreas: sed qua oportet docilitate nos ita tibi subjiciamus, ut vere sentiamus te nobis esse Patrem...'. 1)

To stone and wood he refers in the sense that God willed not only to dwell in a temple of stone and wood, but that the fullness of His take a dwelling place in Christ Himself.

'...quando hodie non tantum ex ligno et lapidibus templum apud nos voluisti tibi extrui, sed quum plenitudo tuae Deitatis habitaverit in Filio unigenito tuo...'. 2)

For the beauty of the world the Reformer had an open eye. The whole creation, the sky and the earth were a big theatre in which God's power and wisdom, goodness and loyalty, were daily displayed. The unchangeability of the orbits of sun, moon, and the stars was an illustration of God's loyalty and faithfulness which would never change. 3) Of course we have to take into account that such illustrations were used at a time when astronomy was still in its early stages. Yet the most important thought is this that Calvin did not remain at the stage of looking at the wonders of the world only. His spiritual eyes looked beyond the beauties of creation to the Creator of all things. 4) Hence he prays that God would effect the raising of man's eyes above the things of the corporeal world to the spiritual world, especially to the eternal hope and salvation, and to the surety that His salvation can not be shattered, nor His faithfulness be changed.

1) Lect. on Ezekiel, Tom. IV. p. 20.

2) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV. p. 87.

3) Lect. on Jeremiah, 33:23-26.

4) ibidem

It is noteworthy that salvation is founded in His certain veracity and that it embraces all things in certitude. 1) Once more we see how Calvin never lets his illustrations and images master him but keeps them as his servants. The way he uses the wonders of the sky as a display of God's handiwork shows how thoroughly his thinking and teaching has been determined by the Scriptures.

Here are two instances taken from his lectures on the book of Jeremiah. The first quotation shows us how he uses the word 'spectaculum' for the corporeal world. The second is an excellent example of Calvin's way of putting it. Withal it makes us aware of his ability to see all things related to the ultimate purpose of God. In this particular prayer the certainty of the course of the solar system is related again to the certitude of man's salvation in Jesus Christ.

'Da, omnipotens Deus, quando quotidie proponis nobis illustre spectaculum tuae non modo potentiae et sapientiae, sed etiam bonitatis, et fidei in caelo et terra, ut discamus altius attollere animos nostros, nempe ad spem illam, quae nobis in caelo reposita est...'. 2)

'Da, omnipotens Deus, quando fruimus luce Solis et Lunae nocte et interdium: da, inquam, ut discamus altius attollere oculos, nec similes simus incredulis, quibus commune est nobiscum hoc beneficium, sed dirigamur in spem aeternae salutis, nec dubitemus, quin sicuti documentum nobis ponis ante oculos immobilis tuae constantiae in his creaturis, ita etiam futura sit firma nostra salus, quae fundata est in veritate tua certissima, et quae rerum omnium est certitudo, donec tandem perveniamus in beatum illud regnum, quod nobis partum est unigeniti Filii tui sanguine, Amen'. 3)

1) Lect. on Jeremiah 31:35-36; 32:6-15.
 2) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV. p. 418.
 3) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV. p. 385.

Of rare occurrence is the use of phrases that refer to the animal world. The wolves appear in the ecclesiastical prayer representing the ravening persecutors of the Church, from the mouths of which deliverance is being asked for. 1) Also rare is the use of the word whip and rod. Hardships such as illness, poverty, imprisonment, plague, war, famine, etc. are referred to as whips and rods in the hands of God. It is interesting to know that Calvin does not pray for immediate relief from them. He is asking for comfort, 2) patience, and perseverance during such times of tribulations until God would send full relief from all those miseries. As Calvin sees it, it would not be becoming for man to ask for immediate relief, for, if God allows tribulations to afflict man, He has His reasons as well as the perfect right to do so. On the other hand, man being a sinful being has no right to ask for relief. Again, he has to get into line with the will of God, which in the end will work out for his good since God's ultimate aim for man is not destruction but eternal salvation.

Lastly, let us consider one more expression that occurs rather often. It is the idea of pilgrimage. Calvin uses different words for the description of life as it is moving on in its course. To walk - *ambulare* - in the fear and obedience of the Lord with a fervent heart is a corollary of the perfect cognition of God's will. To walk continually in His obedience is based upon the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. There is an additional significance in his use of the word '*peregrinor*', to peregrinate as a stranger in a foreign land. Calvin uses it quite frequently, and it is suggested that he was thinking of the Scripture passage that the faithful ones have no continual city on earth. 3) The course of life of the individual as well as of the Church is compared to a peregrination in a strange

1) Appendix p. 3.

2) Appendix p. 23.

3) Epistle to the Hebrews 13:14.

country, which is this world. And as the wanderer is never sure whether he would not meet some danger from any side, he is to walk in soberness so as to be prepared for any meeting with unforeseen opponents. Thus the ideas of the wanderer and of the soldier are very closely seen together, sometimes even in the same prayer.

'...Sancto Spiritu suo nos ita regneret, ut in ipsius obedientia continuo ambulemus...'. 1)

'...ut ad perfectam voluntatis ipsius cognitionem veniamus, et in ipsius timore et obedientia tanto animi fervore ambulemus...'. 2)

'...ut semper reddamus tibi debitam sapientiae, et justitiae, et fortitudinis laudem: et ita ambulemus in sobrietate dum peregrinamur in mundo...'. 3)

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando nobis proposita est terrena haec vita in militiam, et necesse est continua inquietudine nos agitari quamdiu hic peregrinamur: da, inquam, ut semper intenti simus ad beatam illam quietem, ad quam nos invitas...'. 4)

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- 1) Hom. on I. Samuel, Tom. II. p. 395.
 2) Hom. on I. Samuel, Tom. II. p. 371.
 3) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV. p. 394.
 4) ibidem p. 402.

Chapter Four

CALVIN'S CONCEPTION OF GOD ACCORDING TO HIS PRAYERS

1. The importance of Scripture in relation to a real understanding of Calvin's ideas of God.

If we want to get a real understanding of Calvin's conception of God it is important to answer one question, namely: What is the chief factor which has determined his ideas of God ? Unless we have answered this question rightly, we may move into a wrong direction and consequently arrive at false conclusions. We have said that the prayers of Calvin are bound to the Scriptures. We have found that this is true, not only in regard to the form of prayer but also in regard to the content. We have been impressed by the amazing adherence to the Scriptures and by the consistency of Calvin in keeping to it. This leads us to the following: If we want to develop a description of the ideas of God by Calvin we must take one thing into account, which is that the chief factor which determined his conception were the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. In other words: The God of Calvin is the God as revealed in the Bible. This affirmation can surely be made as far as the prayers are concerned. Of course this raises the problem of interpretation and in the last the problem of analogy. There are the various ways and methods of interpreting the Scriptures, as the detailed studies of the specialist in exegetical exposition, the comprehensive work of systematic theology, etc.. We are aware of the fact that

not only clear exposition must be regarded as interpretation, but that every simple reading, and especially every translation into another language, involves already some interpretation. Now as in regard to prayer we have to make a distinction, at least to a certain extent, and it is this: Whereas sermons, lectures, and the works of systematic theology are mainly the product of intellectual reasoning and comprehension, the prayers may be rather considered as the outcome of the heart. Thus a study of them may bring us a bit closer to that what the person concerned really believed. This does not necessarily involve a discrepancy between the mind and the heart. But it might well be that some new aspects of the theology may be revealed.

2. The almightiness of God.

An amazingly great number of prayers start in an almost stereotyped manner: 'Da omnipotens Deus..'. Especially among the prayers attached to the lectures on Jeremiah and the Minor Prophets that opening phrase occurs with an impressive regularity. 1) Other prayers such as the ecclesiastical prayers or the confession of sin begin in a similar way: 'Dieu tout-puissant..', 'Seigneur Dieu, Pere eternel et tout-puissant..'. The usage of the words 'omnipotens' and 'tout-puissant' is significant. Both expressions refer to the same root, namely, the Latin posse = to be able. It is rightly translated into English by the word 'Almighty', the One who has the potential Might and power to do all and everything. Calvin has no doubts as to the might, power, and supremacy of God. Ability and might are in close relationship. Because God has the ability to do

1) See appendix pp. 27-50.

everything, He also has the might and power to create, sustain, and preserve all that which exists as well as to control and rule everything. Yet one must not denote almightiness as just one of God's attributes. Universal ability and with it the highest potential might and power are parts of God's very essence. They belong to the being of God, i.e. God is the Almighty in Himself.

On the other hand, the universe which He has created by an act of grace is fully dependent on Him, or, more in the language of Calvin, on His might. The created universe can only exist through the continuous maintenance of the potentia of God. God the Almighty means, God the living God. His life and Power are together, i.e. His might is identical with His life in eternity. 'Pere eternal et tout-puissant' prays Calvin, and by mentioning God's eternity he refers to God's life. He also sees God's might and life as an active creating element which has brought out of nothingness (ex nihilo) all that which exists. Furthermore, God's potentia can bring the dead to life. In short, all the created world with its life exists only through God's potentia and as long as it receives its being from God. The moment God withholds His potentia from His creation the latter will vanish into non-existence and life will turn to death.

'...sed potius discamus et oculos et mentes et sensus omnes nostros attollere ad illam potentiam tuam, qua vivificas mortuos et excitas ex nihilo quae non erant, ut ita semper aspirent animi nostri ad aeternam salutem...'. 1)

God's potentia, by which He holds the universe together, sustains, maintains, and penetrates the whole world, by which He also gives life to all that lives, must not be understood

1) Lect. on Micha, Tom. V. p. 314.

in the sense of pantheism. God is not imprisoned in His own creation. There is the basic difference between the sovereign Creator and His creation, the former being absolutely free Lord and Master whose superiority remains unchallenged over His creation. The status of the latter then is one of the object, of a dependent. 1)

But if we describe God's potentia as working in general by maintaining the universe, we have to notice that the same potentia works in a special way in regard to man and his history. We shall deal with that more in detail when we treat the nature of the Church. What we want to note at this stage is that God's potentia governs and controls the affairs of man. Kings and governors are given a function of service and are commissioned with the dispensation of His justice. Their power to rule exists only through the intrinsic potentia of God who is behind and above them. 2)

Calvin had no doubts whatsoever as in regard to God's ultimate power and superiority. Amidst the greatest troubles and confusions in world affairs, or Church affairs, he never lost faith in the potentia of God under whose providence and control even the worst human conflicts, upheavals, and confusions could never extend beyond all limits to the stage of chaos. Such a trust in God's potentia is well reflected in a prayer attached to a lecture on Daniel:

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando hodie res in mundo ita turbantur, ut quocumque circumferamus oculos, nihil cernamus praeter horrendam confusionem: da, inquam, ut intenti simus in doctrinam tuam, neque vagemur post nostras imaginationes, neque abstrahamur ullis curis, neque etiam declinemus huc et illuc per curiositatem: sed defixi in

1) cf. Lect. on Jeremiah 31:35-36.

2) See especially ecclesiastical prayers, appendix p. 2.

sermone tuo, semper te quaeramus, et recumbamus in tuam providentiam, nec dubitemus quum tutelam salutis nostrae susceperis, nos semper fore salvos, modo te semper invocemus in nomine unigeniti Filii tui, Amen'. 1)

We began this chapter with a discussion on the almightiness of God, because of the great prominence of the expressions 'omnipotens Deus' and 'Dieu tout-puissant' which appear in almost every prayer. But we cannot speak of God's almightiness without at the same time referring to the wisdom of God.

The wisdom of God again is not an attribute assigned to Him. It is part of God Himself, of His very essence, similar to what has been said in regard to His potentia. God in His being is not only omnipotent but wise. In wisdom He has created the world. In wisdom He has set the orders for the whole universe. Heaven and earth, the visible and the invisible world are an 'illustre spectaculum' of His wisdom. They display by their constancy, accuracy, and beauty the handiwork of the great genius who has ordained it by His wisdom. 2) Now here is a similar thing to be said as in regard to God's potentia. We discovered that God not only lives by His potentia for Himself but that He created the universe by it, thus calling an object into existence. In addition to that He communicates and presents His potentia to His creation in the sense that all that which exists depends on His potentia. Similarly, God has not only kept His wisdom for Himself but has put it to work in the creation of the universe. Thus His wisdom has become the original of all wisdom among His creation. God is the fountain of all wisdom. 3) This means that all human wisdom and knowledge comes from God. We find, therefore, many instances in the prayers which stress the importance of learning, of enlightening, of

1) Lect. on Daniel, Tom. V. p. 192.

2) Lect. on Jeremiah 33:23-26.

3) RO. p. 238.

studying, of acquiring knowledge. 1) Man's complete dependance on God is again obvious and it has the effect that man has much reason to be humble as all his wisdom and knowledge does not come out of him but from the wisdom of God who graciously illuminates him by the operation of the Holy Spirit. A beautiful prayer, that shows how Calvin attributed all wisdom to God, is the prayer before studying the lesson. It also reveals how he expected all wisdom and knowledge from Him who is the source of all sapientia. 2)

3. The holiness of God.

Calvin's understanding in regard to the majesty of God is that it is a 'sainte Maesté', a holy majesty. He uses the term rarely but it does appear at the beginning of the confession which was ordinarily made at the beginning of every divine service. It is not so surprising when such a term referring to God's holiness is being used here. For it is God's holiness that separates man in his sinful state so radically from God. The sin of man is chiefly sin against God's holiness. However, the holiness of God only becomes manifest to man through Christ. In Him, the pure, true, sincere Son of God the holiness of the Father is being made known. Man, on the other hand, only becomes aware of his state of perdition by realising in what condition of depravity he is involved. 3) Christ is indeed the first who reveals to him his true situation before the holy God. 4)

1) Lect. on Ezechiel 14:6-9; Lect. 88 on Jeremiah, Appendix p. 30; Lect. 57 on Minor Prophets, Appendix p. 41; Sermon 23 on Deut. p. 131.

2) RO. p. 238.

3) cf. Sermon on Galatians, CR. 50, 538.

4) cf. ibidem Cr. 50, 541; also Comm. on Acts 17:23 and Romans 11:36.

God's holiness then is linked up with His will. In the same confession the Reformer speaks of the transgressions of the holy commandments. God's will is a holy will and He has expressed the same holy will in the Law. The Law, however, is to be understood as a gift of God to man by which God presents Himself to man. 1)

'Seigneur Dieu, Pere eternel et tout-puissant, nous confessons et reconnissons sans feintise devant ta sainte Maiesté, que nous sommes poueres pecheurs, conceus et nais en iniquité et corruption, enclins à mal-faire, inutiles à tout bien: et que de nostre vice nous transgressons sans fin et sans cesse tes saint commandmens...'. 2)

But since man has transgressed His commandments, since he has fallen by his disobedience into the state of misery and perdition, God is the unapproachable One. Because God is holy, man has no right, no claim, no possibility to draw nigh to God for His holiness puts man to shame so that he is not worthy to lift up his eyes to Him.

God being the Holy One does not merely mean that He is unapproachable. It also means that God is true and loyal to Himself and therefore man can trust in His promises. 3) He is Himself light and from Him proceeds light. And as He is in Himself so is He in His communications towards man. As He is faithful to Himself so is He faithful in His revelation. He is not one God in Himself and another in His revelation. One thing still must be added: His holiness also includes His mystery. 4) God's actions in man's history which appears to be unintelligible to man at times, Calvin considers as part of God's hidden counsel to which man should not even try to penetrate, for it would mean to approach the Unapproachable One who is holy.

1) CR. 28, 513.

2) RO. p. 240.

3) See appendix p. 41, MS 40c Sermon II

4) cf. Institutes III 23,4; OS 4, 398,6.

The holiness of God is to be described as the side of the nature of God by which He is fundamentally and radically opposed to all that which is against His will. Thus the wrath of God, which is directed towards all those who are rebellious and disobedient to Him, must be understood under the aspect of God's holiness. 1) It is His nature by which He stands firm - so to speak - over against the evil and all that is involved in what is contrary to His will. Thus holiness means also judgment. Because God is true and faithful to Himself, He will never permit that evil should prevail against Him. Evil shall be dealt with by judgment. Calvin's prayers disclose in very many instances that God's judgment is being executed. Man's godlessness and rebellion against the holy God shall be judged. And His judgment is just.

'...nous acquerons par ton iuste iugement ruine et perdition sur nous...'. 2)

This is the holiness of God, that He vindicates truth against untruth, righteousness against unrighteousness, integrity against corruption. In the same way the wrath of God must be understood as His action against the sin of man. There is a phrase which is often used 'we provoke the wrath of God by our sins' which means that God's holiness is being affronted by the offences of man.

However, the manifestation of God's holiness culminates in Jesus Christ. It is not in the first place the perfect life of Christ on earth that reveals the holiness of God, it is the suffering and death that reveal it. Truly, the suffering and death of Christ reveal both the grace of God as well as His holiness. They reveal the grace of God in that the judgment does not fall upon mankind as a whole but on One, namely His Son.

1) Appendix 32, 1.

2) RO, 240.

And it reveals God's holiness in that the judgment has to fall. The full wrath of God is directed to this One. Here God maintains His holiness by holding His charge against sin, and against the evil. It also reveals the severity of God's judgment which again refers to the height and depth of His holiness.

4. The goodness and love of God.

What we said so far as concerning God's almightiness, wisdom, and holiness was not surprising. Generally, it is agreed that Calvin was a great believer in God's ultimate power, sovereignty, and superiority over all. A new aspect, however, emerges when we read the prayers, namely, God's goodness. This is the chief characteristic of His nature. The God of Calvin is a good God. The instances in the prayers are numerous which point this out.

First of all, there are hundreds of prayers which say in the opening phrase that God is a good God. Especially the prayers attached to the sermons contain with impressive regularity the adjective 'good' as attributed to God. Let us now prostrate ourselves before the majesty of our good God, is the almost stereotyped phrase. 1)

'Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu...'

In the 'Conciones in liberum Jobi' an even stronger expression is being used, namely, the superlative. Not just 'coram bono Deo' as one might expect, but 'coram optimo Deo' which means before the very best God.

1) Ms 26, pp. 68, 250, 266, 307, 409, 468.
 MS 40B, pp. 28, 49, 59, 69.
 MS 40C, pp. 49, 70, 85, 98.
 HR 9.

'Prosterneremur autem coram facie Optimi Dei nostri...'. 1)

'Prosterneremur autem coram Optimo Deo nostro...'. 2)

In the ecclesiastical prayers appears the term 'Dieu tres-benign et Pere misericordieux' and in a prayer for the celebration of a wedding God is referred to as 'tout bon et tout sage'. 3)

These expressions concerning the nature of God mean just what they say. The mere use of such expressions would already lead us to the conclusion that Calvin's understanding of God's goodness was that it would form a part of His very essence and entity. But we shall deal with one vital question before we make any statements, and it is this: How does Calvin come to the conclusion that God is good in His nature and entity? The answer is this: That which leads Calvin to the conclusion that God is in Himself goodness is because God is God in action. It is an action of His love. 4) He has taken the initiative and gone into action on behalf of man. That is to say, God has made Himself known to man through His revelation. This revelation means: revelation in Jesus Christ in Whom He has proved to be the Father of all mankind. Man then has been adopted as child of the Father through the same Jesus Christ Who is the pledge of the adoption.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando semel testatus es te nobis fore in Patrem, & pignus tuae adoptionis nobis dedisti Filium tuum unigenitum, ut hac promissione confisi non dubitemus etiamsi aliquando durius castiges, tamen te fore tandem misericordem, & ita non desinamus ad tuam clementiam confugere...'. 5)

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- 1) Tom. II, p. 272.
 - 2) Tom. II, p. 276.
 - 3) RO. pp. 248 and 256.
 - 4) cf. Comm. on Ezek. 18:1f.
 - 5) Tom. IV, p. 514.

Thus Jesus Christ is the real, true, and actual presentation of the goodness of God. Again and again Calvin points to Christ as the great gift God has presented to man, for in Christ there is the very heart of God revealed. More still, in Christ God offers in a friendly, familiar way His paternal l o v e to man, the evidence of which He daily presents in and through His Gospel. A prayer of simple beauty which reveals the Reformer's thoughts, one should say the tender thoughts, is to be found in his lectures on Jeremiah. It is somewhat similar to the one quoted above:

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando dignatus es nobis familiariter ostendere paternum tuum amorem, & ejus testimonium nobis quotidie reddis in Euangelio, ne vagemur in obliqui et erraticis nostris cogitationibus: sed acquiescamus in simplici tua veritate...'. 1)

God's goodness and love are to be relied upon. They are trustworthy and sure. The certitude that His goodness and love can be absolutely trusted is grounded in the fact that His only Son Jesus Christ died for man. In this event the incomprehensible goodness and love of God, which are beyond human imagination and expectation, have become manifest and, so to speak, ratified. 2) Hence Calvin puts so much stress on the faith in God's goodness and love. 'Non dubitemus' is an almost classical expression of his which he uses frequently in order to emphasise that God's goodness and love should never be doubted. One gets the impression that Calvin was overwhelmed by God's goodness and love which are sealed by the death of Christ. For in that death God has shown Himself as being the Father of mankind. It gives the firm assurance of the forgiveness of sins and of the adoption. Although by merit man is condemned a thousand times before the

1) Tom. IV, p. 342.

2) See appendix p. 22, ratified as translation of the French ratifiée which is being used by the Reformer.

Almighty God, the death of Christ has changed the whole situation completely. Therefore, no matter whether man is alive or dead, he belongs to God. God in His goodness and love has chosen the way of lowliness and humility in order to win (allicere) man for Himself. Such is the nature of God as He makes Himself known to man.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando erga veterem populum ita fuisti exorabilis, & quantumvis graviter offensus esses, tamen servasti aliquas reliquas, erga quas tuae misericordiae documenta proferres, sic etiam digneris nos hodie allicere, & utcumque simus millies coram te merito damnati, tamen ut potius nos recipias in unigenito Filio tuo, & per ipsum nobis reconciliatus ostendas usque ad finem vitae nostrae atque adeo in morte ipsa te esse Patrem, ut ita vivamus & moriamur tibi, & agnoscamus hanc esse unicam salutis viam, donec tandem fruamur haereditate illa caelesti, quae nobis parta est ejusdem Filii tui sanguine, Amen'. 1)

Here we see what a remarkable & important place the death of Christ takes in the understanding of the nature of God. It is not a peripheral but a primary and central source of the knowledge of God, for the death of Christ is the most striking demonstration and manifestation of God's goodness and love. Now if we take both, goodness and love, together and ask for the possessor of them we find the title Father as ascribed to God. 2) Possessor in this sense means that both, goodness and love, are parts of Himself. In Christ God has proved to be the Father. In other words, if we ask for Calvin's main idea of God the answer will be this: The God in Whom Calvin believes is the Father of Jesus Christ. There are hundreds of prayers which give evidence that the Reformer believed in no other God than the one who has given

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 558.

2) See especially the beginning of the ecclesiastical prayers appendix pp. 21 and 25.

His only begotten Son into this world, namely, Jesus Christ. Therefore the frequent occurrence of calling upon the name of Jesus Christ at the conclusion of the prayer. 1) Hence, every predication in regard to the nature of God must be related to His revelation in Jesus Christ in Whom alone the true divine nature has been set forth.

We have now to go one step further by asking for the criterion by which we can judge the terms goodness and love. What is meant when they are being applied to the nature of God? What does Calvin mean when he believes in God as being a good God, 'bon Dieu' or 'optimus Deus'? Are such terms referring to qualities that are, in general, attributed to man? To answer this we must consider that in fact all human predications concerning the nature of God are bound to human language and as such limited, as well as subject to verification. Calvin used those terms to describe the nature of God. Visible things such as the beauty of the corporeal world, the course of the universe, the harvest of the fields, all good things for the provision of human life, and its maintenance, were looked upon as gifts originating out of the goodness of God. But what impressed Calvin far more still was the fact that God Himself had chosen the means of human language. For what happened in the revelation in Jesus Christ was an act of God's loving-kindness and benevolence. Since God has set forth that in Christ there is the unique source of all good things, Calvin prays for God's assistance so that he would never doubt that He was a merciful and benevolent God. 2)

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- 1) See endings of the prayers appendix p. 27 ff.
 - 2) Calvin uses the term 'humanus pater'. The question could be raised whether the english terms, as merciful and benevolent, would be sufficient to record the precise meaning. Would a term like 'humanitarian' not come somewhat nearer to the original meaning? Perhaps we require to be compelled to realise that he does use such phraseology.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando non aliunde nobis speranda est aut temporalis, aut aeterna felicitas, quam ab uno Christo, sicuti etiam nobis eum proponis tanquam unicam bonorum omnium fontem: da, inquam, ut contenti gratia quae nobis per ipsum offertur, discamus renunciare toti mundo, & ita luctari cum omni diffidentia, ut non dubitemus te nobis semper fore humanum & benignum patrem, qui large suppedites quaecunque necessaria erunt ad victum: interea tamen sic sobrie & temperanter vescamur terrenis bonis, ne simus addicti, sed potius erectis animis aspiremus ad coelestem illam felicitatem ad quam nos invitas, & ad quam nos dirigit talibus adminiculis, ut vere conjuncti capiti nostro, perveniamus tandem ad illam aeternam gloriam, quae nobis parta est eiusdem sanguine, Amen'. 1)

If we study Calvin's methods of thinking we discover that he used two methods. On one hand, he argues back from the good things of the world to the conclusion that God is a good God. 2) On the other hand, he beholds the humanity of God in Christ and concludes from it that since God has shown His goodness in His Son, He will never fail to provide all things necessary for human life. Of the two methods it appears that the Reformer has given much preference to the second.

The criterion of goodness and love then is grounded in the will of God. His goodness and love cannot be separated from His will, in short: What God wills is good. 3) But there are some explanations to be made in regard to this. Is God's will to be defined as arbitrariness as it has often understood to be, both within and without Calvinism? Indeed, if one concentrates on only one part of Calvin's doctrine, especially on his doctrine of predestination, one might come fairly near to such a conclusion. But such an undertaking would not bring

1) Lect. on Zechariah, Tom. V, p. 525.

2) This method is called in German: Rückschlussverfahren. It gives the precise meaning.

3) The will of God as being a good will, and what He wills is good, is implicitly presumed when Calvin sees man's salvation in the submission to the Lord as in so many prayers is evident. See the many instances in the prayers of the appendix.

us nearer to the truth but rather result in giving a distorted view of his theology. For, in order to draw a fairly adequate and just picture of his theology, we must take the whole of the Reformer's writings into consideration. It is the purport of this study on his prayers to make a contribution towards a better understanding of his complete works. Now as far as the will of God is concerned we find that Calvin quite frequently refers to the will of God. It is interesting to notice that God's will is mostly referred to as a good will 'bonne volonte'.¹⁾ The will of God is a will of love and benevolence. The meaning of this is that He executes His will lovingly and benevolently. The object of it, the creation in general and man in particular, is in the last analysis the object of His love and goodness. Thus God's will, love, and goodness must be regarded as being very closely related to one another. They cannot be separated one from the other. If one would do so one would end up with false conclusions. If we mention God's will we also have to mention His love and goodness, and vice versa. However, the will of God is not limited by His goodness and love or bound to them in a way that it would be no more a free will. God's will remains a perfectly free will, not determined by any other factor.

Calvin is amazed and filled with awe when he looks at the will of God, for it is beyond his comprehension. Thus he cannot give any further explanations. And he would never allow man to go any further as to seek more behind the will of God except that which He has set forth in His Word. The fact that God in sovereignty and liberty has chosen to communicate to man lovingly, and out of sheer goodness, is enough to be content

1) Prayers for special occasions, appendix pp. 6 and 8.

with. For man it is sufficient to remain obedient to His will, because it is the very best thing that ever could happen, namely, that God made known His will to man through His word.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quum nobis innotueris doctrina & Lege tuae, & Euangelii, & quotidie etiam digneris familiariter nobis patefacere tuam voluntatem: ut defixi maneamus in vera obedientia ejus doctrina, in qua nobis manifestatur perfecta justitia...'. 1)

The last quotation also shows that the Law takes an important place in the cognition of God's will. God has made known His will through the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel. Hence the Holy Scriptures are the source from which the will of God can be read. For this reason it is needless to say that emphasis is laid on the studying of the Bible.

We described the will of God as closely related to His goodness and love, that He executes His will lovingly, out of sheer goodness. But how does this fit in with God's wrath, of which Calvin used to speak quite frequently ? 2) This is a very crucial point, indeed. For even in his prayers we find wordings that give the unequivocal impression of harshness. 3) For instance, when he prays that God may overthrow and destroy all the devices of the adversaries, or, that He may grant patience to those oppressed, afflicted by poverty and sickness, etc. . The latter, in which he prays for patience, not for relief, shows a harshness which nowadays, four centuries later, may appear as being almost unkind and loveless. It is true that Calvin did use hard terms occasionally. But we must not forget that he was a man living in the 16th century. If we

1) Lecture on Daniel, Tom. V, p. 50.

2) See prayers attached to Lectures on Minor Prophets, appendix 43 ff.

3) RO. p. 245 ff.

compare some of his harsh terms with terms used by Zwingli in his talks against the Roman concept of transubstantiation, or terms used by Luther in his table talks, we come to the conclusion that Calvin was even surpassed by the two other Reformers in regard to the using of harsh terminology. It is strange enough that later generations drew a rather dark picture of the character of Calvin, in a way they did not of the two other Reformers.

However, as far as Calvin's understanding of the nature of God is concerned, we have to admit that it is not possible to put it into one single phrase. For there remains the fact that two ideas are present very closely side by side: God the harsh, rigorous Almighty Ruler whose Law remains fully valid to man, and God the loving heavenly Father who full of compassion turns to man in order to assign to him the abundance of His goodness and love.

Similar is the case in regard to God's unchangeability. On one hand, Calvin holds that God does not change:

'La Loy et l'Evangile. Il est vray que le tout sera bien entendu, il's accorde tresbien. Car Dieu n'a point changé propos..'

1)

On the other hand, and this is a most interesting and important point worthy to be noticed, God can be moved by prayers to change His decision. Here we discover that Calvin did believe in God's willingness to change for the sake of Jesus Christ. Reference is made to the people of Israel from whom the Lord turned away His rods and other curses which He had prepared for them. This reference is made in the ecclesiastical prayers.

1) CR.82,476.

'Ton peuple d'Israel t'a provoqué à ire plusieurs fois par son iniquité, tu l'as affligé par ton iuste iugement: mais quand il s'est reduit à toy, tu l'as tousiours recue à pitié. Et quelques griefues que fussent ses offences, pour l'amour de ton alliance que tu avois faite avec tes serviteurs Abraham, Isaac, et Iacob, tu as destourné tes verges et maledictions, lesquelles leur estoyent preparees: Tellement que leur oraison n'ont iamais esté repousses de toy'. 1)

Now such a wording is really surprising. The God in whom Calvin believes never rejects anybody who turns to Him in prayer. The reason why is, because God has made a covenant with His people. But that would still leave the assumption that such a covenant would extend to the people of Israel only - the elected again ! However, the prayer goes on with a strong reference to Christ in whom there is even a far greater covenant which extends to the whole world.

'Nous avons, par ta grace, une alliance beaucoup meilleure que nous te pouvons alleguer, c'est celle que tu nous as faite establee en la main de Iesus Christ nostre Sauveur: laquelle tu as voulu estre escrite de son sang, et ratifiée par sa mort et passion. Pourtant, Seigneur, renonçons à nous mesme, et à toute esperance humaine, nous recourons à ceste alliance bien-heureuse, par laquelle nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ t'offrant son corps en sacrifice, nous a reconciliez à toy. Regarde donc, Seigneur, en la face de ton Christ, et non pas en nous à fin que par son intercession ton ire soit appaisee, et que ton visage reluisse sur nous en ioye et en salut...'. 2)

This is an excellent part of prayer that reveals with an amazing clarity the way Calvin understood the true nature of God. God does change His mind, He does put aside His wrath for mercy. And all that because there is the covenant which has been signed

1) RO. p. 246.

2) ibidem.

and ratified by the blood, death, and passion of Jesus Christ. His wrath is appeased through the intercession of the same Jesus Christ. Therefore, for the sake of Jesus Christ, He exchanges His sceptre of law for the sceptre of mercy.

What, then, can be gathered from those opposing statements ? Is one concept preferred to the other ? Or is God in Himself divided and contradicting Himself ? Calvin would not agree to such a conclusion, for man should not be so immodest as to try to comprehend the last and ultimate secrets of God's nature. For, as he states, he is not so much concerned with the question how God is in Himself, as he is interested in the question how God is towards man. The important thing for man is to know the will of God as it concerns man himself. 1) Calvin maintains that there is a mystery about God's entity which is beyond the reach of man's capacity. 2) To him it is sufficient to know God's nature as far as He Himself was pleased to reveal it. Admittedly, this does not solve the problem of dialectical tension that has emerged out of the two opposing ideas as set forth above.

Yet this is not the last word to be said here, because we have to consider the significance of Christology in this matter. 3)

1) cf. Inst. III, 2,6: 'Neque enim unum id in fidei intelligentia agitur, ut Deum esse noverimus, sed etiam, imo hoc praecipue, ut qua sit erga nos voluntate, intelligamus...'

2) cf. Inst. I, 5,1: 'Essentia...eius incomprehensibilis est, ut sensus omnes humanos procul effugiat numen...'

ibidem 6,16: 'Neque enim essentia eius capax est mens nostra...'

But it is not likely that what is beyond reach of human capacity would be just the *essentia* of God as P. Brunner assumes: 'eben dieser Rest macht das Wesen Gottes, seine *essentia* aus'. Vom Glauben bei Calvin, p. 45.

3) cf. W.F. Dankbaar: Calvin, sein Weg - sein Werk, p. 212.

We shall deal with the mediating work of Christ in the next chapter. But already here in the context of the knowledge of the nature of God we must consider its tremendous importance for a better understanding of Calvin's ideas.

We have already mentioned that the God of Calvin is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that the knowledge of God means knowledge through Jesus Christ in whom is the fullness of the revelation. So we have to look at the nature of God from the point of view of Christology. It runs through all of his prayers with such consistency that one cannot but take it as the chief key to the comprehension of God's revealed nature. What kind of God is He who has sent His only Son into this world to suffer and die on the cross for man? What must be concluded from a God who has paid such High a price for man's salvation? What is the nature of Him who has sealed and ratified a covenant through the blood, death, and passion of His only Son so that man shall live? Calvin is sure that only a God who in His true nature is pure, overwhelming love and goodness is capable of such action. And it is the work of Jesus Christ on which the Reformer wants to have the whole emphasis laid. Unless one is prepared to give Christology the first place one runs the risk of failing altogether to appreciate the true greatness of Calvin's theology. For God has revealed Himself in the flesh. 1)

From the point of view of Christology man's life with all its implications is seen in a new light. Especially the sufferings and the various calamities are understood in a new way. Though the Reformer holds that often severe punishment takes place, and that God has the full right to visit man with tribulations and afflictions, he believes that ultimately

1) cf. CR. 46, 110; 53, 327.

they are means of God's love and goodness by which He desires that man should repent and turn to Him.

'Prosterneremur autem coram facie Optimi Dei nostri, agnoscentes peccata nostra, eique supplicantes, ut eorum sensum talem nobis indat, ut si nos ad tempus una cum improbis puniat, cognoscamus tamen, ipsum adhuc nobis parcere, nosque sua benignitate tolerare, quando nos cum ipsis non perdit & exterminat: & quamvis exitium simus promeriti, nihilominus ad ipsum confugiamus, quum tanta humanitate & suavitate nos ad se vocet & alliciat: tum etiam laboremus in carnis nostrae vitiis corrigendis, & in ipsis magis ac magis nobis displiceamus, ut nos penitus ad bonam ipsius voluntatem conformemus, & totos ad ipsum convertamus...'.1)

'...Et que nous apprenions de plier le col souz ses verges, sachans qu'elles sont a nostre proffit, et que nos tristesses soyent tellement adoucies, que ce qui nous semblera estre amer, ne nous desgouste de sauourer sa bonté au milieu de noz afflictions, puis que nous scauons que le tout sera conuerti a nostre salut...'. 2)

The idea is chiefly that tribulations and afflictions work to the effect that man would become aware of his sins and that he, having received insight into the gravity of his foolishness and corruption, may flee to God's mercy, into the shade of His benevolence as Calvin liked to put it. 3) Thus Calvin sees suffering of every kind as a means through which God wants to draw the afflicted one to Himself. Suffering is, ultimately, for the good of man, 'elles sont a nostre proffit' is a phrase that occurs often. That does not mean that Calvin was not sympathetic with those who were in great distress. On the contrary,

1) Lect. on Job, Tom. II, p. 346.

2) HR. 206, also MS 40C, pp. 33, 61.

3) cf. Lect. on Hoseah, Tom. V. pp. 32, 80.
Lect. on Lamentations, Tom. IV, 622.
Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, 546.
Lect. on Ezekiel, Tom. IV, 87.

his letters to the persecuted and oppressed of that time show a tender consideration on his part. Not to forget that he himself was a man who suffered from illness almost all his life through, which did not shatter his belief in the love and goodness of God. Here is a part of the ecclesiastical prayers which refers especially to those in distress and affliction. It discloses very clearly the thoughts of Calvin.

'Pareillemant, ô Dieu de tout consolation, nous te recommandons tous ceux que tu visites et chasties par croix et tribulations, les peuples que tu affliges par peste, ou guerre, ou famine: les personnes battues de povreté, ou prison, ou maladie, ou bannisément, ou autre calamité de corps, ou affliction d'esperit: que tu leur vueilles faire entendre ton affection paternelle, qui est de les chastier pour leur amendement: à fin que de tout leur coeur ils se convertissent à toy et estans convertis, reçoivent entiere consolation, et soyent delivrez de tous maux...'. 1)

To summarise we can say, according to our findings in Calvin's prayers, that the nature of God is such as revealed in Jesus Christ. We maintain that the nature of God is holiness, free and sovereign will that is uniquely united with pure goodness and paternal love. The God of Calvin is a God who in Jesus Christ has lovingly chosen to be the God of all mankind, or as the Reformer prays:

'Seigneur Dieu, Pere Eternel et tout-puissant, puis qu'il t'a pleu par ta clemence infinie nous promettre que tu sera Dieu de nous et de nos enfans...'. 2)

1) RO.p. 242.

2) ibidem p.250.

Chapter Five

THE MEDIATING WORK OF CHRIST

1. The Mediator of revelation.

In this chapter the mediating work of Christ is to be treated. What is at issue is the very heart and centre of Calvin's theology. It is the focus on which the Reformer's thinking was concentrated. Such a view is very strongly supported in his prayers. The following will show how well his prayers correspond to his doctrine of the same as set forth in the first chapter.

The contact between God and man takes place in Jesus Christ. This is the most decisive fact in the history of religion. Here man is confronted with something that is beyond his imaginations and expectations. For in Jesus Christ man is not only called upon to seek God but he is presented with a sole unique offer, namely, open access to God the Father. Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man. His origin is singularly based in God Himself. His function is twofold as He communicates from God to man and responds from man to God. More still, since Christ is the Mediator of God's revelation, man's greatest discovery is this that the God who confronts him is a propitious Father.

*'Da omnipotens Deus, quando non tantum Euangelii tui
voce assidue nos invitas ad te quaerendum, sed etiam*

offers nobis Filium tuum Mediatorem, per quem nobis ad te pateat accessus, ut reperiamus te propitium Patrem...'. 1)

Now revelation means that something that was hidden hitherto is now made manifest. That which was unknown is now being made known. Revelation means that God made Himself known to man. Because we cannot ascend to that height, it is needful for God to conform Himself to man's ignorance, and to descend to man in some way since he cannot ascend to Him. 2) Thus revelation is linked up with knowledge in the sense that he to whom revelation eventually is directed acquires such knowledge which enables him to reflect upon it. Jesus Christ in His property as Mediator of revelation is called the Teacher of perfect wisdom, because His teaching not only fulfills that which has been taught by the Prophets, but it is superior to all human knowledge. His teaching is perfect wisdom because it discloses the true nature of God as well as the true nature of man.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando non tantum semel nobis ac saepius etiam testatus es per servos tuos quaenam esset recta salutis via, sed Filium tuum unigeniti misisti, qui nobis esset doctor perfectae sapientia: da, inquam, ut sic nos tibi subjiciamus...'. 3)

Revelation then is not the result of man's long and constant searching, nor is it something that can be achieved by an operation of the power of intellect and insight. Revelation simply is not at the disposal of man. It is something that happens to him. Since Jesus Christ is the Mediator of revelation the latter is to be regarded as a gift which God graciously

1) Lect. on Joel, Tom. V, p. 160.

2) cf. Comm. on Exodus 33:20; Ezekiel 18:32.

3) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom IV, p. 433.

presents to man. God has s e n t His Son. Jesus Christ the Mediator is g i v e n to man. Hence, revelation is an act of God's sheer grace and love. In response to this act man is called upon to put his trust entirely in God's goodness which has become manifest in the Mediator, namely, Jesus Christ.

'...deinde tamen freti bonitate tua, quam dignatus es nobis offerre per Euangelium tuum, freti etiam Mediatore, quem nobis dedisti, non dubitemus ad te confugere, & te invocare Patrem...'. 1)

Furthermore, revelation not only includes the knowledge of the nature of God, but it means that God's will is being made known. Thus knowledge of God is equal to knowledge of His will. Although God has in the Law prescribed to man what is right, i.e. what is according to His will, He has more clearly revealed His will by the light of the Gospel, where Jesus Christ shines forth as the Sun of Righteousness. Therefore, confrontation with Jesus Christ means confrontation with the will of God.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando nobis non tantum Lege tua praescripsisti quid rectum sit, & viam pie vivendi nobis monstrasti, sed etiam clarius affulsisti nobis per Euangelii tui lucem, ubi respondet Christus Filius tuus Sol justitiae: da, inquam, ut nos totos subjiciamus tibi...'. 2)

The reason why Calvin places the highest importance to Christology is precisely this: Jesus Christ is the Mediator of God's will. Not that God had not already to some extent made known His will to man through His Prophets, but in Christ His will is made manifest more clearly - clarius - , which means that

1) Lect. on Daniel, Tom. V, p. 68.

2) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 498.

there is no other source from which the knowledge of the will of God can be acquired with certainty except the Mediator of revelation. Calvin's cognition of Christ as the Mediator of God's will signifies that this theology stands and falls with Christology.

Revelation in Jesus Christ means that ignorance can be no excuse. God has indeed exhibited His glory to be seen by man, not only in the sky and on earth, but also in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Gospel, chiefly in His only-begotten Son. In Christ God has made Himself revealed in a familiar way. Since that event has taken place man cannot excuse himself or search for other supposed sources of revelation. God has chosen *t h i s* way of revelation, namely, Jesus Christ; and He kindly invites man to attend to *t h i s* revelation.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quum gloriam tuam nobis conspiciendam exhibeas non tantum in caelo & terra, sed etiam in Lege, Prophetis, & Euangelio, & ita familiariter te in Filio tuo unigenito patefeceris, ut nulla sit ignorantiae excusatio: da, inquam, ut proficiamus in hac doctrina, qua tam comiter ad te nos invitas, & sic constanter tibi adhaereamus ne ulli mundi errores nos abstrahant, sed defixi stemus in verbo tuo, quod fallere nos non potest...'.1)

Calvin attends with impressive determination to the revelation in Jesus Christ. The appearance of Christ as the Mediator of revelation he reckons as an event which has happened once and for all. In times of troubles, confusions, and perplexities he would pray for strength and constancy of such a faith that would entirely rely on the work of Christ as Mediator. Here is a prayer that shows well the way he was thinking. It is actually

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 127.

packed with theological statements, although put into simple phrases.

'...da, inquam, ne deficiamus sub tuis ferulis, sed semper animos erigamus ad spem exitus, quam nobis facis proposito Mediatore, quem ipse nobis semel in hunc mundum misisti, ut per eum nos tibi reconciliares, & per quem etiam opem feras, quoties nobis opus est: & simul discamus sperare in Filium tuum unigenitum, ut fortibus animis transeamus per omnes hujus mundi miserias...'. 1)

Lastly, it must be considered that Christ is the Mediator through whom God speaks. This is expressed not only by the fact that Christ is called the Doctor who teaches wisdom or Doctor who proclaims the way of salvation, but Christ Himself is the Word, the living Word of God. His property of being the living Word of God makes Him truly the sole and unique Mediator of God's revelation. As such He is the teacher who alone fulfills the office of the Prophet completely. 2)

2. The Mediator of the Atonement.

The work of Christ as the Mediator of revelation can be described as a movement which takes place from God towards man. Emphasis is laid upon the sole and unique act of God's sheer grace and love. Christ is acting on behalf of God for the benefit of man. Now the work of Christ as the Mediator of the atonement can be described as a movement which takes place from man towards God. Christ is acting on behalf of man for the benefit of man. The origin of this movement is not

1) Lect. on Micah, Tom. V, p. 318.

2) cf. Comm. on Deut. 18:15

Ist. II 15, 1 - 2

OS 3,472,6 ff.

to be found in man as such. Its origin rests in the one true man, namely, Jesus Christ who is true God and true man. Thus the origin of this movement is rooted in God Himself. Christ as the eternal Son of God who became man fulfills the priestly office. 1) But since it is on behalf of man, it is of great benefit to the latter.

'...nous receuions de luy un si grand benefice, c'est qu'en certaine foy nous iouyssions de son corps & de son sang, voire de luy tout entierement: comme luy estant vray Dieu & vray homme...'. 2)

Again, what has been said in regard to Christ's work as Mediator of revelation must also be said in regard to His work as Mediator of the atonement. It is not another revelation or something apart from it. There is exactly the same Person, the same Mediator, the same Revelation. The distinctions made here have only an auxiliary function so as to describe the various aspects of the same whole and total revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

First of all, what is the status of man before God? It is not difficult to get a clear and definite answer to this question from the prayers of John Calvin. Especially the confession of sin which was made at the beginning of each divine service reveals what he thought and believed to be the true status of man. Man is a poor sinner from the beginning. Conceived and born in sin and iniquity, inclined to do evil, incapable of doing that which is good, and through his vices he never ceases to transgress God's commandments. Therefore he deserves and acquires just judgment upon him and thus ruin and perdition.

1) cf. CR 48, 545; Inst. II, 15, 6; OS 3, 480, 1.

Comm. on Acts 10:43; OS 3, 486, 1. 33.

2) RO p. 243.

'Seigneur Dieu, Pere eternal et tout-puissant, nous confesson et recognoissons sans feintise deuant ta saint Maiesté, que nous sommes poures pecheurs, conceus et nais en iniquité et corruption, enclins à mal-faire, inutiles à tous bien: et que de nostre vice nous transgressons sans fin et sans cesse tes saint commandements. En quoy faisant nous acquerons par ton iuste iugement ruine et perdition sur nous...'. 1)

As it appears, the sinfulness of man is due to his disobedience, as he has, and still does, transgressed the commandments of the Lord. Man has arbitrarily chosen to disobey God and by doing so he has reached the status of being unable to do that which is good in the sight of the Lord. Because he has brought upon him such a status by his own fault, he has no right to lift up his eyes unto the Lord. In fact he can in no way presume that God should listen to his prayers when he looks at that which in man is. Nor is there any hope for justification; for God being just will not justify the sinners but rather punish those who transgressed His commandments. The situation of man is indeed a hopeless one as he stands before the Holy and Almighty God. It is a situation of death and despair, which is that man is already in the abyss of death. From the following prayer it can be gathered how seriously the Reformer took the radical sinfulness of man.

'Dieu, tout-puissant, Pere eternal, nous recognoissons en nous-mesme et confessons, comme la verité est, que nous sommes pas dignes de lever les yeux au ciel, pour nous presenter devant ta face: et que nous ne devons pas tant presumer, que nos oraisons soyent exaucees de toy, si tu regardes ce qui est en nous. Car nos consciences nous accusent et nos pechez rendent tesmoignage contre nous: et nous sauons que tu es iuste iuge, qui ne iustifies pas les pecheurs et iniques, mais punis les fautes de ceux qui 'ont transgressé tes commandements.

1) RO p. 240.

Ainsi, Seigneur, en considerant toute nostre vie nous sommes confus en nos coeurs, et ne pouvons autre chose, sinon nous abbatre et desesperer, comme si nous estions deia ens abysmes de mort...'. 1)

It is this hopeless human situation where Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the atonement appears. As true God and true man He achieves that which was not possible in the strength and power of man in his sinful status. Christ as the Mediator stands before Almighty God on man's behalf in His capacity as the true and unique Priest who, by offering His life as a sacrifice, procures a perfect propitiation. 2)

The atoning work of Christ has two aspects. First of all, He renders perfect obedience to God the Father through His life, suffering, and death, by putting His will completely into accordance with the will of God. Where man has been disobedient and rebellious, Christ has stepped in as the perfect obedient Son of the Father. 3)

Secondly, Jesus Christ has performed perfect satisfaction in that He has taken upon Himself the judgment of God on behalf of man. Christ achieves perfect satisfaction by offering His body as a sacrifice through which reconciliation between God and man is being accomplished. 4) The effect of the sacrifice of Christ is a covenant. Calvin uses the French expression 'alliance' and the Latin 'foedus'. This covenant is the very heart of the God - man relationship. It is a covenant between two unequal partners, as one party consists of the free, sovereign, majestic, God and the other the fully dependent man, who not only has no right or power to make a covenant with the

1) RO p. 245.

2) cf. Inst. II, 16,6.

3) Inst. II, 16,5, and 17,3.

4) Inst. II, 16,7, and 17,5.

holy Lord but rather made himself subject to God's wrath. 1) However, this covenant is sure, trustworthy, and true, because it is the work of Christ, the Mediator of the atonement. This covenant is ultimately established by God Himself who has signed it by the blood of Christ and ratified by His death and passion.

The atoning work of Christ again is twofold. Towards God He takes the just judgment, which originally was directed towards man, upon Himself by the suffering of His passion and death. With regard to man He liberates him from just punishment by taking upon Himself the divine verdict. By this twofold deed the atoning work of Christ the Mediator is accomplished. But it must be stressed that this work is not of man but of God. It is God's own and exclusive work of His grace. Calvin puts it this way: The 'alliance' of reconciliation 'we have through thy grace'. And since it is the exclusive work of God as He has taken the initiative to reconcile Himself with man, and since it is the free and voluntary work of Christ who has willingly and obediently humbled Himself so as to carry out the work as Mediator of the atonement, it is a unique gift which God has presented to man.

'Nous auons, par ta grace, une alliance beaucoup meilleure que nous te pouons alleguer, c'est celle que tu nous as faite et establie en la main de Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur: laquelle tu as voulu estre escrete de son sang, et ratifiee par sa mort et passion. Pourtant, Seigneur, renonçans à nous-mesmes, et à toute esperance humaine, nous recourons à ceste Alliance bien-heureuse, par laquelle nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ t'offrant son corps en sacrifice, nous a reconciliez à toy...'. 2)

The work of Christ as Mediator of the atonement extends even further as through Him His people are bestowed with a royal

1) cf. Inst. I, 14, 18.

2) RO p. 246.

cf. OS 3, 508.

priesthood which He has wrought by His function as the true High Priest whose sacrifice is made once for all.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando nos in Filio tuo fecisti Sacerdotium regale, qui tibi quotidie offeramus spirituales hostias, ac tibi corpore & animo simus sacri: da, inquam, ut instructi virtute tua, etiam fortiter militemus contra Satanam: ...ut colligat nos in regnum suum coeleste, quod peperit nobis sanguine suo, Amen'. 1)

Relying on Christ's sacrifice man has now a sure promise in regard to his future. He will be gathered together with Christ in His realm because life eternal with Christ has been procured through His blood. 2) The instances are numerous where the Reformer refers to the blood of Christ as being the means by which man acquires access to the fellowship in the Kingdom of God. 3)

The uniqueness of Christ's atonement which He has wrought once for all means that it is valid continuously throughout time as well as eternity. The past includes the whole history of man from the time of creation, for Christ's work as the Mediator was in God's providence from the very beginning. 4) The validity of that event then goes on into the present, which is to be understood as the continuously progressing border that separates the past from the future. The same validity will stand fast in the future, which means that man has a sure hope as he is stepping from the past into the future. Moreover it will stand in eternity as a triumph of Christ's victory over all evil powers and potentialities. 5)

1) Lect. on Zechariah, Tom. V, p. 478.

2) cf. Inst. II, 16, 6.

3) CR 59, 87 ; see especially appendix pp. 31, 33, 37 ff.

4) Inst. III, 20, 18.

5) cf. CR 34, 616.

The belief in the validity of Christ's atonement gives Calvin the courage to affirm that man can hide himself behind Christ. Thus he prays that God may not look upon man, who is marked by his sinfulness and frailty, but upon Jesus Christ who has wrought a propitiation once for all. Such belief leads the Reformer even further to a statement which may appear almost unlike Calvin. For he prays that God may grant them, who are assembled in His name, that they may strive to bring back into the way of salvation those who now seem to be lost, so that His mercy may extend far and wide, and that thus His salvation, obtained through Christ His only-begotten Son, may be known and embraced by all nations.

'Da omnipotens Deus, ... ut studeamus etiam eos nobiscum reducere in viam salutis, qui jam videntur perditii, ut misericordia tua sese in omnes partes extendat, atque ita salus per Christum unigenitum Filium tuum quaesita, effectum suum obtineat in cunctis gentibus, Amen'. 1)

3. The Mediator of Adoption.

In the previous section special attention has been given to the obedience of Christ as He wrought the atonement through His perfect obedience instead, and in the place of, man's disobedience. In this section stress will be laid on the Sonship of Christ and its effect on man.

Jesus Christ renders perfect obedience to God the Father as the perfect obedient S o n . As such He is the well beloved

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 42.

Son of God in whom the Father is well pleased. Love marks the relationship between the Father and the Son which is a relationship of unity and harmony. Christ is the true Son of God, not the adopted but the Begotten One. There are hundreds of instances where Calvin refers to Christ as the only-begotten Son. Especially the prayers attached to the commentaries on the prophet Jeremiah and the Minor Prophets very often end with a reference to Christ as the 'unigenitus Filius'. 1)

'...ut fruamur etiam beata illa gloria quae nobis parta est sanguine unigeniti Filii tui, Amen'. 2)

'...nec dubitemus tandem te fore nobis placabilem, quoties te quaesierimus in Filio tuo unigenito, Amen'. 3)

Now the term 'unigenitus' means that Christ as the Son of God is not one among many. He is simply the only and unique Son. Not a 'primus inter pares' but the One who has none beside Him. His generation points to the fact that He is not part of the created world by origin. Begotten means that He was with the Father before the world was created. It also points to the unity, to the oneness of God the Father and God the Son. Thus the application of the term 'unigenitus' to Christ signifies the properties of His Sonship, namely, His oneness with the Father and His uniqueness in being the Son. 4)

The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is a relationship of love, i.e. it is marked by the love of the Father towards the Son and the love of the Son towards the Father. This forms a totality in itself. Yet it has pleased God the Father and God the Son not to be content with the love

1) See the endings of many of the prayers in the appendix.

2) Lect. on Zephaniah, Tom. V, p. 425.

3) Lect. on Lamentations, Tom. IV, p. 616.

4) cf. Inst. I, 13, 11 and 12.

between themselves, so to speak, but to extend that love towards creation. It has pleased God to let man take part in His love. The medium of communication is the Mediator Jesus Christ through whom man is made a partaker of God's love by adoption. This means that man is the object of God's love. Adoption goes back to the eternal counsel of God by which He willed from the very beginning to enter into communication with man and adopt him through His beloved Son Jesus Christ. It is an adoption which makes man not a servant but a child of God. His paternal favour towards man He has also inscribed on man's heart as a sure sign and pledge.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando non tantum aeterno tuo consilio nos adoptasti in filios, sed etiam insculpisti cordibus nostris certum signum & pignus paterni erga nos favoris...'. 1)

Adoption of man through Christ means that a basic change has taken place, namely, in regard to man's state. His hopeless state of perdition and condemnation has been fundamentally transformed into the state of being under grace. This is the work of Christ, the Mediator of adoption, that He as the true only-begotten Son stands before God on behalf of man presenting His own obedience and love to the Father for the benefit of man. And through Christ the Father will be propitious to man, and accept him as child.

'...etiam attollere discamus oculos in promissiones gratuita bonitatis tuae, & paterni favoris, quem nobis pollicitus es in Filio tuo, ut non dubitemus te nobis fore propitium, quia nos in populum adoptasti...'. 2)

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 537.

2) Lect. on Micah, Tom. V, p. 338.

It is interesting to notice that Calvin does not think in terms of the individual but rather in terms of the community, of the people. Adoption extends far and wide to many. 'Inasmuch as thou hast adopted us as thy people' is a phrase which occasionally occurs. Also wordings that refer to the holy vocation. 1) Although it is suggested that the Reformer had the people of Israel in mind it appears that he thought of the people of the New Covenant which God made in Jesus Christ.

But Jesus Christ is not only the Mediator of adoption who has wrought salvation for man, He is also the pledge for such adoption. The latter has surely taken place once for all in Christ, and it is going on continuously in His name; which is for the benefit of man for he can ever call upon that pledge before Almighty God.

'...quum nos in nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi adoptavit, nobisque salutis nostrae pignus dedit...'. 2)

4. The Mediator of Intercession.

Christ's mediating work is a work that not only once for all took place on earth but one that goes on continuously in Heaven, i.e. before the Almighty God. The specific mode by which Christ continues His mediating work is by way of intercession. This does not supersede His work accomplished once; it continues on the basis of, and by the presentation of, that which happened once for all. It forms part of the heavenly

1) HR. pp. 179, 234.

MS. 40C p. 49, also prayer at the end of sermon two on the history of Melchisedech.

2) Lect. on Job, Tom. II, p. 333.

office of Christ which He freely carries out on behalf of man. Christ intercedes for man and thus constitutes a possibility of access to God the Father who, looking upon Christ, will mercifully receive man.

'...interim non dubitemus, quin optimus Deus noster nos oculo misericordiae respicere velit, & in gratiam recipere in ejus nomine, quem nobis Mediatorem constituit..'. 1)

The Reformer makes clear that it is the work of God who acts in Christ. It is also God who presents the Mediator for intercession. It is God the Father who has constituted His Son as man's Mediator.

Christ's intercession then works to the effect that man's prayers will not be in vain. 2) Through Christ's intercession the wrath of God will be appeased and He, well pleased, will make His countenance to shine upon man in benevolence.

'Regarde donc, Seigneur, en la face de ton Christ, et non pas en nous à fin que par son intercession ton ire soit appaisée, et que ton visage reluisse sur nous en ioye et en salut...'. 3)

But why will God's wrath be appeased through the intercession of Christ? It is because the intercession is based on the atonement by which Christ wrought perfect satisfaction on behalf of man. Thus the atoning work of Christ is not merely a basis on which man can proceed to offer his prayers, but it sustains and makes effective his prayers every moment. The priestly office of Christ is constantly being fulfilled without intermission. It is an act that continues on behalf of man day by day. It is this intercession without intermission that gives man the sure hope that his prayers will be heard and accepted

1) Lect. on Job, Tom. II, p. 239.

2) cf. Inst. III, 20, 17.

3) RO p. 246.

by God the Father.

'...sed etiam vota nostra apud te veniam obtineant, praesertim Christo unigenito Filio tuo intercessore, qui te semel nobis placavit & perpetua ejus intercessio nos tibi subinde reconciliet...'. 1)

It also shows that reconciliation, because it has been achieved once for all, goes on perpetually through Christ's intercessory work. This means that man shall always meet a propitious Father whenever he turns to God in sincerity and humility. 2) God will not look upon him as he is in his sinful estate. God will rather consider the merit of Jesus Christ whom He has installed as intercessor and advocate. The latter term seems to be taken from legal terminology and it suggests the idea that God has taken the affairs of man into His own hands and given him an Advocate who will speak on his behalf. Here again it is noteworthy that man was presented with an Advocate by God the Father. This excludes that man should ever be capable of presenting an advocate by his own effort of merit.

'...tu nous as promis de recevoir nos requestes et supplications, non point en considerant quelle est nostre propre dignité, mais au nom et par la merite de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, lequel tu nous as constitué Intercesseur et Aduocat...'. 3)

5. The Mediator of Sanctification and Justification.

The word sanctification denotes a process by which man

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, p. 183, Tom. IV.
 2) cf. Inst. III, 20, 19.
 3) RO p. 245.

comes out of his estate of sinfulness and corruption into a newness of life which is acceptable before the Almighty God. The sanctified man is therefore he who has acquired such newness of life. But since man is so utterly depraved and corrupt, he cannot sanctify himself, even if he wanted to do so. As he cannot sanctify himself he has to be sanctified by a strength and power that lies outside him. Hence, the process of sanctification is not something which he achieves or reaches by his own efforts. It is something of which he is the receiver. But where there is a receiver there must be a giver also. The giver of sanctification is God Himself, the means by which He gives it is the Mediator, namely, His Son Jesus Christ. But this does not mean that sanctification would be just one of Christ's merits, among many various others, which He would now assign to man in general. There is a deeper and more profound truth in it.

The sanctification of man comes to pass in that the sanctity of Jesus Christ is bestowed upon him. This means that Christ incorporates Himself into man, and by the same action man is also incorporated into Him. 1) This incorporation is the work of the Holy Spirit through whose secret agency man shares life with Him. 2) Sanctification means therefore life, i.e. the true life which is a new life as it is life in Him. Calvin often refers to the old and new Adam. Man by origin shares his life with the old Adam which means that it is a life of corruption and bound to perdition. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, however, he shares life with the new Adam, namely, Jesus Christ, which means life under grace. The Reformer uses the term of the 'image of Christ'

1) cf. Inst. III, 11, 5 ff.

2) cf. Inst. III, 11, 5 also 16, and 23.

into which man is to be transformed, or reformed. The latter expression indicates that the restoration of man goes back beyond the first Adam to the original purpose of God, to what God wanted man to be, and which has eventually and actually become true in the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

'...donec tandem perveniamus ad solidam illam sanctitatem, ad quam nos invitatis, ubi spolati omnibus carnis nostrae sordibus, vere erimus reformati ad imaginem Filii tui Domini nostri, Amen'. 1)

'...ut interea etiam transformemur in imaginem Filii tui..'.2)

But there is another question. What is the sign of the sanctification, if any? Calvin's answer is: It is baptism. This is the outward sign by which man is being ingrafted into the communion with Christ, i.e. Christ's incorporation in him and thus also man's incorporation in Christ. Again it is the sole work of God. Baptism itself points to the active giver and the passive receiver. Since man is being baptized - he does not baptize himself - by another person, it points to the inner relationship of the giver and the receiver. 3)

Now the incorporation of Christ in man is not something that happens to one part of man only, for instance, the intellectual or spiritual side. It happens to the whole of man. And as it happens to the whole of man it will have some effects on him, or, in Calvin's terminology, it will bear fruits. Even more so as sanctification is an event that goes on constantly on the basis of Christ's sanctity which He bestows on man day by day.

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 277.

2) Lect. on Nahum, Tom. V, p. 349.

3) cf. Prayer on Baptism, appendix p. 25.

The idea of bearing fruit in the course of the human life is well expressed in the prayer for the occasion of a Baptism. 1) Not only is the confrontation of the old and new Adam indicated but also the progressive realisation of the life in Christ. Although Christ has broken once for all the dominion of sin, the latter does still imperil man's life. Man is engaged in a constant struggle against sin, which is a state of affairs that goes on through the whole life. But how can man fight against sin? Here the Reformer places greatest importance on penitence. As a matter of fact, most of his prayers that give such evidence start with a call to repentance.

'Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de notre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians, que nous les face sentir de plus en plus, iusqu'à ce que nous ayons apprins de nous assubiection sous luy, et que sa maiesté domine tellement sur nous, que nous n'ayons ny force, ny vertu, ny sagesse sinon en ce qu'il luy plaira nous donner et que nous tenons tout nos bien de luy, en sorte, que nous rapprochons à son secours, et a la gloire de nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ, auquel tout empire est donné pour dominer par dessus nous afin qu'il iouysse et de noz corps et noz âmes: et que tout luy soit présenté en vray sacrifice. Que non seulement il nous fasse ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc.'. 2)

'Jam vero agite, fratres, coram Dei Opt. Max. Majestate facti supplices, in genua procumbamus: infinita peccata, quibus ejus iram in nos quotidie provocamus, agnoscentes: eumque precemur ut talem illorum nobis sensum injiciat, quo discamus non tantum humiliari ac dejici magis ac magis coram ipso: sed etiam adversus pravas nostras cupiditates pugnare, & illis sic exui, ut tandem ipsius induti justitia in spem illam immortalem recipiamur, quae nobis in regno coelorum praeparata reservatur. Neque vero nobis solis hanc, &c.'. 3)

1) cf. Prayer on Baptism, appendix p. 25.

2) MS 40C p. 113, similar in MS 40C p. 61; MS 40B p. 127; MS 26 p. 298, MS 26 p. 484, etc.

3) Homiliae in I. Lib. Samuelis, Tom. II, p. 231.

'Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance des fautes infinies dont nous sommes coupables, le prians que de plus en plus il nous vueille toucher d'vne telle repentance, que nous retournions a sa misericorde, pour luy demander assiduellement pardon, le prians aussi qu'il nous renouelle, en telle sorte que nous monstrions que vrayement nous portons la marque de ses enfans, pour le glorifier tout le temps de nostre vie, et que nous soyons despouillez de toutes noz affections meschantes, pour nous assuiettir, pleinement a luy, et mesme que nous renoncions a toute nostre raison et prudence, afin de n'estre sages sinon en obeissant a sa parolle. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc.'. 1)

Obviously, the process seems to go on in stages. First there is the acknowledgement of the innumerable sins. Then comes the experience of 'feeling them better', as the Reformer often puts it, and the actual struggle against them takes place. The idea seems to be that only after the cognition of sins the struggle can start. For unless man is aware of them, he in no way takes up the fight against them. Through the progressive cognition, however, man also becomes aware of his incapacity to fight successfully. The more he grows in insight the more he realises that he cannot achieve a victory by himself. Such awareness of incapacity, however, should lead man back to the only refuge, namely, to Christ. In fact God exercises man in such a way that he may forsake his own efforts and throw himself totally upon Christ. It suggests the idea that progress consists of a growth of knowledge. The kind of knowledge is that of a knowledge of the relationship between God and man, that is to say, the knowledge of his own depravity, sinfulness, and incapacity of doing good, and the knowledge of the fact that the only help lies

1) HR p. 494.

outside him, in Jesus Christ. What actually must take place is this: After the cognition of the true state of affairs, is to follow recognition of the only Mediator Jesus Christ. This is suggested by a passage in the prayer for the occasion of a Baptism. After the sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit the person baptized is to come to the age of cognition and thus to the recognition of the only and sole God. 1)

But what are then the fruits and virtues which are to appear in the course of life ? The Reformer speaks of the fruits and virtues that are pronounced in the Gospel. Likewise, in a prayer to be found in the commentaries on Jeremiah he refers to progress as progress in the fear of the Lord's name, and that in reliance on the grace which is offered in Christ. 'May we derive real fruit from the reading and hearing of thy word'.

'...ut referamus verum fructum ex lectione & auditu verbi tui...'. 2)

Now what is the significance of all this ? It points to the exclusive and sole work of Christ as Mediator, and to the complete dependance of man on Him. If man comes to be aware of his state, of his true condition before God, it is only due to the work of the Holy Spirit. 3) But this puts him into the situation in which he finds only one way, namely, to hear the Word of God. And this is precisely what God wants him to do: To attend to His holy Word through which alone man gets to know the true determination and destiny of his life. Calvin does believe in virtues. But they are not

1) See appendix p. 25.

2) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 277.

3) See chapter VI.

qualities by themselves which can be acquired by man through his own power. They are fruits which only grow out of the newness of life that Jesus Christ has established.

Man's being is therefore only a being in either of two possibilities: Being in the old Adam or being in the new Adam. There is no other being of man apart from that. 1) Interesting enough, life in the old Adam means quietness, in the last resort the quietness of spiritual death, life in the new Adam means struggle, the struggle in life and for life.

Very closely connected with sanctification is justification. 2) The latter word denotes an act of God. By this act man is set free from the state of guilt and declared as righteous. Justification refers to the legal aspect of the God - man relationship.

The legal aspect of that relationship is expressed in the Law. God has given man His Law. But man did not keep the Law but has gone away from it. This makes him guilty of breaking the Law. If he had kept the Law he would be righteous. But since he does not, and since even his best efforts never amount to a perfect subjection under the Law, the verdict over him is that of guilt which means that he is unrighteous. The state of man is therefore a state of unrighteousness. How can he ever escape from it? Calvin's answer is: Through the Mediator Jesus Christ. While man has broken the Law, Christ has through His obedience perfectly kept and fulfilled it. This work again is twofold. Firstly, He has kept and fulfilled the Law and, secondly, He has suffered the punishment which was due to man. He has done this for man and in his stead,

1) cf. Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Akt und Sein, p. 101.

2) cf. Inst. III, 11, 1 f.

Thus the justification of man before God has been actualised in that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to man. 1) Such imputation of Christ's righteousness to man has happened once for all and is continuously going on through the intercessory work of the Mediator. 2) This works to the effect that man can now appear before Almighty God as righteous. Not on grounds of his own qualities or merits, but because God will now look upon him through Christ and take him as righteous. A term which is often ascribed to Christ is that He is the Sun of Righteousness. 3) Calvin seemed to like this term very much. It also points to a profound theological significance. As the rays of the sun come from the one centre and are directed towards man giving him light, warmth, and life, so does the righteousness of Christ come from the one centre, namely, from Himself to man, continuously covering him from the darkness of the ultimate judgment and punishment. 4)

The acquittal then takes place on the grounds of the righteousness of Christ. This means the forgiveness of sins. 'Pardon all our faults for the sake of Christ the righteous' is a sentence that often occurs. Through Christ God has removed the grounds of accusation and given man the opportunity of putting on His righteousness.

'...omnes cupiditates rejicere discamus & naturalem corruptionem exuere, ut ipsius justitia induamur...'. 5)

'...ut carnalibus omnibus cupiditatibus renunciantes, ipsius Justitia tandem induamur...'. 6)

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- 1) cf. Inst. III, 11, 3.
 2) cf. Inst. III, 11, 16.
 3) cf. Inst. III, 11, 12.
 4) cf. appendix p. 6.
 5) Hom. in Lib. I. Sam. Tom. II, p. 258.
 6) Hom. in Lib. I. Sam. Tom. II, p. 362.

'...ad Deum vera poenitentia convertamur, ejusdemque justitia sic induamur...'. 1)

It has been said at the beginning of this chapter that the mediating work of Christ would form the very heart of Calvin's theology. While still on this subject, one thing must be added although it has been mentioned already but only in passing. It concerns the high importance Calvin attributes to the b l o o d of Christ. The blood of Christ is mentioned in so many prayers that it cannot be overlooked, and its importance is obvious. 2) Reconciliation has taken place through the blood of Christ. So have salvation and justification. Life eternal is procured by the blood of the only-begotten Son of God. Adoption has been accomplished through the same blood.

The reason why Calvin so often refers to the blood of Christ seems to be that he wanted to stress the humanity of Christ. Christ is true God and true man. His mediating work He achieves through His humanity which involves suffering and death to which the term blood refers. This means that His work has not been achieved on a purely spiritual level. His work comprises the totality of humanity. It takes place in history in the actual human situation. The manhood of Christ also involves His humility as He becomes one with man and thus enter into communion with him. By doing so He establishes a true brotherhood through which man becomes the heir of His eternal heritage. The blood of Christ reveals the depth of His humanity for His work as Mediator has not just a representative significance. It is rather substitut- ionary, in place of man. The exchange of what is properly His and what is properly man's is real and true.

1) Hom. in Lib. I. Sam. Tom. II, p. 404.

2) See ending phrases in the ex tempore prayers of the appendix.

Chapter Six

THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The nature of the Holy Spirit.

There are no explicit statements in the prayers of John Calvin which would denote the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity. Whenever there is a mention of the Holy Spirit it always refers to His work. However, from the Institutes it is clear that the Reformer maintains that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He has actually taken over the concept from the early church. 1) The Holy Spirit he understands as the third mode of being in the being of God. Although the explicit statements may not be found in the prayers, one can gather from the many occurrences where the Holy Spirit is being referred to that the trinitarian concept is implicitly presupposed.

In the prayers the Holy Spirit is frequently mentioned. The words being used are 'Saint Esprit' in the French prayers and 'Sanctus Spiritus' in the Latin prayers. Both terms, which are taken from the Scriptures, signify that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. It is not just any spirit but the exclusive Spirit that belongs entirely to God. Similarly, the possessive pronouns indicate the same when they are being applied like this: 'Ton Saint Esprit' or 'Spiritus Sanctus tuus' respectively.

1) cf. Inst. I, 13, 6.

As Holy Spirit He is not only ascribed to God the Father but also to God the Son. The following two examples show both references, i.e. reference to God the Father and reference to God the Son.

'...in primis vero Spiritu tuo corrigere in cordibus nostris omnem contumaciam...'. 1)

'...ut regeniti Filii tui Spiritu totos nos tibi tradamus...'. 2)

The Holy Spirit therefore proceeds from both, from the Father as well as from the Son. This does not mean that there would be two spirits distinct from one another. The Holy Spirit is *o n e* . As such He is not divided from the Father or the Son but distinct from both. 3) This distinction does not interfere with the unity of God. For the Son is one God with the Father, inasmuch as He constitutes one Spirit with Him, and that the Spirit is not different from the Father and the Son, inasmuch as He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. 4) The nature of the Holy Spirit can therefore be described as the true divine third Person of the Trinity. This means that whatever the work of the Holy Spirit may be, it is always the work of God the Father and of God the Son in the one unity of the same one Spirit. The Holy Spirit is personal Agent of God the Father and of God the Son. He is not a shadow of the Deity. Calvin holds that the Holy Spirit is the entire spiritual essence of God, in which are comprehended Father, Son, and Spirit. As such He is both of God and from God. 5)

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 292.

2) *ibidem* p. 415.

3) Inst. I, 13, 17 and 18.

4) Inst. I, 13, 19.

5) Inst. I, 13, 20.

2. The work of the Holy Spirit.

The working power of the Holy Spirit takes a very important place in John Calvin's prayers. The frequency of the terms in which the Holy Spirit is being mentioned cannot be overlooked. In the following the main operations of this power are to be set forth.

The Holy Spirit is the power of God through which He communicates to the whole creation in general, and to man in particular. Thus He was pre-existing with the Father and with the Son. The Holy Spirit was at work when God created the world. 1) This means a wonderful conjunction between the Spirit and the Word. But not only the actual creation took place through the work of the Spirit, its preservation, i.e. the complete upholding of the creaturely existence is His work also. For the same Spirit is being diffused over all space, sustaining, invigorating, and quickening all things, both in heaven and on the earth. 2) Even before the creation of the world He was at work cherishing the confused mass so as to prevent its being instantly annihilated. 3)

In regard to man the Holy Spirit works in various ways. First of all, He is the Spirit which enlightens man. The atoning and redemptive work of Christ has been wrought once for all, and for the whole mankind. But man does not know these facts unless he is being told of it. Without this Spirit he lives in the darkness and captivity of error and ignorance, he remains a stranger as in regard to cognition of Christ as the Saviour of the world. By the

1) Inst. I, 13, 14.

2) ibidem.

3) ibidem.

illumination of the Holy Spirit man is taken out of the darkness of ignorance and brought into the light of knowledge, namely, the knowledge that God is the only true God and Jesus Christ the Saviour. This work goes together with the preaching of the Gospel. Again there is the profound conjunction between the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Only through the illumination of the Holy Spirit man is able to comprehend the Word of God which comes to him through the preaching of it. The question may be asked which element in man is to be illuminated, the mind or the heart. Calvin seems to think of both as he expresses himself in the prayer after rising in the morning.

'vueille-moy par la clarté de ton Esprit illuminer mon entendement et mon coeur...'. 1)

In the prayer before studying the lesson more stress is laid on the illumination of the mind and the Holy Spirit is referred to as a Spirit of all intelligence, truth, judgment, prudence, and doctrine. 2) In both cases, in the illumination of the heart as well as of the mind, the aim is the same, namely, the cognition and recognition of the one true God and His Christ whom He has sent. Through this operation of the Holy Spirit true faith is being created in man. 3) For faith is the vessel by which Christ is being received by man.

Further, the Holy Spirit r e g e n e r a t e s man. Since the fall man lives in a state of corruption and perversity. He lives in the old Adam. As such he cannot stand before Almighty God. To be acceptable in the sight of God he must be regenerated, i.e. brought out of the state of

1) Appendix p. 6.

2) RC, p. 238.

3) cf. OS 5, 264, 3. CR 7, 704.
OS 5, 266, 4. Inst. IV, 14, 7 and 8.

perdition into the state of salvation, or from the being in the old Adam into the being in the new Adam. Such a transformation has taken place in the mediating work of Christ. He has achieved the newness of life which is acceptable in the sight of God, He is actually the new Adam. To make this mediating work effective on man, He bestows Himself on man. Jesus Christ confers the new state of life, which He has achieved once for all, upon man. And this is through the work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration actually indicates a new birth. However, birth always means to him who is born that it is an event which happens to him, he is the passive partner. The new birth of man by which he acquires the newness of life is the exclusive work of the Holy Spirit. Through the same Holy Spirit man is ingrafted into the life which exists in Jesus Christ; he is transformed from the being in the old Adam into the being in the new Adam. Through the secret operation of the Holy Spirit the image of God in man is being restored. 1)

'...que par son saint Esprit il nous purge: et que nous soions reformez de plus en plus: et qu'il nous reveille pour n'estre point obstinez en nos vices...'. 2)

'Et cependant que de plus en plus il nous reforme par son saint Esprit, à fin que nous ayons tesmoignage d'estre vrayement du nombre de ses enfans, quand nous aurons esté ainsi gouvernez en sa crainte, et que nous ne cerchions sinon à nous adonner du tout à luy...'. 3)

1) cf. Inst. III, 6, 1.

2) CR 59, 196.

3) CR 50, 495 similar in CR 59, 116; 2nd sermon on history of Melchisedeck;
HR 96; 197; 485.
Confession of sin, appendix 3 and 5.
Sermons on Deut. p. 1135.
Lectures 85 and 156 on Jeremiah.

'...until we shall at length be renewed in thine image..' 1)

'...et que nous soyons faits tellement conformes à son image, que sa gloire reluise en nous iusques à ce que nous entrions en pleine possession de l'heritage qu'il nous a promis...' 2)

Regeneration is therefore nothing that man can accomplish by his own efforts and merits. It is not that he had to renounce and abnegate himself in order to reach regeneration. It goes actually the other way round. Only by being regenerated through the Holy Spirit he is able to abnegate himself and become more and more subject to the will of God. In becoming subject to the will of God, regeneration is not the end or the result of a long and constant struggle, it rather marks the beginning.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando prorsus in parte nostro Adam perimus, nec ulla restat in nobis pars, quae non sit corrupta, dum gestamus materiam irae, & maledictionis, & mortis tam in anima quam in corpore: Ut Spiritu tuo regeniti magis ac magis nos abdicemus propria voluntate, & proprio spiritu, & ita nos tibi subjiciamus, ut Spiritus tuus vere in nobis regnet: deinde ne tibi ingrati simus, sed reputantes quam inaestimabile sit hoc beneficium, totam vitam nostram addicamus, & applicemus ad glorificandum nomen tuum, in Christo Jesu Domino nostro, Amen'. 3)

The same idea that regeneration by the Holy Spirit precedes cognition of the will of God, and total commitment to it, occurs in the prayer for the celebration of Baptism.

'...puis apres le sanctifiant par ton Esprit, à fin que quand il viendra en aage de cognoissance, il te re-cognoisse et adore comme son seul Dieu...' 4)

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- 1) Lecture 128 on Haggai.
 - 2) Sermon on Galatians, CR 50, 558.
 - 3) Lect. on Ezekiel, Tom. IV, p. 96.
 - 4) See appendix p. 25.

Regeneration through the Holy Spirit means that the newness of life which Christ has achieved once for all comes to effect in man. Christ bestows Himself on man. It is Christ's life that shines into the life of man and out of it. The main effect of regeneration on man is that he is being enabled to glorify the name of God as he ought to do. He does it through Christ which is the only way to glorify the name of God.

'...ut in posterum regeniti Spiritu tuo, etiam glorificemus nomen tuum in Christo Jesu Domino nostro, Amen'. 1)

Now this leads on to the next idea which is that the Holy Spirit r u l e s man. Calvin uses several different words as regnare, gubernare, conduire, etc. which all point to the same: the ruling power of the Holy Spirit. He also seemed to like to link together those words denoting regeneration and those denoting reigning through the same Spirit. A good example is to be found in the prayer quoted on page 106 where the words 'regenerare' and regnare' follow one another closely. This is not surprising, for on the basis of regeneration man is then ruled by the Holy Spirit.

What is as issue is, however, not just a governing principle according to which man would be encouraged or compelled to act. It is not a principle or a guiding rule. It is God Himself who through the power of the Holy Spirit governs and guides man. It is the living Lord who time and ever takes man by his hand to lead him on the right path of salvation. Man is in a miserable condition unless he is being guided by the Spirit of God.

1) Lect. on Ezekiel, Tom. IV, p. 105.

'Da omnipotens Deus, quando non cessamus te provocare nostris peccatis, ut saltem reputemus quam misera sit nostra conditio, nisi Spiritu tuo nos gubernes...'. 1)

The chief aspect of the governing work of the Holy Spirit is to be seen as He rules the Church. The Reformer especially prays for those to whom the care of the Church is committed, that is to say for the ministers. Only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit they can become faithful and loyal ministers of His glory.

'Aussi nous te prions, Pere veritable et Sauueur, pour tous ceux que tu as ordonnez pasteurs à tes fideles, et ausquels tu as commis le regime des ames, et la dispensation de ton sacré Evangile, que tu les conduises par ton saint Esprit, à fin qu'ils soyent trouvez fideles et loyaux ministres de ta gloire...'. 2)

There is again the important conjunction between Word and Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit there is no real proclamation of the Gospel possible. As there is only one way of reading and hearing the Scriptures, namely, through the constant aid of the Holy Spirit, so is preaching fully dependant on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. 3)

In the same prayer where the Reformer asks for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the ministers of the Church he also asks for the bestowal of the same upon the princes and magistrates. 4) Here the operation of the Holy Spirit works to the effect that they may recognize in true faith that Jesus Christ is the King of kings. It is interesting to notice that the Holy Spirit is being bestowed upon the rulers of the state not only in general as one might expect since they are part of God's creation which again is being upheld

1) Lect. on Ezekiel, Tom. IV, p. 111.

2) RO p. 247.

3) cf. Inst. I, 9.

4) RO p. 247.

by His Spirit. From the prayer it can be gathered that the Spirit is bestowed upon them in a special way, for the aim is not only creaturely existence and its upholding but the cognition and recognition of God's will. The works for the illumination and guidance are very closely tied together.

The Holy Spirit then works in the sense that it provides man, after the operation of regeneration, with the strength of resistance against the temptations of Satan. That is to say it enables man to live in the newness of life which Christ has achieved for him. As has been stated above the regeneration is not at the end but at the beginning of the struggle in the newness of life. Calvin sees the whole course of life under the aspect of struggling, fighting, and battling against the evil one, the sin, the world, the flesh. Man as such is so weak that he is ever inclined to follow the temptations of Satan and yield to the enticements of his own flesh. Only the regenerated man realises that peril and takes up the struggle against it. But he can only gain a victory if he is endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

'Prosterneremur autem coram facie Optimi Dei nostri, agnoscentes peccata nostra, eique supplicantes, ne patiamur nos Satanae fraudibus & fallaciis obnoxios esse: & quamvis natura proclives simus ad sequendas illecebras illas, quas nobis proponit adversarius, retineamur & cohibeamur Spiritu ejus Sancto, ne cupiditates & affectus carnis nostrae pro more abripiant nos, & transversos huc illuc agant: sed iis constanter resistamus, donec virtute Spiritus Sancti plenam victoriam obtineamus...'. 1)

'...ad solam ejus misericordiam confugiamus, sicuti etiam nullum aliud remedium habemus. Nec solum peccata commissa condonet nobis, sed ita Sancto suo Spiritu nos in posterum regat, ut nihil aliud velimus quam in ipsius obsequio ambulare...'. 2)

1) Lect. on Job, Tom. II, p. 272.
2) ibidem p. 613.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the struggle of man is twofold. It purifies man continuously and endows him with strength to continue his fight. It also directs his will so that he may not want anything but to walk in God's obedience. Moreover, the Holy Spirit purifies man in such a way that God will acknowledge him as His adopted child.

'...bonum Deum precemur, ut nos tot naevis & maculis, quibus scatemus, purget & Sancto suo Spiritu ita nos purificet, ut nos semper pro filiis suis agnoscat...'. 1)

1) Lect. on Job, Tom. II, p. 473.

Chapter Seven

EVIL AND SIN

1. The nature of evil.

In the prayers of John Calvin the terms evil and sin are very frequently used. The former not as often as the latter though, but still so many times that one cannot omit to deal with its meaning.

The Reformer speaks of the Evil One. The words he uses for him are Satan and Devil; terms which he has borrowed from the Biblical usage. There is no difference between Satan and Devil as both are being used interchangeably. Both denote the Evil One which is regarded as the personified power opposed to God and His will. But when the term power is being applied to evil it must be made clear that it is not a power that would be in any way equal to good. There are not two powers fighting one another on equal terms and with equal qualifications. Evil as power is in the last resort a negative power in the sense that it is totally overruled by the power of God. It can only exist as far as God permits it to exist. Thus the existence of evil is a negative one. This means not only that it is limited but that it is fundamentally denied all claims and rights of being. It exists only under the verdict of total annihilation. The Reformer often prays: 'Lord overthrow and destroy all adversaries', i.e. all that is against God's holy will.

This indicates that the existence of evil only consists in that it is on the retreat whereas God is the advancing. Thus evil has no future; for the future will reveal the total victory of God. The future of evil is doomed to total obliteration. The existence of evil is therefore an existence of the past. And even if it appears in the presence it bears the marks of the past. It was but it shall not be. Is evil created by God? Calvin's answer is in the affirmative in the sense that God permits evil to play its negative part in order to serve God in His ultimate purposes. Thus God may permit Satan to tempt man in order to test the latter. But there is a basic difference. God permits Satan to tempt man in order to save him. Whereas Satan wants to tempt man in order to destroy him. 1)

In relation to man the power of evil is such as it imperils man. Here a contrast appears. Whereas evil in regard to God is ultimately a power which is only permitted to exist in order to be doomed to total annihilation, it appears over against man as a power which is stronger than he. Evil advances towards man and attempts to distract him from his obedience to God in order to destroy him. Man is constantly encircled by the power of evil. It wants to impose upon man either by threatening him and drive him to despair or by alluring him. The advance the evil makes towards man is of such strength that man will never prevail against it. Man standing alone will ever lose the battle for he is just not capable to resist the power of evil because the latter is - in regard to man - a very strong enemy.

1) cf. Inst. III, 20, 46.

'...Et quamquam res nobis sit cum hoste potentissimo, cujus insultibus obsistere non possumus, nihilominus Optimi Dei nostri virtute nixi & armati, in ipsius obedientia ad finem usque perseveremus...'. 1)

'...Et puis qu'il nous a vne fois monstré le chemin de salut, que nous n'en soyons iamais destournez: quoy que Satan machine, et qu'il tasche de nous esblouyr les yeux de ses illusions et enchantemens, que nostre bon Dieu ne permette point que nous tombions en ses filets, pour y estre attrapez, et en la fin engloutis, et abysmez: mais qu'il nous illumine tellement par son St. Esprit, que nous puissions fuyr et euitier tous les allechemens de Satan, qui ne tendent qu'à nostre ruine...'. 2)

At the end of the ecclesiastical prayer the Reformer mentions the devil together with the world, the sin, and the flesh as the opponents which never cease to make war against man. 3) The first of course refers again to the Evil One whereas the three others rather appear as a kind of instruments through which the Evil One tries to operate. The danger of evil to man lies not so much in that it appears as a power, but rather that it so often appears in a guise of which man is not aware by his own insight. Man on his own is not capable of detecting the evil which encircles and assaults him. In Calvin's language, the evil one uses traps, nets, and the like in order to lead man into perdition.

How then can evil be overcome? According to Calvin there is no strength whatsoever in man neither to resist evil nor to cope with it. Since man is a fallen creature he has lost his original liberty to withstand it. If he wants to leave that

1) Conciones in Lib. Jobi, Tom. II, p. 18.
 2) Sermon 109 sur Devteronome, p. 642.
 3) Appendix p. 4.

terrible state of perdition and corruption, in which he is so weak as to yield ever to evil, he has to look for help beyond himself. As a matter of fact, man cannot and should not take up the struggle against evil by his own. The Reformer's classical phrase which occurs numerously is this: 'Confugiamus ad te'. The way left to man is therefore to flee and take refuge in God. For it is solely and exclusively God who can overrule, and dispose of, it. To take refuge in God is the only way for being saved from the Evil One.

However, this does not imply that man should not fight at all against evil. Man has to fight, but not by his own strength since he is too weak and since he also has no arms to meet the opponent. He has to rely upon God, and he has to be armed with the Holy Spirit. In the last resort it is again a matter of knowledge. Man standing by his own is not aware of the danger in which he is as he is imperilled by evil. He is deceived a thousand times by the enticements and assiduous seductions of the enemy. It is through the Holy Spirit that man gets aware of it. Through the same Spirit he also realises that the power of evil is already broken. His fighting therefore consists of this that he points out to the victory of Christ which He has won once for all. Through the Holy Spirit the evil one is being unmasked to man. Man realises the true condition in which he lives, namely, his total slavery to evil when he looks upon himself, and the total salvation when he looks upon Jesus Christ.

'...que nous venions à luy, non pas seulement pour obtenir misericorde des fautes que nous auons commises, mais pour estre gouvernez par son S.Esprit, et pour estre retenus tellement, que combien que Satan bataille

contre nous, toutesfois nous persistions au service de celuy qui nous a vne fois appelez et acquis à soy...'. 1)

The constant emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit in regard to the fight against evil reveals that the whole concern is shifted from man to God. Man's resistance is only possible on the grounds of God's resistance, and in the refuge to Him.

2. The nature of sin.

As far as can be gathered from the prayers of John Calvin the nature of sin is not simple but at least three-fold. One is acquainted with his ideas with every prayer one reads. The call to confession of sins, which forms in most cases the opening phrase of the prayer, points to the importance given to the understanding of sin. At first sight, the most outstanding characteristics of sin seem to be that sin is transgression of the law. 'Acknowledging our many-fold faults' is one of the most frequent usages. The French word 'faute' has of course much resemblance to the English 'fault', which has several meanings like guilt, mistake, neglect, but chiefly transgression which comes about through action.

'Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre Dieu en recognoissance des fautes infinies dont nous sommes coupables, le priant qu'il nous les face tellement sentir, que ce soit pour nous attirer a vne

1) Sermon 166 sur le Deuteronomie, p. 976.

vraye repentance...'. 1)

'Prosternemur autem coram facie Optimi Dei nostri, agnoscentes peccata nostra, eique supplicantes ut det ea sic à nobis sentiri, ut vera poenitentia tacti, ad ipsum revertamur, de ipsius benevolentia non dubitantes...'. 2)

The Latin word 'peccatum' which the Reformer mostly uses in the Latin prayers does not denote something different from what has been said about the French 'faute'. In any case the emphasis is laid on action of which the sinner is guilty. This action is action against God's will which is made manifest in His commandments. This is well expressed in the great confession of sins at the beginning of the divine service where Calvin says: '...nous transgressons sans fin et sans cesse tes saints commandemens...'. 3) Sin is therefore action by which man transgresses the law of God. This means that sin is in the first place *d i s o b e d i e n c e* . That corresponds with what has been stated in the Institutes according to which man has been disobedient to God and has gone astray through his arrogance, haughtiness, and pride. 4) The Reformer does not go into details as to mention of what the transgressions consist of. He simply mentions transgressions of the holy commandments by which the Decalogue is being chiefly understood.

1) HR, p. 105.

Similar in MS. 26, p. 484.

MS. 40C, p. 49.

Sermons on Galatians CR. 50, 286.

Sermons on Jakob and Esau CR. 58, 30.

Sermons on the history of Melchisedech.

2) Conciones in Lib. Jobi, Tom. II, p. 225.

3) Appendix p. 5.

4) See p. 8 of this thesis.

Transgression as an act of disobedience means an offence against the Majesty of God. It is an act of slightly disregarding the will of God: 'Seigneur, nous auons desplaisir en nous mesme de t'auoir offensé...'. 1) By doing so - and man does it constantly - he challenges the wrath of God to descend upon him.

'...quando non desinimus quotidie iram tuam provocare contra nos, et tanta est etiam durities ac contumacia carnis nostra, ut necesse sit nos variis modis affligi...'.2)

Man's disobedience is severe obstinacy by which he takes a refractory attitude over against God who is a good God towards him. His transgressions are not just accidental as though he would not know better. Man chooses arbitrarily the way of disobedience by refusing to comply with God's commandments. Thus the faults which are mentioned in almost every prayer are not the results of man being conquered by an external evil power. Rather, he himself commits the faults against the Majesty of God. It is man acting against God. That makes it so grievous and severe.

'Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la face de nostre bon Dieu en cognoissance des fautes innumerables que nous auons commises contre sa sainte Maieste, et desquelles nous sommes coupables de mort eternelle, sinon qu'il ait pitié de nous...'. 3)

Secondly, sin is concupiscence. The Reformer speaks of the rebellion of the flesh and prays for strength to overcome and subdue the fleshly desires. For they, in Calvin's

1) Appendix p. 5.

2) Lect. on Hab. Tom. V, p. 409.

3) Sermon 20 sur le Deuteronomie, p. 114.

language, make constant war against man, that is to say that they distract man from being obedient to God. God calls man into the right way of salvation but the fleshly desires hinder him to do it. Obedience is only possible after the restraintment of the desires.

'Et pour nous la faire sentir, que doresenauant il nous vueille tellement ranger à soy, qu'il dompte toutes rebellions, et toutes les meschantes cupiditez de nostre chair: qu'il nous vueille reformer à son obeissance, en sorte que nous puissions faire nostre profit des chastimens qu'il nous enuoye...'. 1)

The usage of the word 'cupiditas' which occurs very often indicates that not only corporeal desires are meant by its use but that the whole man is concerned with it. It refers actually to all human desires that are self-centred. They are not simply natural desires, so to speak, but human ambitions, wishes, and demands other than those which are in the line with God's will. And it is here where the evil one operates so successfully by alluring man to follow his own desires instead of following the will of God. As evil is opposed to the will of God, so are all desires which are opposed to the same denoted as sin.

'...le prians...que nous bataillions incessamment contre tous nos desirs, à ce que nous tenions ceste mesure, de ne rien demander de luy, sinon ce qu'il approuue, et cognoissons luy estre agreable'. 2)

1) Sermon 20 sur le Devteronome, p. 114.

2) Sermon 17 sur le Devteronome, p. 97.

Similar in sermons on Galatians CR. 50, 390; CR. 50, 608.
Also HR. pp. 537 and 546.

Thirdly, sin is in its deepest sense *d o u b t* which also comprises the two conceptions of mistrust and faithlessness. This is *t h e* sin in the last resort. All other sins are disobedience, pride, haughtiness, arrogance, carnal desires, rebellion, obstinacy, etc. lead in the last analysis to one root, namely, doubt. Man does not put his trust in God but stands over against Him doubting and mistrusting Him. God has in great mercy and lovingkindness given to man all he needs: life, provisions, a beautiful world in which to live, above all His Word. But man has not accepted it as a child from the father. Man has doubted God's goodness and love. This is a very important point, because mistrust and doubt towards God means an offense of His love and goodness. Man not only sins against the majesty of God but against His heart. How much Calvin was aware of man's doubt can be read from the fact that again and again the phrase recurs 'ut non dubitemus' which in most cases refers to the promises of God. Because the Reformer knew about man's mistrust in God and His promises he so often prayed for His assistance in order to become enabled to put all trust in Him and His Word.

'...Et cependant qu'il imprime en nos coeurs la certitude de ses promesses qui sont contenues en sa parole, tellement que nous ne doutions point quand nous aurons esté appuyez sur luy...'. 1)

1) Sermon 148 sur le Deuteronomie, p. 867.

Chapter Eight

THE CHURCH

1. The nature of the Church.

In his Institutes Calvin sets forth his theory of the Church according to which it is the Mother of all believers. 1) The Church is just as essential to the spiritual life of the believer as a mother is to his physical life, and even more so because a person never 'grows up' with regard to the Church, but through the whole course of his life he is being constantly nourished and kept under charge of the Church until he is being divested of mortal flesh and become like the angels. The Church is the Mother of the believers inasmuch God has committed to her the office of bringing them up in the faith, and there is no salvation outside the Church. The Church is the means by which the exalted Christ accomplishes His work on earth. Through the Church as Mother He continues His action among men.

The second concept of the Church according to the Institutes is that it is the Body of Christ. 2) The believers grow in every respect in adhesion to Him who is the Head of the Church. This is to be understood that there is only one Head, namely, Christ. The Church is not ruled by any single or collective government. It is Christ alone as the

1) Inst. IV, 4.

2) Inst. IV, 3.

Head over her to whom is given the reign by the Father. The Church as the Body of Christ indicates the profound union between Him and her into which all believers are being drawn. The purport of the body is that it serves the head and, accordingly, the Church as the Body of Christ is to serve Him alone.

The third main concept of the Church is that it forms the congregation of the elect people. 1) The foundation of the Church is rooted in God's election. This means that the Church has a firm and sure foundation as it goes back to the eternal will of God.

Thus the Reformer's concept of the Church is threefold: The Mother of believers, the Body of Christ, and the Congregation of the elect. In the following it will be investigated whether or not, and how far, these concepts can also be applied to the findings revealed in his prayers.

Now as far as the prayers are concerned there is one concept of the three mentioned above the outstanding one, namely, the third, the Church as the elect people. There is a number of prayers in which the Reformer refers to the Church directly when he mentions the 'Eglise' or the 'Ecclesia' respectively. Those terms would refer to their original meaning as a gathering of those who are 'called out'. The Church forms the body of those people who have been chosen by the grace and mercy of God. Is this to be applied to the local congregation only? Calvin seems to hold both, the local congregation as well as the Church Universal. In fact, when he prays for protection of the Church, a petition that frequently recurs, he apparently prays for the whole Church Universal.

1) OS I, 86.

And since God Himself is the mighty protector of His Church the latter is called upon to put all trust in Him and to render Him due thanks through the whole course of life.

'...non tamen dubitemus, quin, ut miseram suam Ecclesiam in suam clientelam et tutelam receipt, sic nos in finem usque protegat, et salvos tectos conservet...'. 1)

'...Et cognoissans qu'il est protecteur de son Eglise, que nous nous attendions tant plus a luy en vraye fiance et luy rendions action de grace tout le temps de nostre vie...'. 2)

The idea of the Church as the elect can even more be read from the prayers where Calvin does not at all directly refer to it, i.e. where he does not mention the name 'Eglise' or 'Ecclesia' but where he simply speaks in the first person plural. This is actually in almost every prayer the case, with only very few exceptions. He prays by using the first person plural and by doing so - by the use of 'we' - he means the Church. This is with emphasis expressed in the ecclesiastical prayers where we find phrases like this: 'Thou art our Creator, and we are the works of thy hand; thou art our Pastor, and we are thy flock; thou art our Redeemer, and we are thy people which thou hast purchased; thou art our God, and we are thy heritage'. 3) In short, the Church as the elect is God's property. And all this is true on the grounds of Jesus Christ. Election takes place through Him. So does the purchase of the people, and so is man's access to the heritage of the heavenly Kingdom the exclusive work of Christ. There is no election as such. It is always related to the work of Christ. There is hardly any writing by the Reformer in which the christological

1) Homiliae in I. Lib. Samuelis, Tom. II, p. 366.

2) HR. p. 277.

3) Appendix p. 22.

aspect of election is more emphasised than in the prayers. More over the term that refers to election is actually the one which denotes adoption. 1) In Calvin's understanding the Church is the gathering of the adopted children of God, which is in and through Jesus Christ. This is a very positive aspect. For it shows that election is not to be understood as a rigid verdict by which some were elected and some were condemned. The latter assumption, as one might understand from the reading of the Institutes, is subject to some corrections in regard to that which is expressed in the prayers. There seems to be only one clear cut vision of the election, namely, in Christ there is adoption, apart from Christ there is only condemnation. But it is the will of God that the sinner should not perish but rather be saved, for which purpose He has sent His Son into the world. God wills the salvation of man. There is condemnation, even total condemnation, and there is salvation, even total salvation. But since Christ has taken upon Him the sin of the world, and condemnation with it, and has wrought an eternal salvation for the whole world, election now denotes an action by which man is being transferred from condemnation to salvation. The Church as the elect, therefore, forms the gathering of those who have come to the realisation of the actual situation, i.e. those who realise their salvation in Christ. They are the people who rely on the promises of God.

'...voire en telle sorte qu'apres nous estre condamnez, nous ne laissions pas de nous appuyer sur ses promesses, de venir à luy, et l'invoquer, a fin qu'il ait pitié de nous, comme celuy qui ne demande point la mort des pecheurs, mais qu'ils soyent reduits à luy, comme il est prest de les recevoir au salut qu'il a promis à ses

1) Sermon 26 sur Devteronome, p. 151.

enfans. Que donc nous y venions, voire au nom de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, et que quand il nous chastiera, si du premiere coup nous ne sommes conuertis, que nous le prions qu'il nous face profiter de iour en iour en vraye repentance, pour renoncer à ce qui est de nostre vice, tellement qu'il nous gouverne par son saint Esprit, et qu'on apperçoie que la parole de Dieu a telle autherité sur nous, que nous ne demandions sinon de nous y conformer en tout, et par tout. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc.. 1)

The nature of the Church as the elect people, the adopted children of God, implies that the Church has no right of existence by itself, nor can it constitute itself on its own. The existence of the Church is totally dependent on Christ in whom God has adopted men to be His children. The Church comes into existence through the calling of men out of the darkness of evil and sin into the light of Christ. The initiative is fully on the side of God who is acting in Jesus Christ. The only action of man is to respond to the calling of God, or, in Calvin's words, to stick to the promises of God. The promises of God, however, are vouched in the covenant which He has made with man in and through His Son Jesus Christ. The Church exists on the grounds of that eternal covenant, for this covenant constitutes the communion into which God has deigned to call man. This leads to the actual life of the Church which shall be dealt with in the following section.

2. The life of the Church.

The Church lives by her union with Christ. This union, however, tends to communion with Christ. Hence the Church is

1) Sermon 26 sur Devteronome, p. 151.

the place where the holy sacraments are being administered. The two prayers for the celebration of the Baptism and the Lord's Supper respectively disclose the meaning and significance of both sacraments. Both are grounded in the eternal covenant.

The prayer for Baptism starts right away with reminding God of His promises that He would be the God of His people, and that He would deign to confirm that grace on the child to be baptized. 1) It is important to attend to the fact that grace and in this connection the grace of the covenant precedes the sacrament of Baptism. 'Nous te prions qu'il te plaise de confermer ceste grace en l'enfant present' is a noteworthy phrase. For it shows that not the minister, not the congregation, and not the parents of the child confirm a promise, rather, it is God who confirms His promises. This seems to be the reason why Calvin held firmly to infant Baptism - because the whole emphasis in this event is laid on God's action. In the same prayer the Reformer refers to sanctification through the Holy Spirit and the incorporation into the communion of Christ. In both cases the stress lies on the action of God, not on man's. The idea that man's salvation rests totally in the hands of God makes it comprehensible why Baptism should be administered to man right at the beginning of his life and why the question of whether an infant can or cannot give personal consent is beside the point.

Similarly, the Holy Communion is grounded in the covenant of God which He has made with man through Jesus Christ, in which He has been pleased to be a propitious Father.

1) Appendix p. 25.

'Par ainsi que nous soyons faits vrayement participans du nouveau et eternel Testament: à savoir, l'alliance de grace, estans certains et asseurez que ton bon plaisir est de nous estre eternellement Pere propice..'1)

Also through the Holy Communion the life of the Church is constantly sustained and nourished. This happens through looking upon Christ who, being true God and true man, is the holy bread from heaven through which the Church lives, and is being vivified. Thus the Church as a whole as well as her individual members live, because Christ lives in them.

'...aussi les nous veut communiquer pour nourriture en vie eternelle...comme luy estant vray Dieu et vray homme, est veritablement le saint pain celeste, pour nous vivifier: à fin que nous ne vivions plus en nous mesme, et selon nostre nature laquelle est toute corrompue et vicieuse: mais luy vive en nous...' 2)

The life of the Church is therefore closely connected with the Holy Communion. Because life of the Church means communion with God, the Holy Communion is, so to speak, the life-line of the Church.

However, Holy Communion does not stand isolated when it is being administered. It has to be accompanied by the Word of God. The life of the Church is signified by the hearing of the Word of God. This is a very crucial point, for the hearing of the Word of God is the greatest privilege ever assigned to man as with His Word God has given a great treasure at the disposal of the Church.

'...d'autant qu'il nous a donné ce thresor infini de sa saint parolle, là où nous auons pleine assurance de

1) RO, p. 243.

2) ibidem.

nostre salut, que nous le receuions en toute reuerence, et que nous cheminions en telle pureté de coeur deuant luy, que de plus en plus il nous estargisse ses richesses, et qu'il nous face participans, et que tout le course de nostre vie nous cheminions tellement en son obeissance..'.1)

The proclamation and the hearing of the Word of God cannot be over-emphasised. For it forms the core of the Church service as well as of the Church life as a whole. It is the hearing of the Word of God through which the Church is being safeguarded against becoming torpid and indifferent. It is this Word that shatters man's self-made foundations and stirs him up out of his complacency; and it is also the Word of God that comforts him and gives him, above all, the assurance of the eternal covenant which God has made with him in and through Jesus Christ. Hence it is through the hearing of the Word of God that the Church becomes a living Church. As the Reformer sees it there is a certain progress which must take place in the members of the Church. This progress he calls purification.

First of all, it is only through the Word of God, and through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, that man becomes aware of his sins, and that he realises his true estate before the eyes of God. 2) Through the same Word he also hears of the forgiveness of his sins, of the eternal sacrifice of Christ, of the sanctification in Christ, and of the final redemption in the consummation of the risen and ascended Lord. 3) These facts, which he can only get to know through the hearing of the Word of God, redound to affect his life. Although man does not cease to commit sin and live a life of imperfection, he, nevertheless, should strive to do better. 4)

1) Sermon 86 sur Deuteronomie, p. 510.
 2) cf. Inst. III,3, 11; I, 19, 2; 20, 1.
 3) cf. Inst. III,3, 20.
 4) cf. chap. VI, p. 108.

'Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de noz fautes: le prians, qu'il nous les face sentir de plus en plus, iusques a ce que nous ayons appris de nous assubiection soubz luy, et que sa maiesté domine tellement sur nous, que nous n'ayons ny force, ny vertu, ny sagesse, sinon en ce qu'il luy plaira nous donner et que nous tenons tout nos biens de luy, en sorte, que nous le rapportions a son seruice, et a la gloire de nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ, auquel tout empire est donné pour dominer par dessus nous, afin qu'il iouysse et de noz corps, et de noz ames: et que tout luy soit présenté en vray sacrifice. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples, et nations de la terre, etc.'. 1)

It is interesting that in the vast majority of Calvin's prayers there occurs an almost stereotyped phrase which follows the confession of sin, and it is this: 'en cognoissance de noz fautes: le prians, qu'il nous les face sentir de plus en plus'. He apparently means that in man there should be an increasing consciousness of sins. The Church therefore differs from the people outside that her members are conscious of sins. This, again, is due to the hearing of the Word of God. Man apart from the challenge by the Word is not really conscious of sins, or he may have only a very vague notion of it. The purport of becoming conscious of sins is not to despair over it but to flee from oneself to the mercy of God, and to strive to be more and more conformed to the newness of life which is in Christ. Man cannot do it on his own. He needs the power of the Holy Spirit which ingrafts him into that newness. It is not a progress by which man would at last reach a state of perfection before the Almighty God through a virtuous life. It is rather a progress of insight, a growing consciousness of the true situation, namely, the total perdition of man when he stands alone before God, and the total salvation when he relies on the perfect work of Christ.

1) MS 40C, p. 113.

It is a progress of insight by which man more and more dislikes his sinful nature and estate and takes refuge completely in the mercy of the Lord, from whom he may receive forgiveness of sins. The virtues are then rather to be regarded as the result of forgiveness.

'Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la face de nostre bon Dieu en cognoissance de nos fautes, le prians qu'il nous les face mieux sentir, que nous n'auons point fait, et que de plus en plus nous soyons amenez à vne telle repentance, que nous apprenions de penser à nos vices, pour nous y contrister, et nous y desplaire, afin qu'ayans obtenu pardon d'iceux, nous apprenions de reigler nostre vie à ses saint commandemens, à ce qu'il soit honoré de nous en vne vraye obeissance, et non point seulement par confession de bouche. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais a tous peuples, et nations de la terre, etc.'. 1)

It is noteworthy that the commandments remain in force. It is suggested that the Reformer had both in mind the Ten Commandments as well as the double - commandment of loving God and loving the neighbour. There is also the mention of the true obedience through which God is being hallowed. This leads to the conclusion that the life of the Church is marked by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit who is at work in the Church and also through the Church. There are many prayers which contain terms like this: regenerate, correct, amend, etc., which refer to the progress as set forth above.

As to perfection the Reformer does not leave us without answer. Man does not attain perfection during his life. He will attain it in the Kingdom of God. Many prayers conclude like this: 'that we may strive...until he shall gather us together in His celestial Kingdom where we shall be divested of all

1) Sermon 40 sur Deuteronomie, p. 230.

mortal flesh and corruption', and similar.

'...donec tandem vitiis omnibus puri, fruamur beata illa et immortalis gloria, quam nobis in caelo praeparasti per unigenitum Filium tuum Dominum nostrum, Amen'. 1)

'...mais qu'en verité nous soyons son peuple, separé de toutes les infections de ce monde, et de toutes meschantes cupiditez, qui sont contraires et rebelles a sa loy...'.2)

The life of the Church is also seen under the aspect of warfare, a warfare which never ceases until complete victory is achieved, which again will be in the celestial Kingdom. Thus the Church is never at ease but ever on the move towards her final destiny.

3. The task of the Church.

The Church has neither life nor existence of its own, or by its own strength. Nor can it furnish itself with real import and meaning. Its nature and life are fully dependent on its Head which is Jesus Christ. The same is true in regard to the task. The Church cannot provide itself with a task. It is given to it by its Head.

The prayers of John Calvin disclose with impressive emphasis that there is a real import and meaning given to the Church as there is given a real task. The latter is in its form and content service, namely, to serve God. This service

1) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 399.

2) MS 40C, p. 49.

is twofold in the sense that it goes, as it were, in two directions: the vertical and the horizontal. Not that there would be two services split from one another. Although there is a distinction between the two as in regard to their directions, nevertheless, it is the same one service of God. It must be understood that the service in the horizontal direction is completely determined by the vertical.

The first service then, the vertical as it were, is the service man is called upon to render to God. Its purpose is the glorification of God's name. It is the holy will of God that His name shall be glorified by man. Calvin's idea is that God who is the Creator of all things has the perfect right to call for response from man whom He has created. Moreover, since God is not only the Creator but also the Redeemer who has assigned His perfect love, goodness, and mercy towards His creature, it redounds to gratitude and the least man can do is to be thankful.

'...et que nous luy attribuions toute la louange de nostre prosperité, et luy facions hommage de tous les biens que nous receuons de sa main, voire nous dediant du tout a luy et le gloriffians, non seulement de bouche, mais de toutes noz oeures...'. 1)

'...interea postulemus ejus verbo erudire, ut nobis semper praeleceat, non solum in operibus nostris externis, sed in omnibus nostris cogitationibus et affectibus, ita ut corde et spiritu ipsi penitus addicti simus, ut sanctum ejus nomen tota nostra vita glorificetur...'. 2)

'...Et encores que nous voyons aujourdhuy le monde estre tout confus, et que nous soyons enuironnez de tant scandales que c'est vn horreur: neantmoins que nous soyons retenus sous son enseigne, pour suyure là où il

1) HR, 114.

2) Lect. on Job, Tom. II, p. 298.

nous voudra appeller: et que par ce moyen il soit glorifié en nous, et que nous puissions aussi vrayement nous glorifier en luy, d'autant que nous sommes son peuple, et qu'il nous a separez à son service...'.1)

'...vueille-nous receuoir en ta sainte conduite, et nous gouverner par ton Esprit, qui nous regenerer en vne meilleure vie: par laquelle ton nom soit sanctifié...'. 2)

These few examples which actually represent very many of quite similar kind show the great emphasis which the Reformer laid on the glorification of the name of God. It forms the import and meaning of every divine service as well as of the life of the individual Christian in thought, word, and deed. It is noteworthy to attend to the difference of the wording in the two (1 and 2, page 138) prayers quoted above. In the first, stress seems to be laid on glorification through deeds, whereas in the second prayer it goes just the other way round where stress is laid not on deeds but on the thoughts and affections. This does not suggest a contradiction but rather mutual replenishment. The glorification of the name of God takes place not only through ceremonies but through attentive ears open to listen to His Word. 3) An interesting phrase occurs in the third quotation when it is said 'that we may also truly glorify ourselves in Him'. The meaning appears to be, in connection with other similar wordings, that man is called upon to be a partaker in the glory of Christ. There are many prayers which contain the phrase 'until He shall make us partakers in His heavenly glory'. Such ideas are closely bound to the fact that the Church actually glorifies God through Christ. The Church does so by following Christ and by the being ingrafted into His newness of life. For it is Christ who renders

1) Sermon 119 sur Deuteronomie, p. 700.

2) RO, p. 246.

3) cf. Sermons on Galatians, CR, 50, 338.

perfect obedience to the Father by His perfect life, passion, and death. Moreover, it is the risen and ascended Lord who presents the fruit of His work unto God, to the glory of the Father. The task of the Church as service for the glorification of God is therefore related to the work of Christ, i.e. it takes place through the Mediator in the same way as all other communications between God and man, and man and God are being accomplished.

The second service, the horizontal as it were, is the service man is called upon to render to his fellow-man. It is not a service separated from the first, for it is also in the service of the same God, but it is directed to man's fellow-man. It is also for the glorification of God and totally subject to the will of God. But whereas the first service is a matter purely between God and man, the second is between man and man under God.

This second service to which the Church is called is the proclamation of the Word of God. It has already been mentioned that God has given His Word as a treasure to the Church. But the Church is not supposed to keep this treasure for itself as though it were its own property. The Church is to share the treasures of the Word of God with others. In other words, the Church is to grow and to be augmented. Therefore, the second service of the Church is its *m i s s i o n a r y* task. This idea comes out clearly in numerous phrases which are mainly to be found at the end of the prayers *ex tempore*. There are not only hundreds but over a thousand of occurrences that indicate the missionary aspect of the Church's task. Calvin very often ends his prayers with the petition that God may grant these graces, as asked for in the preceding phrases, not only to the congregation present but to all peoples and nations of the earth. In the following some examples are given.

'...Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, reduisant tous poures ignorans de la captiuité d'erreur et tenebres à la droicte voye de salut. Que pour ce faire, il luy plaise susciter vrais et fideles ministres de sa parolle, qui ne cherchent point leur profit et leur ambitions: mail l'exaltation de son saint nom tant seulement, et le salut de son poure troupeau...'. 1)

'...Nec solis nobis hanc gratiam largiatur, sed omnibus populis et nationibus terrae, omnes miseros ignorantes ex caeca captivitate errorum et ignorantiae ad rectam viam salutis revocans. Eaque de causa libeat illi excitare veros et fideles Verbi sui ministros, qui commodum et ambitionem suam non quaerant, sed exaltationem Nominis ipsius et salutem gregis ejus duntaxat...'. 2)

'...da, inquam, ut horum beneficiorum memores, perpetuo nos tibi subiciamus, & tantum studeamus in hoc vocem attollere, ut totus mundus se tibi subiciat: & qui nunc videntur prorsus contra te insanire, tandem redigantur in communem obedientiam nobiscum, ut scilicet Christus Filius tuus omnium sit Dominus...'. 3)

'...iournellement il nous appelle à soy par son Euangile: que nous ne cerchions point d'autre moyen de servir à Dieu, mais qu'en toute pureté nous profitons sous sa main & sous sa conduite. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples & nations de la terre, &c.'. 4)

'...nostre Dieu nous reueste de sa iustice, à laquelle nous sommes appellez iournellement. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc.'. 5)

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- 1) Sermon 65 sur Devteronome, p. 380.
 - 2) Precatio quam solitus fuit D. Joannes Calvinus in fine uniuscujusque concionis concipere. Conciones in I. Liberum Jobi, Tom. II.
 - 3) Praelectiones in Hoseam, Tom. V, p. 118.
 - 4) Sermon 120 sur Devteronome, p. 706.
 - 5) Sermon 159 sur Devteronome, p. 932.

'...Après nous te prions, Dieu tres-benin et Pere misericordieux, pour tous hommes generalement, que comme tu veux estre recognu Sauueur de tout le monde, en la redemption faite par ton Fils Iesus Christ que ceux qui sont encores estranges de sa cognoissance, estans en tenebres et captivité d'erreur et ignorance, par illumination de ton S. Esprit et la predication de ton Euangile, soyent reduits à la droite voye de salut, qui est de te cognoistre seul vraye Dieu...'. 1)

'...et que ceux qui sont en estat public aduisont, de se portes si loyaument, qu'ilz puissent rendre compte fidele de la charge, qui leur est commise: et que les personnes princés se laissent tellement gouverner, que Dieu domine au milieu de nous, et qu'il y ait tout empire, et que grandz et petitz luy soient subiectz. Et que pour ce faire il luy plaise susciter vrayes et fideles ministres de sa parole, etc.'. 2)

The vast number of prayers which end in that almost stereotyped manner 'que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre' give much evidence of how deeply Calvin was concerned about the salvation of the whole world. 3) The first quotation on this page indicates

1) RO, p. 248.

2) MS, 40C, p. 61.

3) As an example may be mentioned here that the phrase 'que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre' occurs about 120 times in the 200 sermons on Deuteronomy.

It is similar in MS 26, MS 40B, MS 40C; also in sermons on Galatians CR 50, pp. 286, 416, 428, 482, 508, etc.

Homiliae in I. Lib. Samuelis, Tom. II.

Sermons on book II of Samuel.

Sermons on the history of Melchisedech.

Sermons on Jacob and Esau, CR 59. etc.

The prayers attached to the lectures do not so often contain that phrase. However, those attached to the sermons have it almost every time.

that the world's recognition of Christ as Saviour can only be achieved through the illumination of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the Word of God. It is interesting how much stress Calvin laid on the work of the ministers in regard to the preaching of the Gospel and, connected with it, the 'bringing back of the poor ignorants to the right way of Salvation'. It is mainly the ministers of the Church to whom such task is given. The true and faithful ministers are apparently those who obediently serve as heralds of the Gospel. They are called upon not to seek their own profit and ambitions, but the exaltation of the name of God, and the salvation of the poor flock.

The phraseology which Calvin often uses in this context suggests that he not only looks upon men as elect and reprobate but also as those who have already, and those who have not yet, come to light and knowledge. Although the prayers do not reveal any details as to how missionary work has to be carried out by the Church, it is not difficult to gather that teaching takes the most important place. By teaching the Reformer means the teaching of the Word of God, i.e. exposition of the Holy Scriptures. On those grounds the missionary work is in the first place committed to the ministers, that is to say, to those who have been trained in the expounding of the Holy Scriptures. The converse also applies; a person who has been trained to expound the Scriptures, or, in modern terms who has undertaken a theological course, is thereby obliged to be a missionary. The missionary task, however, is not associated with certain geographical areas only. The Reformer thinks of the whole world as the mission field.

But although the missionary work is primarily assigned to the ministers, the whole Church, all members of it, are called to take part in it. Here the prayers of the Church play

a vital part. There is a mutual support through prayers throughout the world. Those who preach and those who come into the fellowship of the Church establish through their prayers more and more a sacred union in the Lord Jesus Christ. This sacred union is to be augmented the world over, so that the name of God may be glorified by all peoples and nations of the earth.

4. The destiny of the Church.

The Church in its appearance on earth is not the final stage of its life and existence. It is transient as far as it is subject to a final transformation. This transformation is marked by the change from imperfection to perfection. By this the Church does not lose its identity or nature. The Church after the transformation will remain in its essence what it is now, namely, the Body of Christ who will remain its Head, it will also remain the chosen people whose only Governor will be the same Jesus Christ. As to the chief task of the Church the same is to be said, for it also will remain to be the glorification of the name of God.

The difference which the transformation will bring about is that of a change from imperfection to perfection. This means that what the Church is now doing, even at its best, is imperfect. Man's taking part in the fellowship of the Church does in no way mean that he is perfect. Indeed, on the grounds of Christ's atonement, he is fully reconciled with God and his sins are forgiven. He is ingrafted into the newness of life in Christ. He is also touched by the operating power of the Holy Spirit. But, nevertheless, this does not mean that he would not sin any more. Still he is inclined to yield to temptation

and, in fact, there passes not a single day during which man would not commit many sins. Hence the great stress on daily repentance. Moreover, the life of the Church is marked by fighting which involves both victory as well as defeat. Thus unrest is the mark of the Church's pilgrimage.

However, this is transitory, determined to change into perfection. It is an heritage which man will acquire by faith and which he does not yet possess. 1) The final stage, according to the prayers of Calvin, is the gathering up in the celestial Kingdom. This heavenly Kingdom is the Kingdom where Jesus Christ is the Governor, where He is ruling in glory and triumph. It is the final consummation of His realm. The promotion of man from imperfection to perfection takes place not on the grounds of his striving for perfection or as a result of his moral virtues. The perfection comes about because it is Christ who has made man rid of all imperfections and at the same time made him partaker of His glory and triumph. Thus perfection is the sole work of Jesus Christ.

As to the actual estate of the heavenly Kingdom, and of man in it, the Reformer is reluctant to mention close details of description. But there are a few predications in his prayers which disclose some ideas. The heavenly Kingdom is a heritage which man inherits because he is made an adopted child of the heavenly Father. This heritage is the fruit of Christ's death on the cross. Christ has procured it through His blood. This repudiates any idea of man getting access to the Kingdom on his own merits. He inherits the Kingdom, that means it is given to him as a pure gift which he would never have to build up for himself in the way that a merchant by hard work builds up his

1) cf. Sermons on Galatians, CR. 50, 286.

fortune. But since this heritage is vouched by Christ's death and not by man's merit, it stands for ever and as such can be relied upon with certainty. Therefore, while the life of the Church on earth is marked by movements, by fighting and struggling, the celestial Kingdom is the place where the fighting will be over, where the Church comes to rest, to a blessed quietude as the Reformer often puts it. Man is made partaker of the victory won by Jesus Christ and he can now rest with Christ because the evil, the sin, and all adversaries are overcome for good.

'...expectantes dum nos Deus ab omnibus hujus miseriis liberatos colligat in illam felicitatem coelestem, ubi perfecta tranquillitate perfruemur...'. 1)

'...donec appareat finis, quem nobis pollicitus es, & tandem finita hujus praesentis seculi militia, perveniamus ad beatam illam quietem, quae nobis reposita est in caelo, per Christum Dominum nostrum, Amen'. 2)

'...donec tandem exuti omnibus vitiis, & omni reatu liberati, perveniamus in regnum illud coeleste, ubi fruamur fructu fidei nostrae, hoc est, aeterna illa hereditate, quae nobis parta est sanguine unigeniti Filii tui, Amen'. 3)

'...et perseverer en ceste bataille spirituelle, iusque à ce qu'obtenions pleine victoire, pour triompher une fois en ton Royaume, avec nostre capitaine et protecteur nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, Amen'. 4)

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- 1) Lect. on Job, Tom. II, p. 242.
 - 2) Lect. on Jeremiah, Tom. IV, p. 339.
 - 3) Lect. on Micah, Tom. V, p. 345.
 - 4) Appendix p. 4.

The celestial Kingdom will reveal to the full the relationship between God and man as a relationship between Father and child and as such a relationship of paternal love. Does man still need a Mediator ? The answer is in the affirmative. Because man is a child of God only through Christ, the latter continues to be the Mediator. For what man shall be in the heavenly Kingdom and thus before God, he will be what he is in and through Jesus Christ.

Chapter Nine

ESCHATOLOGY

The eschatological aspect of Calvin's prayers is very strong. It is impossible to read them without recognising at once that eschatology, or the Last Things, occupies an important place. Although the Reformer's chief concern was the problem of justification and the matters immediately relevant to it, the prayers reveal unequivocally that eschatology played a big role in his thinking and especially in his way of looking into the future. Heinrich Quistorp has written in extenso about Calvin's doctrine of the Last Things. 1) But in spite of his thoroughgoing work he did not consult the prayers very much except on one occasion. 2)

The importance of eschatology is evident in many of his prayers attached to the lectures which were said *ex tempore*. The last part of those prayers comprises phrases which we connoted as prospect. 3) Here Calvin shows that the Last Things, the final destiny of man and of the whole world meant to him as much as any other theological problem. Although, as H. Quistorp points out 4), the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, were so much pre-occupied with their own peculiar theme and so much afraid of distortions, that they never succeeded in attaining any conclusive and independent formulation of Christian eschatology, nevertheless from the prayers we can with certainty

1) H. Quistorp: Calvin's Doctrine of the Last Things.

2) *ibidem*, p. 112.

3) See chap. 2, p. 25.

4) *op. cit.* p. 11.

gather that eschatology played a vital part in Calvin's thinking and could never be separated from his theology. It must be understood on the grounds of the constant recurrence of the prospect in his prayers that eschatology was not a foster child in his theology but rather its centre and goal.

1. The promise of Christ.

If we ask for the source from which Calvin's eschatological thinking got its impulses then the prayers reveal to us with clarity that the Christian hope in regard to the future is based on the promise of Christ which He has given to us through His Word.

'Et combien que nous soyons poures pecheurs, que nous obtenions tousiours misericorde, et que les graces qui nous ont esté promises en luy, non seulement nous soyons accomplies, mais que ce soit pour nous confermer en l'esperance du royaume eternal, iusques a ce que nous y soyons paruenus...'. 1)

Here more than anywhere Calvin shows us, not through teaching or through controversial contests but through his pattern in devotional life, how utterly the future life of the believer is dependent on the Word of God, i.e. on the promise Jesus Christ has given while He was on earth in lowliness and humility. There are numerous instances where the phrase recurs: 'Thou hast promised us...', which gives us an impression how seriously and determinedly the Reformer relied on Jesus Christ.

'...that having finished our warfare, we may at last enjoy that blessed rest, which thou hast promised to us, and

1) HR. p. 206.

which is laid up for us in heaven, and which also has been purchased for us by the blood of Christ thy Son, our Lord...'. 1)

'...to call on thee in the name of thine only-begotten Son, until we shall find by experience that never in vain are the prayers of those, who relying on thy promises, patiently look for remedy from thee alone, even in extreme evils, and also in death itself...'. 2)

Calvin not only calls upon others to put their whole trust in Christ but he himself as teacher and pastor goes ahead with the good example. The promise of Christ is sure and trustworthy and can be relied upon because in Him God has wrought an eternal covenant signed and ratified by Christ's own blood. 3) That 'alliance beaucoup meilleure' as Calvin calls it does not only affect the present stage of our life by which we are reconciled with God the Father but it also reaches into the future. Because God has kept His promises in the past when He showed His mighty deeds to the people of Israel which culminated in the first coming of His Son, He will also keep His promises as far as the future is concerned. We are therefore called upon to put our trust in Him and to rely entirely on His promises. This is to be understood as an act of faith. For we do not yet live by vision but by faith only. Faith, however, is not something which we have or which would be just at our disposal. It is to be prayed for.

'O grant, that, being fortified by invincible faith against these so many temptations, we may persevere in true religion, and never at any time turn aside from the teaching

1) Lect. 71 on the Minor Prophets, on Obadiah.

2) Lect. 1 on Lamentations.

3) cf. chapter V, p. 85 f.

of thy Word, until we be at length gathered to Christ our King, under whom, as our Head, thou hast promised that we shall ever be safe, and until we attain that happy life which is laid up for us in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord...'. 1)

By nature our mind is too much darkened and corrupted to grasp the promises of God. It is only through the operation of the Holy Spirit by whom our mind and heart must be first illuminated that true faith can grow. H. Quistorp again makes clear the relationship between faith and hope, showing how they are corelated and dependent one on the other. 2) We fully agree with what he states there. But from the prayers of Calvin we would have to make a correcting statement: the Holy Spirit is not only the pledge of our inheritance, not only the link between the object of hope and the one who hopes, He not only raises hope to its fullness, but the Holy Spirit is the origin of faith and thus also of hope. Thus those who live in darkness and captivity of error and ignorance, i.e. those who do not yet live in faith, can be brought back to the right way of salvation only by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

'Après nous te prions, Dieu tres-benin et Pere misericordieux, pour tous hommes generalement, que comme tu veu estre recognu Sauveur de tout le monde, en la redemption faite par ton Fils Jesus Christ que ceux qui sont encores estranges de sa cognoissance, estans en tenebres et captivité d'erreur et ignorance, par illumination de ton S.Esprit et la predication de ton Evangile, soyent reduits à la droite voye de salut, qui est de te cognoistre seul vraye Dieu, et celuy que tu as envoyé Jesus Christ...'. 3)

Thus there is an inner co-relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of the believer. The Holy Spirit creates faith which trusts in the promises of Christ. The believer,

1) Lect. 21 on Hosea.

2) op. cit. p. 16 f.

3) RO. p. 246.

by reason of this trust, further prays for increase of faith and for the continued pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

Now we shall turn to the promise of Christ itself. We have to inquire what, in Calvin's view, has actually been promised to the believer. The Reformer uses two expressions which very frequently appear in his prayers, namely: the gathering up into the celestial kingdom and the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. The French word which Calvin uses here is 'recueillir' of which the primary meaning is 'to gather fruit'.

'...iusques à ce que nous soions recueillis en ceste heureux heritage, où il ne nous defaudra aucune chose, quelle qu'elle soit: mais là nous aurons accomplissement de toute ioye et de toute felicité...'. 1)

Occasionally there is also the expression of 'parvenir' (à), which means to attain (to) and is used in the sense of to reach the celestial kingdom.

'...nous ne tendions à autre fin, sinon d'estre receus par la pure misericorde de nostre Dieu, pour parvenir à l'heritage eternal...'. 2)

The fact that Calvin uses so frequently the word to gather in the passive voice, with Christian believers as the grammatical subject, suggests strongly that universalism has no place in his theology. The gathered are the elect or the believers who come from all sorts and conditions of men. Calvin thinks of the final calling together of all who have trusted in Christ's promises. To be with Christ in the company of other believers is the final destiny of man. It means true communion, for the believer's future will not be an isolated one. The highest bliss will be the life together with Christ. As already the believer's

1) CR. 59, 87.

2) Serm. on Gal. CR. 50, 683.

life on earth is to be lived not in isolation and loneliness but together with the invisible Lord and together with other believers, so much more will the life in the celestial kingdom be characterised by a deep communion between the Head and its members as well as between the members themselves. It also suggests that there is no real life apart from communion with Christ since all the members receive their life from the Head alone, as the branches get the life stream from the vine.

The second expression which is related to the promise of Christ is the phrase 'until we shall inherit the heavenly kingdom'. We have already dealt with the meaning of the 'inheritance' when we described the destiny of the Church. 1) It remains here to point out how much that expression takes a central position in Calvin's eschatology. We may rightly say that it forms its very heart. Here again we see clearly that the future of man is solely dependent on Christ. For the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom comes about through Christ because through Him man has been adopted by the Father. Through Christ man's position before the Almighty God is no more that of a servant but that of a child. The many instances in the prayers where the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom is mentioned correspond well with Calvin's teaching: 'Children must sometime enter into their inheritance and if God has accepted us as children then an inheritance is allotted to us by Him....for we are joint heirs with the only begotten Son of God'. 2) If one tries to understand Calvin's eschatology other than in terms of the relationship Father - child one certainly misses the target, at any rate as far as the prayers are concerned.

Both expressions - that of the gathering as well as that of the inheritance - affirm how solely and exclusively the

1) See p. 144.

2) CR. 77, 150.

future of man and the world, or the Last Things, rests on the grace of God. If we inquire into Calvin's view of man's state after death, especially in details, we may perhaps find some speculative ideas as H. Quistorp holds. 1) However, we cannot describe his view as speculative as far as the factor is concerned which determines the future of man and the world. For here the Reformer wants to put all stress on the sole act of God as distinct from the more purely rationalistic point of view. Here he stands on solid ground, for the heritage of the heavenly kingdom is the fruit of Christ's death on the cross. It has been procured through the blood of the only begotten Son of God. Often the prayers end like this:

'...until we shall at length attain that eternal life which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only begotten Son..'. 2)

'...until we shall at length enjoy that celestial inheritance which has been obtained for us by the blood of the same, thine only begotten Son..'. 3)

Because the future rests entirely in the hands of God man is called upon to put his whole trust in Him. But since that is ultimately an act of faith, as we already mentioned, it is to be prayed for as Calvin did:

'...so that we may learn at this day wholly to submit to thee and flee to thy mercy, and that whatever may happen to us, we may never doubt but that thou wilt be propitious to us, if we seek thee with a sincere heart, and with unfeigned faith in Christ, our Lord..'. 4)

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- 1) Quistorp: op.cit. chapter on the immortality of the soul.
 - 2) Lect. 107 on Jeremiah.
 - 3) Lect. 177 on Jeremiah.
 - 4) Lect. 181 on Jeremiah.

'...and however we may deserve a thousand times to be condemned by thee, yet deign to receive us in thine only-begotten Son, and through Him show thyself reconciled to us to the end of our life; and be thou our Father in death itself, so that we may live and die to thee, and acknowledge this to be the only true way of salvation, until we shall at length enjoy that celestial inheritance which has been obtained for us by the blood of the same, thine only-begotten Son'. 1)

From the citations above we can gather that Christ's promise of the inheritance of the celestial kingdom is based on the fact that He Himself is the true Heir because He has obtained the heritage through His own blood, by which God has deigned to be a reconciled and gracious Father. But since we are joint heirs with Christ we live already in the state of the true heritage which is only to be revealed to the full at the second Advent of Christ. As Christ has died on the cross once for all, and thus wrought our eternal salvation, He has also procured for us the celestial kingdom once for all by His blood. Thus it comprises all time, i.e. the past, the present and the future. Therefore, death has lost its terror for, based on Christ's Atonement, God will show Himself propitious even in death itself. The inheritance of the celestial kingdom is not only a matter of the future, it is also a matter of the past in the sense that it has been procured once for all in the past event of Christ's death, and as such it has its effect on the present as well, because its validity goes right through the past, present and future. Thus Calvin looks into the future because he looks into the past, and because he sees the past event of Christ he can also in faith look into the future, as Christ's work is all-embracing also in regard to time.

1) Lect. 181 on Jeremiah.

2. The state of the celestial kingdom.

The content of the promise of Christ is the celestial kingdom. For Calvin the attainment of that kingdom is the goal of the believer's life towards which he should strive while still on his journey on earth. But what is that kingdom like ? There are no further details to be found in the prayers about the kingdom except a very few phrases which, however, do recur very often and must therefore have been of great importance to the Reformer.

The kingdom as such is best described as the kingdom in which Christ is the only Head, the King and the Governor. And this kingdom has two conditions, an inner and an outer. It embraces both time and eternity. While it stretches into time, that is to say, into this world as it is now, it also has an inner condition. This condition is the spiritual and is manifest in the Church where Christ is the spiritual Head. But it will one day also be revealed as the outer condition when all the world will be subject to Christ.

For the Church while it is still on earth the inner condition is significant because, although the glory of Christ shines even now within the Church, the Church is to share the condition of lowliness analogical to the lowliness of Christ. Therefore the Church must not despair when it is tormented by the malice of men and even torn to pieces, because God is at work also in the miserable condition of the Church. 'His kingdom is obscurely hidden under the cross and is violently assailed by enemies'. 1) The two conditions of the kingdom are in contrast with each other since it is a contrast 'between a state of concealment and the extension of the kingdom far and wide', or the contrast 'between the present condition of the kingdom and its future glory'. 2) However, the future glory does already shine forth to a certain extent in the present condition, the Church already gets a taste

1) CR. 80, 385.

2) CR. 73, 667.

of it. 'It is not that the glory and majesty of the kingdom will not appear till the last coming of Christ, but because till that time is delayed the accomplishment of those things which began to take place after His resurrection, and of which God gave His people nothing more than a taste that He might lead them further on the path of hope and patience'. 1) In the prayers we have the wording 'of which we have already a foretaste' when Calvin refers to the future glory of Christ and His kingdom. 2)

Let us now turn to the second condition of the kingdom which is marked by its glory, and to what it will mean to the believer. The celestial kingdom is a place of rest. Calvin thinks here foremost of rest from the struggle in which the believer is engaged all his life through.

'...until having at length finished all struggles, we may reach that blessed rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son'. 3)

'...until we be removed from all dangers into that eternal rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ'. 4)

The dangers from which the believer will be delivered for good comprise all external as well as internal dangers, i.e. dangers such as wars, famine, persecutions, illness as well as temptations, doubts, afflictions and other calamities of body, mind or soul.

The celestial kingdom then is the place of glory, for it is the glory of Christ that shines forth in its fullness, the believer, on the other hand, is to take part in that glory of Christ's.

1) CR. 73, 667.

2) See for instance the prayer at the end of this chapter.

3) Lect. 45 on Minor Prophets.

4) Lect. 70 on Minor Prophets.

'...until we shall come to that blessed state of glory which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy Son'. 1)

'...until thou at length stretchest forth thy hand to raise us up to that glory, the perfection of which now appears in our Head, and shall at last be clearly seen in all members, in the whole body, even when He shall come to gather us into that celestial kingdom, which He has purchased for us by His own blood. ' 2)

The glory of the celestial kingdom is the glory of Jesus Christ in whom the perfection of it is already manifest. To the believer himself that glory is still hidden until he enters that kingdom.

'...we may aspire to that life which is hid for us in heaven...'.3)

That life will be life in glory, the glory of Christ. In some few places the prayers also show that Calvin thinks of the kingdom of heaven as a place where the believer's life will be a happy one, a life of sweet blessedness. But on the whole Calvin says remarkably little about this bliss 'per se'; least of all does he attempt to describe it in detail after the fashion of Mohammed; for him it will be simply the perfect communion with Christ. How deeply the life of the believer in the celestial kingdom will have its centre in the beholding of Christ and His glory is well represented in the following part of a prayer:

'...until we shall at length contemplate thy glory face to face, being made partakers of it in Jesus Christ our Lord...'. 4)

The state of the celestial kingdom, moreover, is that it is also a place of triumph, according to the prayers. It is the triumph of Christ which He has procured over all that which is against God's will by His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again for the

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- 1) Lect. 9 on Hosea.
 - 2) Lect. 139 on Minor Prophets.
 - 3) Lect. 16 on Hosea.
 - 4) Lect. 127 on Jeremiah.

last judgment. In that triumph over all the enemies of God the believer will also be partaker.

'...iusqu'à ce qu'obtenions pleine victoire, pour triompher une fois en ton Royaume, avec nostre capitaine et protecteur nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ...'. 1)

A further characteristic of the state of the celestial kingdom is that it is an eternal kingdom as distinct from this present world. It belongs to this world that it is corrupted and transient and as such doomed to final destruction. The celestial kingdom which will supersede this world is marked by perfection and eternity. Calvin not only in his writings but also very much in his prayers holds the two realms, the present world and the celestial kingdom, over against each other. The whole spiritual struggle which for the believer is constantly going on is actually the struggle between the two realms whose line of battle goes right through the middle of man's heart and nature.

3. The second coming of Christ.

We now shall enter upon a question to which the prayers do not give a very clear answer. It concerns the question of the actual event of the believer's entrance to the celestial kingdom. Will the believer enter into that kingdom immediately after death or will it happen by the event of the second coming of Christ ?

We must, in trying to answer this question, pay attention to the fact that the prayers leave us in this respect to some extent in the dark. The most used phrase in the prayers goes like this:

1) See appendix p. 4.

'..until we be gathered up in the celestial kingdom..' or '..until we shall come to that blessed rest..'. These phrases seem to refer to a state that follows immediately after death. For the preceding sentences always indicate that for the believer's faith, hope, patience, etc. may be strengthened while still living on earth. Then follows the 'until we shall..'. This would indeed strongly suggest that the entrance into the kingdom of heaven would take place right at the end of the believer's life.

Now if Calvin believed that the soul after death was in a state of immortality in the traditional sense and that it would at once enter either into the celestial kingdom or be put to the place of damnation, then his phrases in his prayers would become quite comprehensible. If, however, his belief was different then what would be the state of the soul between death and the general resurrection at the second coming of Christ? Would it be just a state of waiting in some kind of unconsciousness, akin to the Old Testament idea of the state of the departed in Sheol?

There is however a difficulty arising from the prayers themselves. For there are some instances in which the Reformer refers to the actual coming of Christ which would form the redemption, i.e. the gathering up and with it the entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

'...that we may from the heart devote ourselves to thee, and thus proceed in our course, that with minds raised upwards we may ever go on towards that glory which is as yet hid under hope, until it shall at length be manifested in due time, when thine only-begotten Son shall appear with the elect angels for our final redemption...'. 1)

From instances like the one just quoted it could be gathered that to Calvin the gathering up in the celestial kingdom would coincide with the second coming of Christ. That would naturally involve an intermediate state of soul between death and the final resurrection. But the

1) Lect. 131 on Minor Prophets.

prayers do not give us an answer as to that intermediate state. For to Calvin death means the separation of the soul from the body. Whereas the body decays into dust, the soul being immortal in essence proceeds at once to a further state of being. The soul of the believer enjoys already heavenly peace while still waiting for the final resurrection. It is in Abraham's bosom and already with God and Christ. 'Let us consider here the rest of souls which have been delivered from the body in assured faith in the promises of God. By the bosom of Abraham the Scriptures mean to symbolize that state of peace'. 1)

H. Quistorp calls our attention to the fact that 'The state of redeemed souls is considered by Calvin to involve a two-fold and plainly contradictory aspect. On the one hand the position of the soul after its emancipation from the body is described with the utmost fervour as the goal of all our hopes; on the other hand it is depicted as a yet incomplete state.' 2)

A certain double aspect is found in the prayers. On one hand, there are the many statements which indicate that the soul of the believer will enter the celestial kingdom immediately after death. For what other meaning could be contained in a phrase that refers to the life of the pious on earth as a waiting until he be gathered up in the celestial kingdom? In this case the state of the soul after death would be that of immediate entrance into the kingdom. On the other hand, there are the statements - though a little less frequent than the others - which refer to the gathering up of the pious in the celestial kingdom at the moment when Christ will appear at His second coming as the judge. H. Quistorp points out that there are two goals to which the faithful man has to aspire: the nearer goal, which means the rest and peace after death in the bosom of Abraham, and the further goal which is the final consummation when the Son of God will be manifest in all His glory and His kingdom will appear. 3)

1) Psychopannychia, 41, 188.

2) H. Quistorp: Op. cit. p. 81.

3) ibidem p. 87.

There remains the question as to where the actual meeting of Christ with the faithful shall take place. Is it in heaven or is it on earth? If the faithful departed enjoy already the rest and peace of the celestial kingdom in the communion with God and Christ, then where is that kingdom now? It is surely not on earth since it is still to come as it is promised. So then, are the faithful already taken away wholly from this earth to that Kingdom? or to a place or state between death and resurrection? But how will then the final resurrection take place for those who have already departed from this life and live now in a place other than this world? Will they come back to this world when Christ appears at the Day of the Last Judgment? Will the souls have to come back in order to be robed with the new bodies of the resurrection? Calvin's exposition of 1 Cor. 15 suggests an idea of the souls coming again to this world in order to regain their bodies: 'As a field marshal gathers his armies to battle by the sound of the trumpet, so Christ will summon all the dead with a voice that rings and resounds throughout the whole world... how will it be when not only a single people but the whole earth is to be summoned before the judgment throne of God, and when it is necessary not only to assemble the living but to summon the dead from their graves, and to command the withered bones - nay, the dust itself - that men may resume their former selves and regain their living breath in order to appear before their Lord and Judge'. 1)

In the prayers Calvin seems to put most stress on the idea of the soul being ushered to the celestial kingdom immediately after death. Here it must be understood that the parousia is an event which happens to the believer at the end of his life, i.e. at the moment when he dies. In other words, the event of his death and with it his being ushered to the celestial kingdom would be to him the parousia, because his departure from this life means that he will be with Christ.

Now a few words must be said in regard to the immortality of the soul. Calvin does hold that the soul is immortal. But his idea is not

1) CR. 77, 562.

the same as the Greek idea. For the immortality of the soul is not rooted in its own nature. Calvin believes only in the immortality of the soul in the sense that it is totally subject to God its Creator. The soul has no qualities of its own that would attain to immortality. It is God who has created it out of nothing and who can raise it again to life. Therefore, Calvin's idea of the immortality of the soul is linked up with the resurrection. Because Christ is risen from the dead and ascended to heaven there is now hope for the believer that he will also rise since the same Christ has promised it. Calvin strongly emphasizes the ultimate orientation of hope towards the resurrection, and in so doing he makes immortality dependent on the resurrection: 'If we rightly consider the teaching of Scripture, then in fact a continued life of the soul without the hope of the resurrection is a sheer illusion. For God does not say that the soul survives death as though it immediately attained the glory and blessedness of the end, but He refers its hope to the Last Day'. 1) '...he who rejects the resurrection at the last day deprives the soul of its hope of immortality'. 2) Here the hope of immortality seems to be rooted in the resurrection at the Last Day which is the Day of Christ's second Advent. Does this now presuppose an intermediate state between the believer's departure and the Last Day? The prayers do not suggest this because what they really mean is that the faithful departed will be with Christ and enjoy already the heavenly bliss which is the fellowship with Him. To be with Christ does not allow us to think of an intermediate state in the sense of a waiting room, as it were, for the prayers refer to the celestial kingdom and not to a realm between the kingdom and this world. Calvin also uses very often the term partakers of the heavenly glory. This means that the faithful departed take already part in the heavenly glory of Christ, which again does repudiate the assumption of an intermediate state.

1) CR. 73, 106.

2) ibidem.

The second Advent of Christ means His coming as the judge of the world. Then the final consummation and perfection, which are yet hidden, will be manifested. The condition of lowliness of the Kingdom will then be turned into the condition of glory, or, the distinction of two conditions will come to an end because the celestial Kingdom will then be manifest to the full.

4. The time of expectation and hope.

The promise of Christ determines the life and attitude of the Christians in this world. In Calvin's view the Christian's life in faith is deeply linked up with the Last Things. The eschatology has an influence on the ethics. Since the goal of man's life is not to be found in this world but in the kingdom of heaven which is to come, man has to consider himself as a stranger. This world is not the abiding city for him. It is rather, as we have already set forth in this study, a place of unrest, struggle, and hardship. 1) In Calvin's view the difficulties of this life serve well the purpose that man should not be distracted by the enticing forces of this world such as prosperity, welfare, etc. or better still, the hardships serve in order to free men from bondage to this world and prepare them for the future. Calvin's harsh and strict attitude towards the believer's life is very largely due to his eschatological ideas.

But since this earthly life is transient and only a journey towards the final destiny, the time which is at the disposal of man is a time of expectation and hope. The prayers, more than other writings, do reflect that expectation and hope of the believer. Again and again the Reformer prays for patience, for the reinforcing and quickening Power of the Holy Spirit that enables him to go on in steadfastness and

1) See p. 50.

soberness so that the world, the flesh, and all the manifold trials as well as the constant enticements of Satan may not succeed in distracting him from the right way of salvation.

The time of expectation and hope is also the time of grace during which true penitence should be exercised and thereby true faith attained. In this time the day of judgment should be anticipated and therefore refuge be taken in the mercy of God.

'O grant that we may not only by our obstinacy provoke thine extreme wrath, but in time anticipate thy judgment so that we may find thee reconcilable, and never doubt that thou wilt be merciful to us when we sincerely turn to thee...'. 1)

While on one hand the time of expectation and hope is a time of repentance, it is, on the other hand, a time of joy. Because the believer has nothing to fear, since the last day means not condemnation to him but redemption, he can look into the future with a joyful heart. For the end will be glorious and triumphant as it will be the partaking in the glory of Christ. Therefore the tribulations and adversities of this aeon should be considered just as a thin mist which will soon vanish to give way to the advancing glory and majesty of the Lord. And even if shortcomings and manifold sins may discourage the believer on his journey he may be quite comforted by the knowledge that at the end he will be totally freed from sin and imperfections.

'...iusques à ce que nous soyons despouillez de nostre chair et retirez de ceste prison en laquelle nous sommes maintenant retenus sous la servitude de peché...'. 2)

As the moment of the parousia of Christ is unknown the Christian should be constantly on the alert so that the last day may not fall upon him unaware. For 'God intentionally hides from us this day so that we should not feel secure but constantly keep watch'. 3)

1) Lect. 111 on Jeremiah.

2) Sermon 7 on Galatians.

3) CR. 73, 676.

To the believer the time of expectation and hope is also marked by sanctification which takes place progressively through the operation of the Holy Spirit. 1) Its ultimate aim is the complete restoration of man's image of God. The perfect restoration will be accomplished only in the celestial kingdom.

'...that we may through the whole course of our life make progress in faith and repentance, until we shall at length attain to that perfect holiness, to which thou daily invitest us, when we shall be wholly divested of all the filth of our flesh, and become fully renewed after the image of thy Son, our Lord'. 2)

But as is evident from the prayer just quoted, the restoring operation begins already in the life on earth. Therefore the time of expectation and hope may not be wasted as if there is nothing more that needs to be done. Although the salvation of man and his final redemption is the exclusive work of Christ, and although the believer is in the sight of God already considered as holy and perfect through Christ, he nevertheless has to acquire that perfection by faith. And faith is precisely the mark of the believer's attitude while going his journey on earth. H. Quistorp shows very well the co-relationship between faith and hope. 3) His exposition is well supported by the prayers of Calvin. The Reformer not only holds that view in his teaching but the prayers reveal with clarity that he himself was a man who lived in faith by that great hope for the final redemption and consummation.

It remains here to say a word concerning the reprobate. The last judgment will be chiefly the judgment for the ungodly while for the faithful it will mean the resurrection to the

1) See chapter V, section 5.

2) Lect. 88 on Jeremiah.

3) Op. cit. p. 16.

celestial kingdom. The ungodly are also waiting in expectation, not in expectation of the celestial kingdom as the believers, but in expectation of the final wrath of God by which they will be put to damnation. 'As God enlightens our hearts by His spirit so that He may dwell with us and His word display its power in us, in the reverse sense He abandons those whom He has appointed to damnation, so that as though bewitched and with blinded eyes they hand themselves over to Satan and his servants in order to be deceived by him'. 1)

As far as the fate of the ungodly is concerned the prayers do not reveal very much. Although the ungodly are now and then mentioned, it is mostly in connection with the request for deliverance from them. Then they are implicitly mentioned in phrases that refer to the final triumph in the celestial kingdom which will be a triumph over the enemies of God; and to the enemies of God belong also the ungodly besides Satan and evil spirits. The prayers disclose in a way that the final destiny of the ungodly will be that they will not take part in the glory of Christ as the believers do. Apart from punishment they will be put to shame by the revelation of God's mighty power and majesty. Because they did not trust in the promise of Christ, but rather despised Him, they will not like the pious earn the fruit of Christ's merits but rather earn the fruit of their own evil deeds.

However, one aspect of the prayers in regard to the ungodly must not be forgotten here. Calvin, in spite of his doctrine of double predestination, does pray for the conversion of those who live in darkness and ignorance. He prays also that the whole world may acknowledge Christ as saviour.

1) CR. 80, 204.

'...tu veux estre recognu Sauveur de tout le monde en la redemption faite de ton Fils Iesus Christ'. 1)

This appears almost as though in Calvin's view the time that is still left before the second Advent of Christ will be time for conversion to everybody. It is surely a sign of the Reformer's concern about the salvation of all, or at least a sign that he found himself obliged to do his very best in the winning of men for Christ, even in his prayers. For time of expectation and hope means time of grace. It is not that the imminence of the parousia of Christ means that the time of this world is only as a twinkling of an eye, leaving man without any chance to turn to God. The time of expectation is a real time graciously allotted to man by the loving heavenly Father so that he may take advantage of the time and turn to Him and be saved. Thus the time of expectation bears two marks: the mark of urgency by the pressure of the advancing parousia and the mark of freedom under loving grace by which man is given a chance in time to decide for Christ his eternal saviour.

5. The significance of eschatology according to Calvin's prayers.

We shall now try to sum up the most significant points of Calvin's eschatology according to his prayers. We are aware of the fact that the references in the prayers are fragmentary and in no way give a systematic solution of all the main problems of eschatology. Nevertheless, we have so far discovered that some points figure prominently. We maintain that there are at least three outstanding points.

1) See appendix p. 4.

Firstly, the prayers of Calvin reveal that his eschatology is christocentric. The Last Things are completely dependent on Jesus Christ and His second coming. It is the second Advent that frames the ideas of Calvin. Here the Reformer keeps close to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

Secondly, according to the prayers, the chief idea of the believer's entrance into the celestial kingdom is that it is an inheritance. Here again the christocentricity becomes evident. For it is the mediating work of Christ as the eternal Son of God by whom man has been adopted as a child of God which enables him to become partaker in the celestial kingdom. The God - man relationship is for Calvin a Father - child relationship, a relationship of paternal love.

Thirdly, the prayers of Calvin disclose unambiguously that man's life as a whole and the life of the believer in particular are seen under the sign of the advancing heavenly kingdom which is connected with the parousia of Christ. Life in faith means life in hope and great expectation of the second Advent of Christ.

Moreover the devotional life of Calvin reveals that he himself faces the future with great hope and expectation. His thinking is not obsessed by the events of the past, not even by the past work of Christ, whereby the work of Christ is considered as a piece of past history. His thinking points forward to the future, to the final consummation which will take place in Christ. The last prayer which is recorded towards the end of his life, which very fortunately has been preserved, bears witness how Calvin looked into the future with his eyes fixed utterly on Christ. When his state of health deteriorated so badly that he had to give up preaching as well as lecturing, he prayed on 2nd February 1564 in these words:

Because we have a hope we have already entered the gates of our eternal inheritance. We know that there is a place for us in heaven because Christ, our Head, the first fruit of our salvation, has been received there. Therefore, grant, Almighty God, that we may hasten more and more to follow the path of thy holy calling, until we shall reach our destiny in that eternal glory, the beginning of which thou lettest us taste already here on earth, through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Chapter Ten

CRITICAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the course of our essay we have been dealing chiefly with the form and content of John Calvin's prayers. So far we have been reluctant to make critical statements on the prayers since it was our aim to make a clear exposition of both form and content. Although at various places we have given an appreciation of important points, it still remains for us to sum up the most outstanding results of our inquiry and also to compare them with other statements which Calvin made in his writings.

However, before we go any further we must consider one important fact, and keep it in mind throughout all our further discussions, and it is this: prayers do not necessarily reflect the thoughts of the person concerned in the same way as do systematic writings. This is certainly true of Calvin. Systematic writings, sermons, and letters, both pastoral and controversial, reflect chiefly a man's intellectual side. There is the danger of making statements which are too harsh, saying things in a way which shows more zeal than love, especially in contests with opponents. It is very important to take that into account in regard to Calvin who was a man who was engaged in constant controversies all his life long.

The prayers, on the other hand, reflect more the heart of man. They suggest that things that were said in a very strong, harsh manner were perhaps not the deepest verdict of the heart.

What is even more important: the person who prays is standing before Almighty God, which means that words so spoken may be more profound, more humble, and also more genuine than others. It is therefore, only with great reverence that one can undertake such a task as to evaluate the prayers of John Calvin. But although, as we mentioned, the prayers as a whole may reflect more the heart of the man we must also bear in mind that those prayers were public prayers which were said in the Church or in the lecture hall. There are no private prayers of Calvin recorded which might reveal yet another more profound aspect of his belief.

The results of our inquiry need not necessarily contradict what the Reformer sets forth in his writings. But perhaps some conceptions of his theology may be seen in a new light and that there may be some corrections at least in emphasis. So far the prayers do on the whole correspond well to the Reformer's ideas expounded in his writings. When we, for instance, compare his prayers with what he says about prayer in the Institutes, we discover that he kept well to his doctrine. In the ecclesiastical prayers we found the normative pattern of the Lord's Prayer closely followed. Another aspect is that of penitence. He stresses in his doctrine the great importance of man's repentance. Again the prayers, with almost stereotyped repetitions, contain phrases of repentance and of acknowledgment of sins: 'Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance de tant de fautes dont nous sommes coupables...'. Another aspect of his doctrine is that all prayers must be offered to the Lord through the support of the intercessory work of Christ. This explains the use of the phrase 'through Christ our Lord' or 'through the blood of thy only-begotten Son' and similar phrases at the end of the prayers. Evidently the Reformer could not approve of a prayer unless it

was addressed through the Mediator. We shall deal with this more fully in the section on the christocentricity of Calvin's prayers.

In the following we shall deal with problems of Calvin's theology which have been dealt with by many writers, both traditional and very recent ones. Our task is not to claim that we have solved those problems but rather to see them in the light we obtained through our study of the prayers. But since the latter are not a draft of a systematic programme but rather have quite a different character we shall have to take into account that here and there at some particular points our questions may remain unanswered. For obvious reasons the detailed and discursive treatment of subject matter, which is necessary in a systematic treatise, is quite out of place in a prayer.

1. The problem of predestination.

Since Calvin has become so well known both within and without ecclesiastical circles by his doctrine of predestination, we cannot omit to deal with this problem also in this study. Indeed, one interpretation of Calvin has been that predestination is the most significant thing in his theology and in fact the key to the real understanding of Calvin. Paul Wernle in his book on Calvin holds that predestination was held by all the Reformers but that Calvin paid much more attention to it than did the others. 1) Through Calvin the doctrine of predestination became the 'Shibboleth' of reformed Christianity. 2) However, Wernle already warns us against making predestination the main theme of Calvin's theology. For Calvin's Christianity was more 'human' (menschlicher) than usually has been assumed. He maintains that

1) Paul Wernle: Der Evangelische Glaube, Band III, Calvin p. 276.
2) ibidem p. 278.

one should take a very balanced view of this doctrine since Calvin himself wanted to follow a middle path which would avoid over-emphasis as well as under-statement. For there are two extremes: some want to know too much and others too little. The reason for Calvin's acceptance of predestination Wernle sees first and foremost in the fact that the Reformer was biblicist.¹⁾ In addition to that he maintains that while Zwingli derived predestination from the nature of God, Calvin's understanding of it was empirical. The dark spots in the history of man as well as in the history of the individual would raise man's thoughts up to the secret counsel of God. 2) It is to the credit of Paul Wernle that he did not put the doctrine of predestination on top of all other doctrines of Calvin but allotted it a subordinate place analogical to the place the doctrine itself holds in the Reformer's writings.

Peter Brunner in his study on the faith of John Calvin has foregone the task of dealing with predestination on the grounds that it would be too great a task within the limits of his book. 3) He points out that although he does not deal with the idea of election, nevertheless the idea of election would always be behind the idea of faith. He calls the idea of eternal election the reverse side of the idea of faith. Brunner maintains that, according to Calvin, knowledge of faith (Glaubenserkenntnis) is somewhat self contradictory. For faith is a conviction of something which is incomprehensible. 4) A real knowledge of faith would entail going beyond one's own spiritual capacity, which is paradox: because the object of faith is beyond all limits. But how can the limited human spirit conceive what is limitless? P. Brunner then refers to the knowledge of

1) P. Wernle: op.cit. p.283.

2) ibidem p.279.

3) Peter Brunner: Vom Glauben bei Calvin, foreword.

4) ibidem p.128.

faith as knowledge of God. But human attempts to penetrate to the object of faith will fail, for the secrets of God will remain as secrets. 1) Since the idea of predestination is the reverse side of the idea of faith it is just as impossible for us to penetrate to the hidden counsel of God by means of the former idea as it is by means of the latter. True faith then can only be created by the work of the Holy Spirit which enables the believer to put all his trust in God, the object of his faith. Election then has a positive aspect, for it gives him the assurance of his salvation. By way of enlightenment the Holy Spirit effects the human spiritual capacity to the end that it can trust with certainty in that which it cannot comprehend.

Hermann Bauke makes an interesting statement in his book on the problems of Calvin's theology. 2) He denies that the doctrine of predestination is the central doctrine, especially over against Bohatec who strongly put predestination into the centre of Calvin's theology, and repudiates the idea that predestination is rooted in speculative thoughts. He then describes predestination as follows: the doctrine of predestination is not the result of philosophical speculation, but it arises from the dialectical and rational tackling of religious facts as they confronted him. Bauke's view is that the doctrine of predestination is by no means a metaphysical explanation of the secrets of religion, for Calvin did not want to penetrate into the heights and depths of God and His nature. The doctrine is only the recognition of facts as they appear but renounces further ultimate explanation and aetiology. It is not more than a theological formulation of a content already given. 3) Bauke sees

1) P. Brunner: *op. cit.* p. 130.

2) H. Bauke: *Die Probleme der Theologie Calvins.*

3) *ibidem* p. 84.

the solution of the whole problem of predestination in Calvin's method of formulation. Calvin has taken over from Luther the religious material and put into a rational-dialectical form. The doctrine of predestination is therefore the result of the 'translating work' in its true sense. 1)

Hermann Weber, who to a certain extent follows Bauke as far as Calvin's formal method is concerned, refutes his repudiation of all speculation on the grounds that some elements of speculation would necessarily belong to the formalistic way of thinking. 2) H. Weber agrees with Bauke that Calvin's doctrine of predestination is concerned with religious facts as they are to be found in the Scriptures. He therefore calls Calvin's method biblicist. 3) He maintains that Calvin's way of thinking is 'teleo-causal', subject to a supreme object. In this case it is the glory of God which controls the rest of his theology, and to which the rest of his theology points. He states that Calvin solved the problem of predestination by way of the formalistic method. Hence it is a typical product of a man like Calvin since the Reformer could develop his legalism best there. Calvin, by leaving aside the content, showed that predestination was nothing but an exposition of formal contexts. 4) Weber goes even so far as to attribute Calvin's conception of God partly to the 'psychological roots' in Calvin's tendency towards formalism and partly to the schizoid structure of his soul. 5)

We shall now turn to some more recent writers for their chief findings in regard to Calvin's doctrine of predestination. Wilhelm Niesel has treated Calvin's doctrine with more care, and may we say fairness, than many writers before who were too

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- 1) H. Bauke: op. cit. p. 86.
 - 2) Die Theologie Calvins, p. 25.
 - 3) ibidem p. 27.
 - 4) ibidem p. 33.
 - 5) ibidem p. 32.

quick in making judgments upon that doctrine and upon the Reformer himself. Both H. Bauke and H. Weber have, each in his own way, tried to understand the Reformer by attributing to him a single guiding principle, whether a principle of form or a principle of method. Niesel does not come to the conclusion that the solution of the problem lies either in the form or in the method of Calvin's theology. Niesel holds that the doctrine of predestination is the ultimate and necessary expression of the evangelical doctrine of grace. 1) Niesel bases his views on Calvin's positive understanding of the God - man relationship. He first draws our attention to the fact that Calvin himself warned us against speculation on predestination. For we should earnestly remember that we cannot seek to penetrate to the hidden counsel of the wisdom of God and remain unpunished. For along that line our reason will fail. Moreover, if we try to do so, we shall end up in great confusion. 2) Then Niesel places much importance on the meeting between God and man which has taken place in Jesus Christ. For when Christ meets us in His Word and we become aware that we belong to Him, there will be no more room for a secret counsel of God as an object of pondering and as a source of uncertainty. 3) In Christ we realise that we are children of God. But in the Gospel, in the proclaimed Word, in Christ who comes to us through this Word we not only come to know the mere fact of our election. Rather we find in Him the basis upon which our salvation and election rest. When Jesus Christ speaks to us through the Word of the Holy Scriptures we are no more spectators who can deliberate whether or not we are elected. For when Jesus Christ really calls us and when we really hear Him, then it is already decided over us that we are His, and with that all speculation as well as fear comes to an end. 4)

1) W.Niesel: Die Theologie Calvins, p.170.

2) ibidem p.162 f.

3) ibidem p.165.

4) ibidem p.167; CR. 51,281 f.

Niesel then points out that within the framework of Calvin's theology we have to speak also of election and rejection. But this should not be given more importance than any other question. He sees Calvin's reluctance in the matter as a warning to us not to go too far in the whole discussion which might end up in vain speculations. 1) As a whole Niesel evaluates Calvin's doctrine of predestination positively in that he understands that the Reformer wanted to proclaim the Gospel without any restrictions because in Christ God has elected us before the foundation of the world. Thus our salvation rests on a very sure ground. 2) This means the positive aspect of election, for it gives a real assurance of eternal salvation. Niesel admits that there are some speculative thoughts in Calvin's doctrine. But he attributes it to the Reformer's strong zeal by which he found himself engaged in a fight with opponents by whose actions, in Calvin's view, the deity and grace of God were questioned. 3)

A similar positive evaluation has been made by W.F. Dankbaar in his book on Calvin. 4) He holds that while the doctrine of predestination belonged to the core of Calvin's theology, it did not dominate the whole of his theology as dogma. 5) He especially points out that election and reprobation are not concepts a priori but a posteriori, to which he comes after having contemplated the grace revealed in Jesus Christ. God's grace would be no grace at all if it did not proceed out of His sovereign will and counsel, that is, if He were not perfectly free to elect and also to reject. 6) Like Niesel he also sees the positive aspect of predestination in that the assurance of salvation rests upon a firm foundation. For election is the ground of our faith as well as of our salvation. According to

1) W. Niesel: op. cit. p. 168.

2) ibidem p. 171.

3) ibidem p. 172.

4) W.F. Dankbaar: Calvin, sein Weg und sein Werk.

5) ibidem p. 204.

6) ibidem p. 204.

Dankbaar, the belief of Calvin in election and reprobation is nothing other than an act of reverence on the part of a true theologian who meditates upon the Word of God and who does not want to be wiser than God Himself. 1) When the Reformer speaks of election then he praises the grace of God; when he contemplates reprobation he submits himself to the incomprehensible justice of God. 2) It is interesting to see the criticism made by Fritz Büsser. 3) In general he follows closely the thoughts of Niesel. He also wants to emphasize that election means chiefly election in Christ and that the whole doctrine of predestination is far more concerned with the act of grace of God than with man, and that election means the sureness of our salvation in Jesus Christ. However, his criticism starts when he has to face the fact that Calvin did speak of rejection. Here F. Büsser is astonished that Calvin's starting point for a doctrine of rejection does not really rest in the Scriptures but in human experience. 4) Whereas Dankbaar stresses how the Reformer was so utterly concerned to listen to the testimony of the Scriptures, it is to the credit of F. Büsser that he ventured to mark this point. For it is astounding, since Calvin as a whole keeps to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures with consistency, that precisely at this point he has paid more attention to human experience than to Scripture. The mere fact that in the eyes of man some accept the Gospel and some do not is not reason enough to develop a doctrine such as rejection. But here we also find once again a contradiction in Calvin's theology. For he himself states that the search for good works among men would not bring about evidence of their election.

1) W.F. Dankbaar: op. cit. p. 204.

2) ibidem p. 205.

3) *Reformatio*, Sonderheft, Juni 1959, Johannes Calvin, article by Fritz Büsser on Calvin's *Erwählungslehre*, p. 320.

4) ibidem p. 326.

He was reluctant to mention signs of election or rejection. In his summary F. Büsser holds that Calvin's doctrine of predestination is as such far better than many of the interpretations given of it. It is a legitimate and biblical attempt to safeguard the evangelical teaching of grace against the concept of the Roman church. In comparison with other doctrines of the Christian faith the doctrine of predestination takes a subordinate place. Moreover, Calvin wanted to speak more about salvation than of condemnation, more about forgiveness than of sin, more about God's grace and election than of reprobation. 1) Thus, apart from that appropriate criticism, F. Büsser approves of Calvin's doctrine.

A new aspect of Calvin's doctrine of predestination has been set forth by Werner Krusche in his extensive study on the working of the Holy Spirit according to Calvin. 2) In his section 'Berufung und Erwählung' he refers to the relationship between Word and Spirit in regard to their working power. 3) Word and election are very closely related to one another. For there is no election apart from the Word which is proclaimed. But the fact that the Word is being heard and in faith received by some, while others do not receive the Word although it is also proclaimed to them, is due to the fact that true faith can only be created by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit accompanies the Word and engenders true faith. But since some do not come to faith although they hear the Word, it means that the Holy Spirit is not always together with the Word. 4) There are two separations taking place, the first being through the preaching of the Word by which some will hear it while others will not because it is not preached to them. Through such

1) Reformatio: op. cit. p. 328.

2) Werner Krusche: Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin.

3) ibidem p. 233.

4) ibidem p. 234.

preaching a general election takes place. But there is the second which comes through the working of the Holy Spirit, so that some may not only hear the Word but receive it with true faith. Thus the first separation is preliminary through the *vocatio externa* i.e. through the Word only. The second separation is definite through the *vocatio interior* i.e. through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is noteworthy that to the final elect both have taken place: the hearing of the Word as well as the working of the Holy Spirit. 1) Krusche denies that there is already a predestination of the Word itself. For the Word is supposed to be received by all. The rejection takes place because it will not be received by all who hear it. The main problem he sees now is that apparently the universal offer of salvation through the Word does not mean that it is offered to one and all, but to all in the sense of all nations, peoples, and to people of all social status. 2) Predestination would then have its roots in the working of the Holy Spirit. However, Krusche maintains that Word and Spirit are always together in such a way that they cannot be separated from one another. Their work is always a common work or, in other words, every encounter of man with the Word is also an encounter with the Spirit. And it is the Spirit that either opens or shuts the heart of man to the Word. 3) Basically Krusche's findings do not bring a new light to the problem of predestination itself. They give us just a new aspect of the way election takes place. The problem itself remains unsolved.

So far none of the writers whom we discussed has actually come to the conclusion that Calvin's doctrine of predestination has been superseded by statements of his own. As we have seen there have been very serious attempts to put the problem into

1) W.Krusche: op.cit. p.236.

2) ibidem p.239.

3) ibidem p.255.

a better light, to take away the sting which signifies that doctrine. Especially the recent writers tend to minimize the 'decretum horribile' by shifting the emphasis to the positive side, namely to the eternal election as the great act of God's grace, while eternal reprobation is given a very subordinate place. It is true that Calvin speaks more of election and eternal salvation than of reprobation and eternal damnation. It is also true that in the second edition of the Institutes predestination has been treated towards the end of the book, i.e. after having treated the doctrines of God, Christ, justification, the acquirement of salvation, freedom and prayer. The recent attempts show the tendency to draw a more balanced and fair picture of the Reformer's theology than has prevailed before. However, the fact that Calvin put the doctrine of predestination towards the end of the Institutes is not so strong a sign that it was meant to play a subordinate role. 1) It could also be held over against Niesel that its placing near the end was a sign of its importance. It is quite possible that the statements which are brought on to the scene late in the Institutes were meant to be the final refutations of his opponents, and thus by no means lose significance. Whether or not that was Calvin's aim when he put the doctrine of predestination towards the end of his Institutes is not clear. But to use its position as an evidence of its subordinate place, as Niesel does, seems to be too far-fetched.

We shall now turn to the problem itself as it appears in the Reformer's writings and especially in his prayers. The aim of our discussion will be to find out whether or not some definite conclusions can be reached.

1) W. Niesel: op. cit. p. 168.

Before we begin with the prayers it may be of value to consider what he states in one of his sermons, the 28th sermon on Deuteronomy dealing with election and particularly with the three degrees of God's love. 1) Calvin maintains that there are three degrees of God's love extended to the whole of mankind. The first is that He has loved the whole world and given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of all without exception. 2) He has stretched out His arms in order to invite both great and small to Himself. The second degree is that He extends a special love to those to whom the Gospel is being preached, and whom He tests as He wants to make them partakers of the passion and death of His Son. 3) The third degree of God's love is that He not only invites all men to Himself (degree one) and lets His Gospel be proclaimed (degree two) but that He makes them feel His power in the sense that they may recognize Him as Father and Saviour and that they may no more doubt that their sins are forgiven in the Name of Christ and are being reformed into His image. 4)

Now such a statement of three degrees of God's love corresponds well with what the Reformer maintains in his prayers. For the first degree of God's love extends to the whole world and Christ is the Saviour of all men without exception: 'Car Iesus Christ s'est offert en general à tous sans exception, pour Redempteur...'. 5) The latter idea is represented especially in the ecclesiastical prayers which were said every divine service, when he prays that the whole world may recognize Christ as Saviour.

1) 200 Sermons on Deuteronomy pp. 157 - 159.

2) ibidem.

3) op. cit. p. 158.

4) ibidem.

5) ibidem.

'Après nous te prions, Dieu tres-benin et Pere misericordieux, pour tous hommes generalement, que comme tu veux estre reconnu Sauveur de tout le monde en la redemption faite de ton Fils Iesus Christ...'. 1)

This strong statement according to which all the world is called upon to accept Christ as Saviour is well in conformity with ideas Calvin expressed in Commentaries on Isaiah and on Matthew: 'The blame lies solely with ourselves if we do not become partakers of this salvation, for (God) calls all men to Himself without a single exception and gives Christ to all, that we may be enlightened by Him'. 2) And it is not God but the unbelievers themselves who exclude themselves from salvation by their own fault: 'Were it not that the reprobate, through their own fault, turn life into death, the Gospel would be to all the power of God unto salvation'. 3)

Now the question could be raised whether Calvin had really the whole world, all men numerically in mind when he used such terms. Or did he think merely of all groups, classes and races of mankind? If he had that latter idea in his mind then it would correspond with the findings by Werner Krusche. The first and second degree of God's love would then correspond to the 'electio generalis' which means the framework, so to speak, within which the Gospel is being proclaimed in general. And within the same framework there would be the 'electio specialis' or the third degree of God's love which would mean the actual election for eternal salvation. 4)

However, the term 'to all without exception' is rather strong and carries the meaning of every single soul. Also noteworthy is the term 'car Iesus Christ s'est offert...'. If Christ has offered

1) See appendix p. 3.

2) CR. 65, 65.

3) CR. 73, 475.

4) W. Krusche, op. cit., p. 235.

Himself to all without exception it does also entail that all men are called upon to accept Him as Saviour. In Jesus Christ God has paid too high a price for our salvation, for the salvation to be restricted to one group of men. 'For He did not look at His justice, His integrity, and His perfection, which were in Him; but rather Jesus Christ was taken to represent all sinners without exception. Behold then, Jesus Christ, who was charged with all our faults and iniquities. Not that He was guilty of them. But He was willing that all of them might be imputed to Him, and that He might give an account of them, and that He might pay for them'. 1) It is not intelligible how God could offer His Son to be the Saviour of the whole world, and of all men, without giving them the freedom to accept Him. The idea according to which God has given all men who hear His Word the chance of acceptance does appear in the prayers. There is the constant petition brought before God that He may bring back all those who have gone astray to the right way of salvation. The ecclesiastical prayers - and it must be kept in mind that they were said at every divine service - bear witness to the idea that God wants to be recognized and accepted as Saviour of the whole world.

On the basis of the prayers we can assert that a doctrine of predestination in the sense of a double election - a term which has been used to describe Calvin's doctrine but which the Reformer himself did not use - has no place in Calvin's thinking. What could be said more favourably of Calvin than this: that he prayed for years and years every divine service that God may give grace so that all men without exception would be saved ? after all, what the Reformer places before the Almighty God must be true and genuine.

1) Sermon on Isaiah 53: 4 - 6.

In recent years it has become almost fashionable to put Calvin's doctrine of predestination into a better light. There have been serious attempts to reach a better understanding of his theology. Much has been brought to light which was hidden hitherto - as for instance Calvin's doctrine of man or his doctrine of the working of the Holy Spirit. 1) Now as far as the doctrine of predestination is concerned, there has been a tendency to present it in more favourable terms, as especially Wilhelm Niesel and Fritz Büsser have shown in their studies. The latter two writers tend to magnify the positive aspect of predestination by putting strong emphasis on the election for eternal salvation. On the other hand they tend to minimise the negative aspect by pointing out that the Reformer has given the doctrine of predestination a subordinate place within his writings, and which is quite true. We acknowledge the good intentions of those writers in trying to reach a better understanding of Calvin's theology. But does it really make a difference in the last resort if one magnifies one aspect and minimises the other? The sting, so to speak, of such doctrine would remain. One might wonder why they did not take the prayers of the Reformer and use them as evidence of their argument. The fact that they did not is probably due to the other fact that in the normal editions of Calvin's works the prayers are not available, except for a tiny number as for instance in the *Corpus Reformatorum*.

The other attempt to show with P. Wernle, that the Reformer in his doctrine of predestination places the concept of free unconditioned grace on top of all theology - that, in other words, this doctrine is the uttermost and necessary evangelical teaching of God's grace - fails also to take the sting away. 2)

1) T.F. Torrance: Calvin's Doctrine of man.

W. Krusche: op. cit.

2) P. Wernle : op. cit. p. 284.

And although there has been a noteworthy shift of emphasis in recent years, as the examples of Niesel, Büsser, and Dankbaar clearly show, to present Calvin's theology and especially his doctrine of predestination in a better light, something more than their method is required.

But there is a most important element in Calvin's writings that will lighten our path on the search to a better understanding. This is what we may call the *a c c i d e n t a l* aspect of reprobation. Calvin puts much stress on the theory that if we regard salvation then we have to emphasize the part of God. Salvation is the exclusive work of God which He has accomplished in and through His Son Jesus Christ. But if we contemplate the cause of our sinful actions we are to regard sin as manifestly and evidently caused by ourselves. For we are not condemned on the grounds of the eternal decree but on the grounds of our sinful actions. 'I teach that a man ought rather to search for the cause of his condemnation in his corrupt nature than in the predestination of God'. It is not the will of God that man should perish but rather that all may be saved. In the prayers we find that element well represented according to which God wants to be the Saviour of the whole world in Jesus Christ. Reprobation is not to be attributed to God's loving will but to man's disobedience. Calvin warns us of making attempts to penetrate to the hidden counsel of God. 'Here then, messieurs, is the very core of the whole question: I say that all the reprobate will be convicted of guilt by their own consciences and that thus their condemnation is righteous, and that which they err in neglecting that which is quite evident to enter instead into the secret counsel of God which to us is inaccessible. At the same time the Scripture does indeed show us that God has predestined men to such ends as he chose them to reach. But as to why or how this is done we must remain ignorant, because it has not been revealed to us. I say

that it is perverse to pry into the secrets of God to which we are unable to attain in order to search for the origin and condemnation of mankind, while passing over the corruption of their own nature from which it manifestly proceeds'. 1) It is false to attribute the fall and ruin of man to God his Creator since He created him to be in the state of rectitude. But man by arrogance, haughtiness, and disobedience has brought ruin and perdition upon himself, by his own actions. 'It is clear that the ruin of man must be ascribed only to himself, since he was favoured with rectitude by divine goodness, but has fallen into vanity through his own folly'. 2)

We must also pay attention to Calvin's teaching according to which God's grace has two effects, namely, a proper effect and an accidental effect. The proper effect is that the aim of grace is the salvation of the whole of mankind. Wherever the Gospel is proclaimed there it is for the salvation of man. The second effect is the accidental, for the Gospel does not always accomplish its true purpose, but even in this case it may have an accidental effect. 'The Gospel is preached for salvation; this is what is proper to it'. 3) 'It is properly the power of God to salvation to all who believe'. 4) The response proper to the preaching of the Gospel is belief in Christ and thus the becoming ingrafted into the fellowship of God. If, however, the Gospel does not get the response of belief and is met instead by unbelief and disobedience, then it is accidental and the guilt is purely on the side of man. 'It must be observed, however, that this does not belong to the nature of the Gospel, but is accidental'. 5) 'We must always therefore distinguish between the

1) Reply in the case of Troillet, CR. 14,380 f., CR. 36,138.

2) CR. 2,184.

3) Comm.on II Cor. 2:15, CR.50,34 ; Comm.on Matth. 16:19,CR.45,475.

4) Comm. on John 3:17, CR.47,66; *ibid.* 20:23, CR.47,442.

5) Comm. on Matth. 16:19, CR.45,475 ; Serm.on Eph.2:16-19, CR.51,421.

proper office of the Gospel and the accidental, so to speak, which is to be imputed to the depravity of mankind'. 1) Here we see that Calvin obviously repudiates any assumption that would accuse God of withholding His grace from those who do not accept His Gospel antecedent to their action of unbelief. For the proper purpose of the Gospel as we mentioned is to bring salvation to man and not unbelief and destruction. Calvin goes even further and states that all men are invited to salvation, and here it seems that he has the whole of mankind numerically in mind, and this corresponds very well with the numerous phrases in the prayers that God may grant His grace not only to us but to all peoples and nations of the earth. The following statement also reveals that Calvin thought that all people numerically are invited to salvation and that it is by accident that they do not attain to it. 'It is proper to the Gospel that all are invited to salvation, but it is adventitious if it brings destruction to some'. 2) Such a statement does not allow us to assume that the Gospel is determined to be selective in that it would only be meant for a selected group of people within the whole of mankind. It is strongly suggested that it is meant by its true nature to reach all. Even W.Krusche's statement according to which God would withhold His Spirit to some within the number to whom the Gospel is preached, and thus they would be excluded from the proper hearing of the Word, does not really apply to Calvin's teaching here. 'Since Christ is by His own nature the light of the world, it is accidental that His coming should make some blind'. 3) The same accidental aspect is also represented when the power of the Gospel is referred to. The

1) Comm.on II Cor.2:15, CR.50,34; Comm.on Micah 2:7, CR.43,309 f.

3) Comm.on John 9:39, CR.47,233 ; Sermon on Luke 2:34, Cr.46,391 f.

2) Comm.on John 20:23, CR.47,442.

power of the Gospel is that it brings man to salvation. This is its real purpose. On the other hand, if it brings some not to life but rather to death then this is accidental. 'The Gospel is in its own nature the power of God to salvation and an odour of life to life, but it is through accident an odour to death'. 1) The power of the Gospel is however to be understood as the Holy Spirit who accompanies the Word. So then, it is not the fault of the Holy Spirit if some are shut off from the proper hearing of the Word. For the accidental aspect also applies to the working of the Holy Spirit.

The mistake that has been made in the past and even in recent years is precisely that the accidental aspect of reprobation has not been taken into account. From our exposition above, we shall no longer be able to draw certain conclusions in regard to predestination; we must consider what Calvin really wants to tell us when he lays so much stress on the accidental side of reprobation.

In this context we must make one point clear, and it is this: Calvin actually does not speak of the double election. He does speak often of election, which always means election in Jesus Christ. He then does also speak of the reprobate but then not in the same manner as he speaks of election. If he speaks of election then it is not just a speaking of the sunny side of a subject, as it were, which also has a shadowy side. For election is the real aim, the proper purpose of the Gospel, in other words, it is precisely the thing that God wills. It is not enough to say that Calvin put more emphasis on election than on reprobation, as recent writers like F. Büsler and Niesel have done. From our

1) Comm. on II Cor. 13:10; CR. 50, 153.
 Comm. on Luke 2:34, CR. 45, 92 f.
 Comm. on Matth. 13:11; CR. 45, 257 f.
 Comm. on Acts 19:9, CR. 48, 444.

exposition on the accidental aspect of the problem of the reprobate we can assert that there is to be laid no emphasis at all on the reprobation. For reprobation is not the purpose of the Gospel and it is not the will of God. If reprobation takes place due to unbelief then it is accidental.

Now it is precisely here that the prayers of John Calvin help us to reach a better understanding of the whole problem. We have noticed the frequent usage of phrases such as:

'Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre...'

'...comme tu veux estre recognu Sauveur de tout le monde en la redemption faite de ton Fils Iesus Christ...'

which clearly show that, Calvin thought of the whole world, the whole of mankind, coming to the recognition of Christ the Saviour, that is to say being saved. These phrases were said at practically every divine service for years and years. Now let us only for a moment imagine the actual situation when these words were said. There was Calvin worshipping with the congregation, standing before the Almighty God praying that His grace may be extended to all peoples and nations of the earth, bringing back all poor and ignorant souls, all those who have gone astray, to the right way of salvation, all those who seem to be lost; and that Christ may be recognized and accepted as Saviour by all. What does this really mean? It means that wherever the glorious message of God, the Gospel, is being proclaimed there its aim and purpose will always be the conversion of all who hear it. Or was the Reformer not sincere? It seems to us that it would be a great untruth, and injustice too, if we were to attribute insincerity to Calvin. We may attribute to him many negative features such as intolerance, harshness, over-zealousness, etc., but we surely

can not accuse him of having been insincere. So then, what can we do but also take these most important phrases as they were meant, namely as sincere utterances of the great Reformer while he was standing before Almighty God. Here all speculations, if such there were, come to an end. Here the man stands bare, so to speak, before God just as he really is.

To sum up, we have to draw the following conclusions: the prayers of John Calvin can be firmly held against any assumed doctrine of double election, since there is only one aspect represented, namely, eternal election in Jesus Christ in whom God has made an eternal covenant by which He wills to be the Father of all mankind. The purpose of the Gospel is not twofold, by which some would be called to salvation and others destined to damnation. The Gospel has only one purpose: the salvation of all without exception. If the Gospel is met by unbelief then this is accidental. There is a strong element in Calvin's prayers, which reveals that the Gospel is meant to be extended to all peoples and nations of the earth in order to bring back to salvation all men, even those who now seem to be lost. Christ is made the Saviour of the whole world and as such He wants to be recognized by all without exception. The foundation of this teaching is laid in the eternal covenant which God has made with us through the Mediator Jesus Christ, who has signed and ratified this covenant by His own blood so that it would stand for ever.

2. The true nature of God.

There have been many discussions by various theologians on Calvin's conception of God. The attempts have been made chiefly in order to reach a definite conclusion on the matter. If Calvin's ultimate idea of God were found, then it would be easier to track down the determining factors in the rest of the subjects of the Reformer's theology. The results of such inquiries have been various, even contradictory at times. We shall in the following deal with some views and then try to see them in the light which we got from the prayers.

Otto Ritschl discusses first the importance of the glory of God as a determination of Calvin's conception of God. The glory marks the supreme title of God, Ritschl attributes this to a certain extent to the fact that Calvin was a Frenchman to whom the 'gloire de la grande nation' was meaningful to the extent that he actually transposed the idea of glory, as it appears in the national life of the French, to his concrete idea of God. 1) Ritschl goes even so far as to say that the homeless Calvin, while foregoing the French national aspiration of glory, found a substitute in his ideas of God to whom he attributed that which was originally attributed to his earthly King and Country. 2) The glory of God then is to be manifested, and this happens in that God is the just God. God's righteousness is, therefore, regarded as the supreme manifestation of God's nature. The doctrine of the righteousness of God is hence given the place of a basic dogma. 3) According to Ritschl, Calvin's idea of God as in the last analysis the righteous is not based on the irrational experience of personal belief but on the Holy Scriptures mainly of the Old Testament. The love of God has no important place but is

1) Otto Ritschl: Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus, Band III, p. 172.

2) ibidem.

3) ibidem p. 176.

considered as a kind of sideline subordinate to the righteousness of God. This love is directed only towards the elect and consists in that they have been chosen not on the grounds of their own merits but out of sheer grace. 1)

To a different conclusion comes Edwin Mülhaupt in his fine study on the sermons of Calvin. 2) He emphasizes that one should not separate the nature of God from the properties of God. For God's nature can only be read from his actions. This includes His wisdom as it is displayed in the course of the corporeal world as well as in the revelation of Himself in the Gospel. Mülhaupt warns us against drawing out just one Divine attribute setting it up as absolute. 3) It is more akin to the truth when all the main features of God's nature are seen together, such as allmightiness, wisdom, holiness, righteousness and love. The most outstanding properties of God are His action, will, and freedom: this Mülhaupt denotes as a sign of the more evangelical rather than legalistic character of Calvin's idea of God. 4) He also speaks about the glory of God, but maintains that it becomes manifest not so much in the righteousness of God as in God's goodness which is beyond the law. 5) Thus the ultimate and true nature of God is not righteousness, as O. Ritschl holds, but benevolent will. 6) This does not mean that righteousness has no place of importance in Calvin's idea of the nature of God. But righteousness as well as other properties of God that are manifest in the Gospel are based on the grounds of God's benevolent will towards His creation.

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- 1) Otto Ritschl: op.cit. p.175 f.
 - 2) E.Mülhaupt: Die Predigt Calvins.
 - 3) ibidem p.158.
 - 4) ibidem p.162.
 - 5) ibidem p.168.
 - 6) ibidem p.169.

Different again is the view of Rudolf Hermes who asserts that the glory of God is the central axis round which all of Calvin's ideas of the nature of God revolve. 1) Then God is to be thought of as the Almighty Will which is the ground and basis of all that happens in history, in the Church, as well as in the life of the individual. What God wills is right and all He wills is directed towards His glorification. The events in the world are to serve man, the Church, and the furtherance of salvation. But the ultimate purpose is the revelation of God's glory. The whole creation is to be a theatre in which the glory of God is mightily displayed and manifested. 2)

Paul Wernle understands Calvin's ideas of God mainly as trinitarian: here God is in His true nature the Creator. As such He is also the Father of all mankind under whose providence we enjoy the manifold gifts and benefits He continuously provides for us. Such care moves us to gratitude. 3) Wernle points out that, if we want to comprehend Calvin's real belief in God, we must search for it here and not in the doctrine of predestination. For God is in Calvin's view primarily the benevolent Father whose sheer goodness is directed towards us. 4) However, we only come to the proper knowledge of God's Fatherhood and goodness towards us when we behold His Son Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ the God of Creation becomes the God of our salvation. Only in Christ God meets us as the Father and in Christ we can call upon Him confidently as His children. Thus God's nature can be read in the first place from His revelation in Jesus Christ. Wernle regards, therefore, the belief in Christ as the core of Calvinism. 5)

1) Rudolf Hermes in 'Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart', Band I, p.1545.

2) *ibidem*.

3) Paul Wernle: *op.cit.* p.38.

4) *ibidem* p.39.

5) *ibidem* p.47.

Alfred Göhler in his study on Calvin's doctrine of sanctification refers to the properties of God and describes God's righteousness and love as the most outstanding ones. 1) Here he has something in common with O Ritschl's view as far as the righteousness of God is concerned. But Göhler does not regard the righteousness of God on its own as His chief attribute as did Ritschl; he regards the love of God as a very strong element of God's nature which supplements His righteousness. For, facing the righteousness of God, we have to prostrate ourselves in obedience before Him, but in faith we can confidently raise ourselves to the love of God. 2) The righteousness and love of God cause our sanctification and justification. The righteousness of God requires our sanctification whereas the love of God offers us free grace and forgiveness of sins. The unity of sanctification and justification is rooted in the unity of God's righteousness and love. 3)

It must be remembered, however, that Göhler maintains that no dogma of Calvin can be looked upon as the central dogma from which all other doctrines would have to be deduced. He maintains that all doctrines are in a sense central in that they aim at reaching an understanding of the central element from their own independent standpoints. He believes that it is possible to penetrate to a real understanding of the whole, even by starting from a particular doctrine. 4)

Peter Brunner draws out attention to the fact that, according to Calvin, we cannot comprehend the nature of God as He is in Himself. We can only grasp that side of God's nature which is directed to us by His revelation. 5) Man is not supposed to

1) Alfred Göhler: Calvins Lehre von der Heiligung, p.107.

2) ibidem.

3) ibidem.

4) ibidem, p. 81.

5) P. Brunner: op.cit. p.54.

penetrate to the ultimate nature of God. He rather is called upon to believe in that which God has revealed to him, i.e. it is important to come to the knowledge of how God acts towards us, and it is less important to know how He is in Himself. This is the modesty of faith. 1) Now as to the side of God which He reveals to us, here we see God as the One who meets us with paternal love, grace, and mercy. And this side constitutes the ground of our faith. 2) However, God for us in His revelation means God in Jesus Christ. Thus knowledge of God means knowledge of Christ. 3) P. Brunner then sees Calvin's theology chiefly as Christology.

We must at this point make clear that in Calvin's view there is no separation between the nature of God and the properties of God. 4) This means that God is not different from His actions. As He reveals Himself in Christ to us, so is He in Himself. His revelation in Jesus Christ can, therefore, be trusted because God will not at one time show Himself different towards us from what He has manifested of Himself in His Son. 'For the work of Christ is the work of God; and Christ's work is voluntary'. 'Calvin cannot, therefore, interpret the life and acts of Jesus as other than the activity of God'. 5)

So far our examples given above have shown us various attempts to give a conclusive answer to the question of what is the real and ultimate nature of God according to Calvin's theology. We have noticed that the results are very different; and this discloses the great difficulty of the whole problem. It is not

1) P. Brunner: op. cit. p. 64.

2) ibidem p. 63.

3) ibidem p. 67 f.

4) CR. 63, 60 'il ne nous faut point separer les vertus qui sont en Dieu, pource qu'elles sont son essence proper. Les hommes auront bien quelques vertus en eux, lesquelles leur pourront estre ostees: mais ce n'est pas ainsi de Dieu.

5) T.H.L.Parker: The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, p.83 f.

easy to give a clear answer in this matter since some of the views, as mentioned, are well supported by statements in the Reformer's writings. But if we consider the writings upon which certain theories were based we discover that at least a few have not gone further than the Institutes, perhaps consulting some of the commentaries - but that was all. Apart from Mülhaupt little attention has actually been paid to the sermons of Calvin. The prayers were left aside amongst them almost completely by everybody. It remains for us here to see what the prayers have us to reveal in regard to the nature of God in comparison with the results as set forth above.

But is it at all possible to come to a definite conclusion in regard to the nature of God as far as Calvin's theology is concerned? Was it not perhaps a vain attempt to find a supreme idea of God which would dominate all the rest of Calvin's theological thinking? Did he really attribute one property to God that would be superior to all others and which would then form the essential part of His nature? How is it that so many different results emerge by the investigation of the one subject?

If we want to answer these questions we must, first of all, bear in mind that we must go with Calvin to the very same source from which he got his ideas. And if we try to do so we shall realise at once that the Reformer did not wish to engage in vain speculations about God and His true nature. He was strongly determined to approach this subject in the proper way, and this means the revelation in Jesus Christ as the only source from which we can obtain true knowledge of the matter. 'All contemplation about God apart from Christ is like an abominable abyss which will swallow all our thoughts completely'. 1) This is the signpost which gives us unmistakably the right direction on the path to a proper understanding of Calvin's theology. It is here

1) Comm. on I Peter 1:20; CR.55,226.

that we must pay most attention, for if we want to develop a theory of the nature of God we must realise that it is closely connected with our knowledge of God. But knowledge of God means in Calvin's view knowledge of Christ; for through the countenance of Christ God makes Himself known to us. 1) God's revelation in Jesus Christ means that God accommodates Himself to our capacity. We must humble ourselves with all reverence to the end that God may lift us up to Him, and shew Himself to us and make us partakers of the doctrine to which we would otherwise never attain. That is, for Calvin, the essential movement of the true knowledge. 2) Knowledge of God through Christ means that it is trustworthy, we are no more left in the dark confusion of our own imaginations but are given a reliable manifestation from which we can read how God wills to show Himself to us. 'All that the Father had, He deposited with His only begotten Son, in order that He might manifest Himself in Him, and thus by the communication of blessings express the true image of His glory'. 3) 'Christ is the living image of the Father, and in Him are laid up all treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As soon, then, as we turn aside from Him, we cannot do anything else but wander in error'. 4)

Calvin thus emphasizes strongly that he wants his own understanding of God to be seen as completely rooted in the revelation of God in Christ. But even that is not enough if we are to grasp the nature of God as He shows Himself in Christ, because our mind cannot comprehend it unless it is opened by the Holy Spirit. This happens, 'when the Spirit with a wondrous and special energy, forms the ear to hear and the mind to understand'. 5) This again means that, in view of the incapacity of our own mind, we are not

1) CR. 9, 816.

2) T.F. Torrance: Calvin's Doctrine of Man, p. 130.

3) Instit. III, 2, 1.

4) Comm. on John, 3:23.

5) Instit. II, 2, 20, 21.

authorized to make any statements about God of ourselves. For God is the only Author of our knowledge of Him. We can actually utter only the words which are uttered to us by Him. The means through which God speaks to us now is His word. So if we want to come to a knowledge of Him we must consult the Word. 'We must go to the word where the character of God drawn from His works is described accurately and to life; these works being estimated not by our depraved judgment, but by the standard of eternal Truth'. 1) 'The identification of Jesus of Nazareth with the eternal Word of God made by faith on the authority of the Scriptural witness, means that He is regarded as the valid revelation of God'. 2) 'To know Thee and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. The reason why he says this is, because there is no other way in which God is known but in the face of Jesus Christ, who is the bright and lively image of Him'. 3) '..the Son is said to know the Father, not because He reveals Him by His Spirit, but because, being the lively image of Him, He represents Him visibly in His own person'. 4)

We can gather from the great stress Calvin put on knowledge of God as being a knowledge of Christ, that one of the chief mistakes that have been made in the interpretation of the Reformer's understanding of God has been that too little attention has been paid to Christology. If for instance O. Ritschl believed that Calvin's idea of the glory of God was the all-determining factor of his theology, then he was wrong in the sense that while the glory of God has an important place in that it is the goal towards the whole created world is to move, it is not the root out of which Calvin would develop a concept of the righteousness of God as the supreme aspect of His nature. It is also not

1) Instit. I, 6,3.

2) T.H.L. Parker: op. cit. p. 70.

3) Comm. on John, 17:3, CR. 47, 376.

4) Comm. on Matth., 11:27, CR. 45, 320.

true that Calvin developed his theories mainly on the basis of the Old Testament.

As we have repeatedly noticed in this study, Calvin can be rightly understood only as long as Christology is given the first place. The most frequent mistake in the past has been to try to understand Calvin's theology apart from its Christological basis. Such an analysis severely distorts the Reformer's thinking and is fatal to a sound understanding of it. If Christology is not given the first place and instead an attempt is made to understand Calvin's theology in terms of some abstract attribute of God then it will be impossible to come to any agreement on the matter. For example with E. Mülhaupt the goodness of God would play this role whereas with O. Ritschl it would be His glory and justice. What becomes clear when we consider adequately such material as Calvin's prayers is that it would have been impossible for Ritschl to make out the case that he did, if he had given these prayers sufficient consideration. Indeed, without the essential Christological basis it is impossible to see Calvin's thought as a unity at all, as distinct from a collection of disconnected and perhaps irreconcilable statements. Moreover, we do not do justice to Calvin as long as we attempt to develop an exposition of his conception of God without looking at things in the way Calvin looked at them, which means from the Christological basis. We should avoid using different standards from those he used. We can follow him only if we adapt ourselves to his standards, i.e. if we are willing to follow him along the lines he himself has decided to go. Since Christology is his real starting point, we also must start there, and nowhere else. Only then we have sure guarantee of a proper understanding of his theological concepts which otherwise could be largely misinterpreted.

We have already mentioned that true knowledge of God can be obtained only through the knowledge of Christ. And we have also mentioned that to us now this means knowledge through the Word of God according to the testimony of the Scriptures. However, since we can grasp the content of the Word only as far as the Holy Spirit illuminates us, we must bear in mind that even in a study such as this we may fall short in describing the nature of God except we ourselves receive that light which illumines our mind also. This moves us to humility for it means that we should read the Scriptures in the same spirit as they were originally written. And thus, indeed, it is only when the human intellect is irradiated by the light of the Holy Spirit that it begins to have a taste of those things which pertain to the Kingdom of God. 1) We ought therefore to acknowledge that we come short in every respect, so that the heavenly doctrine proves to be useful and efficacious to us only so far as the Spirit both forms our minds to understand it, and our heart to submit to its yoke. 2) In the last resort this also means that what is being said about God and His nature will be a statement of faith for 'knowledge is connected with faith, because we are certain and fully convinced of the truth of God, not in the same manner as human sciences are apprehended, but when the Spirit seals our hearts.' 3) 'Faith is a miracle of God whereby He makes Himself to be seen by us, although He is hidden from us, and we can by no means come nigh to Him'. 4) Now this abundantly confirms that, if we want to reach a better understanding of Calvin's idea of the nature of God, it is quite wrong to develop a theory in terms of an abstract attribute of God. For it is important to keep to

1) T.F. Torrance, op. cit. p. 131.

2) ibidem p. 133.

3) Comm. on John, 6, 69.

4) Sermon on I Tim. 1:17 - 19.

the fact that Calvin's ideas were deeply connected with his faith. Based on these presuppositions we may assume that such material as Calvin's prayers will provide us adequately with those elements that represent very well his ideas of the nature of God, as prayers are profoundly connected with a person's faith.

In the course of our study we have dealt extensively with Calvin's conception of God in chapter four. Our chief findings were that God's nature cannot be described by the use of only one term. We found that four elements were most outstanding, namely: Almightyness, holiness, goodness, and love. All of these elements are very well represented in the prayers. We did not add a fifth element, righteousness, since the term holiness, as we described it, already contains that element.

Now the question arises whether or not one of these elements is to be put on top of all the others so that it would form a supreme centre from which the lines of Calvin's theology could be drawn out. Wilhelm Niesel refers to this question at the end of his fine study on Calvin's theology and points out that many attributes could be given first place, if one wanted to do so, as each of them has its own strong support within the framework of the Reformer's theology. Thus the glory of God, or the Law, or sanctification, or eschatology, or the sacraments, could be made the center of his theology, and from such a centre one supreme idea of God's nature could be presupposed by way of arguing back. 1)

However, if we try to set one chief idea of God's nature as the ultimate in Calvin's theological thinking we run again the risk of over-emphasis or even misinterpretation. For, although we have discovered several ideas of God represented in his prayers, we must hold to one most important fact, namely that the centre

1) W. Niesel: op. cit. p. 245.

of Calvin's theological thinking is not an idea or supreme conception but a Person, that is, the Person of Jesus Christ. It was a mistake when theologians tried to set some abstract attribute as the ultimate element of God's nature. No wonder that they differed so much since there are several elements which can be given a place of ultimate importance. But Calvin's theology can be understood aright only so long as Jesus Christ - not any abstract idea - is being regarded as the very centre round which all thinking must revolve, What we have expounded in chapters four and five dealing with Calvin's conception of God and the work of the Mediator gives us sufficient evidence of Christ's exclusive central position. Now as to the nature of God we must maintain that we cannot make any statements with certainty apart from what Christ conveys to us as the Mediator of God to us. This is the very source to which the Reformer wants to draw all our attention. 'For God Himself would be altogether concealed from us, if we were not illuminated by the brightness of Christ. For this purpose the Father has deposited all His treasures with His only-begotten Son, that He might reveal Himself in Him; and that, by such a communication of blessings, He might express a true image of His glory. For, as it has been observed that we need to be drawn by the Spirit so that we may be moved to seek Christ, so we should also be apprised that the invisible Father is to be sought only in this image'. 1)

According to our investigation of the prayers we found the elements of almightiness, holiness, goodness, and love as those which are most represented. We arrived at that conclusion because Calvin used those terms most frequently of all. However, the study on the mediating work of Christ made us aware of the fact that we must see the nature of God as he made Himself known to us in His revelation, which is in Christ. But in His presence

1) Instit. III, 2, 1.

in revelation we can know Him as He really is, who He is, and what He is for us, for in Christ God comes to meet us personally. This means God's self-impartation and as such condescension. Now Calvin maintains that God's impartation and condescension is based on the eternal covenant which He has made with us in Christ. This covenant is an act of paternal love because the aim of that covenant is that He wills to be the Father of all mankind by adopting us as His children. The God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ is a loving God. The relationship between God and man is a relationship of love because it is a relationship of the Father to the child. Thus the real nature of God as we know it from His covenant in Christ is that it is p a t e r n a l l o v e . But why can we boldly assert that God's nature is in its depth paternal love ? Does not the Gospel also show us the God of righteousness and judgment ? Surely it does. But we have to attend to that which God really wills. If God put the whole world to eternal damnation He would still be the righteous God since we have sinned without exception against Him and merited judgment upon us. In the fact that the purpose of the Gospel is the salvation of man we see that God's will is a loving will. Almightyness, holiness and other properties we may attribute to Him are indeed true properties of His Deity. They are also manifest strongly in His Word. It is also true that God wants to be glorified by us; the prayers bear also witness of that. However, God could glorify Himself by other means than through us. The fact that He did choose mankind to do it, i.e. that He would glorify Himself in us, shows His will and intention. Our salvation is not primarily rooted in His properties such as almighty, holiness, righteousness, but in His love. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'. 1)

1) St. John, 3:16.

Of this love God has shown to us in His Christ, which reveals His true nature towards us, the prayers bear unequivocal witness.

3. Christocentricity.

By using the term christocentricity we mean the central place Christ takes in the theology of Calvin. It remains for us chiefly to set forth to what extent Christ is to be regarded as central in the prayers of the Reformer.

Among the peculiarities of Calvin's prayers there is of outstanding interest in this connection - that the Reformer does not address Christ in his prayers but addresses them consistently to the Father. How does this fit in with christocentricity? Should this fact not be a proof that the prayers are not at all christocentric? Does it not mean Christ is actually given a subordinate place in the God - man relationship as far as the prayers are concerned?

We find the key to this question in Calvin's doctrine of prayer where he expounds at length how a true prayer has to be placed before the Almighty God. 1) First of all, there is the fact that man as such does not know how to pray. He, therefore, must be taught how to pray. Moreover, Christ gave the Lord's Prayer to man to show him what kind of prayer is acceptable in the sight of God. Then Calvin stresses the importance of Christ's mediatory work. 'Whoever does not know the office of Jesus Christ, can never trust in God, nor make prayers and supplications: he will always be in anxiety and doubt and dissimulation.' 2)

1) Instit. III, 20.

2) Sermon on Luke, 2:9 - 14.

'Comme nous avons declaire ne avoir la confiance et esperance de nostre salut et tout bien en aultre que en Dieu par Iesuchrist, aussy nous confessons que nous le devons invocquer en toutes noz necessitez au nom de Iesuchrist, qui est nostre mediateur et advocat, par lequel avons accez a luy. Pareillement devons reconnoistre que tous biens viennent de luy seul, et luy en rendre action de graces. Au contraire, nous reiectons lintercession des saintz, comme une superstition inventee des hommes contre l'Escripture, veu mesmes que elle ne procede que de deffiance que lintercession de Iesuchrist ne soit suffisante'.1)

The prayers have weight in the sight of God only when they are presented through Jesus Christ who is the Mediator of our prayers. Because Christ is the Mediator of our prayers they are to be addressed to the Father through Christ. And this is the reason why Calvin did not address them to God the Son.

But when Christ is the Mediator of our prayers, it means that He is it through His humanity. He is the true High Priest who on behalf of His people offers prayers to the Father. When a minister in a divine service offers prayers with the congregation he is not to do it in his own name. That is, he is not to act as a kind of mediator himself, for the prayers he is to offer are actually not his own prayers, nor the prayers of the congregation. It is in fact very different, for the prayers which are to be offered are to be offered through Jesus Christ, that means that the minister as well as the congregation are not to utter their own words but to utter the words of Jesus Christ. Thus all sacerdotalism comes to an end since we are not to pray in our own name. For it is not our humanity that steps in between God and ourselves but the humanity of Christ through whom we are reconciled with the Father and made His children by way of adoption through the same Jesus Christ.

1) Confession de la foy, 1537; OS I, 422.

It is precisely in the prayers of Calvin that the correct procedure is followed showing that they are truly christocentric. The very many prayers which end with the set phrase 'through Jesus Christ thy only-begotten Son' or 'through the blood of Christ thy Son our Lord' indicate the importance of Christ's humanity by which He is our sole Mediator of our prayers. In teaching us to pray in the words and manner of the Lord's Prayer, Christ has revealed to us that God is the Father, and not only His Father but also our Father. Apart from Christ it would be impossible for us to call God our Father, since it is through His humanity that we are ingrafted into the fellowship with the Father.

It is also here that present day Protestantism has to learn and realise that prayers are not just the outpouring of one's own desires and wishes, which often bear the marks of strong self-centredness: this is too often characteristic of free prayers offered in prayer halls and also in churches. No matter whether we are ministers of the Church or just members we are not to let our own humanity step between God and ourselves as a medium of our prayers. Such a prayer, in Calvin's view, would not have any chance of response from the side of God. The right prayer is that which utters the words that Christ taught us, and this alone gives assurance of being heard and answered by the Father.

Now the question could be raised whether the intercessory work of Christ would not also imply the possibility of addressing a prayer to Christ the Mediator who would place the petition before the Father. Or, again, could not a prayer be addressed to any of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity since they form a unity in trinity? If Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are one with the Godhead and truly divine in their essence, this question can be answered in the affirmative. Evidence for this can be drawn

from those New Testament passages that record men prostrating themselves before Christ and praying to him, actions which Christ Himself did not refuse but accepted. A prayer offered to Christ would not mean that His function as Mediator was by-passed, so to speak, but could be actually the same in procedure as those offered directly to God the Father. It is peculiar to Calvin that he himself did not pray to Christ, at least as far as we can gather from the prayers recorded. For even a prayer to Christ should not actually be contradictory to his strong belief in the work of the Mediator of intercession. The reason why Calvin did not also, at least occasionally, pray to Christ may lie in his very strict keeping to the Lord's Prayer; because Christ did not teach us to pray to Himself, but actually showed us by the teaching of the Lord's Prayer as well as through His own pattern that we are to pray to the Father. It is the christological foundation of his doctrine of prayer that prevents Calvin from praying to Christ Himself.

The second aspect of the prayers that reveals the christocentricity is eschatology. We have extensively dealt with Calvin's eschatology in our exposition, and we can draw from our findings that eschatology is chiefly christology. By this we mean that the Reformer's ideas of the Last Things are determined by Christ, i.e. mainly by Christ's second coming. Calvin calls the second coming of Christ one of the chief articles of our faith, for it is the goal of the work of Christ because it properly consummates our redemption. 'It is the sealing and ratifying of the whole work of Christ and thus the great hope for the future cherished by His own. He comes to rescue them from the hands of their enemies and to make manifest their glory, to reward them for their obedience and faith by His judgment which will be a judgment according to works. The Judge is the Saviour who has allowed Himself to die in our stead'. 1)

1) Sermon on 1 Thess. 1:6 - 10, CR. 80, 226 ff.

The prayers bear witness of how thoroughly Calvin's eschatology is bound to Christ and His coming. All hope and expectation are directed to that final event while all faith is rooted in the promise which Christ has given to His people. While the believer is in via on earth where he has to live both on natural and on spiritual food, and where many temptations encircle him, he is to be regenerated in the hope of a better life which is revealed to him through the Gospel. And all this is within the framework of faith which looks out towards the second coming of Christ from which it also gets its unceasing spiritual encouragement.

'Seigneur Dieu, nous te rendons graces de tous les benefices que nous recevons asiduellement de ta main, de ce qu'il te plaist nous substenter en ceste vie corporelle, nous administrant toutes nos necessitez: singulierement de ce qu'il t'a pleu nous regenerer en l'esperance d'une meilleure vie, laquelle tu nous a revelee par ton saint Evangile. Te prians qu'il te plaise ne permettre pas que nos affections soyent ici enracines en ces choses corruptibles, mais que nous regardions tousiour plus haut, attendans nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, iusqu'à ce qu'il apparoisce en nostre redemption, Amen'. 1)

The christocentricity of the prayer just quoted, and it represents actually many of similar content, is obvious. For what could be said more in favour of it than the fact that the Reformer prays for constant reinforcement so that he may look incessantly upon Jesus Christ whose second coming means the final redemption? And it must be pointed out that such material does not just occur sporadically but is to be found repeatedly.

The third aspect of christocentricity is in the prayers represented in Calvin's idea of regeneration and sanctification. For the aim of regeneration and sanctification is that we become

1) Prayer after the meals, RO. 239.

reformed into the image of God. But this takes place again through Jesus Christ who is the true and undistorted image of God. The transformation to which we are subject if we wish to aspire to the state of that perfect image of God is the exclusive work of Christ which He has achieved through His humanity. For the image of God is regained through the healing of our corrupt nature in Christ. When Calvin speaks so often in his prayers of the spots and the filth that must be washed away he means that process by which we become transformed into the state in which we reflect spiritually the glory of God. But since only Christ is the true image of God, since in other words He alone reflects the glory of God, we are to be transformed into Christ's image. Since in Adam we have lost our similitude of God, we cannot regain it by our own efforts, because the image of God has to do with our heavenly nature and can be acquired only through our restoration in Christ. 'For now we begin to bear the image of Christ, and are every day more and more transformed into it, but the image consists in spiritual regeneration. But then it will be fully restored both in body and soul, and what is now begun will be perfected and accordingly we will obtain in reality what we as yet only hope for'. 1) It is interesting to notice that the transformation into the image of God is a process. This process starts already while we live on earth but will achieve its final stage in heaven at the ultimate consummation. The image of God must bear its marks already on our human nature because Christ not only in His divinity but also in His humanity has engraved the image of God so that we may be formed in the resemblance of it. 'Christ is not only the image of God, in so far as He is the eternal Word of God, but even on His human nature, which He has in common with us, the likeness of the glory of the Father has been engraved so as to form His members to the resemblance of it'. 2) But the christocentricity is not just expressed

1) Comm. on 1 Cor. 15:49.

2) Comm. on John 17:22.

in the fact that Christ is the true image of God and thus a pattern for us to which we should strive by our efforts. Rather is it that Christ Himself works through the agency of the Holy Spirit in us to form us into the true image of God. 1)

We have already discussed the meaningful place Christ holds as He, as the true High Priest, teaches us how to pray. And while we are to utter His words in prayer He Himself as our Intercessor in the matter of prayer stands before the Almighty God and intercedes for us. Here again the christocentricity is evident because our prayers need the continuous support of Christ's intercession.

A further remarkable aspect of christocentricity is evident in the great stress Calvin lays on the relationship between God and man. We have repeatedly noticed that Calvin regards strongly the relationship between God and man as a Father - child relationship. The covenant which God has made with us is an eternal covenant and has been signed and ratified by the blood of Christ. While the covenant which God made with Abraham was already a remarkable manifestation of God's love towards His people, much more is the eternal covenant which He made with the whole of mankind through Jesus Christ. The Reformer calls it a 'alliance beaucoup meilleure' which can absolutely be trusted and relied upon. Since it is a covenant not made by man but by God Himself through His Son its effect is certitude in the firm assurance that it will not fall or be annihilated. It does not stand on the ground of our virtues, nor does it fall on the

1) 'Et qu'il luy plaise de nous reduire tellement, nous ayant pardonné nos fautes passes, que nous soyons faite nouvelles creatures par le moyen de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, puis que maintenant il l'a enuoyé au monde, afin de nous remplir de tous biens spirituels. Que donc nous ne fermions point la porte à sa grace: mais que plustost nous luy donnions ouerture en toute crainte et humilité'. 200 sermons on Deuteronomy p. 964.

ground of our vices and sins. I) If our salvation stood on the ground of our own merits then we would be condemned a hundred times every day. Calvin's prayers show us clearly that our salvation rests totally on the work of Christ. But the covenant in Christ means that we are adopted children of God. Thus we have already come to the state in which we can have full confidence in God as our Father because it is Christ who presents us to God the Father. And also through Christ God reveals Himself to us as the Father.

To answer now the question of christocentricity, we suggest strongly that the prayers of John Calvin bear this hallmark. Neither the Reformer's doctrine of prayer nor the prayers themselves can be properly understood except in the light of Christology. Christ as the Mediator not only of our salvation but also of our prayers is right in the centre of the whole relationship between God and us. The prayers of Calvin are determined by Christ's key position as our eternal High Priest and this means that the prayers are christocentric.

4. Conclusion.

In this final section we shall try to look at the prayers of John Calvin more from a distance. We said already that prayers are quite different from systematic theology and cannot be judged by the standards of thoroughness, detail and coherence appropriate to the latter, so that here and there at some particular points our questions may remain unanswered. We must also bear in

1) Karl Barth: Kirchl. Dogmatik Band II/2, p. 423.

mind that they date from a time other than our own and thus reflect characteristics of the Reformation time which was a time of great strife and controversy. Calvin again and again refers in his prayers to spiritual warfare and these references surely originated to a certain extent in the long and constant fighting in which the Reformers were involved with their opponents. But this does by no means indicate that they are out of date as though they would have no relevance to other periods. It may be that in times of peace and easy going those prayers may not appear as meaningful to us in worship. But since our twentieth century is characterised by its great upheavals, wars and unrest not only in the secular field but also in the spiritual, there are many prayers which carry a profound meaning also for our times. There are even prayers which nobody would attribute to the 16th century if he did not know beforehand from whom they originally derived. This is for instance the case when the Reformer prays:

'Wherever we look around in this world there we behold nothing but great confusion and perplexity, and the ungodly seem to triumph above the heavens and appear as though they could swamp us away at any moment... O grant, that, being armed with thy power, we may persevere in this contest...'

This is indeed a prayer that is most appropriate in many periods of our century. This is not due primarily to the fact that history repeats itself but rather to the fact that spiritual problems remain the same so long as we live in a world which is still on the march towards the final redemption at the second Advent of Christ.

Now when we survey our inquiry we can sum up some of the peculiarities in the Reformer's prayers. About the fact that the prayers are always addressed to God the Father and none to God the Son we have already given an answer in the previous section.

So we need no more discuss it. Another peculiarity is that as a whole the prayers lack an important element of worship, namely, adoration. This seems to be rather strange since we know that Calvin put so much emphasis on the glorification of God. Should it not be precisely the prayers, which form actually the principal element in our service of God according to Calvin's own words, that are to contain adoration as one of the most important parts ? Why did the Reformer not have it in the prayers ? It is not likely that he neglected this particular element, for it would be very much unlike Calvin's doctrine of prayer. It is therefore much more likely that adoration was given its special place elsewhere. And as the prayers were said chiefly at the divine services we have to assume that some other part of the service would contain adoration. Now this particular element of adoration is well represented in the Psalms that were sung at every divine service. T.F. Torrance draws our attention to the stress Calvin put on the sheer joy of the Christian life, when in Strasbourg he began to introduce congregational singing into the liturgy and in 1543 he prepared 'La Forme des Prieres et Chantz Ecclesiastiques' for the Church in Geneva. 1) The introduction of this music was a startling change in the worship of the Church, which may be difficult for us to appreciate nowadays. Calvin himself makes clear that the singing is important in divine services since it is given as a gift from God to His people. 'The Lord creates a people for Himself who sing and celebrate the praise of His goodness when He delivers and restores the hopes of those who were afflicted, bruised and in despair'. 2) Already in 1537 the Reformer, supported by Farel, actually urged the City Council of Geneva to introduce the singing of the Psalms

1) T.F. Torrance: Kingdom and Church, p. 96.

2) CR. 34, 227.

in the divine services and for the teaching of the youth. He wanted the creation of a complete Psalter for the use in the Church. His idea was then realised when, after his return to Geneva, the gifted and talented poet Clément Marot, a refugee from Paris, paraphrased some 49 Psalms, which are still regarded as the best part of the Genevan Psalter. After the death of Marot in 1544, Theodor Beza completed the Psalter with the co-operation of two other talented composers, Louis Bourgeois and Claude Goudimel. In all the history of Church Hymns there has been no success so great as the Genevan Psalter, which reached 62 editions within three years and was translated during the same period into 22 other languages. 1)

In this connection we have also to say a few words on the glorification of God, for it plays an important role in Calvin's theology. We mentioned already that some even regarded it as the supreme concept of his theology which would dominate all his doctrines. Now what does Calvin really mean when he speaks of the glory of God, and of our partaking in the glorification of Him? Does he have the sure conviction that we are capable of glorifying Him, the Eternal and Holy One, everywhere in all our life and work? To this we have to say the following: the glory of God is not to be understood as a theological principle, but as the ultimate goal of our life. 2) Moreover, the glory of God is manifest in a person, the Person of Jesus Christ. Calvin does also hold that it is exhibited in the beauty of nature. But the main manifestation is revealed in Jesus Christ in whom the glory of God is perfectly reflected as He is the true image of God. Thus our glorification of God is not achieved by our own works and merits but by our partaking in the glory of Christ. The prayers

1) cf. Bernhard Henking: Der Hugenottenpsalter, Reformatio VIII Jahrgang, Juni 1959, p. 350.

2) Alfred de Quervain: Calvin, sein Lehren und Kämpfen, p. 6.

of Calvin contain phrases like 'that we also glorify in Him' which means that we cannot glorify God apart from Christ. In the same context belongs the hallowing of the Name of God. This first petition of the Lord's Prayer is very well represented in Calvin's prayers. But when he refers to God's Name that is to be glorified he refers to Christ, because the glory has been obtained for us by His Son.

'...and be made partakers of that glory which has been obtained for us by Christ our Lord'. 1)

Calvin is deeply concerned with the glory of God. But it would be quite false to develop a theological system on the basic conception of God's glory. The glory of God as manifest to us is manifest in Christ, and accordingly our glorification of God also takes place through Jesus Christ. In other words, when Calvin emphasises the 'soli Deo gloria' he emphasises the work of Jesus Christ. It has its primary concern with christology.

Our partaking in the glory of Christ is based upon our union with Him. For we are made to participate in the movement of Christ's resurrection and ascension. 2) Christ did not conquer death by His glorious resurrection as it were for Himself only but for His people: 'in the Head has begun what has to have its effects on the members also'. 3) Thus when it has been assumed that the purpose of our life would be the glorification of God it does not mean that we can do so on the grounds of our own humanity. For we are not capable to do so since we are fallen creatures and have altogether lost our true image of God. We can only glorify God through Christ in that our life has been restored

1) Lect. 58 on Jeremiah.

2) CR. 76,620.

3) Instit. III, 25,3.

in Him to the newness which alone bears the marks of the true image of God. The glory of God is manifest in the triumph of Christ which is the triumph of God's mercy and love. God is glorified by the perfect life of Christ, by His obedience, by His total submission to the will of the Father and not by our life which by nature is corrupt. Our glorification of God while we are still on earth consists in faith, for in faith we are made partakers of the glory of Christ. The glorification of God as our goal is eschatological, because only in the second Advent of Christ, when He shall appear for our final redemption, we shall glorify Him in perfection, when our restoration into His image shall be accomplished, as Calvin prays:

'...until we shall at length be renewed in thine image, and be received into a full participation of that glory, which has been attained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son'. 1)

K.Fröhlich describes the glory of God as the decisive factor in Calvin's ethical ideas and maintains that the Christian idea of love would receive its real purpose from the idea of the glory of God. He also holds that Calvin interpreted his ideas of love chiefly in terms of righteousness. 2) Now the prayers of Calvin give us sufficient evidence that this is not so. His christological basis does not allow us to interpret his ethical ideas in terms isolated from the very source of his theology, which is christology.

This leads us to a significant aspect of his prayers. When one reads the Reformer's prayers an interesting aspect cannot be overlooked, namely, that there are very few terms which refer to the present life in detail. The Reformer contemplates his

1) Lect. 128 on the Minor Prophets.

2) Karlfried Fröhlich: Gottesreich, Welt und Kirche bei Calvin, p. 40 f.

sinfulness, prays for illumination by the Holy Spirit and for strength to do better, he commends other people, such as the afflicted and oppressed, to the fatherly care of the Lord, he prays for patience, perseverance and wisdom in the course of the earthly life. But except in this general way he does not refer to our daily life. What does this mean? Does it mean that the Reformer was not at all concerned with the Christian's way of life nor with his social conditions? For we do not find prayers which would directly refer to social improvements. Here we have to say two things. Firstly, the fact that there are almost no phrases in Calvin's prayers which refer to the way and conduct of life does not indicate a lack of interest in the problems of everyday life. But it does show that a great freedom was assigned to the individual as to how to behave. If a man was really a believer and had submitted to the Lord, then there was no more need to tell him what to do in detail. That means that the life of the believer was not supposed to be determined by regulations since the Word of God and the working of the Holy Spirit were the exclusive guides in all the affairs with which a believer could be concerned. Moreover, the life of the Christian is marked by the union with Christ. Now union indicates a lively co-relationship and not a dead verbalism. This may appear to be contradictory to the situation in Geneva when very strong discipline was exercised both in Church and State. But we must bear in mind that the picture one used to have of Geneva of the Reformation time was very distorted. Calvin was not so much concerned with the conduct of the believers as is generally assumed, but much more with their actual belief. He found doctrine his special responsibility and consequently regarded himself as also responsible for the right belief of the members of the Church. That was the main reason why at one time he wanted to have all citizens of Geneva accept a confession of faith by an oath, in

the summer of 1537. We may admit that Calvin went too far in his programme, by which he wanted to establish a kind of theocratical government in Geneva. But his zeal can only be understood if we realise how deeply he was concerned with right teaching, right worship and right believing.

Secondly, we do not find terms that would refer to the necessity of the improvements of social conditions. He normally does not pray for better conditions nor does he pray for relief of those who are in distress and affliction. When he does mention human suffering as he indeed often does, then he prays for strength, patience and perseverance so that the believer in his misery may be able to bear the cross. Now such petitions must be seen in the context of Calvin's eschatological ideas. We do not have an abiding city while we live on earth. Wars, famine, illness, poverty, misery, etc. are God's rods by which he wants to draw us nearer to Him. Calvin did appreciate a still and quiet life. Thus he prays for the rulers that they may reign in such a way that order and justice may be established. But when things reached the stage of conflict for the sake of the Gospel, as it was the case with the Protestant community in France, he took it as part of the cross the Christians must bear. In addition to that he expected the second Advent of Christ to happen soon and therefore he thought it quite natural when unrest and persecution took place since they had to precede the Last Day of judgment according to Scripture. He took the same attitude to poverty, which he also regarded as a rod of God. It is suggested that Calvin's idea was that social conditions would improve with the progress in faith, since poverty and misery were in the last resort due to man's sinfulness and depravity. But it would be unfair if we now attributed to Calvin harshness and unkindness. Some of his prayers as well as many of his letters show us how sympathetic he actually was towards all those in distress. He was

very anxious to comfort them in a true pastoral manner.

So far in our inquiry we have left untouched a matter of some importance, namely, whether the prayers of Calvin were his original compositions or whether he took and borrowed at least parts of them from other sources. We have already made clear at one point that his prayers are related to a large extent to Scripture passages. Especially in the Ecclesiastical Prayers we should find that many parts came almost directly from Scripture. This is well in conformity with his teaching in the Institutes where he maintains that prayers must be bound to the Scriptures and also in conformity with what he says in the preface to 'La Maniere de faire prieres aux eglises Francoyses', where he concludes that 'Le tout selon la parole de nostre seigneur'. But nevertheless Calvin was deeply conscious of the weight and wealth of the Christian tradition of the early Church. Thus he did consider the tradition of the early Church when he introduced the form of ecclesiastical prayers and singing. In his preface to 'La Forme des Prieres et Chantz Ecclesiastiques' he holds that they are 'selon la coustume de l'Eglise ancienne'. 1)

It is important to consider what Calvin actually found when he started to produce 'La Forme'. According to W.D. Maxwell there was a real development in the liturgical history of Calvin's 'La Forme'. 2) It can be traced back to the Roman Mass from which Diebold Schwarz at Strasbourg derived his German Mass. The latter had been modified by Bucer. The main feature of the service was, when Calvin came to Strasbourg, that the sermon had received increased prominence and was mainly based upon the Gospel. The Calendar had been replaced by a system whereby the minister chose consecutive chapters for the Scripture Lectons for the

1) OS. 2, 11.

2) W.D. Maxwell: John Knox's Genevan Service Book 1556, p. 17 f.

ordinary Sunday services. Only the main festivals of the Church Year had been retained. All sacerdotalism in connection with the idea of priesthood has vanished. Thus the minister was no longer designated priest but pastor or minister. 1) The Sunday service at Strasbourg between 1524 and 1539 was a Eucharist modified and simplified to meet the understanding of the common people. But originally it was based upon the Roman Eucharist. Thus it was not based upon the Prone nor was it an independent product of the Reformers. In spite of translation and modification the essential character of the Strasbourg service was not changed. Since in Strasbourg the Magistrates did not allow Calvin to celebrate Communion more than once a month, he was compelled to modify the form, which he already found, in such a way that it could be used in the Sunday services when no Communion took place. Thus for ordinary Sundays those parts had to be omitted which pertained directly to Communion. But it cannot be held that by Calvin's arrangement of 'La Forme' the services were unduly impoverished as Maxwell maintains. 2) For Calvin laid much more stress on the Scriptures and enlarged the actual prayers. If he removed all sacerdotal accretions in order to achieve the simplicity and purity of the early Church rites, his true intentions were to remove those obstacles which would hinder from true worship in which the true priest was not the pastor or minister but the High Priest Jesus Christ. Here again we recognize Calvin's great concern over the right Mediator between God and man. Since Christ was considered as the sole and exclusive Mediator, especially in His priestly office, there could be no room left in a divine service for any of such things as human mediators, as there would be with the sacerdotalism of the Roman Mass. The Ecclesiastical Prayers of Calvin, which he placed in his 'La Forme', were a safeguard against two contrary errors.

1) W.D. Maxwell: op. cit. p. 32.

2) ibidem p. 34.

The first was the sacerdotalism as it existed in the Roman Mass, while the second was the Anabaptism and related heresies, since the latter were also in danger of engaging in some sort of sacerdotalism by offering their prayers without discipline and in the last resort in their own name.

The prayers *ex tempore* bear the marks of the pattern of the ancient collect. But since they were said normally at the end of the sermon, or at the end of the lecture in the Academy, they were meant to provide an opportunity for free prayers relevant to circumstances and conditions in which the congregation actually lived.

Now what is the significance of the use of both 'La Forme des Prieres et Chantz Ecclesiastiques' and the prayers *ex tempore*? The fact that Calvin did set a form of prayer for the divine services indicates that in the first place he believed that we must be guided in prayer - not just by the words of the minister but by the Word of God Itself. Since by nature we do not know what and how to pray we must be taught, which can only happen through the Word and the operation of the Holy Spirit. The many Scripture passages, which form the basic thoughts of the ecclesiastical prayers, and the use of the paraphrased Lord's Prayer give us evidence of the christological basis upon which a divine service must be founded. Divine worship in which Christ is not given the sole and exclusive place as the true Mediator means in the last resort false worship. Calvin was very much concerned with the *r i g h t* worship in spirit and truth. And to him this meant worship according to Scripture. If he did borrow elements from the old tradition it meant that he had no other intentions but to get as close as possible to the ancient Church. For Reformation had to stand for what it was: the re-formation to the ancient, scriptural service of the early Church. Moreover, the old tradition was that the Sunday service was based upon the Eucharist.

This meant originally the union with Christ that becomes manifest in Communion with Him. Calvin's basic thought seems to be that the Sunday service is to be continued as a Eucharist, even if the elements of bread and wine be not present. Within the whole service the ecclesiastical prayers take a considerable part, even as far as the time is concerned. This means that the Reformer laid much more stress on prayer than generally is assumed, or as the practice shows of many Church services of the present day in which only little time is actually allotted to the offering of prayers. Let us here remember what Calvin teaches about prayer, that it forms the main action of man in the service of God. It is the service, since it forms the actual intercourse between God and man. In prayer we respond to God's calling us. But since God addresses us through His Word, that is through His Son Jesus Christ the Mediator, we are also to play our part in the same manner by uttering to Him the words which Christ speaks on our behalf. Prayers and Eucharist are in very close relationship with each other because both express in truth the union between God and us through Christ, as well as the power of the Holy Spirit who is also the active agent of God for both.

It is also of interest that Calvin did give consideration to free prayer following the sermons. He did not seem to be too afraid of some spiritual extravagances that might creep into the services if he left the door open to free prayers, We mentioned above that they would provide the minister with the opportunity to refer to things relevant to the circumstances and conditions in which the congregation lived. But it is suggested that the Reformer had in mind also that not all prayers in the Church service had to be in set form because the Holy Spirit is a free Spirit to whom must be given the liberty to utter independently the words of petitions even through the mouth of

a minister of the Church, for 'each must privately examine himself so that each can make his particular confession of his own guilt'. 1)

To sum up we have to assert that Calvin's teaching on prayers is well in conformity with his actual prayers. We have noticed that he consciously bases them on the Holy Scriptures. Christology is the centre round which all theological thinking in regard to prayer revolves. In practice Calvin was anxious to be sure that the prayers in the Church services would bear the authentic Christian stamp by their adherence to Scripture in the first place, and also by their simplicity and purity which had been derived from the worship of the early Church. 'Whatever human action or worship does not arise out of the Word of God is false and unstable and is not approved by God Himself'.2)

The adaption of both prayers in set form and prayers ex tempore strongly suggests that Calvin's idea was that the prayers that we offer must be disciplined, which means subject to God's Word and especially to the Lord's Prayer. But within that discipline there is also the freedom to offer a free prayer according to the urging of the Holy Spirit. It is the content as well as the form of Calvin's prayers from which our present generation has again to learn. For it is within the Protestant Churches that prayer must be given more and better consideration since many Churches of the more conventional tradition have long ago arrived at prayers that not only show signs of great impoverishment by their shortness, but also have become meaningless in regard to their content, because they lost the unconditional and straightforward frankness which is so significant in Calvin's prayers. At the same time the Churches of the more liberal and

1) CR. 31, 604.

2) CR. 45, 10.
CR. 32, 327.

unconventional type would do well to attend to Calvin's teaching on discipline in prayer, since the prayers in those Churches often bear too much the stamp of neo-sacerdotalism by which the minister has put himself again as a kind of mediator between God and the congregation. Unless we are willing to attend to the form and content of the Lord's Prayer and keep it consistently as our guide, we fail to pray in such a way that it is acceptable before God Almighty. Moreover, we should come to a deeper realisation of the central place Christ must take as the sole Mediator of our prayers in which respect Calvin himself has set such a clear example.

APPENDIX

**A compilation of prayers
extracted from various sources.**

PRIERES ECCLESIASTIQUES

DIEU TOUT-UISSANT, Pere celeste, tu nous as promis de nous exaucer en nos requestes que nous te ferions au nom de ton Fils Iesus Christ bien aimé nostre Seigneur, et aussi nous sommes instruits par doctrine de luy et ses Apostres, de nous assembler en son nom, avec promesses qu'il sera au milieu de nous, et qu'il sera nostre intercesseur envers toy, pour impetrer toutes choses dont nous consentirons sur la terre.

Premierement nous avons ton commandement de priere pour ceux que tu as constituez sur nous superieurs et gouverneurs: en apres pour toutes les necessitez de ton peuple, et mesme de tous hommes. Parquoy en confiance de ta saint doctrine, et de tes promesses, d'autant que devant ta face, et au nom de ton Fils nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ nous sommes ici congregez, nous te supplions affectueusement nostre bon Dieu et Pere, au nom de nostre Sauveur unique et Mediateur, vueille-nous par ta clemence infinie gratuitement pardonner nos offences, et tellement attirer et eslever à toy nos pensees et nos desirs, que tout nostre coeur nous te puissions requerrir, voire selon ton bon plaisir, et volonté laquelle seule est raisonnable.

Nous te prions, Pere celeste, pour tous princes et seigneurs tes serviteurs, ausq uels tu as commis le regime de ta iustice: et singulierement pour les Seigneurs de ceste Cité, qu'il te plaise leur communiquer ton Esprit, seul bon et vraiment principal, iournellement leur augmenter: tellement que reconnoissans en vraye foy Iesus Christ ton Fils nostre Seigneur estre Roy des rois, et Seigneur sur tous seigneurs, comme tu luy as donné toute puissance au ciel et en terre, ils cherchent de le servir, et exalter son regne en leur domination, gouvernans leurs subiets, qui sont les creatures de tes mains, et brebis de ta Pasture selon ton bon plaisir: à fin que tant ici que par toute la terre, estans maintenus en bonne paix, nous te servions en toute sainteté et honnesteté: et estans delivrez de la crainte de nos ennemis, te puissions rendre louange en toute nostre vie.

Aussi nous te prions, Pere veritable et Sauveur, pour tous ceux que tu as ordonnez Pasteurs à tes fideles, et ausquels tu as commis la charge des ames, et la dispensation de ton sacré Evangile, que tu les conduises par ton Saint Esprit, à fin qu'ils soyent trouvez fideles et loyaux Ministres de ta gloire, ayans tousiours ce but que toutes les povres ouailles esgarees soyent recueillies et reduites au Seigneur Iesus Christ, principal Pasteur et Prince des Evesques: à fin que de iour en iour elles profitent et accroissent en luy à toute iustice et sainteté. D'autrepart vueille delivrer toutes tes Eglises de la gueule des loups ravissans, et de tous mercenaires qui cherchent leur ambition ou profit, et non point l'exaltation de ton saint nom tant seulement, et le salut de ton troupeau.

Après nous te prions, Dieu tres-benin et Pere misericordieux, pour tous hommes generalement, que comme tu veux estre recognu Sauveur de tout le monde en la redemption faite de ton Fils Iesus Christ, que ceux qui sont encores estranges de sa cognoissance, estans en tenebres et captivité d'erreur et ignorance, par illumination de ton Saint Esprit et la predication de ton Evangile, soyent reduits à la droite voye de salut, qui est de te cognoistre seul vraye Dieu et celuy que tu as envoyé Iesus Christ: que ceux que tu as desia visitez par ta grace, et illuminez par la cognoissance de ta Parole, croissent iournellement en bien, estans enrichis de tes benedictions spirituelles: à fin que tous ensamble t'adorions d'un coeur et une bouche, et donnions honneur et hommage à ton Christ, nostre Maistre, Roy et Legislatteur.

Pareillemant, ô Dieu de toute consolation, nous te recommandons tous ceux que tu visites et chasties par croix et tribulations, les peuples que tu affliges par peste, ou guerre, ou famine: les personnes battues de povreté, ou prison, ou maladie, ou bannissement, ou autre calamité de corps, ou affliction d'esprit: que tu leur vueilles faire entendre ton affection paternelle, qui est de les chastier pour leur amendement: à fin que de tout leur coeur ils se convertissent à toy et estans convertis, reçoivent entiere consolation, et soyent delivrez de tous maux.

Singulierement, nous te recommandons tous nos povres freres qui sont dispersez sous la tyrannie de l'Antechrist, estans destituez de la pasture de vie, et privez de la liberté de pouvoir invoquer publicquement ton nom: mesme qui sont detenus prisonniers ou persecutez par les ennemis de ton Evangile: Qu'il te plaise, ô Pere de grace, les fortifier par la vertu de ton Esprit, tellement qu'ils ne defaillent iamais, mais qu'ils persistent constamment en ta sainte vocation: les secourir et leur assister comme tu cognois qu'il en est besoin, les consoler en leurs afflictions, les maintenir en ta garde contre le rage des loupes, les augmenter en tous les dons de ton Esprit, à fin qu'ils te glorifient tant en la vie qu'en la mort.

Finalement, ô Dieu et Pere, ottroye-nous aussi à nous qui sommes ici assemblez au nom de ton Fils Iesus, à cause de sa Parole, (Et de sa sainte Cene) que nous reconnoissons droitement et sans hypocrisie, en quelle perdition nous sommes naturellement: et quelle condamnation nous meritons et amassons de iour en iour sur nous, par nostre mal-heureuse vie et de desordonnee, à fin que voyans qu'il n'y a rien de bien en nous, et que nostre chair et nostre sang ne sont point capables de posseder en heritage ton Royaume, de toute nostre affection et en ferme fiance nous-nous rendions entierement à ton cher Fils Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur seul Sauveur et Redempteur, à fin que luy habitant en nous, mortifie nostre vieil Adam, nous renouvelant en une meilleure vie, par laquelle ton nom, selon qu'il est saint et digne, soit exalté et glorifié par tout et en toutes places.

Pareillement, que tu ayes la seigneurie et le gouvernement sur nous tous: et que iournellement et de plus en plus nous apprenions de nous submettre et assubiectir à ta Maiesté: tellement que tu sois Roy et Dominateur par tout, conduisant ton peuple par le sceptre de ta Parole, et par la vertu de ton Esprit, confondant tes ennemis par la force de ta verité et iustice. Et ainsi, que toute puissance et hautesse contrevenante à ta gloire soit de iour en iour destruite et abolie, iusqu'à ce que l'accomplissement de ton royaume vienne, et la perfection en soit du tout etablie, quand tu apparoiras en iugement en la personne de ton Fils. Que nous avec toutes creatures te rendions vraye et parfaite obeissance, ainsi que tes Anges celestes ne demandent sinon d'executer tes commandements: et par ce moyen que ta volonté soit accomplie sans quelque contradiction, et que tous se rengent à te servir et complaire, renonçans à leur propre vouloir, et à tous desirs de leur chair. Que nous cheminans en l'amour et en la crainte de ton nom, soyons nourris par ta bonté: et que tu nous donnes toutes choses qui nous sont necessaires et expedientes, pour manger nostre pain paisiblement: à fin que voyans que tu as soin de nous, te recognoissions mieux nostre Pere, et attendions tous biens de ta main, ostans et retirans nostre fiance de toutes creatures, pour la mettre entierement en toy et en ta benignité.

Et pour ce que durant ceste vie mortelle nous sommes povres pecheurs, si plains de fragilité que nous defaillons assiduellement, et nous fourvoyons de la droite voye, qu'il te plaise nous pardonner nos fautes, par lesquelles nous sommes redevables à ton iugement: et que par ceste remission tu nous delivres de l'obligation de mort eternelle, en laquelle nous sommes. Qu'il te plaise donc ne nous imputer point le mal qui est en nous, tout ainsi que par ton commandement, nous oublions les iniures qu'on nous fait, et lieu de chercher vengeance, procurons le bien de nos ennemis.

Finalemment, qu'il te plaise pour l'avenir nous soustenir par ta vertu, à fin que par l'infirmité de nostre chair nous ne trebuschions. Et d'autant que de nous-mesme nous sommes si debiles, que nous ne pourrions demeurer fermes une minute de temps: d'autrepart, que nous sommes circuis et assailis continuellement de tant d'ennemis, que le diable, le monde, le peché, et nostre propre chair, ne cessent de nous faire la guerre, vueille-nous fortifier par ton Saint Esprit, et nous armer de tes graces, à fin que puissions constamment resister, à toutes tentations, et perseverer en ceste bataille spirituelle, iusqu'à ce qu'obtenions pleine victoire, pour triompher une fois en ton Royaume, avec nostre capitaine et protecteur nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, Amen.

(Recveil des Opuscules, p. 241 ff.)

CONFESSION

Seigneur Dieu, Pere eternal et tout-puissant, nous confessons et reconnoissons sans feintise devant ta saint Maiesté, que nous sommes poveres pecheurs, conceus et nais en iniquité et corruption, enclins à mal-faire, inutiles à tout bien: et que de nostre vice nous transgressons sans fin et sans cesse tes saints commandemens. En quoy faisant nous acquerons par ton iuste iugement ruine et perdition sur nous. Toutes fois, Seigneur, nous avons desplaisir en nous memes de t'avoir offensé, et condamnons nous et nos vices, avec vraye repentance, desirans que ta grace subviene à nostre calamité.

Vueille dancques avoir pitié de nous, Dieu et Pere tres-benin, et plein de misericorde, au nom de ton Fils Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur: et en effaçant nos vices et macules, eslargi-nous et augmente de iour en iour les graces de ton Saint Esprit, à fin que reconnoissans de tout nostre coeur nostre iniustice, nous soyons touchez de desplaisir, qui engendre droite penitence: laquelle nous mortifiant à tous pechez, produise fruits de iustice et innocence, q uite soyent agreables par iceluy Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur, Amen.

(Recveil des Opuscules, p. 240)

ORAIISON POUR DIRE AU MATIN EN SE LEVANT

Mon Dieu, mon Pere et mon Sauveur, puis qu'il t'a pleu me faire la grace de passer la nuict pour venir iusques au iour present: vueille moy aussi maintenant faire ce bien, que ie l'employe tout à ton service: tellement que ie ne pense, ne die, ne face rien, sinon pour te complaire et abeir à ta bonne volonté: à fin que par ce moyen toutes mes oeuvres soyent à la gloire de ton nom, et edification de mes prochains. Et comme il te plaist de faire luire ton soleil sur la terre, pour nous esclairer corporellement, aussi vueille-moy par la clarté de ton Esprit illuminer mon entendement et mon coeur, pour me diriger en la droite voye de ta iustice. Ainsi à quelque chose que ie m'applique, que tousiours ma principale fin et intention soit de cheminer en ta crainte, te servir et honorer, attendant tout mon bien et ma prosperité de ta seule benediction: à fin de ne rien attenter qui ne soit agreable. D'avantage, travaillant tellement pour mon corps et pour la vie presente, que ie regarde tousiours plus loin, à savoir, à la vie celeste, laquelle tu as promis à tes enfants.

Neantmoins, qu'il te plaise et selon le corps et selon l'ame estre mon protecteur, me fortifiant contre toutes les tentations du diable, et me delivrant de tous les dangers terriens qui me pourroyent advenir. Et pource que ce n'est rien de bien commencer qui ne persevere, vueille-moy non seulement pour ce iourd'huy recevoir en ta sainte conduite, mais pour toute ma vie: continuant et augmentant iournellement ta grace en moy, iusqu'à ce que tu m'ayes amené à la pleine conionction de ton Fils Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur, qui est le vray soleil de nos ames, luisant iour et nuict, sans fin. Et à perpetuité. Et à fin que ie puisse obtenir telles graces de toy, vueille oublier toutes mes faultes passes, me les pardonnant par ta misericorde infinie, comme tu as promis à tous ceux qui t'en requerront de bon coeur. Exauce-moy, Pere de misericorde, par nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, Amen.

(Recveil des Opuscules, p. 237)

ORAIISON POUR DIRE AU SOIR DEVANT QUE D'ALLER COUCHER

O Seigneur Dieu, puis qu'il t'a pleu creer la nuict pour le repos de l'homme, comme tu luy as ordonné le iour pour travailler: vueille-nous faire la grace de tellement reposer ceste nuict selon le corps, que nos ames veillent tousiour à toy, et que nos coeurs soyent esleuez en ton amour: et que tellement nous-nous demettions de toutes sollicitudes terriennes pour nous soulager selon que nostre infirmité le requiert, que iamais nous ne t'oublions: mais que la souvenance de ta bonnté et grace demeure tousiours imprimee en nostre memoire: et que par ce moyen nos consciences ayent aussi bien leur repos spirituel, comme les corps prennent le leur.

D'avantage, que nostre dormir ne soit point excessif pour complaire outre mesure à l'aise de nostre chair: mais seulement pour satisfaire à la fragilité de nostre nature, à fin de nous disposer à ton service, Aussi qu'il te plaise nous conserver impolus tant en nos corps qu'en nos esprits, et nous conserver contre tous dangers, à ce que nostre dormir mesme soit à la gloire de ton nom.

Et pource que le iour ne s'est point passé que ne t'ayons offensé en plusieurs sortes, selon que nous sommes povers pecheurs: ainsi que tout est maintenant caché les tenebres que tu envoyes sur la terre vueille aussi ensevelir toutes nos fautes par ta misericorde, à fin que par icelles nous ne soyons reculez de ta face, Amen.

(Recueil des Opuscules, p. 239)

PRIERE POUR DIRE AVANT LE REPAS

Seigneur auquel gist la plenitude de tous biens, vueille estendre ta benediction sur nous tes poveres serviteurs, et nous sanctifier les donns lesquels nous recevons de ta largesse, à fin que nous en puissions user sobrement et purement selon ta bonne volonté: et par ce moyen te reconnoistre Pere et autheur de toute benignité: cerchans tousiours principalement le pain spirituel de ta Parole, dont nos ames soyent nourriers eternellement, par Iesus Christ ton Fils nostre Seigneur, Amen.

ACTION DE GRACES POUR DIRE APRES LE REPAS

Seigneur Dieu, nous te rendons graces de tous les benefices que nous recevons asiduellement de ta main, de ce qu'il te plaist nous substenter en ceste vie corporelle, nous administrant toutes nos necessitez: singulierement de ce qu'il t'a pleu nous regenerer en l'esperance d'une meilleure vie, laquelle tu nous as revelee par ton saint Evangile. Te prians qu'il te plaise ne permettre pas que nos affections soyent ici enracinees en ces choses corruptibles, mais que nous regardions tousiours plus haut, attendans nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, iusqu'à ce qu'il apparaisse en nostre redemption, Amen.

(Recveil des Opuscules, p. 239)

PRAYERS SAID EX TEMPORE

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la face de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le prians qu'il luy plaise nous ouurir tellement les yeux, que nous n'attentions plus de rien imaginer de luy selon nostre sens charnel: mais que nous recourions du tout à sa sainte parolle, par laquelle il s'est reuelé à nous, receuans aussi ses Sacramens, par lesquels nous sommes encores mieux confermez en sa cognoissance, nous ne demandions sinon de suyure la pureté qu'il nous monstre en sa doctrine, pour n'estre point seduis de nul erreur qui nous puisse diuertir de luy, et de la pure religion en laquelle nous auons estre enseignez. Et cependant, comme nous luy faisons hommage en esprit: que nous le seruions aussi de tout nostre coeur, cognoissance que ni par ceremonies, ni par choses externes il ne peut estre serui ni adoré de nous, que nous luy rendions l'honneur et la louage qu'il demande. Et que cependant il luy plaise de corriger toutes les idolatries et superstitions qui sont au monde, et d'en purger tellement la terre qu'il a dediee à l'vsage des hommes, que son Nom y soit purement reclamé et inuoqué. Que pour ce faire il luy plaise susciter vrais et fideles ministres de sa parolle, etc..

(Sermon 23 sur Deuteronomie, p. 131
du Ieudi vingttroisiesme de May, 1555)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la face de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le prians qu'il nous les face mieux sentir, que nous n'auons point fait, et que de plus en plus nous profitons à obseruer sa sainte Loy. Et d'autant que nous sommes si corrompus et peruers, que toutes nos pensees et affections tendent tout au rebours: qu'il luy plaise nous reformer par son saint Esprit, et nous approcher tellement de soy, qu'en renonçant au monde, en mesprisant ces choses mortelles et caduques, nous aspirions à son royaume celeste là où nous pourrons auoir tout contentement, et repos. Ainsi nous dirons tous: Dieu tout puissant, Pere celeste, etc..

(Sermon 39 sur Deuteronomie, p. 222
du Mercredi troisieme de Iuillet, 1555)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la face de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il nous les face mieux sentir que nous n'auons point fait par ci deuant: et que cognoissans la necessité que nous auons de le prier, veu qu'à chaune minute de temps nous serions coupables de mort eternelle, et qu'en corps et en ame il nous faudroit perir: qu'il luy plaise de nous enflammer par son saint Esprit, en telle sorte que nous l'inuoquions sans feintise, et que nous ayons plus grand soin de ce faire, et de nous y exercer à toutes heures: comme aussi nous y deuons estre sollicités par le besoin qui est, voyans les pouretés desquelles nous peririons, n'estoit que nous fussions secours de luy, et par sa grace. Et que cependant il nous supporte en nos foiblesses, et qu'il ne permette point que nous soyons estongés du corps de son Eglise: mais que nous cognoissions par experience que les prieres qui se font par tout le monde profitent à ses esleus, et que leurs prieres aussi nous profitent, et que ce soit pour nous establir tousiours de plus en plus en ceste vnion sacree qu'il a faite au nom de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ; que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, reduisant tous poures ignorans de la captivité d'erreur et tenebres à la droite voye de salut. Que pour ce faire, il luy plaise susciter vrais et fideles ministres de sa parole, qui ne cherchent point leur profit et leur ambition: mais l'exaltation de son saint nom tant seulement, et le salut de son poure troupeau, au contraire, etc..

(Sermon 65 sur Deueteronome, p. 230
du Vendredi penultiesme iour
d'Aoust, 1555)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il nous les face mieux sentir, et que nous soyons enflammez par cela de nous adonner tant mieux à son seruire, et de l'adorer, non seulement quant à la ceremonie, mais aussi pour appliquer toute nostre vie à son obeissance, et pour nous dedier pleinement à ceste integrité, laquelle il nous monstre par sa sainte parole. Et que nous taschions d'y amener les autres, et de ne point souffrir que ceux qui sont desia au bon chemin s'escartent: mais que d'un commun accord nous retenions au troupeau ceux qui y sont desia entrez: et y attirions les autres par nostre bonne vie et conuersation, obuians à tous scandales et confusions par lesquelles la vraye religion pourroit estre peruertie. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 103 sur Deueteronome
du Lundi dixhuitiesme iour
de Nouembre, 1555)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il nous les face mieux sentir que nous n'auons point fait, afin de nous attirer de plus en plus en vne vraye repentance: et que nous soyons tellement abbattus en nous mesme, que nous ne laissions pas d'estre reluez en luy, et de le chercher, et de nous reposer tellement en ses promesses, que nous bataillions constamment par sa vertu inuincible, et contre Satan, et contre tous ses supposts, et contre tout le monde. Quand nous serons empeschez de la seruir, que toutes-fois nous acheuions nostre course, iusques à ce que nous soyons paruenus au but auquel il nous appelle. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 113 sur Deueteronome, p. 664
du Vendredi sixiesme iour de
Decembre, 1555)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il ne permette point qu'en ceste vie mortelle nous soyons si aueugles, que nous ne cognoissons que toutes les miseres et pouretez que nous endurons sont autant d'aduertissemens qu'il nous donne, pour nous faire penser à nous et à nostre vie, afin aussi de nous inciter à repentance. Si donc nous sommes affligez de sa main, que ce ne soit point pour nous faire blasphemer contre son S.Nom, ne pour nous esmouuoire à impatience: mais plustot que nous en soyons domptez, et que nous puissions faire nostre profit de toutes ses corrections pour retourner à luy. Et mesme d'autant que nous voyons le poure monde estre auicourdhuy si plein de pouretez et de miseres, que c'est vn horreur, qu'aussi nous contemplions l'ire de Dieu à cause des pechez qui y regnent. Et que par ce moyen nous soyons retenus: prians Dieu qu'il n'exerce pointvne telle rigueur à l'entcontre de nous: mais qu'ayans nostre refuge à sa misericorde au nom de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, nous soyons touchez d'vne vraye repentance, et que nous y croissions et profitons de plus en plus, iusques à ce qu'estans despouillez de toutes nos imperfections et vices, nostre Dieu nous rueste de sa iustice, à laquelle nous sommes appellez iournellement. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 159 sur Deueteronome, p. 933
du Mardi vingtquatriesme iour de
Mars, 1556)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians de nous toucher d'une telle repentance, qu'estans confus en nos pechez, nous ne demandions sinon de nous remettre du tout entre ses mains. Et qu'ayans obtenu pardon de luy, nous sentions aussi qu'il nous a reformez et que nous luy sommes agreables, pour nous dedier du tout à sa sainte volonté. Et combien qu'il y ait tousiours beaucoup à redire en nous, et que nos appetits et affections nous tirent tout au rebours de ce qu'il nous commande, que nous ne laissions pas toutesfois de batailler à l'encontre, pour nous addonner du tout à luy: et que nous-nous efforcions de plus en plus à cela, cognoissant que c'est nostre souuerain bien: et encores qu'il nous monstre quelque fois signe de rigueur, et qu'il nous chastie: que nous sachions faire nostre profit de cela, pour nous corriger de tous nos vices, pour estre amenez à ceste perfection à laquelle il nous appelle tous les iours. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 162 sur Devteronome, p. 952
du Vendredi vingtseptiesme iour
de Mars, 1556)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il luy plaise de nous toucher tellement, que nous cognoissions qu'il n'y a rien en nous que condamnation: et que cependant nous ne pensions point à chercher des eschappatoires, mais que nous venions nous presenter deuant luy comme à nostre iuge: et que sentant que nous sommes du tout maudits, que nous n'ayons autre remede, sinon que par sa bonté infinie il nous redresse, et nous ramene à soy. Et qu'il luy plaise de nous reduire tellement, nous ayant pardonné nos fautes passes, que nous soyons faits nouvelles creatures par le moyen de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, puis que maintenant il l'a enuoyé au monde, afin de nous remplir de tous biens spirituels. Que donc nous ne fermions point la porte à sa grace: mais que plustost nous luy donnions ouuerture en toute crainte et humilité. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 169 sur Devteronome, p. 964
du Lundi sixiesme iour d'auril,
1556)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il nous les face sentir de plus en plus, et mesme qu'en cognoissant la fragilité qui est en nous, que nous cerchions de nous armer tellement de ses promesses, que nous en soyons munis iusques à la fin, non seulement pour soustenir vn combat ou deux, mais guerroyer tout le temps de nostre vie, et pour demeurer inuincibles contre toutes tentations. Et puis qu'ainsi est que nous deuons dependre du tout de luy, que nous y soyons tellement arrestez, que quand les choses ne nous viendront point à propos selon le monde, pour cela nous ne soyons point effarouchez ni esperdus: mais attendans que luy seul suffira pour tous moyens, que nous-nous remettons à luy, et que là dessus nous taschions à la glorifier: et puis qu'il nous veut gouverner par la main de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, que nous luy soyons dociles et obeissans, et qu'estans asseurez qu'il nous sera bon conducteur et fidelle, et qu'il ne nous defaudra point, que tousiours nous prenions tant plus de courage de nous adonner à luy, et nous y offrir du tout. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 173 sur Deueteronome, p. 1018
du Ieudi vingttroisiesme iour
d'Auril, 1556)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il luy plaise de nous les faire tellement sentir qu'apres auoir cogneu comme nous auons este desbordez, nous ne demandions sinon d'estre redressez par sa main: et s'il luy plaist de nous chastier, que nous portions patiemment toutes les corrections qu'il nous enuoyera. Toutesfois qu'il luy plaise tellement faire profiter sa parolle en nous, que nous n'attendions pas qu'il leue la main pour nous punir: mais que nous receuions les admonitions qui nous sont faites en son Nom, pour nous ranger pleinement à sa volonté: et qu'il nous en ait du tout purgez, et qu'il nous ait tellement reformez à l'obeissance de sa iustice, que nous ne demandions sinon à glorifier son nom, iusques à ce que nous paruenions à la gloire immortelle qui nous est apprestee au ciel, et laquelle nous a esté acquise par nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 188 sur Deueteronome, p. 1100
du Mardi seiziesme iour de Iuin, 1556)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il luy plaise nous les faire sentir de plus en plus: et que nous despouillant de toutes nos meschantes cupiditez il nous retir pleinement à soy, et que nous profitions de iour en iour, et soyons augmentez en ses graces, iusques à ce qu'estans sortis de ce monde nous paruenions à sa gloire celeste. Et que d'autant que nous sommes maintenant vn royaume sacerdotal, qu'il luy plaise nous reuestir de la iustice et intergrité de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, et non point en figure, comme les sacrificateurs de la Loy: mais que par son S. Esprit nous soyons tellement renouvellez, que si nous ne sommes parfaits du premier iour, pour les moins nous aspirions à ceste perfection à laquelle il nous conuie. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 193 sur Deuteronomie, p. 1135
du Mardi dernier iour de Iuin, 1556)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes: le prians qu'il luy plaise nous reformer tellement que nous ne soyons point enyurez en nos cupiditez et affections meschantes: que Satan ne nous ensorcelle point aux delices de ce monde, tellement que nous soyons eslongez de nostre Dieu: mais puis qu'il luy a pleu nous appeller vne fois en la cognoissance de sa verité, et qu'il ne demande sinon de nous attirer à luy: que nous y venions de nostre costé, et qu'vn chacun s'y efforce tellement, que nostre vie soit dediee à son honneur, et qu'on cognoisse que vrayement il regne au milieu de nous: et que nous n'ayons autre but, sinon de nous conformer en tout et par tout à ses loix et à ses saintes ordonnances. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 197 sur Deuteronomie, p. 1160
du Samedi quatrieme iour de Iuillet,
1556)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance de tant de fautes dont nous sommes coupables, le priant qu'il luy plaise nous les faire sentir de plus en plus, et que nous luy attribuions toute louange de nostre prosperité et luy facions hommage de tous les biens que nous receuons de sa main, voire nous dediand du tout a luy et le gloriffians, non seulement de bouche, mais de toutes noz oeures. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 13 sur 2. Samuel,
HR, p. 114)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance de toutes noz fautes, le prians que, de plus en plus, il nous les face sentir, et que ce soit pour nous y desplaire, afin d'en demander pardon, et pour nous en faire retirer aussi avec vne telle repentance, que de plus en plus, nous taschions et esuertuions de nous addonner pleinement à luy, voire en verité et sans fiction, et que tous noz sens et toutes noz pensees se rapportent là, et que nostre vie, puis apres, declare, quel a esté nostre zele. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 19 sur 2. Samuel, HR, p. 171)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance des fautes dont nous sommes coupables deuant luy, le prians qu'il luy plaise nous faire participans des graces qui nous sont icy promises, et que nous puissions tousiours auoir nostre recours a nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, et qu'il nous recoiue en son Nom. Et combien que nous soyons pures pecheurs, que nous obtenions tousiours misericorde, et que les graces qui nous ont esté promises en luy, non seulement nous soyent accomplies, mais que ce soit pour nous confermer en l'esperance du royaume eternel, iusques à ce que nous y soyons paruenus. Et que nous apprenions de plier le col souz ses verges, sachans qu'elles sont a nostre proffit, et que noz tristesses soyent tellement adoucies, que ce qui nous semblera estre amer, ne nous desgouste de sauouer sa bonté au milieu de noz afflictions, puis que nous scauons que le tout sera conuertit a nostre salut. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 23 sur 2. Samuel, HR, p. 206)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance des fautes et offenses dont nous sommes coupables, le prians qu'il nous les face sentir, tellement que ce soit pour nous y desplaire et pour en demander pardon, et que nous apprenions de nous dedier tellement a luy, et en noz personnes et en tout ce que nous aurons receu de luy, que nous ne taschions sinon que son Nom soit glorifié, et d'vser de sa liberalité, en telle sorte qu'elle soit appliquée a son droit vsage, et que, sur tout, nous prenions peine a luy bastir vn temple pour estre adoré et de petis et de grans, et mesmes que ceux qui sont encores eslongnez de sa parolle, soyent reduitz a son obeissance. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 27 sur 2. Samuel, HR. p. 242)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance des fautes infinies dont nous sommes coupables, le prians qu'il luy plaise nous les faire tellement sentir, que ce soit pour en gemir continuellement et pour estre tellement confus, que nous cerchions de nous conformer du tout a sa bonne volonté, et que nous soyons purgez de toute hypocrisie, afin de n'auoir point noz yeux ny noz sens attachez en ce monde ny au regard des hommes, mais que nous ne pensions sinon de cheminer comme en la presence de Dieu et de ses Anges, afin d'estre retenus en telle obeissance, que son Nom soit glorifié par nous, et que nous ne soyons point aueuglez en noz voyes, et que nous ne venions point en compte deuant luy, pour estre iugez selon noz iniquitez. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 33 sur 2. Samuel, HR. p. 294)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en recognoissance des fautes infinies dont nous sommes coupables, le prians qu'il luy plaise nous les faire sentir de plus en plus, et que nous preuenions, par ce moyen, sa rigueur, tellement qu'elle ne se desploye point sur nous, mais que nous la puissions voir sur ses ennemys et les nostres, afin d'estre confermez de plus en plus au tesmoignage qu'il nous donne, d'estre nostre pere et de nous gouverner et conduire tellement et a la vie et a la mort, que nous soyons tousiours ses bien-aimez et que nous reclamions son saint Nom, pour auoir nostre refuge a sa seule bonté. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 40 sur 2. Samuel, HR. p. 356)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance des fautes infinies dont nous sommes coupables, le prians qu'il luy plaise nous humilier de plus en plus pour obtenir pardon, et pour nous faire sentir noz miseres, afin que nous le prions incessamment qu'il luy plaise nous purger de toutes affections terrestres, et sur tout qu'il nous deliure tellement de tout incredulité que ses promesses surmontent noz afflictions, et que nous ne doutions point qu'il ne nous subuienne, et que par ce moyen soyons paisibles, pour nous laisser gouverner par sa main, et nous face surmonter toutes les tentations desquelles nous pourrons estre assailiz. Et que nous combations si vertueusement, que nous monstrions que vrayement nous auons esté soustenus de luy, et qu'il nous conduise en telle perseuerance, que nous paruenions a la fin au royaume eternel, qui est appresté a tous fideles. Et qu'il nous face paracheuer nostre course au milieu des combatz du monde, sans que nous en puissions estre destournez par les astuces de Satan et de ses suppostz. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 51 sur 2. Samuel, HR. p.450)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant sa maiesté en recognoissance de tant de fautes et offences dont nous sommes coupables, le pryans qu'il nous les fasse tellement sentir, que nous puissions en toute humilité nous remettre a toutes les punitions qu'il nous enuoye, et tousiours recognoistre qu'il est iuste iuge, en confessant noz iniquitez, lesquelles nous rendent redeuables deuant luy, et qu'en chemynant ainsi, nous ne doubtions pas, encore que pour vng temps il nous afflige, que ce n'est pas qu'il nous veuille abandonner du tout ny reietter, mais qu'a la fin il aura pitié de nous, et mesmes il conuertira toutes noz miseres en bien, et seront dediees a nostre salut. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Sermon 54 sur 2. Samuel, HR. p.476)

Or nous-nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en recognoissance de tant de fautes et offenses dont nous sommes coupables, le prians que de plus en plus il nous vueille toucher au vif, et que ce soyt pour nous faire renger a lui et non seulement lui demander pardon, mais pour nous purger de toutes noz corruptions et cupiditez charnelles et nous reformer en telle sorte, que nous ne cerchions sinon de lui complaire et lui rendre l'obeissance qu'il requiert de nous. Ainsi nous dirons tous: Dieu tout puissant, pere celeste, etc..

(Sermon 61 sur 2. Samuel, HR. p.537)

Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la Maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en cognoissance de nos fautes, le priant qu'il lui plaise nous les faire tellement sentir, que ce soit pour nous y desplaire: et que nous apprenions de batailler tellement contre toutes tentations, que s'il faut endurer beaucoup de povretez et de miserés en ce monde, quoy qu'il en soit, que cela ne nous debauche pas, et que nous ne declinions point du bon chemin: mais que chacun y resiste, et à soy et à tous ses appetits, et à toutes ses passions: et que nous servions à nostre Dieu tellement, que s'il lui plaist d'esprouver nostre patience, en nous destituant des moyens et commoditez de ce monde: que nous portions le tout d'un courage passible, iusques à ce que nous soions recueillis en cest heureux heritage, où il ne nous defaudra aucune chose, quelle qu'elle soit: mais là nous aurons accomplissement de toute ioye et de toute felicité. Que non seulement, etc..

(Sixieme sermon de Iacob et Esau,
CR. 59, 87)

Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la Maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le priant qu'il nous les face tellement sentir, que ce ne soit pas pour y croupir, ne pour nous y flatter ou endormir: mais pour retourner tellement à nostre Iuge, qu'en lui demandant misericorde, nous la trouvions en lui: et que ce soit pas seulement afin qu'il n'entre point en conte avec nous pour nous imputer nos iniquitez et offenses: mais que par son saint Esprit il nous purge: et que nous soions reformez de plus en plus: et qu'il nous reveille, pour n'estre point obstinez en nos vices: mais que nous pensions à toutes les corrections par lesquelles il nous veut retirer du mauvais chemin, auquel nous avons esté esgarez, et que nous facions tellement nostre profit de tous les adverissemens qu'il nous donne, que nous n'ayons point honte d'estre condamnez de lui, afin d'obtenir misericorde. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais aussi à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Treizieme sermon de Iacob et Esau,
CR. 59, p. 196)

Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le prians qu'il nous les face sentir de plus en plus, et que ce soit pour nous attirer à une droite repentance, et pour nous faire croistre et profiter en la foy, à fin que nous luy soyons vrais sacrifices: et comme nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ s'est offert pour nostre redemption, qu'aussi nous advisions de nous dedier pleinement à luy: et que nous soyons conduits par luy en telle perseverance, qu'en la vie et en la mort nous ne cerchions autre contentment et repos, sinon d'acquiescer à sa bonne volonté, et que nous n'ayons autre chose pour nous glorifier, sinon au salut qui nous a esté acquis en luy. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais aussi à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc.

(Troisieme sermon sur l'Epitre aux Galates,
CR,50, p.314)

Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le priant qu'il nous les face tellement sentir que ce soit pour nous attirer à une droite repentance, et aussi pour le requerir d'user de sa misericorde infinie envers nous, iusques à ce qu'il nous ait tellement purgez de toutes nos imperfections, que nous le puissions cognoistre face à face, tel qu'il est, aspirans à la perfection à laquelle maintenant il nous convie par sa parole et à laquelle il nous faut tendre tout le long de nostre vie, sachans bien que nous n'y pouvons pas parvenir, iusques à ce que nous soyons despouillez de nostre chair et retirez de ceste prison en laquelle nous sommes maintenant retenus sous la servitude de peché. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc.

(Septieme sermon sur l'Epitre aux Galates,
CR,50, p. 363)

Or nous - nous prosternerons devant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le priant qu'il nous les face sentir, et que ce soit pour nous retirer des ordures ausquelles nous sommes plangez, et nous conioindre à nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, en telle sorte qu'il nous attire à Dieu son Pere, et que de plus en plus il nous en face approcher, iusques à ce que nous y soyons conioints pleinement. Ainsi nous dirons, Dieu tout puissant, Pere celeste, etc.

(Treizieme sermon sur l'Epitre aux Galates,
CR, 50, p.442)

Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu en cognoissance de nos fautes, le prians qu'il nous les face tellement sentir, que ce soit non seulement pour luy en demander pardon avec une vraye repentance, mais aussi pour le prier qu'il nous supporte tout le temps de nostre vie, iusques à ce qu'il nous ait retirez en son royaume. Et cependant que de plus en plus il nous reforme par son saint Esprit, à fin que nous ayons tesmoignage d'estre vrayement du nombre de ses enfans, quand nous aurons esté ainsi gouvernez en sa crainte, et que nous ne cerchions sinon à nous adonner du tout à luy. Ainsi nous dirons tous, Dieu tout puissant, pere celeste, etc..

(Dixseptieme sermon sur L'Epitre aux Galates, CR. 50, p. 495)

Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le priant qu'il nous les face tellement sentir, que ce soit pour en gemir et souspirer avec une vraye repentance, et tendre là où il nous appelle, c'est que nous soyons vrayement despouillez de nostre chair et de toutes nos corruptions, pour parvenir à la ioye à laquelle il nous convie iournellement, et à ceste intégrité en laquelle il nous faut profiter tout le temps de nostre vie. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace: mais à tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(Vingtquatrieme sermon sur L'Epitre aux Galates, CR. 50, p. 582)

Or nous-nous prosternerons devant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de nos fautes, le priant que de plus en plus il nous les face sentir; et que nous en soyons tellement touchez que ce soit pour nous amener à une vraye repentance, et que nous cerchions en nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ tout ce que nous voyons nous deffailir: et qu'il y ait une telle humilité qu'estans du tout abatus, et ayans aneanti toute fausse presumption de laquelle nous pourrions estre trompez, nous ne tendions à autre fin, sinon d'estre receus par la pure misericorde de nostre Dieu, pour parvenir à l'heritage eternal. Et que nous taschions de cheminer tellement sous ses commandemens que cependant il luy plaise de nous supporter selon nostre fragilité, iusques à ce qu'il nous en ait du tout despouillez. Ainsi nous dirons tous, Dieu tout puissant, pere celeste, etc..

(Trentedeuxieme sermon sur L'Epitre aux Galates, CR. 50, p. 683)

ECCLESIASTICAL PRAYER WHICH WAS SAID AFTER THE EX TEMPORE
PRAYER

Dieu tout-puissant, Pere celeste, nous reconnoissons en nous-mesme et confessons, comme la verté est, que nous sommes pas dignes de lever les yeux au ciel, pour nous presenter devant ta face: et que nous ne devons pas tant presumer, que nos oraisons soyent exauces de toy, si tu regardes ce qui est en nous. Car nos consciences nous accusent, et nos pechez rendent tesmoignage contre nous: et nous savons que tu es iuste iuge, qui ne iustifies pas les pecheurs et iniques, mais punis les fautes de ceux qui ont transgressé tes commandemens. Ainsi, Seigneur, en considerant toute nostre vie nous sommes confus en nos coeurs, et ne pouvons autre chose, sinon nous abbatre et desesperer, comme si nous estions deia en abysmes de mort. Toutesfois, Seigneur, puis qu'il t'a pleu par ta misericorde infinie, de nous commander que nous t'invoquions, mesme du profond des enfers: et d'autant plus que nous defaillons en nous mesme, que nous ayons nostre refuge à ta souveraine bonnté: puis aussi que tu nous as promis de recevoir nos requestes et supplications, non point en considerant quelle est nostre propre dignité, mais au nom et par le merite de nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ, lequel tu nous as constitué Intercesseur et Advocat: renonçans à toute fiance humaine, nous prenons hardiesse en ta seule bonté pour nous adresser devant toy: et invoquer ton saint nom, pour obtenir misericorde.

Premierement, Seigneur, outre les benefices infinis que tu distribues communément à tous hommes de la terre, tu nous as fait tant de graces speciales, qu'il nous est impossible de les reciter, ne mesme suffisamment comprendre.

Singulierement, il t'a pleu nous appeller à la cognoissance de ton S. Evangile, nous retirant de la miserable servitude du diable, où nous estions: nous delivrant de la maudite idolaterie, et des superstitions où nous estions plongez, pour nous conduire en la lumiere de la verité. Et neantmoins par ingratitude et mesconnoissance, ayans oublié les biens que nous savons receus de ta main, nous avons decliné, nous destournans de toy apres nos concupiscences: n'avons pas rendu l'honneur, ne l'obeissance à ta saint Parole telle que nous devons: n't'avons point exalté et magnifié comme il appartenoit: et combien que tu nous ayes tousiours fidelement admonestez par ta Parole, nous n'avons point escouté tes remonstrances. Nous avons donc peché, Seigneur, nous t'avons offensé. Pourtant nous recevons confusion sur nous et ignominie, reconnoissans que nous sommes griefvement coupables devant ton iugement: et que si tu nous vouldois traiter selon que nous en sommes dignes, que nous ne pouvons attendre que mort et damnation.

Car quand nous voudrions nous excuser, nostre conscience nous accuse, et nostre iniquité est devant toy pour nous condamner. Et de faict, Seigneur, nous voyons comment par les chastimens qui nous sont desia advenus, tu as esté bon droit courroucé contre nous. Car puis que tu es iuste et equitable, ce n'est pas sans cause que tu affliges les tiens. Ayans donc esté battus de tes verges, nous recognoissons que t'avons irrité à l'encontre de nous. Et maintenant nous voyons encores ta main leuee pour nous punir: car les glaives dont tu as accoustumé d'executer ta vengeance, sont maintenant desployez: et les menaces que tu fais contres les pecheurs et iniques, sont toutes appareillees.

Or quand tu nous punirois beaucoup plus rigoureusement que tu n'as fait iusqu'à ceste heure, et que pour une playe nous aurions à en recevoir cent: mesme que les maledictions, desquelles tu as autrefois corrigé les fautes de ton peuple d'Israel, tomberoyent sur nous, nous confessons que ce seroit à bon droit, et ne contredisons pas que nous ne l'ayons bien merité.

Toutesfois Seigneur, tu es nostre Pere, et nous sommes que terre et fange: tu es nostre Createur, et nous sommes les oeuvres de tes mains: tu es nostre Pasteur, et nous sommes ton troupeau: tu es nostre Redempteur, et nous sommes le peuple que tu as racheté: tu es nostre Dieu, et nous sommes ton heritage. Parquoy ne te courrouce point contre nous, pour nous corriger en ta fureur. Que tu n'ayes point memoire de nostre iniquité, pour la punir: mais chastie-nous doucement en ta benignité. Pour nos demerits ton ire est enflammee: mais qu'il te souviene que ton nom est invoqué sur nous, et que nous portons ta marque et ton enseigne. Entretien plustost l'occure que tu as commencee en nous par ta grace, à fin que toute la terre cognoisse que tu es nostre Dieu et Sauveur. Tu sais que les morts qui sont ens enfers, et ceux que tu auras deffaits et confondus, ne te loueront point: mais les ames tristes et desolees, les coeurs abbatus, les consciences oppressees du sentiment de leur mal, et affamees du desire de ta grace, te donneront gloire et louange. Ton peuple d'Israel t'a provoqué à ire plusieurs fois par son iniquité, tu as affligé par ton iuste iugement: mais quand il s'est reduit à toy, tu l'as tousiours recue à pitié. Et quelques griefues que fussent ses offences, pour l'amour de ton alliance que tu avois faite avec tes serviteurs Abraham, Isaac, et Iacob, tu as destourné tes verges et maledictions, lesquelles leur estoyent preparees: tellement que leur oraisons n'ont iamais esté repoussees de toy.

Nous avons, par ta grace, une alliance beaucoup meilleure que nous te pouvons alleguer, c'est celle que tu nous as faite et etablie en la main de Iesus Christ nostre Sauveur: laquelle tu as voulu estre escrite de son sang, et ratifiée par sa mort et passion. Pourtant, Seigneur, renonçons à nous-mesmes, et à toute esperance humaine, nous recourons à ceste Alliance bien-heureuse, par laquelle nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ t'offrant son corps en sacrifice, nous a reconciliez à toy.

Regarde donc, Seigneur, en la face de ton Christ, et non pas en nous à fin que par son intercession ton ire soit appaisée, et que ton visage reluisse sur nous en ioye et en salut: et d'oresenavant vueille-nous recevoir en ta sainte conduite, et nous gouverner par ton Esprit, qui nous regenerer en une meilleure vie: par laquelle ton Nom soit sanctifié. Ton regne advienne. Ta volonté soit faite en la terre comme au ciel. Donne-nous aujourd'huy nostre pain quotidien. Et nous pardonne nos offenses, comme nous pardonnons à ceux qui no'ont offensez. Et ne nous induy point en tentation: mais delivre-nous du mal. Car à toy est le regne la puissance et la gloire, au siecle des siecles, Amen.

Et combien que nous ne soyons pas dignes d'ouvrir la bouche pour nous-mesmes, et le requerir en nostre necessité: neantmoins, puis qu'il t'a pleu nous commander de prier les uns pour les autres, nous te prions pour tous nos povres freres et membres, lesquels tu visites de tes verges, et chastimens, te supplians de destourner ton ire d'eux: nommenment pour N. et N.. Qu'il te souviene, Seigneur, qu'ils sont tes enfans comme nous, et s'ils t'ont offensé, que tu ne laisses point de poursuivre sur eux ta bonté et misericorde, laquelle tu as promis devoir estre perpetuelle envers tous tes fideles. Vueille donc regarder en pitié toutes tes Eglises, et tous peuples que tu as maintenant affligez, ou par peste, ou par guerre, ou par tes autres verges: les personnes battues de tes verges, soit de maladie, prison, ou poverté, les consolant tous, selon que tu cognois qu'ils en ont besoin: et en leur faisant profiter tes chastimens a leur correction, les confermer en bonne patience, et moderer ta rigueur: et en la fin, en les delivrant, leur donner pleine matiere de se resiouir en ta bonté, et benir ton saint nom.

Singulierement qu'il te plaise d'avoir l'oeil sur ceux qui travaillent pour la querelle de ta verité, tant en general qu'en particulier, pour les confermer en constance inuicible, les defendre, leur assister en tout et par tout: renversant toutes les pratiques et complots de leurs ennemis et les tiens, tenant leur rage bridee, les rendant confus en l'audace qu'ils entreprennent contre toy, et les membres de ton Fils. Et ne permets que la Chrestienté soit du tout desolee: ne permets que la memoire de ton nom soit abolie en terre, ne permets que ceux sur lesquels tu as voulu ton nom estre invoqué perissent: et que les Turcs, Payens, Papistes, et autres infideles se glorifient en te blasphemant.

Nous te prions aussi, Pere celeste, pour tous princes et seigneurs tes serviteurs, ausquels tu as commis le regime de ta iustice: et singulierement pour les Seigneurs de ceste Cité, qu'il te plaise leur communiquer ton Esprit seul bon et vrayement principal, iournellement leur augmenter: tellement que recognoissans en vraye foy Iesus Christ ton Fils nostre Seigneur estre le Roy des rois, Seigneur sur tous seigneurs, comme tu luy as donné toute puissance au ciel et en terre, ils cherchent de le servir, et exalter son regne en leur dominion, gouvernans leurs subiets, qui sont les creatures de tes mains,

et brebis de ta Pasture, selon ton bon plaisir: à fin que tant ici, que par toute la terre estans maintenus en bonne paix, nous te servions en toute sainteté et honnêteté: et estans delivrez de la crainte de nos ennemis, te puissions rendre louange en toute nostre vie.

Aussi nous te prions, Pere veritable et Sauveur, pour tous ceux que tu as ordonnez pasteurs à tes fideles, et ausquels tu as commis le regime des ames, et la dispensation de ton sacré Evangile, que tu les conduises par ton saint Esprit, à fin qu'ils soyent trouvez fideles et loyaux ministres de ta gloire: ayans tousiours ce but, que toutes les povres ouailles esgarees soyent recueillies et reduites au Seigneur Iesus Christ, principal Pasteur et prince des Evesques: à fin que de iour en iour elles profitent et accroissent en luy, à toute iustice et sainteté. D'autrepart, vueille delivrer toutes tes Eglises de la gueule des loups ravissant, et de tous mercenaires, qui cherchent leur ambition ou profit, et non point l'exaltation de ton saint nom tant seulement, et le salut de ton troupeau.

Après nous te prions, Dieu tres-benin et Pere misericordieux, pour tous hommes generalment, que comme tu veux estre reconnu Sauveur de tout le monde, en la redemption faite par ton Fils Iesus Christ que ceux qui sont encores estranges de sa cognoissance, estans en tenebres et captivité d'erreur et ignorance, par illumination de ton S. Esprit et la predication de ton Evangile, soyent reduits à la droite voye de salut, qui est de te cognoistre seul vraye Dieu, et celuy que tu as envoyé Iesus Christ: que ceux que tu as desia visitez par ta grace, et illuminez par la cognoissance de ta Parole croissent icurnellement en bien, estans enrichins de tes benedictions spirituelles, à fin que tous ensemble t'adorions d'un coeur et d'une bouche, et donnions honneur et hommage à ton Christ, nostre Maistre, Roy et Legislatteur.

(Recueil des Opuscules, p. 245 ff.)

APRES AVOIR ACHEVE LA CENE

Pere celeste nous te rendons louanges et graces eternelles, que tu nous as estlargi un tel bien à nous povres pecheurs, de nous avoir attirez en la communion de ton Fils Iesus Christ nostre Seigneur, l'ayant livré pour nous à la mort, et nous donnant en viande et nourriture de vie eternelle. Maintenant aussi ottroye-nous ce bien, de ne permettre, que iamais nous mettions en oubli ces choses: mais plustost les ayans imprimees en nos coeur, nous croission et augmentaions assiduellement en la foy, laquelle besongne en toutes bonnes oeuvres: et en ce faisant, ordonnions et poursuyvons toute nostre vie à l'avancement de ta gloire, et edification de nos prochains, par iceluy Iesus Christ ton Fils, qui en l'unité du saint Esprit, vit et regne avec toy Dieu eternellement, Amen.

DU BAPTESME

Seigneur Dieu, Pere Eternel et tout-puissant, puis qu'il t'a pleu par clemence infinie nous promettre que tu seras Dieu de nous et de nos enfans, nous te prions qu'il te plaise de confermer ceste grace en l'enfant present, engendré de pere et de mere, lesquelles tu as appelez en ton Eglise: et comme il t'est offert et consacré de par nous, que tu le vueilles recevoir en ta sainte protection, te declarant estre son Dieu et Sauveur, en luy remettant le peché originel, duquel est coupable toute la lignee d'Adam: puis apres la sanctification par ton Esprit, à fin que quand il viendra en aage de cognoissance, il te reconnoisse et adore comme son seul Dieu: te glorifiant en toute sa vie, pour obtenir tousiours de toy remission de ses pechez. Et à fin qu'il puisse obtenir telles graces, qu'il te plaise l'incorporer en la communion de nostre Seigneur Iesus, pour estre participant de tous ses biens, à fin que le Baptesme que nous luy communiquons selon ton ordonnance, produise son fruict et sa vertu telle qu'elle nous est declaree par ton Evangile.

(Recveil des Opuscules, p. 250)

DU MARIAGE

Prions tous d'un nostre Pere.

Dieu tout-puissant, tout bon et tout sage, qui dens le commencement as preveu qu'il n'estoit pas bon que l'homme fust seul, à cause dequoy tu luy as creé une aide semblable à luy, et as ordonné que deux fussent un: nous te prions et humblement requérons, puis qu'il t'a pleu appeler ceux-ci au saint estat de Mariage, que de ta grace et bonté leur vueilles donner et envoyer ton S.Esprit: à fin qu'en vraye et ferme foy, selon ta bonne volonté, ils vivent saintement surmontans toutes mauvaises affections, edifiens les autres en toute honnesteté et chasteté: leur donnant ta benediction, ainsi qu'à tes fideles serviteurs, Abraham, Isaac, et Iacob: qu'ayans sainte lignee, ils te louent et servent, apprenans icelle, et la nourrissans à ta louange et gloire, et à l'utilité du prochain, en l'avancement et exaltation de ton saint Evangile. Exauce-nous, Pere de misericorde, par nostre Seigneur Iesus Christ ton tres-cher Fils, Amen.

Nostre Seigneur vous remplisse de toutes graces, et en tout bien vous doint vivre ensemble longuement et saintement.

(OS 2, 55)

PRAYERS SAID EX TEMPORE, TRANSLATED BY THE CALVIN TRANSLATION SOCIETY

Grant, Almighty God, that as we cease not, though favoured with many blessings, to provoke thee by our misdeeds, as though we avowedly carried on war against thee, - O grant, that we being at length warned by those examples, by which thou invitest us to repentance, may restrain our depraved nature, and in due time repent, and so devote ourselves to thy service, that thy name through us may be glorified, and that we may strive to bring into the way of salvation those who seem to be now lost, so that thy mercy may extend far and wide, and that thus thy salvation, obtained through Christ thine only-begotten Son, may be known and embraced by all nations. - Amen.

(Commentaries on Jeremiah, end of chapter 3)

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast not only once kindled among us the light of celestial truth, but also invitest us daily to partake of the salvation which has been set before us, - O grant, that we may not close our eyes, nor render deaf our ears, nor harden ourselves in our sins, but that as thou ceasest not continually to call us to thyself, so we may earnestly strive to hasten to thee, and to persevere in the course of our holy calling, so that we may draw nearer daily to its end, until thou receivest us at length into that celestial kingdom, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Commentaries on Jeremiah, chapter 4, 23 - 26)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are in like manner at this day so torpid, that we are not moved by thy threatenings, nor do the kind and friendly warnings, by which thou invitest us to thyself, prevail with us, - O grant, that we may at length learn to attend to the truth, in whatever form thou settest it before us, and that we may be teachable and obedient, when thou only invitest us, and that if we become hardened, we may be also touched by thy threatenings, and not tempt thy patience, but suffer ourselves to be brought under thy yoke, and so submit to thee, that thou mayest through our whole life rule over us, and shew to us thy paternal love, so that, having faithfully served thee in this world, we may come at length into that blessed rest which is prepared for us in heaven by Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 42 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that though the same hardness is inbred in us as in thine ancient people, we may not become rooted in it; but do thou rouse us by thy Spirit, that we may suffer ourselves to be gently governed by thy word, and be so touched by thy threatening, that we may not defer the time whenever thou announcest to us thy judgement, but strive to be immediately reconciled to thee: and as there is no other way of being reconciled except through thine only-begotten Son, may we in true faith embrace the favour which thou offerest to us in thy gospel, and also devote ourselves wholly to thee, being truly penitent of our sins; and as we ought to make progress to the end of life, may we strive more and more to put off all the lusts of our flesh, until we shall at length be made partakers of that glory which thine only-begotten Son has prepared for us. - Amen.

(Lecture 48 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as so many of the people who have been gathered by thee, that they might be the body of thine only-begotten Son, have fallen away, and have by their ingratitude alienated themselves from the hope of eternal salvation, - O grant, that they may again at this day be united together, and hold with us the true unity of faith, so that with one heart and one mouth we may profess thee as our God and Father, and so learn to swear by thy name, that we may acknowledge thee as our Judge, and ascribe to thee all power over us, until we shall at length enjoy that eternal inheritance, into the hope of which thou hast called us and daily invitest us, through Christ Jesus our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 51 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are taught by the Teacher whom thou hast set over us, to seek our daily bread from thee, we may know that whenever thou chastisest us with scarcity, we are justly visited by thy hand: and shouldst thou at any time deal severely with us, may we never cease to implore thy mercy, and feel assured that thou wilt ever be merciful and propitious to us, provided we decline not from the way which thou hast pointed out to us, even that thy Son will reconcile us to thee, and that his blood is our only satisfaction; and may we not look to anything else, even in seeking our salvation, but that thy name may be more and more glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 55 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou art graciously pleased to exhort us to repent, and withholdest thine hand, yea, and allowest us the opportunity to repent, - O grant, that we may not obstinately provoke against ourselves thy extreme vengeance, but render ourselves obedient to thee, so that thou mayest not only hear others praying for us, but that our own prayers may also obtain pardon from thee, especially through the intercession of Christ, thine only-begotten Son, who has once for all reconciled thee to us, and whose perpetual intercession is to continue to reconcile us to thee, until we shall appear at length before thee with all our spots and filth wholly washed away, and be made partakers of that glory which has been obtained for us by Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 58 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are wholly nothing and less than nothing, we may know our nothingness, and having cast away all confidence in the world as well in ourselves, we may learn to flee to thee as suppliants, and so put our trust in thee for our present life and for eternal salvation, that thou alone mayest be glorified: and may we be devoted to thee through the whole course of our life, and so persevere in humility and in calling on thy name, that thou mayest not only for once bring us help, but that we may know that thou art always present with those who truly and from heart call upon thee, until we shall at length be filled with the fulness of all those blessings, which are laid up for us in heaven by Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 66 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only in former times sent thy prophets, but makest the testimony of thy will to be declared to us daily, - O grant, that we may learn to render ourselves teachable and submissive to thee, and so willingly bear thy yoke, that thy holy word may gain among us that reverence which it deserves: and may we so submit ourselves to thee, while thou speakest to us by men, that we may at length enjoy a view of thy glory, in which will consist our perfect felicity: and that we may not only contemplate thy glory face to face, but also hear thee thyself speaking, and so speaking, that we shall delight in that sweetness, which is laid up for us in hope, through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 68 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as virulent tongues now surround us, and the devil has many mercenaries, who have nothing else in view but to prevent by clamours whatever is rightly derived from thee, and has proceeded from thy mouth, - O grant, that we may firmly oppose such intrigues, also stand with resolute minds against all their violent artifices, and proceed in the course of thy holy calling, until we shall at length surely know that they who trust in thee, and faithfully devote themselves to thy service, are never left without thy help; and that, having at last finished our warfare, we may be gathered into that blessed rest which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 77 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that we, having been all slaves to sin and to iniquity, but regenerated by the Spirit of thine only-begotten Son, may truly and with sincere desire seek to serve and worship thee alone, and so consecrate ourselves to thee, that it may appear that we do not falsely profess the name of Christ, but that we are truly his members, being partakers of that new life which he brought us: and may we make such progress in it, that, having finished our course on earth, we may at length come to that fulness of life and happiness which has been procured for us by him, and which is laid up in heaven for us. - Amen.

(Lecture 85 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as nothing necessary to be known for salvation is wanting in thy holy and celestial oracles, we may carefully and diligently study them, and so labour to make progress in the fear of thy name, in reliance on that grace which is offered to us in Christ, that we may derive real fruit from the reading and hearing of thy word; and may we also learn to turn everything to edification, so that thy name may be really glorified in us, and that we may through the whole course of our life make progress in faith and repentance, until we shall at length attain to that perfect holiness, to which thou daily invitest us, when we shall be wholly divested of all the filth of our flesh, and become fully renewed after the image of thy Son, our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 88 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are place in this world, that while daily receiving so many blessings, we may so pass our time as to regard our end and hasten towards the goal, - O grant, that the benefits and blessings by which thou invitest us to thyself, may not be impediments to us, and keep us attached to this world, but on the contrary stimulate us to fear thy name as well as to appreciate thy mercy, so that we may thus know thee to be our God, and strive on our part to present ourselves to thee as thy people, and so consecrate ourselves and all our services to thee, that thy name may be glorified in us, through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 92 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seekest continually in various ways to restore us to thyself, - O grant, that we may not by our untameable perverseness resist thy holy and kind admonition nor continue torpid in our drowsiness, but anxiously flee to thee and so humbly solicit pardon, that we may thus shew that we really and habitually repent, so that thy name may be glorified in every way, until we shall come into thy celestial glory, through Christ Jesus our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 97 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou wouldest so try the constancy of our faith as to permit the devil to blend his lies with thy holy truth, we may not yet be entangled in them, but be attentive to that light which thou settest before us, and by which thou guidest us into the way of salvation: and may we in the spirit of docility so offer ourselves to be ruled by thee, that thou mayest also become our faithful and infallible leader, until we shall at length attain that eternal life which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 107 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast given so remarkable a proof both of thy wrath and of thy paternal kindness in thy dealings with thine ancient people, - O grant, that we may not only by our obstinacy provoke thine extreme wrath, but in time anticipate thy judgement so that we may find thee reconcilable, and never doubt but that thou wilt be merciful to us when we sincerely turn to thee; and as we are so prone to all evil, yea, and rush headlong into it, and as our wickedness and hardness are so great, grant to us, we pray thee, the spirit of meekness, that we may in all things submit ourselves to thee, and thus render ourselves thy children, that we may also find thee to be our Father in thine only-begotten Son, - Amen.

(Lecture 111 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we enjoy the light of the sun by day, and of the moon by night, we may learn to raise higher our eyes, and not be like the unbelieving, who have this benefit in common with us, but look forward in hope of our salvation, nor doubt but as thou settest before our eyes a proof of thy immovable constancy in these created things, so also secure and certain shall be our salvation, which is founded on thy most certain truth, which renders sure all things, until at length we come into that blessed kingdom, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 124 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as our whole wisdom is this, to submit ourselves to thee, to admire, and receive, and reverently to adore thy judgments, - O grant, that we may not indulge the perverse thoughts of our flesh, but so learn to check and restrain ourselves as ever to render to thee the praise due to thy wisdom, and justice, and power, until we shall at length contemplate thy glory face to face, being made partakers of it in Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 127 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since our earthly life is appointed to be life of warfare, and we must necessarily be exposed to continual disquietude as long as we soujourn here, - O grant, that we may always look forward to that blessed rest, to which thou invitest us, and in the meantime remain quiet in dendance on thy protection, and courageously fight to the end, not doubting but that through thy favour all things shall turn out for good, until we shall at length enjoy that eternal and glorious inheritance, which is laid up for us in heaven, through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 130 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since we have been redeemed by thine only-begotten Son, not only from temporal servitude, but also from the miserable tyranny of the devil and death, - O grant, that we may acknowledge thee as our Deliverer, and so wholly devote ourselves to thee, that we may also labour to serve one another, and by mutual acts of kindness so cherish among ourselves brotherly love, that it may appear that thou indeed rulest among us, and that we are subject to thee through the same thy Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 137 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast promised that we shall be to thee as the apple of the eye, - O grant, that we may ever flee under the shadow of thy mercy, and that this alone may be our tranquility in times of confusion and misery and may we, at the same time, recumb in confidence on thy help, that we may, in sincerety, perform what thou commandest us, and that which is our duty to do, so that we may, by experience, find, that all they who obey thy voice are really sustained by thine hand, and that those are never disappointed who look for certain reward of their obedience from thee and may we carry on the warfare so perseveringly in this life, that we may know that there is a reward laid up for us in heaven, when Christ thine only-begotten Son shall appear. - Amen.

(Lecture 152 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are here tossed to and fro, being uncertain and doubtful, except we are ruled by thy word, and are blind in thick darkness, - O grant, that while thou shinest on us by thy Law and by thy Gospel, we may be illuminated as to our minds by thy Holy Spirit, so that we may wholly surrender ourselves to thee, and never deviate from the right way which thou hast made known to us, but so persue our course through life, that at length we may come to that blessed life, which has been prepared for us in heaven by Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 156 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou wouldest prove our faith by many trials, we may constantly persevere in the pure worship of thy name, and in calling on thee in sincerity and truth, and that as we are surrounded and beset on every side by many pollutions, we may preserve ourselves pure and devoted to thee, both in body and soul, and thus proceed through the whole course of our life, so that at length we may appear unpolluted before thee, through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 161 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou wouldest have to exist a monument of thine invaluable mercy towards thy chosen people, when thou didst so grievously punish the unbelieving, - O grant, that we may at this day resort to thee whenever our enemies distress us, and enver doubt but that thou wilt take care of our safety, and so recumb on thy mercy, that we may patiently wait for the time of our deliverance; and that, in the meantime, we may see from on high, as in a mirror, the punishment prepared for the unbelieving, so that we may not follow their example nor implicate ourselves in their vices, but separate ourselves from them, that, being devoted to thee, we may fight under the banner of thine only-begotten Son, until he shall have us gathered into his celestial kingdom. - Amen.

(Lecture 168 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that though the things related to us to-day from thy Prophets, concerning ancient nations, may seem as grown out of use, O grant that we may however be seriously impressed whenever we read of thy judgments as executed on any part of the world, so that we may learn at this day wholly to submit to thee and flee to thy mercy, and that whatever may happen to us, we may never doubt but that thou wilt be propitious to us, if we seek thee with a sincere heart, and with unfeigned faith in Christ, our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 177 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast been so merciful towards thine ancient people, and however grievously thou mightest have been offended, yet thou didst preserve some remnant to whom thou gavest tokens of thy mercy, - O grant, that it may deserve a thousand times to be condemned by thee, yet deign to receive us in thine only-begotten Son, and through him shew thyself reconciled to us to the end of our life; and be thou our Father in death itself, so that we may live and die to thee, and acknowledge this to be the only true way of salvation, until we shall at length enjoy that celestial inheritance which has been obtained for us by the blood of the same, thine only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 181 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou didst formerly put forth thy wonderful power, to help thy miserably afflicted people, - O grant, that at this day the same power may be put forth in our behalf, and that the same evidence of thy grace and paternal favour may be shewn to us, by raising up thy terrible hand to destroy all the ungodly who ruelly oppress thine innocent people, that being delivered by thine hand, we may learn ever to give thanks to thee, in the name of thine only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 186 on Jeremiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as the deformity of thy Church at this day is sufficient to dishearten us all, we may learn to look to thine hand, and know that the reward of our sins is rendered to us, and that we may not doubt but that thou wilt be our physician to heal our wound, provided we flee to thy mercy; and do thou so retain us in the assurance of thy goodness and paternal care, that we may not hesitate, even in extreme evils, to call on thee in the name of thine only-begotten Son, until we shall find by experience that never in vain are the prayers of those, who relying on thy promises, patiently look for remedy from thee alone, even in extreme evils, and also in death itself. - Amen.

(Lecture 1 on Lamentations)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou didst in former times so severely chastise thy people, we may in the present day patiently submit to all thy scourges, and in a humble and meek spirit suffer ourselves to be chastised as we deserve; and that we may not, in the meantime, cease to call on thee, and that however slowly thou mayest seem to hear our prayers, we may yet persevere continually to the end, until at length we shall really find that salvation is not in vain promised to all those who in sincerity of heart call on thee, through Christ our Lord, - Amen.

(Lecture 8 on Lamentations)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have not only been redeemed from Babylonian exile, but have also emerged from hell itself; for when we were the children of wrath thou didst freely adopt us, and when we were aliens, thou didst in thy infinite goodness open to us the gate of thy kingdom, that we might be made thy heirs through thy Son, - O grant, that we may walk circumspectly before thee, and submit ourselves wholly to thee and to thy Christ, and not feign to be his members, but really prove ourselves to be his body, and to be so governed by his Spirit, that thou mayest at last gather us up into thy celestial kingdom, to which thou daily invitest us by the same Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 3 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are at this day as guilty before thee as the Israelites of old were, who were so rebellious against thy Prophets, and that as thou hast often tried sweetly to allure us to thy self without any success, and as we have not hitherto ceased, by our continual obstinacy, to provoke thy wrath, - O grant, that being moved at least by the warnings thou givest us, we may prostrate ourselves before thy face, and not wait until thou puttest forth thy hand to destroy us, but, on the contrary, strive to anticipate thy judgment; and that being at the same time surely convinced that thou art ready to be reconciled to us in Christ, we may flee to Him as our Mediator; and that relying on his intercession, we may not doubt but that thou art ready to give pardon, until having at length put away all sins, we come to that blessed state of Glory which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 9 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we do not, by due gratitude, respond to thy favours, and after having tasted of thy mercy, have willingly sought ruin to ourselves, - O grant, that we, being renewed by thy Spirit, may not only remain constant in the fear of thy name, but also advance more and more and be established; that being thus armed with thy invincible power, we may strenuously fight against all the wiles and assaults of Satan, and thus pursue our warfare to the end, - and that being thus sustained by thy mercy, we may ever aspire to that life which is hid for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 16 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that since the rule of thy true and lawful worship is sufficiently known to us, and thou continuest to exhort us to persevere in our course, and to abide in that pure and simple worship which thou hast fully approved, - O grant, that we may, in true obedience of faith, respond to thee: and though we now see the whole world carried here and there, and all places full of the awful examples of apostasy, and so much madness everywhere prevailing, that men become more and more hardened daily, - O grant, that, being fortified by invincible faith against these so many temptations, we may persevere in true religion, and never at any time turn aside from the teaching of thy word, until we be at length gathered to Christ our King, under whom, as our head, thou hast promised that we shall ever be safe, and until we attain that happy life which is laid up for us in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 21 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou dost train us up with so much diligence and assisuous care, and regard us as dear and precious like an hereditary vine, - O grant, that we may not bring forth wild grapes, and that our fruit may not be bitter and unpleasant to thee, but that we may strive so to form our whole life in obedience to thy law, that all our actions and thoughts may be pleasant and sweet fruits to thee, and as there is ever some sin mixed up with our works, even when we desire to serve thee sincerely and from the heart, grant that all stains in our works may be so cleansed and washed away by the sacrifice of thy Son, that they may be to thee sacrifices of sweet odour, through the same, even Jesus Christ, who has reconciled us to thee, as to obtain pardon even for our works. - Amen.

(Lecture 26 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as thou showest thyself to us at this day so kindly as Father, having presented to us a singular and an invaluable pledge of thy favour in thy only-begotten Son, - O grant, that we may entirely devote ourselves to thee, and truly render thee that free service and obedience which is due to a Father, so that we may have no other object in life but to confirm that adoption, with which thou hast once favoured us, until we at length, being gathered into thy eternal kingdom, shall partake of its fruit, together with Christ Jesus thy Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 31 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou dost so kindly call on us daily by thy voice, meekly and calmly to offer ourselves to be ruled by thee, and since thou hast exalted us to a high degree of honour by freeing us from the dread of the devil, and from that tyranny which kept us in miserable fear, and hast also favoured us with the Spirit of adoption and of hope, - O grant, that we, being mindful of these benefits, may ever submit ourselves to thee, and desire only to raise our voice for this end, that the whole world may submit itself to thee and that those who seem now to rage against thee may at length be brought, as well as we, to render thee obedience, so that thy Son Christ may be the Lord of all, to the end that thou alone mayest be exalted, and that we may be made subject to thee, and be at length raised up above, and become partakers of that glory which has been obtained for us by Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 34 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we now carry about us this mortal body, yea, and nourish sin a thousand deaths within us, - O grant, that we may ever by faith direct our eyes towards heaven and to that incomprehensible power, which is to be manifest at the last day by Jesus Christ our Lord, so that in the midst of death we may hope that thou wilt be our Redeemer, and enjoy that redemption, which he completed when he rose from the dead; and not doubt but that the fruit which be then brought forth by his Spirit will come also to us, when Christ himself shall come to judge the world; and may we thus walk in the fear of thy name, that we may be really gathered among his members, to be made partakers of that glory, which by his death he has procured for us. - Amen.

(Lecture 36 on Hosea)

Grant, Almighty God, that as almost the whole world give such loose reins to their licentiousness, that they hesitate not either to despise or to regard as of no value thy sacred word, - Grant, O Lord, that we may always retain such reverence as is justly due to it and to thy holy oracles, and be so moved, whenever thou deignest to address us, that being truly humbled, we may be raised up by faith to heaven, and by hope gradually attain that glory, which is as yet hid from us. And may we at the same time so submissively restrain ourselves, as to make it our whole wisdom to obey thee and to do thee service, until thou gatherest us into thy kingdom, where we shall be partakers of thy glory, through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 38 on Minor Prophets,
on Joel)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us so foolish in nourishing our vices, and also so ensnared by the gratifications of the flesh, that without being contrained we hardly return to thee, - O grant, that we may feel the weight of thy wrath, and be so touched with the dread of it, as to return gladly to thee, laying aside every dissimulation, and devote ourselves so entirely to thy service, that it may appear that we have from the heart repented, and that we have not trifled with thee by an empty pretence, but have offered to thee our hearts as a sacrifice, so that we and all our works might be sacred offerings to thee through our whole life, that thy name may be glorified in us through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 42 on the Minor Prophets,
on Joel)

Grant, Almighty God, that as are now surrounded on every side by so many miseries, and as our condition is as such, that amidst groans and continual sorrows, our life should be hardly sustained without being supported by spiritual grace, - O grant, that we may learn to look on the face of thine Anointed, and seek comfort from him, and such a comfort as may not engross our minds, or at least not retain us in the world, but raise our thoughts to heaven and daily seal to our hearts the testimony of our adoption, and that though many evils must be borne by us in this world, we may yet continue to pursue our course, and to fight and to strive with invincible perseverance, until having at length finished all struggles, we may reach that blessed rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. - Amen.

(Lecture 45 on the Minor Prophets,
on Joel)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have, in this world, to fight continually, not only with one kind of enemies, but with numberless enemies, and not only with flesh and blood, but also with the devil, the prince of darkness, - O grant, that, being armed with thy power, we may persevere in this contest; and when thou afflictest us for our sins, may we learn to humble ourselves, and so submit to thy authority, that we may hope for the redemption promised to us; and though tokens of thy displeasure may often appear to us, may we yet ever raise up our minds by hope to heaven, and from thence look for thy only-begotten Son, until, coming as the Judge of the world, he gathers us and brings us to the fruition of that blessed and eternal life, which he has obtained for us by his own blood. - Amen.

(Lecture 48 on the Minor Prophets,
on Joel)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be of a disposition so hard and rebellious, that we are not, without great difficulty, drawn to thee, - O grant, that we may at least be subdued by the threatenings thou daily denoucest on us, and be so subdued that being also drawn by thy word, we may give up ourselves to thee, and not only suffer ourselves to be constrained by punishments and corrections, but also obey thee with a willing mind, and most readily offer ourselves to thee as a sacrifice of obedience, so that being ruled by thy Son, we may at length attain that blessed rest, which has been prepared for us by the same thy Son our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 49 on the Minor Prophets,
on Amos).

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou art pleased daily to exhort us to repentance, and dost not suddenly execute that judgment by which we might be in an instant overwhelmed, but givest us time to seek reconciliation, - O grant, that we may now attend to thy teaching, and all thy admonitions and threatenings, and become teachable and obedient to thee, lest thou be constrained, on finding us hardened against thy threatenings, and wholly irreclaimable, to bring on us extreme vengeance: make us then so to submit ourselves to thee in the spirit of teachableness and obedience, that being placed under thy protection of thy Son, we may truly call on thee as our Father, and find thee to be so in reality, when thou shalt show to us that paternal love, which thou hast promised, and which we have all experienced from the beginning, who have truly and from the heart called on thy name, through the same, even Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 53 on the Minor Prophets,
on Amos)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou seest us to be so entangled not only by depraved lusts, but also by the allurements of Satan, and by our own ignorance and blindness, - O grant, that being roused by thy word we may at the same time learn to open our eyes to thy wholesome warnings by which thou callest us to thyself: and since we cannot do this without thy Spirit being our guide and leader, grant that we may be enlightened by him, to the end that, being truly and from the heart turned to thee, we may know that thou art propitious and ready to hear all who unfeignedly seek thee, and that, being reconciled to thee in Christ, we may also know that thou art to us a propitious Father, and that thou wilt bestow on us all kinds of blessings, until thou at length gatherest us to thy celestial kingdom, through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 57 on the Minor Prophets,
on Amos)

Almighty God, since thou so suspendest thy hand in chastising us, that expect we be wholly blind and stupid, we must acknowledge that we are spared in order that we may willingly return to thee, and that being allured by the gentleness of thy forbearance, we may submit ourselves to thee in willing obedience, - O grant, that we may not harden our hearts, nor be slow, nor slothful, nor even backward to repent, when thou deferrest extreme punishment, but strive to anticipate thy final vengeance, and so submit ourselves to thee, that we may be pardoned while it is time, and so hasten to offer our hearts whole and sincere to thee, and so repent, while urged by extreme danger, that there may not remain any hidden hypocrisy in our hearts, but that we may in such a way search every faculty of our soul, that thou mayest become to us a real and faithful witness of that integrity which thou requirest of all who return to thee to obtain pardon through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 63 on the Minor Prophets,
on Amos)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we see everywhere so many evident tokens of thy displeasure, and more grievous ones are impending if we indeed duly consider how grievously we have provoked thy wrath and how wickedly also the whole world at this day rages against thee, and at the same time abuses thy name, thy many and excellent benefits, - O grant, that we may ever remember thy covenant, and entertain a perpetual confidence in thy only-begotten Son, that whenever it may please thee to sift us, thou mayest keep us in safety, until we come, not into any earthly storehouse, but into thy celestial kingdom, where we may become partakers of that glory which thy Son has obtained for us, who has once for all redeemed us, that we may ever remain under his guardianship and protection, - Amen.

(Lecture 68 on the Minor Prophets,
on Amos)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast once received us under thy protection, and hast promised that our salvation would be so much cared for by thee, that whatever Satan and the whole world may contrive, thou wilt yet keep us safe and secure, - O grant, that being endued with perseverance, we may remain within our borders, and be not carried away here and there either by craft or by wicked counsels; but be thou pleased to keep us in genuine integrity, that being protected by thy help, we may, by experience, find that true which thou declarest in thy word, - that thy who call on thee in truth shall ever know thee to be propitious to them: and since thou hast already made open to us an access to thee in the person of thy only-begotten Son, O grant, that we, the sheep, may rely on him, as our shepherd, and resignedly abide under his protection, until we be removed from all dangers into that eternal rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy Son Jesus Christ. - Amen.

(Lecture 70 on the Minor Prophets,
on Obadiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are so scattered in our pilgrimage in this world, that even a dreadful spectacle is presented to our eyes, when we see thy Church so miserably rent asunder, - O grant, that being endued with the real power of thy Spirit, and gathered into one, we may so cultivate brotherly kindness among ourselves, that each may strive to help another, and at the same time keep our eyes fixed on Christ Jesus; and though hard contests may await us, may we yet be under his care and protection and so exercise patience, that having finished our warfare, we may at last enjoy that blessed rest, which thou hast promised to us, and which is laid up for us in heaven, and which has also been purchased for us by the blood of Christ thy Son, our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 71 on the Minor Prophets,
on Obadiah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou settest before us this day thy holy Prophet as an awful example of thy wrath against all who are rebellious and disobedient to thee, - O grant, that we may learn so to subject all our thoughts and affections to thy word, that we may not reject anything that pleases thee, but so learn both to live and to die to thee, that we may ever regard thy will, and undertake nothing but what thou hast testified is approved by thee, so that we may fight under thy banners, and through life obey thy word, until at length we reach that blessed rest which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son, and is laid up for us in heaven through the hope of his Gospel. - Amen.

(Lecture 75 on the Minor Prophets,
on Jonah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are loaded with so many vices, and so many sins, yea, and scandalous crimes break out daily among us, - O grant, that we may not be hardened against so many exhortations, by which thou invitest us to thyself, but that being made contrite in spirit, whenever thou denoucest on us thy wrath, we may be really humbled, and so place ourselves before thy tribunal, that we may, by a true confession and genuine fear, anticipate the judgment which would otherwise have been prepared for us; and in the meantime relying on Christ our Mediator, we may entertain such a hope of pardon as may raise us up to thee, and not doubt but that thou art ready to embrace us, when we shall be moved by a true and real feeling of fear and penitence, since it is a proof of thy favour, when thou art pleased to anticipate us, and by thy Spirit testifiest that thou art the Father to us; and, in a word, may we be so cast down in ourselves, as to raise up our hope even to heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 78 on the Minor Prophets,
on Jonah)

Grant, Almighty God, that, being warned by so many examples, the record of which thou hast designed to continue to the end of the world, that we may learn how dreadful a judge thou art to the perverse, - O grant, that we may not, at this day, be deaf to thy teaching, which is conveyed to us by the mouth of thy Prophet, but that we may strive to be reconciled to thee, that, passing by all men, we may present ourselves unreservedly to thee, so that, relying on thy mercy alone which thou hast promised to us, and be so touched with the spirit of true penitence, we may not doubt but thou wilt be propitious to us in Christ, and that, if we have been to others a bad example and an offence, we may lead others to the right way of salvation, and each of us may so endeavour to assist our neighbours in a holy life, that we may together attain that blessed and celestial life, which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us by his own blood. - Amen.

(Lecture 82 on the Minor Prophets,
on Micah)

Grant , Almighty God, that as thou hast from the beginning so defended thy Church, that thou hast never wholly forsaken her, and though it had nearly rejected thee by its defections, yet it has been thy pleasure to stand firm to thy covenant, and to show to it thy favour through all ages, until at length the everlasting Redeemer of the whole world would appear, - O grant, that we may experience the same favour at this day, and though we have in various ways provoked thy wrath against us, yet do thou so humble us, that thou mayest sustain us by thy word; and may we so recumb on those promises which we find in Scripture, that we may at length by our patience overcome our enemies, and in patience possess our souls, until thou raisest up thine hand, and showest that invincible power which thou hast given to thy only-begotten Son, that he might repress devil and all the wicked, and preserve us safe and secure from all injuries. - Amen.

(Lecture 91 on the Minor Prophets,
on Micah)

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as thou seest thy enemies at this day raging with cruel, yea, with diabolic fury against thy Church, we may find thee to be the same as the faithful in all former ages had found thee, even a defender of the safety of those who truly, and with a sincere heart, called on thee, and sought thee in extreme necessity; and do thou at this day, stretch forth thine hand, and so restrain the fury which thou seest is against all thy servants and thy children, that the wicked may at length really find, even to their ruin, that they fight not with miserable mortals, disheartened and without defence, but with thy ineffable power, that they may clamour against thee and thine invincible hand, they may yet become an example and a manifest evidence, that thou art not only faithful in thy promises, but also armed with power, by which thou canst execute whatsoever thou hast promised respecting the preservation of thy Church, until at length thou gatherest us into that blessed rest, which has been provided for us by the blood of thy Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 100 on the Minor Prophets,
on Nahum)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have now heard of punishments so dreadful denounced on all tyrants and plunderers, this warning may keep us within the limits of justice, so that none of us may abuse our power to oppress the innocent, but, on the contrary, strive to benefit one another, and wholly regulate ourselves according to the rule of equity: and may we hence also receive comfort whenever the ungodly molest and trouble us, and doubt not but that we are under thy protection, and that thou art armed with power sufficient to defend us, so that we may patiently bear injuries, until at length the ripened time shall come for thee to help us, and to put forth thy power for our preservation; nor let us cease to bear our evils with patience, as long as it may be thy will to exercise us in our present warfare, until having gone through all our troubles, we come to that blessed rest which has been provided for us in heaven by Christ Jesus our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 103 on the Minor Prophets,
on Nahum)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou deignest so far to condescend as to sustain the care of this life, and to supply us with whatever is needful for our pilgrimage, - O grant, that we may learn to rely on thee, and so to trust to thy blessing, as to abstain not only from all plunder and other evil deeds, but also from every unlawful coveting; and to continue in thy fear, and so to learn also to bear our poverty on the earth, that being content with those spiritual riches which thou offerest to us in thy gospel, and of which thou makest us now partakers, we may ever cheerfully aspire after that fulness of all blessings which we shall enjoy when at length we shall reach the celestial kingdom, and be perfectly united to thee, through Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 111 on the Minor Prophets,
on Habakkuk)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have a continual contest with powerful enemies, we may know that we are defended by thine hand, and that even thou art fighting for us when we are at rest; so that we may boldly contend under thy protection, and never be wearied, nor yield to Satan and the wicked, or to any temptations; but firmly proceed in the course of our warfare: and however much thou mayest often humble us, so as to make us to tremble under thine awful judgment, may we yet never cease to entertain firm hope, since thou hast promised to be to us a paternal Father in thine eternal and only-begotten Son; but being confirmed by the invincible constancy of

faith, may we so submit ourselves to thee, as to bear all our afflictions patiently, until thou gatherest us at length into that blessed rest, which has been procured for us by the blood of thine own Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 105 on the Minor Prophets,
on Habakkuk)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou triest us in the warfare of the cross, and arousest most powerful enemies, whose barbarity might justly terrify and dishearten us, were we not depending on thine aid, - O grant, that we may call to mind how wonderfully thou didst in former times deliver thy chosen people, and how seasonable thou didst bring them help, when they were oppressed and entirely overwhelmed, so that we may learn at this day to flee to thy protection, and not doubt, but that when thou becomest propitious to us, there is in thee sufficient power to preserve us, and to lay prostrate our enemies, how much soever they may now exult and think to triumph above the heavens, so that they may at length know by experience that they are earthly and frail creatures, whose life and condition is like the mist which soon vanishes: and may we learn to aspire after that blessed eternity, which is laid up for us in heaven by Christ our Lord. - Amen.

(Lecture 123 on the Minor Prophets,
on Zephaniah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are at this day so scattered on account of our sins, and even they who seem to be collected in thy name and under thy authority, are yet so torn by mutual discords, that the safety of thy Church hangs as it were on a thread, while in the meantime thine enemies seek with savage cruelty to destroy all those who are thine, and to obliterate thy gospel, - O grant, that we may live in quietness and resignation, hoping in thy promises, so that we may not doubt, but that thou in due time wilt become our deliverer: and may we so patiently bear to be afflicted and cast down by thee, that we may ever raise up our groans to heaven so as to be heard through the name of thy Son, until being at length freed from every contest, we shall enjoy that blessed rest which is laid up for us in heaven, and which thine only-begotten Son has procured for us. - Amen.

(Lecture 127 on the Minor Prophets,
on Zephaniah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as we must carry on a warfare in this world, and as it is thy will to try us with many contests, - O grant, that we may never faint, however extreme may be the trials which we shall have to endure: and as thou hast favoured us with so great an honour as to make us the framers and builders of thy spiritual temple: and, inasmuch as each of us has received some peculiar gift, may we strive to employ it in building this temple, may every one of us present and consecrate himself wholly to thee, so that thou mayest be worshipped among us perpetually; and especially, may each of us offer himself wholly as a spiritual sacrifice to thee, until we shall at length be renewed in thine image, and be received into a full participation of that glory, which has been attained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 128 on the Minor Prophets,
on Haggai)

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are by nature extremely prone to superstition, we may carefully consider what is the true and right way of serving thee, such as thou dost desire and approve, even that we offer ourselves spiritually to thee, and seek no other altar but Christ, and relying on no other priest, hope to be acceptable and devoted to thee, that he may imbue us with the Spirit which has been fully poured on him, so that we may from the heart devote ourselves to thee, and thus proceed patiently in our course, that with minds raised upwards we may ever go on towards that glory which is as yet hid under hope, until it shall at length be manifested in due time, when thine only-begotten Son shall appear with the elect angels for our final redemption. - Amen.

(Lecture 131, on the Minor Prophets,
on Haggai)

Grant, Almighty God, that since we live here as in thick darkness, and are also surrounded with so much darkness of ignorance, that we often entertain doubts as to thy providence, and think ourselves forsaken by thee whenever thou dost not immediately succour us, - O grant, that with our minds raised above, we may contemplate those things which thou hast once revealed to thy servant Zechariah, and not doubt, but thou lookest on us also and commandest thy angels to take care of us, and to raise us up in their hands, and to guide us in all our ways, yea, in all the crooked windings of this life, so that we may learn to commit ourselves to be wholly ruled by thee, and thus suffer ourselves to be drawn and turned here and there in

the world, so as still to follow the way which thou hast been pleased to set before us, until we shall at length be gathered into that eternal rest, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 135 on the Minor Prophets,
on Zechariah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast made us a royal priesthood in thy Son, that we may daily offer to thee spiritual sacrifices, and be devoted to thee, both in body and soul, - O grant, that we, being endued with thy power, may boldly fight against Satan, and never doubt but that thou wilt finally give us the victory, though we may have to undergo many troubles and difficulties: and may not the contempt of the world frighten or dishearten us, but may we patiently bear all our reproaches, until thou at length stretchest forth thy hand to raise us up to that glory, the perfection of which now appears in our head, and shall at last be clearly seen in all members, in the whole body, even when he shall come to gather us into that celestial kingdom, which he has purchased for us by his own blood. - Amen.

(Lecture 139 on the Minor Prophets,
on Zechariah)

Grant, Almighty God, that though we daily depart from thee by our sins, we may not yet be wholly removed from the foundation on which our salvation depends; but do thou so sustain us, or even raise us up when fallen, that we may ever continue in our degree, and also return to the end in true repentance; and whatever may happen to us, may we learn ever to look to thee, that we may never despair of thy goodness, which thou hast promised to be for ever firm, and that especially while relying on thy only-begotten Son our Mediator, we may be able to call on thee as our Father, until we shall at length come to that eternal inheritance, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 148 on the Minor Prophets,
on Zechariah)

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast been pleased in thine infinite mercy not only to choose from among us some to be priests to thee, but also to consecrate us all to thyself in thine only-begotten Son, - O grant, that we at this day may purely and sincerely serve thee, and so strive to devote ourselves wholly to thee, that we may be pure and chaste in mind, soul, and body, and that thy glory may shine forth in all our performances, that thy worship among us may be holy, and pure, and approved by thee, until we shall at length enjoy that glory to which thou invitest us by thy gospel, and which has been obtained for us by the blood of thine only-begotten Son. - Amen.

(Lecture 171 on the Minor Prophets,
on Malachi)

Grant, Almighty God, that as nothing is omitted by thee to help us onward in the course of our faith, and as our sloth is such that we hardly advance one step though stimulated by thee. - O grant, that we may strive to profit more by the various helps which thou hast provided for us, so that the Law, the Prophets, the voice of John the Baptist, and especially the doctrine of thine only begotten Son, may more fully awaken us, that we may not only hasten to him, but also proceed constantly in our course, and persevere in it until we shall at length obtain the victory and the crown of our calling, as thou hast promised an eternal inheritance in heaven to all who faint not but wait for the coming of the great Redeemer. - Amen.

(Lecture 182 on the Minor Prophets,
on Malachi)

Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de noz fautes: le prians qu'il nous les face mieux sentir, voire, et que non seulement nous en soyons touchez pour luy en demander pardon, et pour l'obtenir, mais aussi pour estre inductz a vne droicte repentance, a fin de conformer toute nostre vie a sa saint Loy. En sorte, que nous ne demandions sinon de luy obeir en tout, et par tout. Et ainsi nous dirons tous, etc..

(MS 40C
unpublished)

Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la face de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de noz fautes, le prians qu'il luy plaise nous les faire mieux sentir, que nous n'auons point faict, voire tellement que nous facions nostre profit de toutes les instructions qui nous sont données, tant les benefices qui nous sont iournellement eslargiz de sa main, que les chastimens aussi qu'il nous monstre. Que par cela nous soyons induictz a le craindre, et qu'en toutes sortes nous l'honorions, et que nous ne pretendions point fausement le tiltre de Chrestienté, mais qu'en verité nous soyons son peuple, separé de toutes les infections de ce monde, et de toutes les meschantes cupiditez, qui sont contraires et rebelles a sa loy. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(MS 40C, 49
unpublished)

Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de noz fautes: le prians, qu'il luy plaise nous en toucher en telle sorte, qu'avec vraye repentance nous retournerions a luy: et que ceux qui sont en estat public aduisont, de se portes si loyaument, q u'ilz puissent rendre compte fidele de la charge qui leur est commise: et que les personnes princés se laissent tellement gouuerner, que Dieu domine au milieu de nous, et qu'il y ait tout empire, et que grandz et petitz ly soient subiectz. Et que pour ce faire il luy plaise susciter vrays et fideles ministre de sa parole, etc..

(MS 40C, 61
unpublished)

Or nous nous prosternerons deuant la maiesté de nostre bon Dieu, en cognoissance de noz fautes: le prians, qu'il nous les face sentir de plus en plus, iusques a ce que nous ayons appris de nous assubiectir soubz luy, et que sa maiesté domine tellement sur nous, que nous ne cerchons ny force, ny vertu, ny sagesse, sinon en ce qu'il luy plaira nous donner: et que nous tenions tout nostre bien de luy, en sorte, que nous le rapportions a son seruice, et a la gloire de nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ, auquel tout empire est donné pour dominer par dessus nous, afin qu'il iouysse et de noz corps, et de noz ames: et que tout luy soit présenté en vray sacrifice. Que non seulement il nous face ceste grace, mais a tous peuples et nations de la terre, etc..

(MS 40C, 113
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