VERBUM CHRISTI

JOURNAL OF REFORMED EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY
Vol. 09, No. 2 October 2022
p-ISSN: 2407-0556; e-ISSN: 2599-3267

CALVIN AND THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE*

https://doi.org/10.51688/VC9.1.2022.art1

Bernard Aubert
Westminster Theological Seminary, U.S.
baubert@wts.edu

ARTICLE HISTORY

SUBMITTED
24 August 2022

REVISED
4 October 2022

ACCEPTED
5 October 2022

PAGES
115–131

ABSTRACT
This article examines John Calvin's (1509–1564) method of biblical interpretation. It first considers his approach in the context of the history of interpretation and then examines two examples of his method of interpretation of Psalm 2 and Acts 20:17–38. It will be suggested that Calvin's approach can enrich the renewal of interest in theological interpretation in the academy and the church. Although some traits of Calvin's interpretation resemble modern approaches, this essay confirms the shift in Calvin studies that classify his method as a type of precritical interpretation—in particular, Calvin's concern for application, his use of the analogy of faith, and his integration of exegesis and doctrine

Keywords: *John Calvin, Psalm 2, Acts 20:17–38, precritical interpretation, application, theological interpretation, Calvin's commentaries, Institutes, hermeneutics.*

* An earlier version of this article was presented in an adult education class at Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, on April 19, 2009, commemorating the five-hundredth anniversary of Calvin's birth.

Introduction

After an introduction to Calvin's method, this article explores how John Calvin (1509–1564) interprets Scripture by examining his interpretation of two specific texts: Psalm 2 and Acts 20:17–38.[1] Although Calvin's doctrine of Scripture impacts how he read the Bible and has influenced the Reformed tradition, we will focus on his method of biblical interpretation.[2] Also, rather than with the content of his interpretation, we will engage with his method.[3]

Calvin's 1557 preface to his *Commentary on the Book of Psalms* contains one of the few autobiographical sections in his writings. It serves the purpose of introducing his interpretations of the Psalms:

> For although I follow David at a great distance, and come far short of equalling him; or rather, although in aspiring slowly and with great difficulty to attain to the many virtues in which he excelled, I still feel myself tarnished with the contrary vices; yet if I have many things in common with him, I have no hesitation in comparing myself with him.[4]

Thus, Calvin interprets the Psalms in light of his personal life. How can this be? How can we make sense of Calvin's interpretation of the Psalms? Are the Psalms not primarily about Christ? Should the interpreter not chiefly understand the Psalms in their historical context?

Calvin's preface challenges preconceived notions about his interpretation of Scripture. It highlights the distance between modern Bible interpretation and Calvin's method. It will also appear that Calvin's approach to the Bible cannot be easily identified with contemporary perspectives on the Bible. Further, this preface challenges the view that Calvin's interpretation was primarily centered upon Christ and upsets many contemporary Reformed interpretations that focus on finding Christ in the Old Testament and the Bible. Christ is vital to Calvin's interpretation of the Bible, but it will also become clear that his approach was broader.

Orientation to Calvin's Method of Bible Interpretation

Calvin in Context: A Few Signposts

What Jean-Jacques von Allmen states about the Reformers also applies to their interpretation of Scripture:

> There are two ways to approach sixteenth-century texts: one that attempts to read them from the theological and patristic erudition that Calvin, Zwingli, Bucer, Knox, etc., in particular possessed and another that seeks to read them in light of subsequent Protestant theology,

---

[1] For Calvin as a Bible interpreter, see Barbara Pitkin, "John Calvin and the Interpretation of the Bible," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, ed. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 2:341–71.

[2] Much of the perspective of this article is indebted to the methodology introduced in Moisés Silva's PhD seminar, "NT981 – History of Interpretation," taken at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, in the fall of 1995. Silva argued that in the history of interpretation, some interpreters' views of interpretation often differ from their actual practice, so it is essential to look at both.

[3] For helpful accounts of the content of Calvin's interpretation of the Psalms and Acts, see respectively, Wulfert de Greef, "Calvin as Commentator of the Psalms," trans. Raymond A. Blacketer, in *Calvin and the Bible*, ed. Donald K. McKim, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 85–106, and Wilhelmus H. Th. Moehn, "Calvin as Commentator on the Acts of the Apostles," trans. Lydia Verburg-Balke, in *Calvin and the Bible*, ed. McKim, 198–223.

[4] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 1:xl.

particularly in light of the theology marked by pietism and the *Aufklärung*.[5]

Scholars commonly consider Calvin a forerunner of modern Bible interpreters. Evangelical scholars see in Calvin a precursor of the practitioners of the grammatical-historical approach.[6] Proponents of the historical-critical methods find in Calvin an interpreter closer to their concerns than many other interpreters in church history.[7] David Steinmetz and Richard Muller, however, have established that Calvin's approach to the Bible has much more in common with earlier interpreters in the history of the church than with modern interpreters.[8] They characterize Calvin's method as precritical, in contrast to the critical stance that followed in the steps of the Enlightenment and rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and beyond.

To understand Calvin rightly, we need to consider the context of his time—including the traditional church interpretation of the Bible, the biblical interpretation of the Reformers, and the methods of Renaissance humanism. The Reformers had much more in common with previous interpreters than with later rationalistic interpreters.

First, in the ancient church and the Middle Ages, an allegorical approach to the Bible was dominant. Many churchmen held that Scripture had a fourfold meaning or sense. The meaning of the Bible was divided into a literal sense and an allegorical sense, which in turn was divided into three according to the three virtues of faith, love, and hope. Thus, the interpreter had to find its literal meaning and then its allegorical sense. A Bible teacher would look at what a passage meant literally and then examine what it would have to say about doctrine (faith), how to behave (love), and our future hope (an eschatological perspective).[9] This method was subject to abuse, especially as a body of traditional interpretations was gathered over the years to help Christians understand the Bible. Now, the Reformers and Calvin reacted against such approaches and complained that many traditional interpretations of the Bible were veiling the good news of Jesus Christ. At the same time, among interpreters of earlier times, some moved in the direction of the Reformers. For instance, Thomas Aquinas laid great stress on the primacy of the literal meaning of Scripture.[10] Furthermore, Calvin, among others, was drawn to Augustine's and John Chrysostom's commentaries. Calvin had a plan to publish Chrysostom's homilies and wrote a preface

---

[5] Jean-Jacques von Allmen, "La Continuité de l'Eglise selon la doctrine réformée," in *Prophétisme sacramentel: Neuf études pour le renouveau et l'unité de l'Eglise* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1964), 109–10.

[6] See, e.g., Philip Schaff, "Calvin as a Commentator," *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 3 (1892): 466, 468.

[7] See, e.g., F. W. Farrar, "Calvin as an Expositor," *Expositor* 7 (1884): 427–28, 444; Hans-Joachim Kraus, "Calvin's Exegetical Principles," *Interpretation* 31, no. 1 (1977): 13, 17–18.

[8] Cf. David C. Steinmetz's ground-breaking essay, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27–38, and the following assessment, Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson, "The Significance of Precritical Exegesis: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 335–45.

[9] Cf. Augustine, *Christian Instruction* (427), 1.35.39–1.40.44; Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994), 89. Muller notes that for Calvin, "the 'literal' meaning of the text … held a message concerning what Christians ought to believe, what Christians ought to do, and what Christians ought to hope for." So, even if Calvin did not hold to the fourfold sense of the Bible, he still looked for it. See Richard A. Muller, "Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: The View from the Middle Ages," in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, ed. Muller and Thompson, 11. For Calvin's concern for application as premodern, see Moisés Silva, *Has the Church Misread the Bible? The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues*, Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 42.

[10] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (1265–1273), 1.1.10.; see McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 91–92, and Nicholas M. Healy, "Introduction," in *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to His Biblical Commentaries*, ed. Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 6–10.

to them. Despite some theological disagreements with him, Calvin appreciated his literal and pastoral interpretation of the New Testament.[11]

Second, Calvin stood on the shoulders of other Reformers like Martin Luther and Martin Bucer. While somewhat critical of earlier commentaries by other Reformers, he also benefited from them.[12] Third, Calvin was trained as a humanist. One of the first books he published was a philological commentary on *De Clementia* by the Latin writer Seneca. Calvin sat under some of the greatest teachers of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew of the time. Even later, during his ministry, Calvin was concerned with philology, as his relationship with the Hebrew scholar Louis Budé—the son of the famous humanist Guillaume Budé—illustrates. Calvin invited Louis Budé to settle in Geneva and teach there. Calvin would also write a preface to Budé's translation of the Psalms.[13]

Is Calvin a Forerunner of Modern Interpreters?

A few characteristics could mark Calvin as an ancestor of modern interpreters. First, he seems to reject the earlier allegorical approach to the Bible. Instead, he prefers to study the Bible in its historical context. Second, unlike other Reformers, especially Luther, he is very cautious in his handling of the Bible and the Old Testament.[14] Luther often sees Christ in the Old Testament and applies his understanding of the law and the gospel to his reading of the Bible.[15] Calvin's exegesis of the Old Testament strives to preserve the text's original meaning. Third, Calvin's training provided him with the means to study the Bible in the original languages. Calvin also expected the same of candidates for the ministry. As Robert Kingdon writes,

> A program of intense study was required of all candidates for the Calvinist ministry in France. One of the sources of the Reformation had been scholarly, critical study of the Bible, and each Calvinist minister was expected to be well equipped for the continuing task of Biblical study and exegesis. Not only must he be able to read, write, and speak classical Latin with a skill approaching perfection; he must also master the Hebrew and Greek of the original Bible texts and learn thoroughly Calvin's own painstaking technique of line-by-line exegesis.[16]

Thus, Calvin displayed and expected of others a rigorous method of study of the Bible.

The influence of humanism on Calvin partly helps explain why some modern interpreters welcome his approach, yet several traits clash with modern approaches to the Bible. First, for Calvin, the Bible had to be interpreted by Scripture itself or in light of Scripture.

---

[11] Cf. W. Ian P. Hazlett, "Calvin's Latin Preface to His Proposed French Edition of Chrysostom's Homilies: Translation and Commentary," in *Humanism and Reform: The Church in Europe, England, and Scotland, 1400–1643; Essays in Honour of James K. Cameron*, ed. James Kirk, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 8 (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 129–50.

[12] Cf. John Calvin, "Letter to Peter Viret, Strasburg, May 19, 1540," in *Letters of John Calvin Selected from the Bonnet Edition with Introductory Biographical Sketch* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1980), 64; "The Epistle Dedicatory: John Calvin to Simon Grynaeus, Strasburg, October 18, 1539," in *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), xxvi.

[13] Rodolphe Peter, "Calvin and Louis Budé's Translation of the Psalms," in *John Calvin: A Collection of Essays*, ed. G. E. Duffield, Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 190–209.

[14] For Calvin, divine authorship of the Bible obligated Bible interpreters to great restraint; see Calvin, "To Grynaeus," xxvii.

[15] For a brief comparison between Luther's and Calvin's approaches, see McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 97; see also Mark D. Thompson, "Biblical Interpretation in the Works of Martin Luther," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, ed. Hauser and Watson, 2:315.

[16] Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France* (Geneva: Droz, 1956), 14.

In the preface to King Francis in his *Institutes*, he expresses confidence that the confession of his faith corresponds to this rule:

> Yet we must say something here to arouse your zeal and attention, or at least to prepare the way for you to read our confession. When Paul wished all prophecy to be made to accord with the analogy of faith [Rom. 12:6], he set forth a very clear rule to test all interpretation of Scripture. Now, if our interpretation be measured by this rule of faith, victory is in our hands.[17]

Thus, for Calvin, the analogy of faith—an expression from Romans 12:6—is a standard that should characterize all interpretations of Scripture and be applied to test them all.[18] This rule implies that the Bible is one unified book with a coherent message inspired by one divine author. This principle stands in contrast to many modern approaches to the Bible that see Scripture as a collection of books written by many different authors.[19]

Second, Scripture has to be understood with Christian doctrine in mind. In other words, the study of the Bible cannot be separated from the study of Christian doctrine. This second principle can be derived from the first. Calvin is mostly remembered for formulating and systematizing doctrines for the emerging Protestant churches, and his *Institutes* stands out as a monument of Christian doctrine. Luther, in contrast to Calvin, had not written any systematic work. Recent studies have reevaluated Calvin's contribution. For instance, T. H. L. Parker writes, "We may be bolder and say that Calvin saw himself primarily, not as a systematic but a biblical theologian."[20] This principle leads us to look at Calvin's interpretation of the Bible in the *Institutes* and his commentaries together. Indeed, as Steinmetz argues, "Closer examination of the *Institutes* provides additional evidence that Calvin intended his commentaries and the *Institutes* to be read together."[21] As Calvin writes in the preface of the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*,

> I may add, that my object in this work was to prepare and train students of theology for the study of the sacred volume [or the Holy Scriptures],[22] so that they might both have an easy introduction to it … and have digested it into such an order as may make it not difficult for any one, who is rightly acquainted with it, to ascertain … what he ought principally to look for in Scripture … Having thus, as it were, paved the way, I shall not feel it necessary, in any Commentaries on Scripture which I may afterwards publish, to enter into long discussions of doctrine, or dilate on common places, and will therefore, always compress them.[23]

Therefore, Calvin, as a biblical theologian, built his doctrine upon Scripture. In addition, his preface makes it clear that to understand how he interprets the Bible, we must take

---

[17] John Calvin, "Prefatory Address to King Francis," in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC 21–22 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1940), 1:12–13; cf. Calvin, *Institutes* 4.17.32.

[18] See also the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), 1.9.

[19] Such modern views imply that each book has to be considered separately. While Calvin differs from such interpretations, the analogy of faith for him does not imply a denial of the diversity and richness of the Bible. For instance, he is sensitive to the progress of the history of redemption and does not want to impose a Christological reading on the Old Testament.

[20] T. H. L. Parker, "Calvin the Biblical Expositor," in *John Calvin*, ed. Duffield, 177.

[21] David C. Steinmetz, "The Theology of John Calvin," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*, ed. David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 118; see also, Paul Traugott Fuhrmann, "Calvin, The Expositor of Scripture," *Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (April 1952): 205–8.

[22] François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 147.

[23] John Calvin, "The Epistle to the Reader (1539)," in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 21; cf. Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27–31.

into account all his works.

At this point, we must briefly speak about the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of Scripture—another trait that sets him apart from modern interpreters.[24] For Calvin, Scripture is inspired, and the Holy Spirit bears witness to the word of God and convinces us of the gospel.[25] The role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of the Bible is crucial. At the same time, Calvin is zealous to guard against the danger of attributing to the Spirit either the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church or new revelations from fringe groups in the Reformation, "the fanatics."[26]

Third, given that the Scriptures were written for our edification, Calvin reads and interprets the Bible to be edified. In his preface to the Bible, Calvin writes,

> For Scripture is not given to us to satisfy our foolish curiosity, or to serve our ambition. But it is useful, as Saint Paul says (1 Tim 6:3–5). And how [is it useful] to instruct us in good doctrine, to comfort us, to exhort us, and to make us perfect for every good work. Thus let us apply it to this use. If someone asks: what is the full edification that we ought to receive from it? It is in short that we have to place our trust in God and to walk in his fear; and that all the more since Jesus Christ is the end of the law and the prophets, and the substance of the gospel.[27]

Consequently, for Calvin, the interpretation of Scripture is not merely an intellectual exercise; rather, it should build the reader up in the salvation found in the gospel of Christ. As we will see, for Calvin, the Bible is not a dead letter, but through its pages, God speaks to us. The word of God addresses us in our daily circumstances because it is a revelation from God.

In consideration of these principles, Calvin's interpretation of the Bible must be characterized, in the words of Steinmetz, as precritical. The following examples of Calvin's exegesis illustrate this.

Calvin's Interpretation of the Psalms

As we mentioned earlier, Calvin, in the preface to his commentary, applied the Psalms to himself and stated that this preface was more about himself than Christ. A careful reading reveals the following: Calvin makes several observations about the nature of the Psalms and his own life. First, he writes, "This book [may be titled], I think not inappropriately, 'An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul'; for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror."[28] As the Psalms reveal the contours of our souls, they also reveal God's remedies for us. He continues, "It is by perusing these inspired compositions, that men will be most effectually awakened to a sense of their

---

[24] Klaas Runia, "The Hermeneutics of the Reformers," *Calvin Theological Journal* 19, no. 2 (November 1984): 145–46.

[25] Calvin, *Institutes* 1.7.4.

[26] Calvin opposes, however, traditions that clash with the Bible but welcomes traditions that help understand it better; see Calvin, "To Grynaeus," xxiv, and Silva, *Has the Church Misread the Bible?*, 95–96.

[27] John Calvin, "Jean Calvin au lecteur (1546)," in *Œuvres choisies*, ed. Olivier Millet (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), 54.

[28] Calvin, *Psalms*, xxxvi–xxxvii.

maladies, and, at the same time, instructed in seeking remedies for their cure."[29] Thus, for him, the Psalms serve our edification in our walk with God. Second, Calvin claims to have gained special insight both by working on the commentary and by facing challenges and trials for the gospel. In his words,

> Now, if my readers derive any fruit and advantage from the labour which I have bestowed in writing these Commentaries, I would have them to understand that the small measure of experience which I have had by the conflicts with which the Lord has exercised me, has in no ordinary degree assisted me, not only in applying to present use whatever instruction could be gathered from these divine compositions, but also in more easily comprehending the design of each of the writers.[30]

In other words, Calvin affirms that his trials have helped him not only to apply the Psalms to the current situation of the church but also to better understand the various circumstances behind the different Psalms. To these unusual statements, Calvin goes on to a very surprising development. He recounts his life and his calling to the ministry by drawing parallels between David's life and his own life.[31] Calvin compares David's slow rise to power in the midst of conflict with his modest role in the Reformation in the face of opposition from the Catholic Church. Third, only slowly and in a veiled way, Calvin clarifies his interpretation of the Psalms. David and the kingdom of Israel are analogous to or shadows of Christ and the church.[32]

Theodore Beza, in his *Life of Calvin,* writes that "on his return, (1557), although still weakly in health, he, however, omitted none of his daily labours, and published in the following year, his most learned Commentaries on the Psalms, with a truly valuable preface."[33] One cannot help while reading Beza's *Life of Calvin* to think of Calvin and the Psalms.

To shed further light on Calvin's interpretation of Scripture and the Psalms, it will be helpful to consider Calvin's interpretation of Psalm 2. Before looking at his commentary, we consider a few other works in which Calvin uses this psalm. First, Calvin alludes to this psalm in his preface to the New Testament:

> In short, if we have Christ with us, we will find nothing so cursed that it will not be made blessed by Him; nothing so execrable that will not be sanctified; nothing so bad that will not turn into good for us. [Then he alludes to verse 2.] Let us not be discouraged when we will see all the worldly mights and powers against us. [Then to verse 4.] For the promise cannot fail us, that the Lord, from on high, will laugh at all the assemblings and efforts of men who would want to gather themselves together against Him.[34]

---

[29] Calvin, *Psalms*, xxxvii.

[30] Calvin, *Psalms*, xxxix.

[31] Calvin, *Psalms*, xxxix–xlviii.

[32] William Bouwsma contends that the basis of Calvin's application of Scripture is his "cyclical view of history" and the analogy between biblical times and his; see Calvin, *Psalms,* 171 (on Ps 12:1–2), and William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 91. For Calvin and application, see also Barbara Pitkin, "Imitation of David: David as a Paradigm for Faith in Calvin's Exegesis of the Psalms," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24, no. 4 (1993): 843–44, 848–49.

[33] Theodore Beza, "Life of Calvin," in John Calvin, *Tracts Relating to the Reformation*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 1:lxxi.

[34] John Calvin, "Christ the End of the Law," in *Thy Word Is Still Truth*, ed. Peter A. Lillback and Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 278–79.

In his interpretation of this psalm, Calvin clearly links the current suffering of the church to Christ and God sovereignly ruling the world. Calvin's preface to the New Testament ends in an unusual way that sounds foreign to our modern ears. Before exhorting the bishops and pastors to promote the word of God, Calvin challenges the

> Christian kings, princes and lords … to have that holy doctrine so useful and necessary published, taught, and heard by all your countries, regions, and lordships, in order that God be magnified by you, and His Gospel will be exalted.[35]

Though Psalm 2 is not quoted here, this exhortation is congruent with the end of this psalm.

Now to his *Institutes*: In the preface to King Francis, when Calvin exhorts the king to promote Christ's kingdom, he mentions Christ's return to judge the earth in the words of Psalm 2:9: "And he is so to rule as to smite the whole earth with its iron and brazen strength."[36] In a chapter on the three offices of Christ, Calvin quotes this psalm on two occasions to speak about Christ's kingly office. In the first citation, Calvin follows a method like that in the preface to his commentary on the Psalms. He interprets the historical situation of the Old Testament, applies it to the contemporary situation, and only then relates it to Christ and his church. The first citation is of verse 2. Calvin first describes the situation at the time of David: "David laughs at the boldness of his enemies who try to throw off the yoke of God and his Anointed." Then, he explains why "the kings and people rage in vain": "For he who dwells in heaven is strong enough to break their assaults." Then, he applies this truth to the persecuted church: "Thus he assures the godly of the everlasting preservation of the church, and encourages them to hope, whenever it happens to be oppressed." After considering Psalm 110:1, Calvin concludes that "the devil, with the resources of the world, can never destroy the church, founded as it is on the eternal throne of Christ."[37] It is remarkable that Calvin employs this approach in his treatment of Christology in the *Institutes*.

In the second citation, Calvin uses Psalm 2:9–12 to speak of Christ as "king and pastor."[38] Calvin here relates Psalm 2:9 to the last judgment. First, Calvin asserts that "Christ fulfills the combined duties of king and pastor for the godly who submit willingly and obediently." Thus, all are called to submit to Christ (Ps 2:11–12). Second, he again appeals to Psalm 110. Third, Christ is called not only a king but a pastor who is both caring toward the godly and a judge of the ungodly. The title "pastor" can be explained by the reference to the rod and by the fact that the Greek translation of the Old Testament and several quotations from Psalm 2:9 in Revelation use the verb "to shepherd" instead of the verb "to break." Calvin might have been aware of such textual variations.[39]

---

[35] Calvin, "Christ the End of the Law," 281.

[36] Calvin, *Institutes*, Battles, 12.

[37] Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.15.3 (Battles, 497–98).

[38] Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.15.5 (Battles, 501).

[39] See G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 267–68, and Gerhard Wilhelmi, "Der Hirt mit dem eisernen Szepter: Überlegungen zu Psalm II 9," *Vetus Testamentum* 27, no. 2 (1977): 196–204.

Calvin's commentary on the Psalms offers a more detailed exposition of Psalm 2, yet this interpretation agrees with his other works and remains short and to the point. Calvin is fond of such expressions as "in short" or "the sum is" to summarize his argument.[40] Again, we observe the following overall interpretive perspective: Calvin starts with David (vv. 1–3) and shows that these verses speak about his struggle against enemies within and without, and yet David trusted in God for years before coming to power because he was God's anointed. Calvin also comments on the extension of David's kingdom in relation to verse 8. A crucial paragraph explains how Calvin moves from speaking about David to expounding on Christ: "But it is now high time to come to the substance of the type. That David prophesied concerning Christ, is clearly manifest from this, that he knew his own kingdom to be merely a shadow."[41] Thus, David and his kingdom were the type or shadow of the substance, which is Christ and his kingdom. Calvin confirms this view by applying the principle of the analogy of faith. In Acts 4:24, Psalm 2 is quoted to speak about the opposition of the ungodly to Christ. Observe Calvin's care not to impose a meaning on this Old Testament text: "Those things which David declares concerning himself are not violently, or even allegorically, applied to Christ, but were truly predicted concerning him."[42] This remark reflects Calvin's polemic against earlier interpreters, whether those in former centuries or other Reformers. Calvin suggests other reasons to support his claim that this psalm speaks ultimately about Christ and his kingdom. He interprets verse 2 to mean that those kings and princes who opposed David were in fact rejecting God, and he sees the same principle at work in Christ's ministry. In fact, Jesus stated, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:22).[43] The mention of the "ends of the earth" in verse 8 points even more clearly to Christ's kingdom: Calvin remarks that David's kingdom was relatively small, but Christ's rule extends to all nations. Thus, Calvin's interpretation carefully blends a consideration of the historical context of David's time and the fulfillment in Christ.

True to the tendencies already observed, Calvin also applies this psalm to his own horizon in church history. He finds consolation here for the suffering faithful: "Yea, rather it will be highly profitable to us to compare those things which the apostles experienced with what we witness at the present time."[44] Further, under persecution, "we may safely laugh them [the ungodly] to scorn, relying on this one consideration, that he whom they are assailing is the God who is in heaven." Calvin does not draw these connections without reason,[45] but he sees continuity throughout redemptive history and argues from the

---

[40] For Calvin's style of biblical commentaries, see Richard G. Gamble, "Brevitas et Facilitas: Toward an Understanding of Calvin's Hermeneutic," *Westminster Theological Journal* 47 (1985): 1–17. Calvin's Commentary on the Psalms offers at the beginning of each psalm a summary of its content.

[41] Calvin, *Psalms*, 11.

[42] Calvin, *Psalms*, 11.

[43] Calvin, *Psalms*, 12. Other parts of the psalm point in a similar direction: for Calvin, the reference to Zion (in v. 6) is more appropriate to Christ than David because of Zion's association with the priesthood.

[44] Calvin, *Psalms*, 12; "Let us, therefore, assure ourselves that if God does not immediately stretch forth his hand against the ungodly, it is now his time of laughter; and although, in the meantime, we ought to weep, yet let us assuage the bitterness of our grief, yea, and wipe away our tears, with this reflection, that God does not connive at the wickedness of his enemies, as if from indolence or feebleness, but because for the time he would confront their insolence with quiet contempt" (p. 14).

[45] Calvin, *Psalms*, 13.

context of Acts 4 that "the prayer of the apostles … manifestly testifies that it ought not to be restricted to the person of Christ."[46] Thus, Calvin thoughtfully applies Scripture to his readers for their edification.

In his interpretation of "This day have I begotten thee" (v. 7), Calvin relates this text to Christology, but he displays great restraint.[47] He puts aside the interpretation of this passage as referring to "the eternal generation of Christ"; rather, with Paul in Acts 13:33, he interprets it to speak about "the manifestation of the heavenly glory of Christ." Further, he suggests, in line with Romans 1:4, that this manifestation occurred chiefly at Christ's resurrection. We observe that Calvin does not shy away from relating his exegesis to doctrine; rather, he uses the analogy of faith and exercises great moderation.

Finally, here are a few exegetical details of Calvin's interpretation of Psalm 2. He offers a subtle analysis of the situation. He observes a contrast between the "*kings of the earth*" (v. 2), a phrase expressing "their feeble and perishable condition," and "the lofty title" given to God in verse 4, "*He that dwelleth in heaven*."[48] On verse 9, Calvin writes, "The Psalmist exposes to shame their foolish pride by a beautiful similitude; teaching us, that although their obstinacy is harder than the stones, they are yet more fragile than *earthen vessels*."[49] As in the *Institutes*, Calvin interprets verse 9 with the shepherd imagery and Psalm 110 in mind.[50] His exposition of the shepherd imagery displays sophistication and depth: "He who shows himself a loving shepherd to his gentle sheep, must treat the wild beasts with a degree of severity, either to convert them from their cruelty, or effectually to restrain it."[51] Finally, his interpretation shows his careful analysis of the Hebrew.[52]

In short, in his method of interpreting Psalm 2, Calvin is sensitive to details and the historical context, uses the analogy of faith, takes into account Christian doctrine, and applies the texts to the situation of the readers. Finally, his interpretation culminates in Christ and his kingdom. Although he displays great care, his interpretation differs from modern critical approaches to the Bible.

Calvin's Interpretation of the Miletus Speech (Acts 20:17–38)

The Miletus speech, Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20, is often read when elders are installed or ordained. However, Calvin applies it more broadly, and his interpretation is impacted by the circumstances in which he found himself.[53] Calvin

---

[46] Likewise, for Calvin, verse 7 applies first to David's ministry as prophet and then to Christ's role as prophet; finally, he adds, "In fact, the very same testimony resounds through the whole world. The apostles first, and after them pastors and teachers, bore testimony that Christ was made King by God the Father." This means practically, for Calvin that "as often, therefore, as we hear the gospel preached by men, we ought to consider that it is not so much they who speak, as Christ who speaks by them" (Calvin, *Psalms*, 16–17).

[47] Calvin, *Psalms*, 18.

[48] Calvin, *Psalms*, 14.

[49] Calvin, *Psalms*, 22.

[50] Calvin, *Psalms*, 20–21.

[51] Cf. "on the contrary, by showing them his shepherd's rod, he quickly turns their sorrow into joy" (Calvin, *Psalms*, 21).

[52] He notes that the word *br* (בר) can mean either "son" or "an elect person" (Calvin, *Psalms*, 24–25). He mentions an alternate translation to "kiss the Son" as "kiss or embrace what is pure," but rejects it on account of the mention of "my Son" in verse 7. He pays attention to the meaning of the Hebrew word ky (כי) verse 12 (25–26). The ESV translates it by "for" in "for his wrath is quickly kindled." Calvin suggests the translation "when": "when his wrath is kindled in a moment." Thus, the word "denotes both the reason and time of what is predicated"—that is, the final judgment through Christ. His attention to detail is seen also in his comment on verse 3: "a prosopopœia, in which the prophet introduces his enemies as speaking" (13).

[53] For the context of Calvin's Acts commentary, see Herman Hendrik Alten, *The Beginning of a Spirit-Filled Church: A Study of the Implications of the Pneumatology of the Ecclesiology in John Calvin's Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Reformed Historical Theology 45 (Göttingen:Vandenhoeck &

preached on this text on Sunday afternoon, September 3, 1553. He expounded Paul's speech under the most unusual circumstances. Some of the events leading up to this Sunday shed light on Calvin's exposition of Acts 20. Two years earlier, Philibert Berthelier had been excommunicated by the Consistory "for abusing Calvin, for not going to church, and other offences, and for refusing to make any apology."[54] In February 1553, the election in Geneva put the party of the libertines in power. In August, the Council, that is, the civil authorities, decided to absolve Berthelier. September 3 was Communion Sunday. What was Calvin going to do, admit Berthelier to the Lord's Table or disobey the magistrates? Beza describes what happened on Sunday morning:

> After he [Calvin] had spoken at some length of the despisers of sacred mysteries, [he] exclaimed, in the words of Chrysostom, "I will die sooner that this hand shall stretch forth the sacred things of the Lord to those who have been judged despisers." These words, strange to say, had such an effect upon these men, however lawless, that Perrin secretly advised Bertelier not to come forward to the Table. The sacrament was celebrated with extraordinary silence, not without some degree of trembling, as if the Deity himself were actually present.[55]

This is not all. September was exactly midway between the trial and the execution of Servetus.

In the midst of these trials, Calvin came to preach on Acts 20.[56] His sermons on Acts were lost in the nineteenth century; back then they were not considered valuable. We have only a few quotes left, yet we can get an idea of Calvin's interpretation of Acts 20 from his commentary on Acts published shortly afterward and possibly based on the sermons.[57] Here is what we can gather from the fragment of his sermon. First, like Paul, Calvin gives a kind of farewell: he announces that this might be his last sermon in Geneva. As he serves the Lord (v. 19), Calvin is willing to be dismissed by the Genevan authorities. Second, he reminds them of his service in public and in private (v. 20). Third, he exhorts the people not to have regard for his person but to cling to the word of God that he preached to them (v. 32).[58] These points and the context of opposition help the reader to grasp Calvin's application of the text in his commentary.

As we look at a few aspects of Calvin's comments on Paul's speech from his commentary on Acts 14–28 (1554), several features stand out. Calvin begins his exposition by announcing its main thrust: "In this address Paul chiefly devotes himself to using his own example to encourage the pastors, whom he had appointed at Ephesus, to discharge

Ruprecht, 2017), 25–48.

[54] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 8:513.

[55] Beza, *Life*, lxiii.

[56] T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin: A Biography* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 154. As Calvin preached through books of the Bible, he likely happened to preach on that text; see Fuhrmann, "Calvin," 191–92, and Max Engammare, *Prêcher au XVIe siècle: La Forme du sermon réformé en Suisse, 1520–1550* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2018), 193.

[57] See Richard Stauffer, "Les Discours à la première personne dans les sermons de Calvin," in Richard Stauffer, *Interprètes de la Bible: Études sur les Réformateurs du XVIe siècles*, Théologie historique 57 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980), 198–99. Calvin's commentary on Acts likely reflects his preaching on the book. Indeed, Moehn notes that the "close coincidence between his sermons and his commentary … is unique" (Moehn, "Calvin as Commentator on the Acts of the Apostles," 199).

[58] Cf. Parker, *Calvin: A Biography*, 154.

their office faithfully" (v. 18).[59] Calvin focuses especially on teaching based on the word of God: "He [Paul] also had another aim, that his integrity might afterwards have the effect of commending his teaching."[60]

In drawing instructions from this text, Calvin maintains a balance between instructions for pastors and instructions for churchgoers. On the one hand, he interprets "serving the Lord" in verse 19 to mean "to carry out a public function."[61] And commenting on the expression "publicly and from house to house" (v. 20), he insists on the need for pastoral care to individuals in private.[62] On the other hand, he derives from verse 20 that the members of the church have to be willing to accept private admonishment from their pastors and elders. Calvin's comments here take on a special meaning in light of the opposition to him in Geneva at the time:

> Those who learn are also warned that, if they do indeed wish to be counted among the flock of Christ, they must admit pastors, as often as they come to them, and that private warnings are not to be avoided. For those who do not think fit to hear the pastor's voice, except in the church building (*theatro*), and moreover cannot bear to be warned and reproved at home, no, and fiercely reject such a necessary function into the bargain, are bears rather than sheep.[63]

Likewise, Calvin interprets the "course" in verse 24 to refer to Paul's apostolic "ministry received from the Lord," and yet he adds, "But by his example he teaches that all, who do not have the Lord superintending their course, are wandering."[64]

As Paul uses the expression "his blood" in relationship to God, Calvin has to relate this text to orthodox Christology. Not surprisingly, given the historical context, he adds a comment about Servetus. In line with the sixteenth-century polemical tone, Calvin writes,

> Yet we must not imagine the confusion of the two natures, such as Eutyches tried to introduce; or such as the Spanish dog, Servetus, has concocted at the present time, for to him the divinity of Christ is nothing else but an image (*spectrum*) of the human nature, which, he dreams, has always been shining in God.[65]

In addition, Calvin sees in this speech many relevant teachings about the Catholic Church of his time. Before his conversion, he struggled to break away from the Catholic Church,[66] and he can now find answers to his struggles in this text. The prediction of the coming of wolves and false teachers within the church (vv. 29–30) speaks for him against the Catholic doctrine of the church: "From this it is also apparent how worthless is the boasting of the Papists about a continuous succession."[67] In another polemical note, he

---

[59] John Calvin, *The Acts of the Apostles 14–28*, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 172.

[60] Calvin, *Acts*, 173.

[61] Calvin, *Acts*, 173.

[62] He reinforces that teaching with an allusion to Ezekiel 34:3–4.

[63] Calvin, *Acts*, 175.

[64] Calvin, *Acts*, 179.

[65] Calvin, *Acts*, 184.

[66] Cf. John Calvin, *Épître à Sadolet* (1539), in *Œuvres choisies*, ed. Millet, 117–18.

[67] Calvin, *Acts*, 186. Calvin addresses the Catholic Church in his interpretation in another way: the Catholic Church was not offering much instruction in the sixteenth century; Calvin notes this as he expounds on verse 20, "I kept back nothing." The theme appears central as Calvin interprets the verb *poimainein* (ποιμαίνειν) in verse 28 to mean "to feed" (Calvin, *Acts*, 183).

explains the words "bishop or overseer" in verse 28. The term indicates the function of watching and is used as an equivalent to the word "elder."[68] This interpretation flies in the face of the episcopalian system of church government of the Catholic Church.

A few details illustrate Calvin's use of and interaction with the learning of Renaissance humanism. Noting that Paul's message entails both repentance and faith in Christ (v. 21), Calvin remarks, "Yes, and what is more, teachers of repentance, who neglect faith and insist only on regulating life and on precepts about good works, are hardly to be distinguished from secular philosophers."[69] Thus, Paul and the Christian pastors are different from moral teachers because they teach grace. Calvin's description of wolves could have well been taken from poetical descriptions found in Greek or Latin epic literature.[70] In his words:

> For sometimes God lightens some trouble, so that the flock may be fed quietly and at peace; and just as the sheep are fed more safely in the fields under a clear and serene sky, but, on the other hand, there is more danger in cloudy and dark weather, so sometimes it is as if some fair weather is granted to the Church of God, and after it comes a stormy time, which is more suitable for the stratagems of wolves.[71]

In the next example, we observe Calvin's sensitivity to rhetoric and the flow of Paul's speech.[72] He explains Paul's use of prayer in the midst of his speech in verse 32, an apparent break in the rhythm, in this way:

> He [Paul] interposes a prayer, and that ought not to appear incongruous in a moving speech. For he did not trouble himself about dividing his speech into parts like the rhetoricians, since no words would suffice for the vehemence of the feelings, with which he was inflamed.[73]

This is in harmony with Calvin's principle expressed earlier in the commentary that "Scripture … must be the norm for testing every method of teaching."[74] Note the interpretation of "helping the weak" and financial support that is influenced by Erasmus's philological studies and the principle of the analogy of Scripture.[75]

Finally, this is how Calvin analyzes verse 35:[76] Paul cites here a saying of Jesus not found in the gospel. Further, this saying has parallels with secular writers. Calvin states that this saying is in harmony with Jesus's teaching: "Nothing brings men nearer to God than beneficence." He also admits, "These sayings about liberality are also to be read in the works of secular authors," but he adds, "Common life shows how few are convinced that there is nothing more desirable than to devote our goods to helping our brethren."

As we have now considered Calvin's exposition of Acts 20, we again see his skillful hand at explaining the text. He does not, however, put forward his knowledge but uses it

---

[68] Note Calvin's interpretation of elders and of the theme of the watchman in relation to Ezekiel 3:18–21 (Calvin, *Acts*, 172, 181).

[69] Calvin, *Acts*, 176.

[70] Cf. Bernard Aubert, *The Shepherd-Flock Motif in the Miletus Discourse (Acts 20:17–38) Against Its Historical Background*, SBL 124 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 290.

[71] Calvin, *Acts*, 184–85.

[72] See also Calvin's explanation of the term "testifying" in the context of "law courts" in verse 21 (Calvin, *Acts*, 175).

[73] Calvin, *Acts*, 187.

[74] Calvin, *Acts*, 174.

[75] Calvin, *Acts*, 189.

[76] Calvin, *Acts*, 188–90; for the interpretation of this verse, see Aubert, *The Shepherd-Flock Motif*, 263.

in the background to teach God's word more effectively. His commentary becomes more alive in view of the historical context in which he applied Scripture.

Conclusion

Calvin's precritical interpretation of Psalm 2 and the Miletus speech reveals a consistent methodology and approach (e.g., his use of philological analysis and his ecclesiological understanding of the text). While Calvin's commentaries on Acts and Psalms are considered among his best, additional research into the consistency of his approach would be beneficial. His methodological restraint and conciseness are strengths, but they could also perhaps be liabilities, as Scripture contains a wealth of meanings beyond his interpretations. For instance, there are typological meanings besides the ones he uncovers. Also, as Calvin's commentaries are rooted in his historical context, they are models of Bible application; however, modern Bible readers should not merely rely on his applications but also work out their own in light of their situations.

I would like to suggest ways in which Calvin can help us read the Bible better. Of course, we should strive with Calvin to understand the historical context of the text and the language through which God communicates to us in the Bible, as Calvin anticipates, in some ways, modern interpretations of the Bible. At the same time, Calvin assists us in liberating ourselves from modern patterns of interpretation, as his interpretation has much more continuity with precritical approaches. Thus, Calvin can assist the recent efforts to recover a theological interpretation in the academy and the church.[77]

Here are some ways Calvin can help us today. First, since the Scripture interprets itself, we should be steeped in the Scriptures. Thus, we will be able to see the connections between various texts and understand them better. One way to do that is to see how the New Testament uses the Old and vice versa. Second, our theology should be scriptural, and our interpretation of the Bible should be theological. In this way, when we come to a Bible passage, we will not be limited in our reading to our favorite themes. Calvin can be our guide to reading Scripture, as he suggested in his preface to the *Institutes*. His *Institutes* is about God and man, Christ and salvation, the work of the Spirit in redemption, and the church. While reading the Bible, we should look for those themes as they appear in the pages of Scripture.[78] Finally, Calvin can teach us to apply God's word to our lives. As Calvin was always careful to derive applications from Scripture and not to read them into Scripture, so shall we.

References

Allmen, Jean-Jacques von. "La Continuité de l'Eglise selon la doctrine réformée." In

[77] For a helpful introduction, see Daniel J. Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

[78] Similarly, Herman Selderhuis analyzes Calvin's interpretation on the Psalms along Trinitarian lines; see Herman J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms*, Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), esp. 45-60; see also, Guenther Haas, "The Trinitarian Shape of Calvin's Theology and Exegesis of Scripture," in *Aspects of Reforming: Theology and Practice in Sixteenth Century Europe*, ed. Michael Parsons (Milton Keynes, Bucks: Paternoster, 2013), 217–41.

Prophétisme sacramentel: Neuf études pour le renouveau et l'unité de l'Eglise, 109–38. Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1964.

Alten, Herman Hendrik. *The Beginning of a Spirit-Filled Church: A Study of the Implications of the Pneumatology of the Ecclesiology in John Calvin's Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. Reformed Historical Theology 45. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica* (1265–1273).

Aubert, Bernard. *The Shepherd-Flock Motif in the Miletus Discourse (Acts 20:17–38) Against Its Historical Background*. SBL 124. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.

Augustine. *Christian Instruction* (427).

Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation*. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Beza, Theodore. "Life of Calvin." In John Calvin. *Tracts Relating to the Reformation*. Translated by Henry Beveridge, xvii–c. Edinburgh: Printed for the Calvin Translation Society, 1844.

Bouwsma, William J. *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Calvin, John. "Christ the End of the Law." In *Thy Word Is Still Truth*, edited by Peter A. Lillback and Richard B. Gaffin Jr., 271–82. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013.

———. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*. Translated by James Anderson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

———. *Épître à Sadolet* (1539). In *Œuvres choisies*, edited by Olivier Millet, 65–126. Paris: Gallimard, 1995.

———. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. LCC 21–22. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1940.

———. "Jean Calvin au lecteur (1546)." In *Œuvres choisies*. Edited by Olivier Millet, 51–56. Paris: Gallimard, 1995.

———. "Letter to Peter Viret, Strasburg, May 19, 1540." In *Letters of John Calvin Selected from the Bonnet Edition with Introductory Biographical Sketch*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1980.

———. "Prefatory Address to King Francis." In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles, 1:9–31. LCC 21–22. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1940.

———. *The Acts of the Apostles 14–28*. Edited by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by John W. Fraser. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

———. "The Epistle Dedicatory: John Calvin to Simon Grynaeus, Strasburg, October 18, 1539." In *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. Translated by John Owen. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005.

———. "The Epistle to the Reader (1539)." In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Henry Beveridge, 21. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

Engammare, Max. *Prêcher au XVIe siècle: La Forme du sermon réformé en Suisse, 1520–1550*. Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2018.

Farrar, F. W. "Calvin as an Expositor." *Expositor* 7 (1884): 426–44.

Fuhrmann, Paul Traugott. "Calvin, The Expositor of Scripture." *Interpretation* 6, no. 2 (April 1952): 188–209.

Gamble, Richard G. "Brevitas et Facilitas: Toward an Understanding of Calvin's Hermeneutic." *Westminster Theological Journal* 47 (1985): 1–17.

Greef, Wulfert de. "Calvin as Commentator of the Psalms." Translated by Raymond A. Blacketer. In *Calvin and the Bible*. Edited by Donald K. McKim, 85–106. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Haas, Guenther. "The Trinitarian Shape of Calvin's Theology and Exegesis of Scripture." In *Aspects of Reforming: Theology and Practice in Sixteenth Century Europe*. Edited by Michael Parsons, 217–41. Milton Keynes, Bucks: Paternoster, 2013.

Hazlett, W. Ian P. "Calvin's Latin Preface to His Proposed French Edition of Chrysostom's Homilies: Translation and Commentary." In *Humanism and Reform: The Church in Europe, England, and Scotland, 1400–1643; Essays in Honour of James K. Cameron*. Edited by James Kirk, 129–50. Studies in Church History, Subsidia 8. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Healy, Nicholas M. "Introduction." In *Aquinas on Scripture: An Introduction to His Biblical Commentaries*. Edited by Thomas G. Weinandy, Daniel A. Keating, and John P. Yocum, 1–20. London: T&T Clark, 2005.

Kingdon, Robert M. *Geneva and the Coming of the Wars of Religion in France*. Geneva: Droz, 1956.

Kraus, Hans-Joachim. "Calvin's Exegetical Principles." *Interpretation* 31, no. 1 (1977): 8–18.

McCartney, Dan, and Charles Clayton. *Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1994.

Moehn, Wilhelmus H. Th. "Calvin as Commentator on the Acts of the Apostles." Translated by Lydia Verburg-Balke. In *Calvin and the Bible*. Edited by Donald K. McKim, 198–223. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Muller, Richard A. "Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: The View from the Middle Ages." In *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday*. Edited by Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson, 3–22. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

———. *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Muller, Richard A., and John L. Thompson. "The Significance of Precritical Exegesis: Retrospect and Prospect." In *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday*. Edited by Richard A. Muller and John L. Thompson, 335–45. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

Parker, T. H. L. "Calvin the Biblical Expositor." In *John Calvin*. Edited by G. E. Duffield, 176–89. Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966.

———. *John Calvin: A Biography*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.

Peter, Rodolphe. "Calvin and Louis Budé's Translation of the Psalms." In *John Calvin: A Collection of Essays*. Edited by G. E. Duffield, 190–209. Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966.

Pitkin, Barbara. "Imitation of David: David as a Paradigm for Faith in Calvin's Exegesis of the Psalms." *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24, no. 4 (1993): 843–63.

———. "John Calvin and the Interpretation of the Bible." In *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*. Edited by Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, 2:341–71. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Runia, Klaas. "The Hermeneutics of the Reformers." *Calvin Theological Journal* 19, no. 2 (November 1984): 121–52.

Schaff, Philip. "Calvin as a Commentator." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 3 (1892): 462–69.

———. *History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Selderhuis, Herman J. *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms*. Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.

Silva, Moisés. *Has the Church Misread the Bible? The History of Interpretation in the Light of Current Issues*. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 1. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.

Stauffer, Richard. "Les Discours à la première personne dans les sermons de Calvin." In *Interprètes de la Bible: Études sur les Réformateurs du XVIe siècles*, 183–223. Théologie historique 57. Paris: Beauchesne, 1980.

Steinmetz, David C. "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis." *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27–38.

———. "The Theology of John Calvin." In *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology*. Edited by David Bagchi and David C. Steinmetz, 113–29. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Thompson, Mark D. "Biblical Interpretation in the Works of Martin Luther." In *A History of Biblical Interpretation: The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*. Edited by Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, 2:299–318. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Treier, Daniel J. *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

Wendel, François. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. Translated by Philip Mairet. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997.

Westminster Confession of Faith (1647).

Wilhelmi, Gerhard. "Der Hirt mit dem eisernen Szepter: Überlegungen zu Psalm II 9." *Vetus Testamentum* 27, no. 2 (1977): 196–204.