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The Institutio Christiana in Calvin and his contemporaries

by

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Thesis submitted for the degree of M.Litt.

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## INTRODUCTION

The original edition of Calvin's work, which appeared in Bâle in 1536, had as its title, Christianae Religionis Institutio. The primary sense of the word 'institutio' at this time seems to have been 'instruction'; when it figured in the title of a work it meant 'compendium' or 'instruction-manual'. 'Institutio Christiana', then, does not refer usually to the establishing or the constitutions of religion (though the word can bear the former sense); more properly it should be understood in a context of education through the Church. The aim of this study is to consider the attitude of Calvin and some other writers of the sixteenth century to the problem of the Church, both in general and with particular reference to its educative mission.

This subject is one which was of special interest to Calvin. The entire fourth book of the Institution is given over to it and the foundations had been laid in the course of the earlier books; and besides, Calvin devoted many years to establishing a model Church in Geneva according to the principles he was elaborating. It was perhaps because of its practical results that Calvin's doctrine was so influential; we must not, however, lose sight of the originality of his thought and above all of the originality of its expression. The clarity and completeness of his approach ensured that his work was at once that of a scholar and a populariser. The study of the Church was

largely a new science at the time that Calvin was writing. Although he was not the sole founder of ecclesiology, there had been few systematic treatises before his time, and the subject had never been discussed so extensively anywhere. It will be shown that at the beginning of this period, while there was an incipient awareness that there was indeed a problem of the Church, it had still far to go before it became the rich exposition of the final draft of the Fourth Book, at the end of the period considered here, at the time of the later work of Sponde and D'Aubigné, it had become the leading chapter in apologetics.

This study is divided into two main parts. The first section deals with what Calvin understood by the idea of the Church. It begins with an account of the relation Calvin's ecclesiology bore to the rest of his theology, and to that of Luther and the Church of Rome, and goes on to consider it under various heads. Election is chosen as the logical starting-point, because it was so important a concept to Calvin and because it seems to be essential to any study of the Church which aims to show continuity with the Chosen People. One of the most practical of Calvin's tenets concerning election is that it should encourage a developing holiness in the individual. Since the Institution in its later versions was written in direct opposition to the theology of the Church of Rome, an analysis of it must occasionally place the two side by side; many of Calvin's contemporaries felt that

the essential difference between Geneva and Rome lay in the conception of the Church as invisible or visible. The treatment of this theme gives us some understanding of the nature of the Church according to Calvin; it leads us on to discuss whether or not Calvin saw the Church as necessary for salvation. The chapter on the marks of the Church is important, because this was to become the most controverted point between the reformers and Rome; it is essentially apologetic, and though it lends itself to a subjective approach, its practical application remains. The final chapters deal with Calvin's views on the relation between Church and State, with particular reference to what obtained in Geneva. The prominent place this topic has in the Institution is proof that Calvin's reformation was specifically aimed at the well-being of the whole man.

The second section shows how these ideas were worked out in sixteenth century France by men who were not primarily, or even not at all theologians. No attempt has been made to compare Calvin with his Catholic critics, though these were in great evidence from the very beginning. Of the four writers considered only one is a whole-hearted Catholic; Sponde (1557-1595) was chosen, not so much for the extent of his writings on the subject of the Church, but because he was a convert from calvinism and was also better known as a writer of poetry. Apart from Sponde none of the four dealt with the subject systematically.

X We are interested to know how they, who had no professional interest in the Church, reacted to this new stress on the study of it. Marot (1496-1544) had nothing explicit to say on the topic, except on rare occasions, but his omissions are revealing in one so religious, and so are the ideals he gives in substitution. He was profoundly concerned with the Church as an institution even if only as an object of satire; the nature of the Church, however, meant nothing to him. Du Bartas (1544-1590) and D'Aubigné (1551-1630) have a definite attitude to the nature of the Church, without theorising on it. They saw more clearly than Marot that the history of the Chosen People was mirrored in their own time, and their biblical repertoire was larger. Sponde has by far the most to say on the matter, both by implication, in his early calvinist days, and of set purpose after his conversion. He is interesting because we can trace many of Calvin's ideas in Sponde's pre-conversion works and then see how earnestly he embraces the Catholic attitudes to the same ideas. He provides, further, a valuable commentary on the course of the controversy. Much of his later writing is a direct answer to Calvin (so, Part Three of the Declaration) or to Calvin's successor Bèze. The completely different picture he gives from Calvin portrays the other aspect of sixteenth century thought on the subject of the Church and not just according to a Catholic standpoint: Sponde is a post-Reformation Catholic.



PART ONE : CALVIN

CHAPTER ONE

The importance of the idea of the Church  
in Calvin's thought

Many different themes have been proposed by Calvin's critics as the key-note of his thought; the fact that there are so many shows the pointlessness of the quest. It has, in fact, become more and more fashionable to analyse the work of theologians from the prima facie irrelevant standpoint of a particular school of either philosophy or psychology. The intention is to hit upon a convenient label with which to characterize the theologian; the result is often to reduce his thought-processes to mere rationalisations and to stress one aspect at the expense of several others. Both Luther and Calvin have been subjected to many such cross-examinations and the results have usually been consonant with the outlook of the investigator.<sup>1</sup> While this is inevitable it seems rather futile even to attempt such an appraisal. The outcome can be only either the emphasis of a partial truth or a reassertion of the obvious. There is nothing, after all, world-shattering about the statement that Calvin's theology is theocentric, though Richel thinks the point is worth making.<sup>2</sup>

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1. See, for example, the introductions to the works by NIESEL, RICHEL and RUPP quoted in the Bibliography.

2. P. J. RICHEL, Het Kerkbegrip van Calvijn, Franeker, 1942, p.6.

Père Congar, in his Esquisses du Mystère de l'Eglise, sums up the doctrine of the Church according to St. Thomas as 'anthropologique ou morale, et pneumatologique ou théocentrique.'<sup>1</sup> This does not avoid the danger, either, of rigidly characterizing a line of thought when there should really be no more than a question of stress, but Congar's adjective is more valuable in that it is contrasted not with anthropocentric but with christocentric. This is not to deny that one of Calvin's chief merits was a revaluation of the relation between God and man, and a consequent deepening insight into the truth of God's transcendence, and absolute otherness.<sup>2</sup> But from the point of view of the science of theology this stress had not been weakened. Popular religious thought may have lapsed into an excessive concern about man rather than about God, but this was to some extent a mere phase in the development of the Church, and in any case it scarcely vitiated the work of the specialist. And besides, Calvin was also very much occupied with man and personal salvation. Richel contrasts Calvin's theology with that of the Church of Rome by styling the one theocentric and the other anthropocentric. Such a hard and fast distinction falsifies rather than misleads since the two terms could be transposed with impunity. Nor is he accurate in pointing to the predominant place of ecclesiology in Rome's theology. Rome had no formal ecclesiology worth speaking of before Bellarmine, largely because the need had not yet arisen. The initial efforts were

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1. M.J. CONGAR, Esquisses du Mystère de l'Eglise, Paris, 1941, pp.69 - 70.
  2. F. WENDEL, Calvin, . . . Sources et Evolution de sa Pensée Religieuse, Paris, 1950, p.110.

necessarily controversial, and their structure and importance were suggested by the work of their opponents. Even now, when discussions about the Church are dogmatic in tone rather than apologetic, it is not meaningful to say that ecclesiology is placed by Rome in an unduly prominent position. There is more truth in the statement of Basil Hall that "The doctrine of the Church is the architectonic principle in Calvinism."<sup>1</sup> The reasoning behind this claim is that "Because God must be honoured, and because God had declared His will in the Scriptures, a visible organised society, the Church of God, must show forth to the world the principles of the true and reformed religion." This is clear enough but it does not quite justify "architectonic". If we were to agree with Richel against Hall we might say that the doctrine of the Church is a fortiori the architectonic principle of Catholicism.

A more revealing assessment is that of Dom Gregory Dix who talks of the "majestic but unbalanced supernaturalism of his theology as a whole, which is the most complete and satisfying to the mind of all the expositions which protestantism has received."<sup>2</sup> It is this merger of the most elevated doctrine with the most detailed rules of action which distinguishes Calvin from Luther with his practice of letting church organisation take care of itself. Of Calvin's attitude in 1536

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1. BASIL HALL, John Calvin, Historical Association, 1956. p.23.
  2. G. DIX, The Shape of the Liturgy, London 1960, p.632.

Basil Hall remarks, "It is characteristic - and should be borne in mind as an omen for the future - that his thought is not speculative but pragmatic: his theological principles are aimed directly at planning a visibly reformed Church. It was this clear coherent planning of a Church and community based on carefully-defined theological principles which had hitherto been absent from other writers of the Reformation."<sup>1</sup>

Now while it is true that even from 1536 Calvin was thinking in terms of Church-organisation, we should qualify this by adding that his theory had not yet had the chance to prove its value by very extensive practice. Of the first draft of the Institution Strohl writes,

"C'était le résultat des études et des réflexions d'un jeune savant français qui n'avait pas encore connu par expérience les exigences du ministère pastoral et qui vivait isolé, en réfugié, à l'étranger."<sup>2</sup>

When Torrance, in a summary comparison of Bucer and Calvin, says that Calvin had a more powerful christology (with the suggestion perhaps of very powerful) and a more precise doctrine of the Church,<sup>3</sup> he underlines the fact that Calvin's down-to-earth, personal, concrete religion is hard to reconcile with the idea of a theocentric theology where the centre is essentially transcendent. The tension is there,

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1. HALL, *op. cit.*, p.16.

2. STROHL, La Pensée de la Réforme, Neuchâtel, 1951, p.209, of also, Richel, *op. cit.*, p.12.

3. TORRANCE, Kingdom and Church, Edinburgh, 1956, p.89.

and inevitably so, since it is not merely verbal, but inherent in the expression of the dogmatic fact behind the words.

In the course of this work something must be said about the Church visible and invisible, since an understanding of these terms will clarify the scope of the concept of the Church and the extent of its membership. On such a topic we must readily admit that polysemy has caused unnecessary divergence of opinion. An analysis, then, of the connotations of the words seems called for in the appropriate place.

For Calvin, the Church aims to teach us about Christ and God, but so as to make us develop in holiness. We can see how Calvin expected this to work in practice if we read his instructions to Philibert Hamelin in 1553. A church is founded, he writes, by assembling 'tant pour prier Dieu en commung que pour estre enseigner tant par luy que d'aultres.'<sup>1</sup> We need external aids because of the insufficiency of our mental and moral make-up. The main point, however, is that we have a personal meeting with God, but through the community. 'The Church is the sphere of the self-revelation of God and of the encounter between Christ and ourselves.'<sup>2</sup> In this context Niesel quotes from the Institution -

"Nous voyons que Dieu, combien qu'il peut eslever en un moment les siens en perfection, les veut néantmoins faire croistre petit à petit sous la nourriture de l'Eglise."<sup>3</sup>

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1. IMBART DE LA TOUR, Origines de la Réforme, Vol.IV, Calvin, Paris, 1935, pp.488 - 9.
  2. NIESEL, The Theology of Calvin, (English Translation by Harold Knight), London, 1956, p.185.
  3. CALVIN, Institution de la Religion Chrestienne, ed. Benoît, IV. 1. 5.

More will be said about this idea of the Church as a means for developing holiness when we come to talk of election.

One of the characteristics of Calvin's work is that he retained far more of the tradition against which he was reacting than he would be prepared to admit or even than he was aware of. To understand his idea of the Church we must see how he compares with the exponents of other religious systems, especially the Church of Rome, the Lutherans and the Anabaptists. Wendel rightly speaks of Calvin's "irénisme",<sup>1</sup> but, although such a description is fitting, it might be preferable to ascribe it rather to Calvin's conservatism than to the fact that union with Lutherans, Zwinglians and Anglicans served to strengthen the common front against Rome, or to the fact that the different Protestant churches saw the Church as the body of the same Christ.

After discussing Calvin's acceptance of the axiom 'outside the Church, no salvation', Niesel admits that "Many will suppose that in this characterisation of the essence of the church considerable vestiges of the Roman doctrine of the church are visible. On this point we must observe that in fact, here as elsewhere, Calvin is quite consciously dependent on the teaching of the early church and takes seriously the testimony of the church fathers."<sup>2</sup> Niesel might have added that if Calvin does this, he does it when, as far as he is concerned, the Roman doctrine reflects the explicit revelation of

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1. WENDEL, op. cit., p.70.

2. NIESEL, op. cit., p.186.

Scripture. From the scattered remarks on tradition in the Institution we learn, for example, that Calvin is more interested in accepting something (such as the Apostles' Creed) as certainly inspired by the Holy Ghost, because of its accordance with Scripture, than in examining its history and provenance.<sup>1</sup>

In talking of indulgences and Purgatory he proffers the possible objection to himself that the Catholic custom of praying for the dead has thirteen centuries of tradition behind it, and replies that he would ask his interlocutor on what word of God, according to what revelation, or what example of a true believer this was based.<sup>2</sup> It must, however, also be stated that he was prepared to rely on an implicit or even virtual revelation (such as of the baptism of infants) for which perhaps the strongest argument he adduces is its antiquity in the primitive church.<sup>3</sup> A few chapters earlier than this he writes that it is not sufficient for Catholics to say that their ecclesiastical and papal traditions are well-founded because the Holy Ghost is keeping the Church from error. His reason for this is that for him the very fact of obvious additions to the word of God shows that the Roman Church is not the true Church.<sup>4</sup> So Calvin accepts, in common with the Church of Rome those traditions which are also clearly scriptural. The justification Niesel gives for his statement is from rather a different point of view. Calvin accepts the teaching of the

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1. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 16. 18.

2. CALVIN, Inst. III. 5. 10; c.f. RICHEL, op. cit., p.193.

3. Ib. IV. 16. 8.

4. Ib. IV. 10. 17.

early church "in the last analysis ... because he must agree with them in so far as he recognizes that, according to the divine will, we are made integral to an institution against which the pride of the godless but also that of the pious and religiously satisfied man rebels.<sup>1</sup> A 'yoke of humility' is laid upon us.<sup>2</sup> We must surrender all our own religious resources, all our so-called points of contact with the knowledge of God, and simply accept the word of another, confronting us authoritatively."

Scripture relies in the first place on its own authority; it is a "self-authenticating unity."<sup>3</sup> But there was the possible danger which Calvin did not altogether avoid of resorting to a criterion which at the very best would be equally arbitrary, and in fact more prone to subjectiveness. "Without his saying so, in effect, the testimony of the Holy Spirit tended to mean the testimony of the Reformed Church."<sup>4</sup>

Calvin sees the Church as a school where men are influenced not primarily by those who are in all respects their equals, but by those who have authority over them in the order of Christian "institution" or teaching.<sup>5</sup> The aim of such teaching is true wisdom which consists in a knowledge of God and an entailed knowledge of oneself.<sup>6</sup>

1. Ib. IV. 1. 5.

2. Ib. IV. 1. 6.

3. HALL, op. cit., p.22; c.f. Inst. I. 8. 5. c.f. Ib. I. 7. 1 - 5.

4. HALL, op. cit., p.23.

5. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 17; c.f. IV. 8. 13, where the Church is described as 'l'épouse et l'escolière de Christ.'

6. 'Toute la somme presque de nostre sagesse ... est située en deux parties; c'est qu'en cognoissant Dieu, chacun de nous aussi se cognoisse ...' Ib. I. 1. 1.



When Calvin has spoken of election and eternal happiness, and how we are made partakers of the salvation brought by Christ, it remains for him to show what provision Christ made to counteract our indolence and proneness to distraction. Christ realised our need of external aids, if faith is to be born in us and come to perfection, and if the Gospel is to be preached throughout the world. So it is that Calvin comes to discourse systematically of the Church. We can contrast Luther's haphazard ecclesiology with this magnificent fourth book of the Institution and see immediately the influence it was bound to have on the future of reformed theology. This is not intended to be a dismissal of the contribution of Luther; the gradual gropings of Luther towards a theology of the Church spared the efforts of his successors on this point.<sup>1</sup> We are here concerned more with a comparison of ideas in themselves than with actual relationships between the writers under discussion, and indeed, the question of the direct or even indirect dependence of one thinker on another is not an easy one to answer. We may declare with Wendel and others that, "C'est surtout à propos de la notion d'Eglise que les points de comparaison deviennent frappants. On peut dire que toutes les idées de Calvin à ce sujet se trouvent déjà dans le Commentaire de Bucer de 1530."<sup>2</sup> Wendel quotes illustrative passages, and agrees that the borrowing is not always or not necessarily direct. Calvin is drawing on his knowledge of Augustine

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1. c.f. STROHL, op. cit., p.174.

2. WENDEL, op. cit., p.104.

and Luther, for example. Among the early reformers themselves it is not easy to decide seniority in the study of the idea of the Church. Is it to be Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer? Strohl shows the extent to which the two latter derive from the former, and yet finds it possible to assert that Oecolampadius "fut ainsi le premier véritable ecclésiologue parmi les Réformateurs, et élargit la connaissance de la pensée du Nouveau Testament en mettant en relief les notions de Royaume de Dieu et de Corps du Christ;"<sup>1</sup> and moreover, that "Bucer est avant Calvin, le réformateur le plus préoccupé d'ecclésiologie."<sup>2</sup> Such distinctions are broadly true, but it should also be borne in mind how far there was present the element of mutual influence in the case of those writers who were reaching the maturity of their thought at approximately the same moment. Calvin benefited from his legal and theological training when he set himself the task of putting into a clear and durable form his evaluation of the work of his predecessors.

Calvin's greatest originality lies in the coherent system of Church organisation which he introduced. It is important to know what he saw as its basis and justification.

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1. STROHL, op. cit., pp.13 - 14.

2. Ib. p.193.

## C H A P T E R T W O

### The nature of ecclesiastical constitutions

"Il lui a paru possible," writes P. Bouyer, "de tirer du Nouveau Testament un certain schéma d'organisation ecclésiastique, puis de le réaliser par une oeuvre politique, à laquelle il a consacré le meilleur de ses efforts. Autrement dit, et sans même critiquer pour l'instant le contenu du schéma qu'il a cru de bonne foi emprunter à la Bible, il semble lui avoir totalement échappé que l'Eglise pour être le 'corps du Christ' au sens de saint Paul, 'la colonne et l'appui de la vérité', ne devait pas simplement être faite ou refaite par l'homme en gardant les yeux sur un modèle fourni d'en-haut, mais bien avoir été créée et demeurer en vie par l'intervention personnelle de Dieu lui-même. L'Eglise calviniste, à supposer qu'elle ait réalisé son propre idéal, serait une construction de l'homme faite d'après un plan divin. Mais elle ne serait pas, et elle n'a jamais sérieusement songé à être, l'oeuvre de Dieu lui-même." <sup>1</sup>

In other words, it lacks apostolicity. But the issue is a little more complicated than this. Calvin was not strictly aiming to take over a particular design. This would have been too rigid and Calvin would have been the first to realise the need for adaptation. In his own eyes, Calvin is making the best of a lamentable situation. Any

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1. LOUIS BOUYER, Du Protestantisme à l'Eglise, Paris, 1954, p.229.

artificiality ("Faite par l'homme") which is present in his set-up is due to the fact that, for him, the nature of Christianity has been obscured, and the return to New Testament principles and practice is the only possible point from which the re-start can take place. He would readily admit that the New Testament arrangement was primarily intended for New Testament times,<sup>1</sup> but, as he saw it, simplicity was intended to be a permanent feature and this had been lost. He was far from being convinced that the Church as it existed in his own day was the natural development of the Church of the New Testament, kept in being by the intervention of God, and he would accord to the Church of his day the note of apostolicity only in so far as it had preserved the inner simplicity of the Gospel. Once granted that the crying need for reform meant the sweeping away of all existing church-structures, then Calvin's is the only logical attitude. The return to the primitive community is part of the divine plan and human only in so far as it is brought about by men, but it is also very much the work of God. It could of course be added that what did escape Calvin's notice was that the Church might have been reformed, even radically, without discarding the basic structure and apostolic continuity.

Calvin differs greatly from Luther in his attitude to Church constitutions. "Il est logique, aussi, que Luther se soit refusé à chercher dans la Bible et à laisser en tirer des règlements éternels pour l'organisation de la société chrétienne, par analogie avec le droit

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1. c.f. The distinction between the substance and form of discipline, Doumergue, Jean Calvin, les hommes et les choses de son temps, Lausanne, 1917, V. p.185.

canonique dont il niait le principe. Il a toujours combattu l'idée qu'une institution ecclésiastique quelconque put être de droit divin. Ce sont Bucer et Calvin qui se sont engagés dans cette voie."<sup>1</sup>

Later in his book Strohl treats more directly of Calvin and declares that "La notion d'une Eglise visible constituée conformément à des ordonnances tirées de la Bible et ayant des ministères divers obligatoires parce qu'institués par Dieu est encore loin de sa pensée."<sup>2</sup>

But this refers to 1536; in the edition of 1543 we read,

"Il me faut protester que ie n'enten point d'approuver autres constitutions que celles qui sont fondées en l'autorité de Dieu et tirées de l'Escriture, tellement qu'on les puisse totalement appeller"Divines."<sup>3</sup>

Whether or not we come to the conclusion that Calvin instituted a theocracy in Geneva we are compelled to admit that his system was not arbitrarily based on the Bible.<sup>4</sup> In the first place, Calvin saw the restricted application for Old Testament laws and practices; and, secondly, New Testament constitutions were not intended to be perpetually irreformable.

"Prenons exemple en la coustume de nous agenouiller quand on fait les prières solennelles, savoir est si nous devons tenir cela pour tradition humaine, laquelle il soit loisible à chacun de mespriser ou

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1. STROHL, op. cit., pp.187 - 8; c.f. TORRANCE, op. cit., pp.63, 134 - 6.

2. Ib. p.214.

3. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 10. 30.

4. Ib. IV. 20. 14, 16.

reietter. Le dy qu'elle est tellement humaine qu'elle est aussi divine. Elle est de Dieu, entant qu'elle est partie de ceste honnesteté laquelle l'Apostre nous recommande (I Cor. 14, 40). Elle est des hommes, entant qu'elle nous monstre spécialement et par exprès ce qui avoit seulement esté touché en général par l'Apostre. Par cest exemple nous pouvons estimer ce que nous devons iuger de tout le reste. La somme est, puisque Dieu a fidèlement compris en sa parolle, et nous a pleinement déclaré quelle est toute la vraye reigle de iustice, toute la façon de le bien servir et tout ce qui estoit nécessaire pour nostre salut, il le faut avoir pour nostre seul maistre en cela. Quant à la discipline externe et aux cérémonies, il ne nous a point voulu ordonner en particulier et comme de mot à mot comment il nous faut gouverner, d'autant que cela dépendoit de la diversité des temps, et qu'une mesme forme n'eust pas esté propre ny utile à tous aages. Donc il nous faut avoir recours à ces reigles générales que i'ay dit: c'est assavoir que tout se face honnestement et par ordre en l'Eglise. Finalement, pource que Dieu n'en a rien dit par exprès, d'autant que ce n'estoyent point choses nécessaires à nostre salut, et qu'il est mestier d'en user en diverses sortes selon la nécessité, pour édification, nous avons à conclurre qu'on les peut changer et en instituer des nouvelles, et abolir celles qui ont esté, selon qu'il est expédient pour l'utilité de l'Eglise. Je confesse bien qu'il ne faut pas innover à chacune fois, ny à tout propos, pour légière cause, mais la charité nous monstrera tresbien ce qui pourra nuire ou édifier,

par laquelle si nous souffrons d'estre gouvernez, tout ira bien."<sup>1</sup>

This key passage is in itself a commentary on the remarks of Perè Bouyer. It shows that Calvin was well aware that the church is not simply to be made or remade by man; but that granted that there was a need for 'remaking' of some form or another, then this was the way in which it should be conducted. To state, as Bouyer does, that the Calvinist Church "n'a jamais sérieusement songé à être l'oeuvre de Dieu" indicates a total misunderstanding of Calvin's views on continuity. Calvin's aim, like that of all the other reformers, was to renew the ancient form of the Church. His insistence that the Reformation did not make a new church committed him also to the view that the Roman church must have been a church before, and to the logical conclusion that he could attack the Church of Rome only under pain of being classed as a schismatic. We shall see later what status he did in fact accord to the Church of Rome. Suffice it for the moment to note that in spite of (or conceivably because of) his profound sympathy with all the implications of what is contained in Scripture, he did not revert to the Bible in the hope of finding there a blue-print for church constitutions. "He followed his own injunction (of referring to Scripture)", writes Niesel, "but not in the sense that he deduced from Scripture principles for the ordering of church life. Hence he did not project a church order on the basis of such guiding principles and put it into practice at Geneva. Calvin was far

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1. Ib. IV. 10. 30.

removed from so misunderstanding the Bible and from the reliance on works which such an approach would imply."<sup>1</sup> It will, however, become evident in the course of this work that agreement with Scriptural (and Patristic) practice is held in very high esteem by Calvin as a de facto corroboration of the value of a church practice of his own day.<sup>2</sup>

While he would agree with the Anabaptists that the Church is essentially a voluntary association 'taking its spirit and discipline from those who intentionally belong to its Fellowship', Calvin would not go as far as they did in accepting that 'the New Testament was clear both as to the content of the Christian Faith and the organizational procedures in the true Christian community.'<sup>3</sup>

In these two introductory chapters we have seen something of Calvin's general approach to the topic of the Church. It now remains to examine in more detail his opinions on particular topics of ecclesiology to arrive at a global view of his attitudes to the Church.

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1. NIESEL, op. cit., p.200.
  2. For this section (on the normative value of Scriptural constitutions) c.f. DOUMERGUE, op. cit., pp.49 - 53; c.f. Calvin, Inst., IV. 12. 14.
  3. F. H. LITTELL, The Anabaptist View of the Church, Boston, 1958, p.46.



## C H A P T E R T H R E E

### Election

"Nous disons donc, comme l'Esriture le monstre évidemment, que Dieu a une fois décrété par son conseil éternel et immuable lesquels il vouloit prendre à salut, et lesquels il vouloit dévouer à perdition. Nous disons que ce conseil, quant aux esleus, est fondé en sa miséricorde sans aucun regard de dignité humaine. Au contraire, que l'entrée de vie est forclosé à tous ceux qu'il veut livrer en damnation; et que cela se fait par son iugement occulte et incompréhensible, combien qu'il soit iuste et équitable. Davantage, nous enseignons que la vocation des esleus est comme une monstre et tesmoignage de leur élection. Pareillement que leur iustification en est une autre marque et enseigne, iusques à ce qu'ils viennent en la gloire en laquelle gist l'accomplissement d'icelle."<sup>1</sup>

Such is Calvin's clear summary of the doctrine he holds concerning election, assuredly one of the key themes in his theology, and one which he treats at great length almost immediately before he enters on the topic of the Church with the fourth book of the Institution. When he talks of the difficulty of distinguishing who are the true members in the Church Calvin says,

"Mais pource qu'ils ne sont qu'une poignée de gens, voire contemptibles, meslez parmy grande multitude, et sont cachez

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1. Inst. III. 21. 7.

comme un peu de grain sous un grand amas de paille en l'aire, il nous faut laisser à Dieu seul ce privilège de cognoistre son Eglise, de laquelle le fondement est son élection éternelle."<sup>1</sup>

But this notion of foundation is confusing and perhaps should not be taken too literally. Although Niesel quotes this assertion of the secret choice of God as the foundation of the Church on page 190 of his book, he has earlier pointed out that election is not a doctrine from which others flow (pp.165 - 6). His reasons are that the treatment of election does not receive a special section in the 1536 edition of the Institution; in the 1537 Geneva Catechism it comes after the discussion of God, man, free-will and so on, and after it has been said that we possess Christ only by faith; in the last and definitive edition of the Institution it is almost the last chapter in the treatment of salvation; the second and final Genevan Catechism includes no special treatment.

In the later context Niesel continues, "According to Calvin's theory of the church, the fact of its election gives to the church its peace and certainty and the impetus which it needs for its ministry in this world."<sup>2</sup> "But surely it is not the fact of election which induces peace and certainty but the knowledge we possess of this fact - in other words, our very certainty."<sup>3</sup> In any case,

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1. Ib. IV. 1. 2; c.f. Epistre au Roy, éd. Benôit, p.43.
  2. NIESEL, op. cit., p.191.
  3. c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 24. 6.

Calvin would not have expressed himself thus. If any "fact" or "reality" were in question it would be more likely to be that of the loving-kindness of God. This would fit in better with the last part of Niesel's sentence. Furthermore, what Niesel says does not apply specifically to Calvin's theory of the Church.

That 'foundation' is essentially a metaphor which should not be probed too deeply is clear from a study of related texts, such as for example, Inst. III.xv. 5. and III.xxv.5., where it is shown that Christ is the only foundation of the Church.

The fact of election can be considered from the point of view either of God or of man. Calvin sees it more from God's side. The context of the passage from Inst. IV.i.2. quoted above is the co-existence in the world of the good and the bad. Calvin thinks that it is the privilege of God alone to decide who of these are His Church, 'whose foundation is his secret election.' It might even be thought that the foundation here mentioned refers rather to God's knowledge than to the Church as such. Richel puts this clearly; from his study of the Epistle to the Romans, and especially from 1539 onwards, Calvin ascertains that the basis of the salvation of the Church is exclusively God's gracious election.<sup>1</sup> Richel is here opposing himself diametrically to Wernle, who had said that in the 1539 edition of the Institution the connexion between this work and the Catechism of 1537 was that in the former the idea of election followed directly on soteriology and did not precede it as in the latter; consequently

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1. RICHEL, op. cit., p.13.

Calvin did not make predestination a central dogma from which everything else logically followed. Richel is adamant. "The opposite of this is the truth." The faithful must look for the ultimate basis of their holiness in the provident and merciful plan of God, "Election works itself out in the order of salvation, whence Calvin ascended in 1559 to the teaching on predestination. The origin of the Church is to be sought only in the sovereign pleasure of God."<sup>1</sup>

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1. 'Het tegendeel hiervan is de waarheid ... De verkiezing werkt zich uit in de orde des heils, waaruit Calvijn in 1559 opklom tot de leer der praedestinatie. De oorsprong der kerk is slechts in het souvereine welbehagen te zoeken.'  
Ib. p.14; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. xi. 1. on the importance of justification.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Election and Holiness

Calvin's practical application of his doctrine of election is readily appreciated when we understand what he saw as the purpose of God's choice. We are chosen in order that we should be holy;<sup>1</sup> this is the lifework of the individual elect and of the Church collectively. It should be stressed from the start that this is a developing holiness.<sup>2</sup> Calvin shows the need for living a good life whether or not we belong, in fact, to the number of the elect.

"Saint Paul enseigne que la fin de nostre élection est, a ce que nous menions vie sainte et irrépréhensible (Ephés. I, 4). Si le but de nostre élection est de saintement vivre, elle nous doit plustost pousser et stimuler à méditer sainteté, qu'à chercher couverture de nonchalance."<sup>3</sup>

More specifically Calvin's aim is to serve God by giving Him the praise which is due to Him<sup>4</sup> and by furthering the interests of the Church; he will help others to become aware of their responsibilities through his mission of teaching.

"Car combien que Dieu ait du tout attaché mon coeur à une droite affection et pure d'augmenter son règne et servir à l'utilité de son

1. Ib. III. 22.3.

2. Ib. III. 22. 2; c.f. III. 6. 5; DOUMERGUE, op. cit., pp. 8 - 9.

3. Inst. III. 23. 12.

4. Ib. I. 5. 6; c.f. Préface, ed. BENOIT, p.26, ("i'oseray hardiment protester en simplicité ce que ie pense de cest oeuvre, le reconnoissant estre de Dieu, plus que mien: comme, à la vérité, la louenge luy en doibt estre rendue").

Eglise: que ma conscience me rende bon et certain tesmoignage devant luy et devant ses Anges, que ie n'ay eu autre intention depuis qu'il m'a donné ceste charge et office d'enseigner, sinon de profiter à son Eglise en déclarant et maintenant la pure doctrine qu'il nous a apprise ... Or mon but a esté de tellement préparer et instruire ceux qui se voudront adonner à l'estude de Théologie, à ce qu'ils ayent facile accez à lire l'Escriture sainte, et à profiter et se bien avancer à l'entendre, et tenir le bon chemin et droit sans choper."<sup>1</sup>

A linguistic inquiry into the meaning of the title of Calvin's book reveals that *Institutio*, besides being the word used by Christian writers in titles of compendia, is also used at this time in the sense of 'education' or 'instruction'.<sup>2</sup> Richel adds to this that our meaning of 'institution' is not implied since the word was not in the current dogmatic vocabulary.<sup>3</sup> In old French the word and its cognates were used to denote the act of establishing or setting something up, that which was so established (especially something of a political or religious nature), and also an order, a command. It does not appear to have been used with reference to education. In this sense it belongs to the language of the Renaissance; the second edition of the Dictionnaire de l'Académie notes the word as *obsolescent*. 'Instituer' until the sixteenth century preserved the primary meaning of

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1. Ib. p.24.
  2. J. T. McNEILL, Footnote to p.xxxi of the Introduction to the S.C.M. translation.
  3. RICHEL, op. cit., p.201; though it could mean 'act of establishing c.f. 'contraire à l'institution de Jesus Christ.' Inst. IV. p. 14.

'instituer', but at that time the figurative meaning (which had equal Ciceronian authority) came to the fore. It meant 'to instruct' and 'to teach', but the earlier sense was not completely forgotten, particularly in the related forms, 'instituteur', 'instituteur', and 'instituter'. The word which comes in the title of Calvin's work is synonymous with 'education', and is also much used in the more concrete sense of 'formation' or 'instruction'. Huguet cites Rabelais, Amyot and above all Montaigne. It is worth nothing, with reference to the practical aim of Calvin's book that 'institut', means 'conduct, way of life' as well as 'that which is established.'<sup>1</sup>

"He was not, we may say, a theologian by profession, but a deeply religious man who possessed a genius for orderly thinking, and obeyed the impulse to write out the implications of his faith. He calls his book not a *summa theologiae* but a *summa pietatis*. The secret of his mental energy lies in his piety; its product is his theology, which is his piety described at length."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin, is, then, primarily interested in inspiring people to become holier, and only secondarily in teaching them facts, even of the highest religious significance. When he treats of education Calvin is thinking of the formation provided by growing up in the Church;

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1. ED. HUGUET, Dictionnaire de la Langue française du seizième siècle, Paris, 1950, IV, pp.654 - 5.  
 F. GODEFROY, Dict. de l'ancienne Langue française du IX<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Paris, 1885, IV, p.594.  
 TOBLER - LOMMATZSCH, Altfranzösische Wörterbuch, Wiesbaden, 1960, IV, pp.1408 - 9.  
 W. V. WARTBURG, Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, Basel, 1952, IV, p.724.
  2. J. T. McNEILL, op. cit., p.li.

he is not envisaging it as something in any way separate from the life of the Church. In 1536 he addresses the King,

"Il m'a semblé estre expédient de faire servir ce présent livre, tant d'instruction à ceux que premièrement i'avoie délibéré d'enseigner, qu'aussi de confession de foy envers vous...."<sup>1</sup>

Learning and teaching are two aspects of bearing witness. So it is that in his discussion of Confirmation Calvin suggests that the ancient Christian custom should be restored, which consisted in 'une instruction Chrestienne, par laquelle les enfans, ou ceux qui auroyent passé aage d'enfance, eussent à exposer la raison de leur foy en présence de l'Eglise.' A manual should be prepared with this in mind. A child of ten would present himself to the Church 'pour déclairer la confession de sa foy. Qu'il fust interrogué sur chacun point, et eust à respondre; s'il ignoroit quelque chose, ou n'entendoit pas bien, qu'on l'enseignast en telle manière, qu'il confessast, présente et tesmoin l'Eglise, la vraye foy pure et unique, en laquelle tout le peuple fidèle d'un accord honnore Dieu.' If such a system could be introduced, says Calvin, 'chacun auroit une adresse de la doctrine Chrestienne.' The Latin text of 1559 has, for 'adresse', 'quaedam velut methodus' which indicates the clarity Calvin hoped to achieve.<sup>2</sup> We can, if we wish, regard the 1536 edition of the

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1. Au Roy, ed. BENÔIT, p.27.

2. CALVIN, Inst., IV. 19. 13.



Institution as a glorified catechism.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the introduction of the actual Catechism, Biéler writes, "On remarquera ici encore, le sens pédagogique de Calvin; il insiste pour que la substance contenue dans le catechisme, valable pour tous, soit enseignée de façon différente selon l'intelligence et l'âge de chaque adolescent. Et il requiert la collaboration active des parents dans la formation spirituelle de leurs enfants."<sup>2</sup> We do not need to dwell here on the undoubted ability of Calvin as a theorist and practitioner in education. It would be sufficient to make a study of the work of his Academy and of his plans for training preachers to be convinced of his merit in this sphere. Corbière, writing in 1858, makes much of this topic of education through the Church:

"L'état étant pour lui un Etat chrétien, tous les citoyens étant baptisés et tous les baptisés étant membres de l'Eglise, il était obligé de renoncer à une définition de celle-ci qui, ayant pour éléments la société, serait peu applicable au christianisme nominal de toute une population. Dès lors l'Eglise devient moyen de grace, les fidèles sont des enfants à élever et Calvin ne peut plus songer à mettre le centre de gravité de l'Eglise dans la multitude de ses membres."<sup>3</sup>

But Corbière is the only one of the nineteenth century thesis-writers who attaches any importance to the topic. Yet it was a vital point of reformation doctrine. Calvin is far from being alone in his

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1. c.f. RICHEL, op. cit., p.12; 167.

2. BIÉLER, La Pensée Économique et Sociale de Calvin, p.86.

3. CORBIÈRE, Théorie de l'Eglise d'après Calvin, Strasbourg, 1858, pp.18, 60.

interest in the educative side of religion. Bucer is even more explicit than Calvin in calling the Church the educator of the city.<sup>1</sup> Melancthon, too, in the 1535 edition of the Loci Communes describes the Church as a 'coetus similis scholastico coetui'.<sup>2</sup> And, above all, Bugenhagen sees the necessity for a control over education if the Reformation is to achieve its object.<sup>3</sup> The instances in which Calvin refers to this subject in the course of the Institution are too numerous to list at length. We might mention one or two of them to illustrate the point. The opening sentences of the Prefatory Address to the King contain the idea, and by their position are an indication of its importance.

"Au commencement que ie m'appliquay à escrire ce présent livre, ie ne pensoye rien moins, Sire, que d'escrire choses qui fussent présentées à vostre Maïesté. Seulement mon propos estoit d'enseigner quelques rudimens, par lesquels ceux qui seroyent touchez d'aucune bonne affection de Dieu, fussent instruits à la vraye piéte."<sup>4</sup>

The key lies in the public to which he wishes to address himself. To be compared with the passage is another one from the Fourth Book. Calvin has spoken of the position and office of subdeacons in the Church of Rome. He has explained how far, in his opinion, this has been distorted in the passage of time, and concludes:

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1. STROHL, op. cit., p.201.
  2. Ib. pp. 204 - 5. (c.f. also p.223).
  3. c.f. ERNST WOLF, Peregrinatio; Johannes Bugenhagen, Gemeinde und Amt, esp. pp. 269 - 273. Munich, 1954.
  4. Au Roy, ed. BENOÎT, p.27.

"Cecy pourra satisfaire à ceux qui se rendront dociles et modestes, auxquels ce livre est adressé....."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin would like to think that he has written in a persuasive manner, but he realises the need for a prepared mind in the hearer.

"Nous voyons que Dieu, combien qu'il peut eslever en un moment les siens en perfection, les veut néantmoins faire croistre petit à petit sous la nourriture de l'Eglise. Nous voyons que la manière est exprimée, assavoir entant que la prédication est commise aux Pasteurs. Nous voyons comment tous sont rengez à cela, de se laisser avec un esprit docile et débonnaire gouverner par les Pasteurs créés à cest usage."<sup>2</sup>

The ultimate justification of the teaching ministry lies in the fact that the whole process of Church life is one of gradual perfection, the growing up into manhood of the members of the Church. To each are given different gifts to be used in the service of others and thus in the service of God.<sup>3</sup>

"Combien que la sainte Escriture contienne une doctrine parfaite, à laquelle on ne peut rien adiuster: comme en icelle nostre Seigneur a voulu desployer les Thrésors infiniz de sa Sapience: toutesfois une personne qui n'y sera pas fort excitée a bon mestier de quelque conduite et adresse,

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1. Inst. IV. 19. 33.

2. Ib. IV. 1. 5.

3. Ib.

pour sçavoir ce qu'elle y doit chercher: à fin de ne s'esgarer point cà et là, mais de tenir une certaine voye, pour atteindre tousiours à la fin, où le Saint Esprit l'appelle. Pourtant l'office de ceux qui ont receu plus ample lumière de Dieu que les autres est de subvenir aux simples en cest endroit: et quasi leur prester la main pour les conduire et les ayder à trouver la somme de ce que Dieu nous a voulu enseigner en sa parolle."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin shows elsewhere that the bond of unity among the members of the Church does not prevent each one from making his personal contribution to the life of the Church.

"Il appert qu'à un chacun membre de l'Eglise est donnée la charge d'édifier les autres, selon la mesure de grace qui est en luy, moyennant que cela se face décentement et par ordre, c'est à dire que nous ne renoncions point la communion de l'Eglise, et aussi que, demeurans en icelle, nous ne troublions point la police ne la discipline."<sup>2</sup>

It is through helping one another to become holier that the individual members themselves become holy and participate in the holiness of the Church.

"Estimer l'Eglise désia sainte et immaculée, de laquelle les membres soyent encore souillez et immondes, n'est-ce

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1. CALVIN, Préface, ed. BENOÎT, p.25.

2. Inst. IV. 1. 12.

pas pure moquerie? Il est donc vray que Christ a lavé son Eglise au Baptesme d'eau par la parole de vie, c'est à dire qu'il l'a purgée par la rémission des péchez, de laquelle purgation le Baptesme est enseigne; et l'a purgée pour la sanctifier. Mais de ceste sanctification le commencement tant seulement en apparoist icy; la fin et l'accomplissement en sera entier, quand Christ, le saint des saints, l'aura remplie du tout de sa sainteté. Il est vray aussi que les rides et macules d'icelle sont effacées; mais c'est tellement que de iour en iour elles s'effacent encores, iusques à ce que Christ par son advènement oste entièrement ce qui en reste."<sup>1</sup>

(To this might be compared Luther's adage, 'semper peccator, semper penitens, semper iustus,' (WA 56 p.441 f.) which can have reference either to man directly or to the progress of the Church in the world.)<sup>2</sup>

An interesting corollary of this is that pointed to by Richel, that because of the fact of sin, when we make an appeal to the 'pure preaching of the word' as a mark of the Church, we are not dealing with absolute purity of preaching.<sup>3</sup> One final point of note is the converse of the principal thesis of the perfecting of the Church.

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1. Ib. IV. 8. 12; c.f. the strikingly similar passage in Iv. 1. 17. l'Eglise done est tellement sainte, que iournellement elle profite, et n'a pas encore, sa perfection; iournellement elle va en avant, et n'est pas encore venue au but de sainteté.<sup>1</sup>
  2. quoted in TORRANCE, op. cit., pp. 53 - 4; 64.
  3. RICHEL, op. cit., pp.182 - 3.

While the Church is striving onwards towards perfection it is not so much tempted away from this to a state of impassivity, but because of the human element involved there is present the danger of positive corruption.

"L'institution divine de l'Eglise, parce qu'elle est en même temps une réalité terrestre, est toujours menacée de corruption, comme toute institution humaine."<sup>1</sup>

This is one of the main reasons for the need of a disciplinary force in the Church. It is also a reason why we should not look for the Church merely among those who can be seen at first glance to be leading a good Christian life.

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1. BIÉLER, op. cit., p.281; c.f. also, p.256.

## C H A P T E R F I V E

### Election and Calling

"Jamais nous ne serons clairement persuadez comme il est requis que la source de nostre salut soit la miséricorde gratuite de Dieu, iusques à ce que son élection éternelle nous soit quant et quant liquide, pource qu'elle nous esclairecit par comparaison la grâce de Dieu, en ce qu'il n'adopte pas indifféremment tout le monde en l'espérance de salut, mais donne aux uns ce qu'il dénie aux autres."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin prefaces his comments on the important topic of election with the warning that these are deep matters and are not to be dealt with glibly or superficially. He is anxious that his views on the subject should not be watered down to make them more widely acceptable; and he feels that much of the misunderstanding is a result of an inability to appreciate the nature of the mystery involved. He wishes, too, to avoid the danger of treating the subject as though it were a philosophical problem.

God, in His providence, looks after the Church He has chosen. His providence is a necessary corollary of Creation, and it is not to be thought of as mere prescience (I. i6. I, 4.). God concerns Himself with every single creature, but more particularly and more lovingly with His chosen people. God, the Father cares for His

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1. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 21. 1.

children (I. 17. I), and especially for those who are members of His Church. (I. 17. 6.).<sup>1</sup> The question then arises, who are members of the Church? The answer is not a simple or straightforward one, and it must ultimately be worked out on several different levels. Initially we should distinguish the general and the particular election. Richel shows that already in 1552, in the treatise De aeterna Dei Praedestinatione, Calvin showed evidence of his awareness of this. There is, of course, a chosen people, but the general election refers to all the seed of Abraham. God selected Israel from among all other nations as the recipient of His message and to be the possessor of His sacraments. And from this people God chose a particular seed which He endowed with faith and made the recipient of His promises. "There is, then, a double election, the one (generaliter) extends to the entire family of Israel, the other is the hidden one, the secret sanctuary of God, in which God choses His own who, through His gift of faith, will embrace His promises".<sup>2</sup> But although the general election extends to the whole race, it does happen that some men do not lay themselves open to God for Him to manifest in them His particular election. This is because proneness to evil is inherent in man's nature. Since it is the inclination and not the wickedness itself which is inherent, evil men are without excuse. The

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1. Ib. III. 14. 6; c.f. WENDEL, op. cit., p.134.

2. 'Er is dus een dubbele verkiezing, de eene (generaliter) strekt zich uit tot heel het geslacht van Abraham, de andere is de geheime, het verborgen heiligdom Gods, waarin God de Zijnen kiest, die door Zijn gave van geloof de beloften Gods zullen omhelzen.' RICHEL, op. cit., p. 24.



wicked seek their excuse in their inability to avoid the necessity of sinning which follows from God's will and design; Calvin contends that this design of God is just, if somewhat impenetrable. "Dont nous concluons qu'ils n'endurent nulle peine, laquelle ne leur soit imposée par le iugement de Dieu tresiuste."<sup>1</sup>

In his conclusion of this discussion Richel writes, "The whole family of Abraham was included in this general election but the particular election alone brings with it the gift of faith, participation in Christ. This gift is not due to man's own merit but is pure grace; God's promise is offered to all but presented only to the faithful."<sup>2</sup> The most important phrase in this sentence is 'participation in Christ.' After speaking of the election of all Israel and then the elections of individuals in the nation, Calvin goes on to say that "son élection gratuite n'a encore esté exposée qu'à demy, iusques à ce que nous venions aux personnes singulières, ausquelles Dieu non seulement offre salut, mais aussi leur en assigne telle certitude, que l'effect n'en peut estre en suspens ny en doute ... toutesfois, pource que plusieurs de ses successeurs ont esté retrenchez comme membres pourris, pour avoir la pleine fermeté et efficace de l'élection il est requis de monter au chef, par lequel le Père céleste a conioinct ses esleus à soy, et les a aussi alliez ensemble d'un noeud indissoluble".<sup>3</sup> The basis of our participation in Christ is

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1. CALVIN, Inst. III. 23. p.  
2. 'Al het zaad van Abraham was in deze algemeene verkiezing opgenomen, maar de bÿzondere verkiezing brengt alleen mede de gave van het geloof, het deelhebben aan Christus ... De belofte Gods wordt allen aangeboden, maar slechts den geloovige geschonkeen.' RICHEL, op. cit., p.31.  
3. Inst. III. 21. 7.

the fact of our election, though it is also true to say that 'the basis of election is Christ.'<sup>1</sup>

What, then, should be the attitude of Christians towards their fellow men? Calvin talks about incorporation in the body of Christ, and this on many occasions.

"He lays all possible stress upon that as the essence of salvation. By affirming that the process takes place through the activity of the Holy Spirit, he intends not to diminish but to secure our communion with Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin's language is Pauline, but the union he speaks of is not technically 'mystical'. For him 'mystical union' often means little more than sacred union, religious union with Christ by faith.<sup>3</sup>

Wendel quotes texts from different stages in Calvin's life which point to an increasing use of this theme, and an apparent deepening of its meaning (especially the homily on I Sam. II 27 - 30 which dates from the end of Calvin's life), but he adds that there is here no essential unity of Christ and believers. That the sense is metaphorical is to be seen from Calvin's polemic on other occasions, and the uncertainty of the present text detracts from its being a definitive statement of Calvin's thought. It still remains true that Calvin saw all Christians as very closely united with Christ. For him, logically, the only true members of the Church are the elect,

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1. 'Het fundament der verkiezing is Christus.' RICHEL, op. cit., p.27.
  2. NIESEL, op. cit., p.125.
  3. WENDEL, op. cit., p.178; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 2.; III. 2. 24, III. 11. 10.

those whose salvation is assured. But this is logic, and love demands that Christians should treat as members of the Church all those who confess their faith in God and Christ; an exception is to be made in the excommunication of heretics and men of evil life.<sup>1</sup>

We may agree with Richel that for Calvin it is to some extent possible to distinguish between true and illegitimate children, by looking to the relation they bear to Christ. "He who believes in him is a true son of Abraham."<sup>2</sup> But this is an external sign and we may not go on from there to assert that election is dependent upon faith. Calvin speaks of some who "*ne say pas de quelle raison estant induits, suspendent l'élection, de la foy; comme s'il n'y avoit point de certitude ne fermeté, iusques à ce qu'on croye... c'est faussement parler, que l'election commence d'avoir son efficace lorsque nous recevons l'Evangile, et qu'elle prend de là sa vigueur.*"<sup>3</sup>

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1. WENDEL, *op. cit.*, pp.102 - 3; c.f. STROHL, *op. cit.*, p.209.
  2. 'Wie in Hem gelooft, is een war kind van Abraham'. RICHEL, *op. cit.*, p.27.
  3. CALVIN, Inst. III. 24. 3.

## C H A P T E R S I X

### The Church Visible and Invisible

Calvin finds a real distinction between true and illegitimate children in the Church, and he refers the reader to the different kinds of adoption in St. Paul. "En ceste Eglise il y a plusieurs hypocrites meslez avec les bons, qui n'ont rien de Jesus Christ, fors que le tiltre et l'apparence, les uns ambitieux, les autres avaricieux, les autres mesdisans, aucuns de vie dissolue, lesquels sont tolérez pour un temps, ou pource qu'on ne les peut conveindre iuridiquement, ou bien pource que la discipline n'est pas tousiours en telle vigueur qu'elle devroit."<sup>1</sup> Many of these have not answered to the call, but it remains true that everyone is a child of God in so far as created in the image of God.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen that the first basis for distinction in membership of the Church is to be found in the idea of particular and general election. The second great distinction is between the visible and the invisible Church. The long Christian tradition behind these words adds to their usefulness in theological discussion, but unfortunately they have been used to characterise such radically divergent points of view, and have been used loosely, almost pictorially, with a consequent depreciation of their value. There are two ways of looking at the Church, yet only one Church; first, the Church is

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1. CALVIN, Inst., IV. 1. 7; c.f. ib., IV. 1. 13.

2. Ib. I. 1. 1 - 2, etc.

invisible, a communion of saints which can include only those who have the grace of adoption; and second, the Church is visible, a multitude which honours God and Christ, has received Baptism, is united in the Eucharist, and wishes to preserve intact Christ's preaching.<sup>1</sup> The invisible Church is styled the 'true Church' and its members 'true members', whereas the visible Church embraces good and bad alike. We should hold this visible Church in honour as well as the invisible, and we should remain in communion with it. We must be clear on this point: Calvin has no intention of disparaging the visible Church. Niesel contends that Calvin's use of the Augustinian distinction, far from suggesting a belittling of the visible Church, is rather a result of his desire to clarify the roles of God and Christ in the Church. "If Calvin makes use of the Augustinian distinction," he writes, "... it is not in order to withdraw the visible Church partly or wholly from the rule of Christ and to hand it over to other powers... He takes over the ideas of Augustine, not in order to develop a doctrine of two churches, but rather in order to confront the empirical church which we know with the concept of the invisible church. All this play of ideas is intended to show clearly that God is really the Lord of the church and that therefore the church in which we live is not simply identical in its empirical reality with the Body of Christ."<sup>2</sup> Calvin's

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1. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 7.

2. NIESEL, op. cit., pp.191 - 2.

interpreter here lays himself open to one or two minor criticisms. It is true that the reader of Calvin readily understands that he wishes to refer to two aspects of one Church (if we take Church in the minimal sense of the 'congregation of the elect people',<sup>1</sup> or 'the total number of the elect, whether angels or men and of men, whether dead or yet alive').<sup>2</sup> But the empirical Church which we know plays an important part in the concept we form of the invisible Church. You cannot really confront one with the other. Nor is it sufficient to say that Calvin intended to show clearly something which he does not mention in this context; and, moreover, the fact that God is Lord of the Church does not necessarily lead as a consequence to the further fact enunciated in Niesel's last sentence.

The near impossibility of making hard and fast distinctions in this matter is demonstrated by Basil Hall's attempt to show Calvin's reliance on three independent schools of thought, those of Luther, the Catholics and the Anabaptists.<sup>3</sup> He contrasts Luther's belief in the invisible Church with the vital importance Catholics attach to the Church we know. He shows, too, that Calvin was not so rigorous as the Anabaptists nor so esoteric, since he agreed that the visible Church was not co-extensive with the elect, and their religious

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1. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 2.; c.f. Epistre à Sadolet, ed. ALBERT-MARIE SCHMIDT, p.52.
  2. CALVIN, O.S. 1, 86, quoted by NIESEL, p.189.
  3. HALL, op. cit., pp.24 - 5.

isolationism conflicted with his acceptance of the idea of the Two Swords; he shared, however, their passion for excommunication. These generalisations about the nature of the Church do indeed have some value, but one school does not inevitably rigidly exclude the others. It is often mainly a question of stress. "In contrast to Luther", writes Torrance, "Calvin laid greater emphasis upon the *ecclesia externa sive visibilis*."<sup>1</sup> But, as Torrance has earlier pointed out,<sup>2</sup> sacramental analogy must be applied to Luther's doctrine; while the communion of saints in Christ does form an invisible and spiritual body (the words are almost interchangeable for Luther, but he prefers 'bodily', and 'spiritual' or 'inward', to 'visible' and 'invisible')<sup>3</sup>, there is always the correlative aspect of the external sign. In Christ's wisdom the visible signs or forms are necessary.<sup>4</sup> Rupp quotes Luther as defining that "The Church is a gathering of all the Christians upon earth," and stating that "The being, life and nature of the Christian people is not a bodily assembling together but an assembling together of hearts in one faith." He comments that Luther's spiritual emphasis was a natural reaction against "the extravagant claims made for the Papal 'plentitude of Power' and its intrusion into a whole continent of secular pressures. But we are not to suppose that Luther spiritualized the Church away."<sup>5</sup> Perhaps

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1. TORRANCE, *op. cit.*, p.148.

2. *Ib.* pp.60 - 61.

3. RUPP, The Righteousness of God, London, 1953, p.316.

4. RUPP, *op. cit.*, p.318.

5. *Ib.* pp.316 - 7; quoting from LUTHER, W.A. 6.293 - 6; W.A. 3. 103 - 9.

more importance should be attached to the fact that just as Calvin changed his theories on the Church in the course of his writings, so, too, did Luther; just as Calvin, writing in 1536 adopted an almost entirely Lutheran idea of the invisible Church, and after his contact with Bucer, from 1539 onwards, turned to the opposite idea,<sup>1</sup> so too with Luther - up to 1518 and the controversy at Leipzig he followed Catholic principles, though from 1515 and the Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans we find an increasing appeal to Scripture and a practical denial of Church authority.<sup>2</sup> Luther wrote to Emser in 1521, "When I have called the Church a spiritual assembly you have insultingly taken me to mean that I would build a Church as Plato builds a state that never was."<sup>3</sup> Calvin, too, could have subscribed to this disavowal of idealism, though with both Luther and Calvin degrees of being are hard to distinguish; mystical and spiritual are, indeed, capable of different interpretations. Whether or not we agree with the opinion of Rupp expressed above we may find his quotation from William Pauck's Heritage of the Reformation a little wide of the mark. "His view of the Church as a spiritual-corporeal communion of believers was thus a Biblical theological re-interpretation of the Roman Catholic idea of the Church as the 'Mystical Body of Christ.' The correction of the impersonalizing that was implied in the Roman Catholic ecclesiology

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1. WENDEL, op. cit., pp.223 - 4.
  2. DE MOREAU (FLICHE-MARTIN, vol. XVI. pp.102 - 5)
  3. LUTHER, W.A. 7. 683 - 9, quoted in RUPP, op. cit., p.316; so MELANCTHON; c.f. STRGHL, op. cit., p.189.



was of special importance to him." The vagueness of this assertion does not help to clarify the relationship between Luther and traditional theology. Rome, too, might just as well be said to subscribe to the 'spiritual-corporeal communion of believers'. Luther, for his part, stresses the activity of Christ in the Church. "It is the great strength of Luther's doctrine of the Church that he returns to the true centre of all ecclesiology, to Christ himself living and reigning in the midst of his people, exercising an active and present sovereignty..."<sup>1</sup> If Luther can be said to 'return' from any theory, it is presumably the Catholic idea of the Mystical Body of Christ. Moreover, it would be equally feasible to take the idea of the Mystical Body as the Biblical theological re-interpretation of the Christian assembly. Finally, the implication of an impersonal element could be present only for someone not in sympathy with the Catholic idea. This is not to suggest that Luther believed in the Mystical Body of Christ. The nearest he approaches to it is in his acceptance of certain sacraments as the signs of Christ's active presence, and the fact that "as a living body correlative to Christ the Church is the corpus fidelium."<sup>2</sup> But 'correlative to' is not 'identical with' and amounts, in fact, to no more than 'analogous to' or even 'bearing some relation to'. Calvin's view, though similar, contains a greater implicit reliance on tradition. Torrance writes that "Where Luther appeared to be content in his doctrine of the Church with a dialectal

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1. RUPP, op. cit., p.326.

2. TORRANCE, op. cit., p.57.

relation between the Word and the historical forms, Calvin taught a doctrine of the Church as the Body of Christ continuously actualised within history."<sup>1</sup>

Grosclaude's contention that Calvin is not interested in the nature of the Church, or at least does not discuss it on the occasions we might well expect him to,<sup>2</sup> is seen to be false if we examine the purpose of the Institution as it is set out in the Prefatory Address to the King. While it is true the work is far from being intended as a philosophical treatise, Calvin does go beyond the particularities of administration, and even beyond the principles underlying such details, to a quest into the ultimate nature of the Church. This is to be recognised at its clearest in what he has to say about the Church as visible and invisible. In the Prefatory Address he says of his adversaries,

"Ils sont bien loin de la vérité, quand ils ne reconnoissent point d'Eglise, si elle ne se voit présentement à l'oeil, et la veulent enclorre en certains limites, ausquels elle n'est nullement comprise."

He is here immediately concerned with what the Church is in its essence. He continues,

"C'est en ces points que gist nostre controverse. Premièrement, qu'ils requièrent tousiours une forme d'Eglise visible et apparente. Secondement, qu'ils constituent icelle forme au

1. TORRANCE, *op. cit.*, p.147.

2. GROSCLANDE, Exposition et Critique de l'Ecclésiologie de Calvin, Geneva, 1896, pp.8, 74.

siege de l'Eglise Romaine, et en l'estat de leurs Prélats. Nous au contraire, affermons que l'Eglise peut consister sans apparence visible, et mesme que son apparence n'est à estimer de ceste braveté extérieure, laquelle follement ils ont en admiration."<sup>1</sup>

This discussion of the different possible forms of the Church is neither idle nor merely philosophical. It has been described as having a 'cardinal place' in sixteenth century Reformation theology.<sup>1</sup>

Calvin wishes to make it plain that he is not introducing a new idea into the study of theology, by undertaking this account of the nature of the Church. He is merely reformulating a scriptural outlook on the Church, which had, indeed, been maintained in the course of theological writing since the time of the Apostles, but which had, at least in his opinion, been completely lost from sight. It was all too easy to progress from the conviction that most of the more blatant anomalies in the customs and morals of many professing Christians were to be ascribed to the fact that institutionalism had run riot, to the further conviction that all who were committed to the same cause were happy to look no further than the visible Church in front of them. It accordingly became all too easy to look on these words as very little more than pass-words or party slogans, whereas, in fact, both parties held views which were similar in many

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1. CALVIN, Au Roy, ed. BENOÎT, pp.41 - 2.
  2. LEONARD HODGSON; in The Nature of the Church, (Paper presented to the theological commission appointed by the continuation committee of the world conference on faith and order). London, 1952, p.132.

respects. Evidently, from the nature of the case, Catholics were of the opinion that the Church was invisible in the sense of spiritual, and Calvin realised that since the Church is for man's use the visible aspect must not be discounted ... witness the whole of the fourth book of the Institution. Calvin hastens to show that we are dealing with two aspects of the one Church and not with two churches. It is largely a question of the point of view one takes.

"L'Esriture sainte parle de l'Eglise en deux sortes. Car quelque fois en usant de ce nom elle entend l'Eglise qui est telle à la vérité, et en laquelle nuls ne sont compris, sinon ceux qui par la grâce d'adoption sont enfans de Dieu, et par la sanctification de son esprit sont vrays membres de Jesus Christ. Et lors, non seulement elle parle des saints qui habitent en terre, mais de tous les esleus qui ont esté depuis le commencement du monde."

This is Calvin's summary statement of what he means by the invisible Church. He goes on to contrast with this the visible Church, which is not to be seperated from the former in that it is not merely a part of it but also contains some members who do not belong to the invisible Church; the two are not totally distinct one from the other. X a

"Souvent par le nom de l'Eglise elle signifie toute la multitude des hommes, laquelle, estant esparse en diverses régions du monde, fait une mesme profession d'honorer Dieu et Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

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1. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 7.

Since the visible Church and the invisible are but two aspects of the one true Church, ("Il n'y a qu'une seule Eglise considérée de deux points de vue différents", though this is not to be understood purely subjectively; there is still a reality corresponding to the division in the mind of the observer),<sup>1</sup> it is not easy to state clearly the relationship between the two. Calvin's topic is 'the true Church'. Evidently this is to be taken as referring to the invisible Church, together with the visible elements by which it is manifested in practice.<sup>2</sup> Niesel comments, "Here it becomes plain that there is not one church in the world which must make its peace, well or ill, with the powers of this world and over and above this in the beyond, the true and pure church; rather there is only one church which is distinguished from the spurious church by the fact that it exists to serve Jesus Christ."<sup>3</sup> This phrase 'in the beyond' is perhaps as good a way as any of indicating the popular appraisal of the ontological order; but I am not sure that it does justice to those who criticised this main tenet of the reformers. The criticism was surely not so much levelled at the fundamental idea of an invisible Church, but rather at the scope which was to be allowed to such a Church, and at the fact that there seemed at first sight to be a radical distinction made between the two aspects of the Church, and yet a very close subsequent rapprochement had taken place. It is

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1. DOUMERGUE, op. cit., c.f. RICHEL, op. cit., p.68.
  2. STROHL, op. cit., p.209.
  3. NIESEL, op. cit., p.192.

claimed that the Church of Rome had so completely identified the spiritual principle of the Church and its manifestation in practice, that the reformers wished to bring to the fore the contrasting idea of the Church's superiority to every particular form.<sup>1</sup> Hence the devaluation of the idea of the visible Church. Whitaker, one of Calvin's strongest supporters, writing just half a century later, interprets for us this point in Calvin's thought, and unwittingly lays bare the slight illogicality of both himself and his master. Woodhouse refers to his admission (if such is necessary) that particular churches are visible, "but to acknowledge this does not prove that the Catholic Church is visible; indeed she is not, for part of her is triumphant and this part is not visible to our eyes. He asserts that the Church is invisible therefore consisting only of the elect: this cannot be discerned by men; yet he reiterates that particular Churches are visible."<sup>2</sup> We may agree with Whitaker that the Church is not visible in its entirety, but this was not in question; you might just as well say that the Church is not invisible since part of her is present to our eyes. Furthermore, it is not just particular churches which are visible to us; we can observe, too, the collectivity of particular churches, that is, the entire visible Church on earth. Now it is unrealistic to say, as Grosclaude does, that for the reformers the visible Church, "n'est qu'une représentation imparfaite de la

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1. GROSCLAUDE, op. cit., p.5.

2. WOODHOUSE, The Doctrine of the Church in Anglican Theology, London, 1954, pp.47 - 8.

communauté idéale."<sup>1</sup> It is true that the visible Church may at times be spoken of in this way, but it is not just a poor copy of the other; it is also an integral part. We can see here an application of the study of the different stages in the development of Calvin's thought.<sup>2</sup> In his Lutheran period he would have been more ready to subscribe to this idea of the invisible Church. In a comparison of Luther and Calvin Basil Hall remarks that for Luther, "the true Church consisted of the elect of God, was invisible, and had for its head Christ alone: the visible Church is but an inferior reflection of the other..."<sup>3</sup> Though this is true of Luther and the early Calvin, it is not so of Calvin's later writings. That it is so of Luther is evident from his definition of the 'one holy, common Christian Church' as 'the congregation or assembly of the saints, that is the good, believing men on earth...'<sup>4</sup>

The question of the relationship between the two aspects of the Church can be rephrased in a slightly different way. In his thesis of 1854 Lys tabulates three ways of looking at the Church. It can be thought of as a divine institution, a voluntary association or a combination of the true and reconcilable elements of both views. He continues,

"Tout en reconnaissant dans Calvin les deux points de vue, il faut avouer qu'il les rapproche plus qu'il ne les

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1. GROSCLAUDE, op. cit., p.6.

2. See above, p.34.

3. HALL, op. cit., p.23.

4. Quoted in RUPP, op. cit., p.313 (LUTHER, W.M.L. 2, 372).

concilie, et qu'il relève tellement l'idée d'Eglise-institution divine, que l'autre côté se trouve, pour ainsi dire, écrasé. Il n'y a point d'équilibre chez lui entre les deux points de vue: l'élément catholique le dominait encore trop fortement."<sup>1</sup>

This does not do complete justice to Calvin's thought. He does more than merely set the two aspects side by side; if he does not attempt to reconcile them, the reason is that, as with the Church visible and invisible, we are here dealing with two facets of the same thing. And the attention Calvin devotes to the possibility of rejecting the call of God is sufficient assurance that he wishes to maintain the balance. As to the further suggestion that this was a throwback to Calvin's Catholic past, this would have had greater relevance if Lys had been dealing directly with the terms 'visible' and 'invisible'. In the present context its application is doubtful.

Although the main outlines of Calvin's attitude to the two aspects of the Church are clear enough, he has himself been the cause of some subsequent confusion since he used the terms in more than one sense. Richel lists in detail some of the varying resultant interpretations of Calvin's thought.<sup>2</sup> Koopmans, for example, sees the problem as one which worked itself out in the history of the Church. Rome had externalized the key Augustinian idea of the Church as the Body of Christ;

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1. LUP, Etude sur Calvin considéré comme Organisateur de l'Eglise, MONTAUBAN, 1854, pp. 6 - 8.
  2. RICHEL, op. cit., pp.60 sqq.



the Church then assumed the juridical position of a state, and became the necessary means of grace. The Church was above all visible, though there were invisible elements. Calvin reacted by an opposite emphasis, though he does not lose sight of the visible elements. We have already seen something of the development of Calvin's thought on this subject. We must now, with Richel go into this in greater detail. In 1536 the stress is on election rather than anything else; in 1539 we find the first usage of 'ecclesia visibilis' as a dogmatic term and in 1543 the first use of 'invisibilis' in the sense of 'visible only to God'. But though the terms were missing earlier, the ideas were not. While it is true that from 1539 there is greater stress on the visible Church, we could ascribe the beginning of this to the conflict with the Anabaptists of March, 1537.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ib., p.65.

## C H A P T E R   S E V E N

### No Salvation outside the Church

The practical application of the distinction discussed in the last chapter, and consequently its greatest importance, is to be seen in the fact that it is the ultimate basis for deciding who are the members of the Church. One of the convictions common to all the reformers was the all-embracing notion of the invisible Church. "Elle a toujours empêché une identification totale d'un corps ecclésiastique avec l'Eglise véritable, et rendu possible, avec le temps, des rapprochements entre les fidèles appartenant à des dénominations différentes."<sup>1</sup> Calvin is ready to admit that other particular churches besides his own are parts of the one true Church. We shall see in a later chapter by what signs Calvin thought it possible to recognize the presence of the true Church in any community. But this does not let us know who are the members of the Church.

The question which must immediately spring to mind is, does not God will that all men should be saved? Assuredly yes, and Calvin states this explicitly on several occasions.<sup>2</sup> Now just as Luther had inveighed against the idea that his conception of the Church was unfounded in reality, so for Calvin the true Church is, to borrow the words of Nicholas Ridley, 'the union of (the invisible) church with

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1. STROHL, op. cit., p.236.

2. c.f. collection of passages in TORRANCE, op. cit., p.106, note; c.f. also, Inst. I. 5. 1; III. 24. 15.

the permixed church.<sup>1</sup> For Calvin the true Church is that which bases itself on authentic Old Testament theology and the teaching of Christ. This is a simpler foundation than the distinction of the last chapter, and it is Calvin's basis when faced with the problem of deciding who are the members of the Church. God exercises greater activity in the Church than amongst mankind in general. From man's point of view this idea is expressed more precisely in Calvin. The Church is the mother of all the faithful and is as necessary to the life and moral formation of each individual as a natural mother is. We must remain at the school which the Church is all our lives. "Hors la giron d'icelle, on ne peut espérer rémission des péchez ne salut aucun, tesmoins Isaie et Joel (Isa. 37, 32; Joel, 2,32); ausquels Ezechiel s'accorde, disant que ceux que Dieu veut exterminer de la vie céleste ne seront point au rolle de son peuple (Ezech. 13, 9). Par ces mots la faveur paternelle de Dieu et le tesmoignage spécial de la vie spirituelle est restreint au troupeau de Dieu, afin que nous soyons advertis que c'est une chose pernicieuse et mortelle de se distraire ou séparer de l'Eglise."<sup>2</sup> Calvin's exact source for this doctrine is not easy to specify. Wendel points to various writings of Cyprian and Augustine, and more immediately Luther. He quotes references to each which presumably Calvin had read at first hand.<sup>3</sup> McNeill's

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1. RIDLEY, Ash Wednesday 1547, quoted in Gasquet-Bishop, The Prayer Book, London, 1891, p.46.
  2. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 4.
  3. WENDEL, op. cit., p.223.

edition of the Institution draws our attention to Augustine, Enchiridion xvii. 65; '(The church ... without whom there is no forgiveness of sins'); this is useful, for the phrase is not often used in this context at so early a date.<sup>1</sup> It is also possible that there is a reliance on Catholic tradition in general rather than on just two authors, however important.<sup>2</sup> The tradition is expressed well in the lapidary formula of the Tridentine Profession of Faith in the words, "Hanc veram catholicam fidem, extra quam nemo salvus esse potest ..."<sup>3</sup> Mutual causality is not absent here; the Bull containing the Profession is 'Iniunctum Nobis' of 13th November, 1564, and is clearly intended to counter protestant ideas. Nevertheless it sums up the tradition in almost the same words as would have been used in any of the Catholic Schools of the time. Although the adage is repeated in many different ways in the Greek and Latin fathers, in the creeds and in subsequent papal documents, there appears to be no other direct reference to the remission of sins in this context until Boniface the Eighth. In the Bull 'Unam Sanctam' of 18th November, 1302, we read "Unam sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam et ipsam apostolicam urgente fide credere cogimur et tenere, nosque hanc firmiter credimus et simpliciter confitemur, extra quam nec salus est, nec remissio peccatorum...."<sup>4</sup> This work, or the tradition which gave rise to it

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1. McNEILL, in S.C.M. trans. - note (p.1016), on IV. 1. 4.
  2. c.f. collections, Enchiridion Symbolorum, Rome, 1957, Index systematicus, II, a, b; c.f. also, Rouët de Journal, Enchiridion Patristicum, Barcelona, 1946, Index theologicus, 47.
  3. Ib. c.f. 1000.
  4. Ib. c.f. 468; c.f. also note in McNEILL'S edition, quoted above.

may well have been, at the least, a contributory source of Calvin.

Calvin's use of the traditional phrase conceals the rupture he makes with tradition. When it is used by Boniface the Eighth he makes it plain that the Church he is talking of is to be identified with the visible Church of which the Pope is the Head. Since for Calvin the Church is the congregation of the elect, being outside this congregation necessarily entails damnation. The conclusion is logically coherent if we accept the premise of the (apparently) arbitrary choice of God. The superficial contradiction in the Catholic exceptions to 'outside the Church no salvation' is removed when we analyse the different ways of belonging to the Church. If salvation is the result of merit, then provision must have been made, since God wills that all should be saved, for those in invincible ignorance. For them an implicit intention is enough. How far removed this is from the thought of Calvin cannot be ascertained from a reading of Inst. IV. i. 4. Verbally he is repeating the statement of an infallible dogma of the Church, (though this was not clear in his own day, and though the adage is to be understood in the way the Church intends). But the rest of his writing shows to what extent he has changed the traditional sense. Niesel's comment that "Calvin can-nay must-repeat the ancient saying that outside the Church there is no salvation" does not take account of the change of meaning which the saying had undergone.<sup>1</sup>

The essential factor in true membership of the Church is quite

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1. NIESEL, op. cit., p.186.

simply whether one is a true follower of Christ or not.<sup>1</sup> Hence it becomes true that for Calvin there is no salvation outside the visible Church either.<sup>2</sup> If you are a Christian you are in Calvin's eyes a member of the one true Church; (though we have noted that the converse is automatically true only of the Church in its invisible aspect).<sup>3</sup> You can be certain that you are a member of the invisible Church if you know that you are responding to the call and are in communion with Christ. You must entertain, too, a presumption in favour of those who are living a full Christian life.<sup>4</sup>

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1. CORBIERE, op. cit., p.14; c.f. Inst. IV. 15. 20 and IV. 16. 26 where it is shown that baptism is not absolutely necessary for salvation.
  2. CALVIN, IV. 1. 4.
  3. CORBIERE, op. cit., p.14.
  4. STROHL, op. cit., p.210; c.f. Inst. IV. 1. 8.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### The marks of the Church

The study of the marks or signs of the Church is of its nature post-Reformation; Catholic theologians have since then looked back to the four-fold Nicene classification, but it was the reformers' preoccupation with finding the true Church which first stimulated their interest. Calvin's approach to the subject is not primarily polemical, though preconceived ideas play their part. There is bound to be a subjective element in the recognition of signs. Calvin starts off from the assumption that the Church of Rome cannot be the true Church on the grounds that it does not listen to the Word.

"Si quelcun recognoist pour Eglises les assemblées qui sont sous la tyrannie du Pape, lesquelles sont contaminées d'idolatrie, de diverses superstitions et de meschante doctrine, pensant qu'il faille persister en leur communion iusques à consentir à leur doctrine, cestuy-là erre grandement. Car si ce sont Eglises, elles ont la puissance des clefs. Or les clefs sont coniointes d'un lien perpétuel avec la Parolle, laquelle en est exterminée. Item, si ce sont Eglises, ceste promesse de Iesus Christ leur appartient, que tout ce qu'ils auront lié en terre sera lié au ciel, etc. (Matt. 16, 19; 18, 18; Iean 20, 23). Or tous ceux qui font profession sans feintise d'estre serviteurs de Iesus Christ en sont reiettez. Parquoy, ou la promesse de Iesus Christ seroit vaine, ou ce ne sont point Eglises, au moins selon ceste considération. Finalement, au lieu d'y avoir le ministère

de la Parolle, on n'y a que des escoles d'impiété, et un abysme de toutes espèces d'erreur. Parquoy encore ne sont ce point Eglises quant à ce regard, où il n'y restera nulle marque par laquelle les saintes assemblées des fidèles soyent discernées des conventicules des Turcs".<sup>1</sup>

Having said so much Calvin is still prepared to admit that there are some traces of the Church to be found in the Church of Rome. God had permitted the foundations of the building to remain after the rest of it had become corrupted. He goes on,

"Pourtant quand nous refusons d'ottroyer simplement aux Papistes le titre d'Eglise, nous ne leur nions pas du tout qu'ils n'ayent quelques Eglises entre eux... mais nous disons qu'il (l'Antechrist) les a profanées par son impiété, qu'il les a affligées par sa domination inhumaine, qu'il les a empoisonnées de fausses et meschantes doctrines, et quasi mises à la mort, tellement que Iesus Christ y est à demy ensevely, l'Evangile y est suffoqué, la Chrestienté y est exterminée, le service de Dieu y est presque aboly."

He sums the matter up by declaring them churches in so far as God has preserved there a remnant of his people; but because the most important marks have been lost,

"ie dy qu'il n'y a point droite apparence d'Eglise, ny en

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1. Inst. IV. 2. 10; c.f. NIESEL, op. cit., pp.194 - 5.



chacun membre, ny en tout le corps."<sup>1</sup>

This last sentence is a very clear condemnation; in Calvin's view, no matter what is the extent of the uncorrupted elements, the Catholic Church is not a true Church, either in its entirety or in its constituent particular groups. This is not to deny that some members of the Church of Rome may in fact be good Christians, and it should remain possible for enough of these to be gathered together into a local community which would then presumably be a true Christian Church. Calvin is ready to concede this, for example, in the course of an argument;

"Certes, Sadolet, nous ne nions point que les Eglises, où vous présidez, ne soient Eglises de Christ : mais nous disons, que le Pape, ensemble toute la troupe de ses faux Eveques ... sont loups très cruels et dangereux..."<sup>2</sup>

But even these individual churches are to be understood as lacking the true form of the Church.

Though Calvin himself was careful to explain that his particular act of rebellion was justified because of the circumstances of his time, (and, by the same token, most of his contemporary reformers were exonerated from the charge of schism), there was always the danger that not all his followers would appreciate this. We may refer to the exchange of letters between Calvin and Du Tillet (though the firmness of the latter's adherence could be questioned). He cannot escape the conviction that Calvin has in fact broken the already

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1. Inst., IV. 2. 12; c.f. RICHEL, op. cit., p.171; c.f. also, CALVIN, Epître à Sadolet, ed. SCHMIDT, p.71.  
 2. CALVIN, Epître à Sadolet, ed. SCHMIDT, pp. 70 - 71.

existing unity and is therefore to some extent at least a schismatic. He also later attacks the lawfulness of the ministry of Calvin since it must have been handed on through the unbroken service of the Church.<sup>1</sup> We have seen above the main lines of Calvin's reply. He realises the dangers his position lays itself open to but is content to fall back on his own privileged function in the history of the Church. So it is that he is perfectly ready to see other protestant communions as the true Church.<sup>2</sup> Calvin is insistent that one must not leave a community without an exceptionally good reason, but one should be equally reluctant to join a group which is obviously corrupt.

We shall see that Calvin accepted broadly the Lutheran thesis of the two marks of the Church, Preaching and the Sacraments. If the Roman Church could show that she possessed the two marks, essential to the true Church, then she was automatically, by that token, a true Church. But the underlying assumption of the Institution is that she does not have them. Perhaps the main reason that Calvin did not simply write off the Church of Rome in its entirety, was that he was constrained to accord to it one of these two marks. Their baptism is something they have held on to out of ancient Church usage.

"En ceste manière, d'autant qu'il a mis une fois son alliance en France, en Italie, en l'Alemagne et autres pays, combien que tout ait esté après oppressé par la tyrannie de l'Antechrist, néantmoins

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1. RICHEL, op. cit., p.121.

2. Ib. p.164.

afin que son alliance y demeurast inviolable, il a voulu que le Baptême y soit demeuré pour tesmoignage d'icelle alliance; lequel, d'autant qu'il est ordonné et consacré de sa bouche, retient sa vertu maugré l'impiété des hommes. Semblablement il a fait par sa providence qu'il y demeurast aussi d'autres reliques, afin que l'Eglise ne périst point du tout."<sup>1</sup>

A comparison of a statement of Luther's doctrine with one of Calvin's reveals how close they are to one another.

"By what sign may I recognize the Church? My answer is, the necessary sign, which we possess, is baptism, the Eucharist and, above all, the Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

"Par tout où nous voyons la parole de Dieu estre purement preschée et escoutée, les Sacraments estre administrez selon l'institution de Christ, là il ne faut douter nullement qu'il n'y ait Eglise."<sup>3</sup>

But it is a controversial point whether or not Calvin was satisfied with the two principal marks. Basil Hall suggests that Calvin added the note of Discipline, but this is contested by Wendel.<sup>4</sup> He proves that Bucer did, indeed, specifically add the note of Discipline to the two Lutheran marks (c.f. Bucer, De Regno Christi: 'Partes vero cuius

1. Inst. IV. 2. 11; c.f. NIESEL, op. cit., p.197.
2. LUTHER, Opp. tom. ii. fol. 376 - 7 quoted in MOHLER, Symbolism London, 1843; II, p.101.
3. Inst. IV. 1. 9; c.f. also, I. 6. 1, IV. 1. 5, IV. 2. 4, and especially IV. 14. 17 which shows that the Sacraments and Preaching have a common aim, to present to us Christ and his grace.
4. HALL, op. cit., p.25; WENDEL, op. cit., p.228; c.f. McNEILL, S.C.M. trans. p.1023 (note on IV. 1. 9.).

sacri ministerii, Doctrina Christi, sacramentorum eius dispensatio, et disciplinae eius administratio<sup>1</sup>), but claims that for Calvin Discipline, however important, was not something essential to the definition of the Church. It would seem that Calvin attached more importance to Discipline than Wendel admits,<sup>1</sup> and, in any case, we are not concerned with the static terms of the statement, but rather with what lies behind them; it is a commonplace that Luther let church organisation take care of itself and that the spread, at least, of Calvin's ideas owed part of its success to careful administration. Wendel goes on to show that Bucer and Calvin based their theory of church organisation on the supremacy of Christ, and on the gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereas Luther's depends on times and circumstances. It could be argued, then, that Calvin is much further from Luther than Möhler suggests in the above comparison of texts, apart from incidental similarities resulting from a common opposition to the same tradition.

Commentators are not agreed what Calvin saw as the exact role of Discipline in the Church. Niesel is quite firm in claiming that for Calvin the aim of discipline is not to promote morally good conduct in the Church, nor to attain to purity of church life in general; its purpose is to bring about the repentance of the sinner, and to secure others against the temptation to lapse.<sup>2</sup> The second of Niesel's positive suggestions does not seem far removed from the first of his

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1. DOUMERGUE, op. cit., pp.164 ss., and pp.203 - 215.
  2. NIESEL, op. cit., p.198; c.f. Inst. IV. 3. 10, IV. 12. 1; c.f. also III. 6. 1. 'melodie' (symmetria); IV. 1. 1.

negative ones. Wendel quotes Niesel's view only to disagree with it. He sees discipline as "un moyen de préserver la pureté de l'enseignement ecclésiastique et les efforts de sanctification des fidèles."<sup>1</sup> This is seen in connexion with the Eucharist, above all, since the Church is the Body of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Wendel has the authority of Calvin behind him:

"Or il y a trois fins que l'Eglise regarde en ces corrections et en l'excommuniement. La première est, que gens de mauvais gouvernement ne soyent avec grand opprobre de Dieu contez au nombre des Chrestiens... Car puisque l'Eglise est le corps de Christ, elle ne peut estre contaminée par membres pourriz, qu'une partie de la honte n'en revienne au Chef... La seconde fin est, que les bons ne soyent corrompuz par la conversation des mauvais, comme il advient souventesfois... La troisième fin est, que ceux qu'on chastie par excommunication, estans confuz de leur honte, se repentent, et par telle repentance viennent à amendement."<sup>3</sup>

It would seem that Niesel does not go far enough. In his favour it could be argued that there is no mention of the positive betterment of the faithful, but surely the promotion of high moral conduct is concomitant with preservation from harm. We have already seen the importance for Calvin of the perfection of the faithful. He would have been the first to see what an excellent instrument he had to hand for the furthering of his purpose. Because of his insistence on development

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1. WENDEL, op. cit., p.226.
  2. Inst. IV. 17. 38.
  3. Ib. IV. 12. 5.

in holiness he was not likely to subscribe to a static conception of the mere avoidance of evil. Lys, too, touches on this point and concludes that since Calvin wished disciplinary measures to combine gentleness with their justice, their aim was 'surtout un but préservatif ou médicinal'. The ancient church, he claims, had been too severe; there is a difference between excommunication and execration (anathema). We must approach Calvin with the realisation that sixteenth century ideas on discipline differed both from those of the early church and from those of more modern times.<sup>1</sup> We may set against this description of the purpose of discipline, the related account of the purpose of the Law according to Calvin. Its purpose is three-fold: first, it shows forth justice which is pleasing to God, and therefore shows each one his own injustice; secondly, it hinders the wicked from doing evil, by instilling fear into them; and thirdly, it has a normative value for Christian life.<sup>2</sup>

We should make it clear what these marks of the Church are intended to convey. They are meant to show where, it can safely be asserted, the true Church of God is to be found. They are not meant to show who are the faithful nor who are the elect.<sup>3</sup> As Calvin himself says, we are not to regard individual men and churches in the same light. "Car il peut advenir qu'il nous faudra traiter comme frères et avoir pour fidèles ceux que nous ne pensons pas dignes

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1. LYS, op. cit., p.21; c.f. GROSCLAUDE, op. cit., p.26.

2. WENDEL, op. cit., pp.147 - 9.

3. RICHEL, op. cit., p.176.

d'estre de ce nombre, à cause du consentement commun de l'Eglise, laquelle les souffrira et endurera encore au corps de Christ." He adds that we are not thereby approving them as members of the Church. "Envers une multitude il nous y faut autrement procéder. Car si elle a le ministère de la Parolle, et si elle l'honore, si elle, retient l'administration des Sacremens, elle doit estre sans doute recogneue pour Eglise, d'autant qu'il est certain que la parolle et les Sacremens ne peuvent estre sans fruit."<sup>1</sup> This Calvin sees as the basis for the universality of the Church; "l'Eglise universelle est toute la multitude laquelle accorde à la vérité de Dieu et à la doctrine de sa parolle, quelque diversité de nation qu'il y ait, ou distance de région, d'autant qu'elle est unie par le lien de religion. Que sous ceste Eglise universelle, les Eglises qui sont distribueés par chacune ville et village sont tellement comprises, qu'une chacune à le titre et autorité d'Eglise."<sup>2</sup> Because of the subjective element which was necessarily involved in the recognition of these signs, the Catholic reaction was to provide a list of more tangible and professedly apologetic notes. They are external signs, but they do not remove the possibility of applying Calvin's two signs as well; they merely dictate the meaning which would have to be understood from these terms, Preaching and the Sacraments, if they were to be used by a Catholic as pointers to where the true Church lies.

Great play was made, at the time, of Calvin's attitude to tradition

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1. Inst. IV. 1. 9.

2. Ib.

in the Church. Succession was important for him, but he stressed that faith and integrity should go hand in hand with it. In Calvin's view Rome had broken the succession with the ancient Church, and he, with other special envoys, had been called to remedy this.<sup>1</sup> The mark of succession, therefore, he would refer to those external characteristics of the Church as an institution which are of no real interest to him. "De là il s'ensuit que la couverture qu'ils prétendent de leur succession est vaine, sinon qu'ils retiennent la vérité de Jesus Christ en son entier, selon qu'ils l'ont receue des Pères."<sup>2</sup> ↗

Both Luther and Calvin, however, list many other signs of the Church besides the two main ones. Their multiplicity can be thought of as similar to the different examples used to illustrate the four-fold Catholic scheme. Most of them are little more than keywords to summarize different articles of Luther's or Calvin's manifesto; they do not belong in any sense to the definition of the Church, but rather (and this is surprising) to the Church as an institution. In some cases they might even be regarded as mere appendages of the Church. But among these many and varied signs, we must not lose sight of the fact that the two signs already mentioned are far and away the most important. And if we wish to establish which of these two signs is the more important, we would be led to agree with Niesel that of the two the more telling is certainly, in Calvin's eyes, the Sacraments, because of the vivid way in which they bring

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1. RICHEL, *op. cit.*, p.175.

2. CALVIN, *Inst.* IV. 2. 2.



Christ to us: 'Still more powerfully than the orally preached Word the sacraments proclaim to us the presence of Jesus Christ.'<sup>1</sup> But the Preaching of the Gospel is in a sense more fundamental in that it always comes before the administration of the sacraments, and indeed gives rise to it. Calvin expresses this in his reply to the Articles of the Faculty of Theology of Paris: "That there is an universal Church, that there has been, from the beginning of the world, and will be even to the end, we all acknowledge. The appearance by which it may be recognised is the question. We place it in the Word of God, or, (if anyone would so put it) since Christ is her head, we maintain that, as a man is recognized by his face, so she is to be beheld in Christ. But as the pure preaching of the gospel is not always exhibited, neither is the face of Christ always conspicuous. (I. Cor. xi. 19). Thence we infer that the church is not always discernible by the eyes of men, as the examples of many ages testify."<sup>2</sup> Strohl is of the opinion that the reformers really admitted only one sign, Preaching. Of the Word he writes, "Elle donne sa vertu essentielle au sacrament.

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1. NIESEL, op. cit., p.194.

2. CALVIN, Articles agreed upon by the Faculty of Sacred Theology of Paris, with the Antidote. (1952).  
 'Ecclesiam universalem esse et fuisse ab initio mundi, et fore usque in finem, confitemur omnes. De aspectu, unde agnoscitur, quaestio est. Eum constituimus in verbo Dei. Vel, si quis malit, quum Christus eius sit caput: quemadmodum agnoscitur homo ex facie, ita illam in Christo intuendam dicimus. Quum ergo non semper emineat pura verbi praedicatio, nec semper conspicua sit Christi facies, inde colligimus, non semper ecclesiam oculis hominum subiectam esse: quemadmodum multorum saeculorum exempla testantur'.

Corpus reformatorum, ed. BAUM, CUNITZ, REUSS. Brunshvig 1868, Vol.35, p.30.

La principale fonction que peut confier l'Eglise, est donc le Ministère de la Parole."<sup>1</sup>

These then are the leading marks of the Church, but there were others listed by the reformers.<sup>2</sup> Calvin, for example, in his Scripture commentaries, introduces a much broader basis for distinguishing the signs. He refers to the fact that Luke in Acts tabulates four marks of the Church - the teaching of the Apostles, the Community, the Breaking of bread, and Prayer. To these is added Doctrine, which is "almost the soul of the Church."<sup>3</sup> The second of these is repeated in Calvin's Articles to the Geneva Councils of January the sixteenth, 1537. While he was not in sympathy with the Anabaptist notion of the 'gathered community', he felt that the Church 'doit cependant se fonder sur l'adhésion de ses membres.' Wendel comments that besides the marks of Preaching and the Sacraments the Church should be moreover "une communauté vivante, un royaume de Christ sur la terre."<sup>4</sup> That this was Calvin's own thought is to be seen from Inst. IV. ii. 4, and a host of other passages in his writings.

"En somme, puisque l'Eglise est le règne de Christ, et qu'il est ainsi que Iesus Christ ne règne que par sa parole, qui est-ce qui doutera que ce ne soient paroles de mensonge, quand on veut faire accroire que le règne de Iesus Christ est où son sceptre n'est point? c'est à dire ceste sainte parole par laquelle seule il gouverne."

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1. STROHL, op. cit., p.225.

2. c.f. DOUMERGUE, op. cit., pp.25 - 31.

3. RICHEL, op. cit., p.177; CALVIN, op. 48 : 57/8.

4. WENDEL, op. cit., p.30.

In his letter to Sadolet (1539) Calvin lists four marks:

"Comme ainsi soit donc que la santé et fermeté de l'Eglise consiste principalement et soit ornée de trois choses: savoir est, de doctrine, de discipline, et de Sacraments: viennent les cérémonies au quart lieu, à fin d'exercer le peuple en devoir de piété: pour bien sauver votre Eglise, et lui garder son honneur, par lequel des quatre veu~~x~~-tu que nous la jugeons?"<sup>1</sup>

Of these we should note that doctrine includes preaching, and that ceremonies are external forms and so refer directly to the Church as an institution. The Consensio cum Carolo of the same year has doctrine, sacraments and discipline, and the Acts of Ratisbon (1541) has doctrine, sacraments, the bond of love and peace, and catholicity. The first two are intended to distinguish the members of the true Church from 'strangers, heathens and heretics', the third from schismatics. In the De Necessitate Reformandae Ecclesiae of 1543 we find pure doctrine and the correct administration of the sacraments as the requisite signs. Finally, in the Interim of 1545, we find the first two as in 1543, with unity added as the third mark and catholicity as the fourth.<sup>2</sup> It will have become evident from this that Calvin is not always using these words 'marks' or 'signs' in the same sense. The earliest set of marks to be used, Preaching and the Sacraments, was only meant to be a pointer to where the true Church could be found, but it was preserved throughout the various editions

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1. Epître à Sadolet, ed. SCHMIDT, p.54.

2. For all these references, c.f. RICHEL, op. cit., pp.177 - 8.

of the Institution; Calvin realised that for his purposes it was a very good classification indeed, and could not be bettered. Alongside it, however, he enumerated the other marks, not so much as marks or pointers to the existence of the true Church, but more as distinguishing characteristics of the Church. Strohl makes a good analysis of the meaning of the words used by Calvin and some of the earlier reformers in this context. He quotes Luther's view that Baptism and the Gospel are the visible signs by which we recognize the presence of the true Church; wherever these signs are to be found, there are bound to be Christians in that place. Strohl's criticism of this is significant: "La prédication de l'Évangile et l'administration des sacraments ne sont pas considérées ici comme les signes distinctifs d'une Église visible conforme à la volonté de Dieu. La thèse qu'ils le sont, devait être défendue par Bucer et par Calvin, et adoptée, plus tard seulement par les luthériens. 'Signe' signifie chez Luther 'indice', 'indicateur'. Le signe indique la direction qu'il faut prendre pour chercher des vrais chrétiens." Strohl says of Melancthon, writing in 1530, that he shared entirely Luther's point of view; he contends that Article VII of the Confession of Augsburg (that the Church is to be found where the Word of God is purely preached, and the Sacraments are administered in conformity to Christ's institution) has been wrongly interpreted in a Calvinistic sense, that is the sense of 'signs' as characteristics rather than pointers. He claims, however, that Melancthon underwent a change of view over the years. "En 1543, les anciens indices (notae) de la présence de l'Église invisible

étaient devenus nettement les critères, les 'enseignes' de l'Institution vraiment salutaire (signum monstrans qui coetus sit Ecclesia). Dès qu'une institution ecclésiastique ne pouvait plus faire montre de ces enseignes, elle ne devait plus être reconnue comme une Eglise."<sup>1</sup>

While this account may be perfectly true of Melancthon's position, it gives a misleading idea of the viewpoint adopted by Calvin, since it does not take notice of the fact that he always retained the idea of the signs as pointers together with the other idea. Nor was Luther as far from Calvin in this respect as Strohl would have us believe. An examination of the history of Luther's ideas reveals a similar broadening from one or two to many marks. Compare the Commentary on Isaiah of 1534 with Of Councils and Churches of 1539 and Wide Hans Worst of 1541. In the first work mentioned we read the statement, "Wherever this Gospel is sincerely preached, there is the Kingdom of Christ. Now this note of the Church or of the Kingdom of Christ cannot deceive you. For wherever the Word is, there too is the Holy Spirit, whether in the hearer or in the teacher... The Papacy therefore is in error in thinking that there are other notes besides the Word..." and elsewhere in the same work, "The one perpetual and infallible mark of the Church has always been the Word."<sup>2</sup> Contrast this with the number of marks listed

1. STROHL, op. cit., p.205.

2. 'Hoc Evangelium ubicumque sincere praedicatur, ibi est Regnum Christi. Et haec nota Ecclesiae seu Regni Christi non potest te fallere. Ubicumque enim Verbum est, ibi est spiritus sanctus, sive in auditore, sive in doctore... Errat igitur Papatus qui alias Ecclesiae notas esse sentit quam Verbum,' and 'Unica enim et perpetua et infallibilis Ecclesiae nota semper fuit verbum.' Luther, In Esaiam Proph. Schol. 1534, WA 25, 97, quoted in Wolf, Peregrinatio, (Die Einheit der Kirche im Zeugnis der Reformation), p.157.

in the two later works. In the first of these there are eight marks given; the Word, Baptism, the Eucharist, the Keys (which generally refers to discipline), the Ministry, Prayer, Suffering and the Christian Life.<sup>1</sup> The second of the two works adds to the first, the Creed, Agreement with the ancient Church, (Luther expatiates on this), the traditional idea of Marriage, Persecution, the lack of violence, and Fasting.<sup>2</sup> So Luther's outlook, too, has veered towards Apologetic through the course of time. The signs have ceased to be pointers to the existence of the true Church; they have even lost something of their usage as tokens by which the true Church may be recognized, and have turned into little more than an expression of the doctrine which is to be held by the true Church. When Strohl writes that the theory that the signs are the distinguishing marks of a visible Church is the prerogative of Bucer and Calvin and was only later adopted by the followers of Luther, he would have done better to point out that the justification for such a view was to be found in the later writings of Luther himself. Strohl is not unaware of the difficulty but he does not probe it thoroughly. With reference to Wider Hans Worst he quotes: "Wir haben alles rein, das Wort rein, die Taufe rein, das Sakrament rein, die Schlüssel rein, und alles was zur rechte Kirche gehört", and further, "Wir haben eine feine, reine, heilige Kirche, wie sie zur Zeit der Apostel gewest". Strohl's comment on this is an explanation of the purpose for which the treatise was written. It was intended as

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1. LUTHER, W.A. 50, 628, quoted in WOLF, op. cit., p.159; c.f. RUPP, op. cit., p.322; c.f. also FLICHE-MARTIN, XVI, 104.
  2. Ib. W.A. 51, 447; c.f. STROHL, op. cit., p.209.

a refutation of the accusation of Henry of Brunswick against the Elector of Saxony that there were now only heretics left in his territory. Luther's aim is to show that there were true Christians there as well. "C'est pourquoi il énumérait les indices; (non pas les signes distinctifs d'une institution vraiment chrétienne, mais l'existence de moyens d'action divins qui ne restent jamais entièrement inefficaces)".<sup>1</sup> But the notion of distinctive signs is not entirely absent. Since for Luther the presence of true Christians implies the presence of the true Church, then those notes which point to their presence can be taken also as marks by which to distinguish them from other people who do not have these characteristics.

Richel includes a section<sup>2</sup> which places Calvin vis-à-vis the four marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity. Though the classification was not Calvin's, it is instructive to work out his attitude to it. The unity of the Church, manifested externally, is to be traced back to the unity of the Body of Christ. There is also a unity of the content of faith, and consequently it is one which is to be believed in rather than physically observed. Calvin's toleration of his fellow-reformers, even when he was diametrically opposed to them, is an indication of this desire for unity in the Church. The basic difference between Calvin and the Church of Rome on this point is that Rome finds unity of administration more conducive to achieving the requisite end, that is, unity of faith and worship.

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1. STROHL, op. cit., p.209; (LUTHER, W. 51, 529. 4 - 6; 536, 11 - 12; 481, 3; 479, 1).

2. RICHEL, op. cit., pp.184 - 196.

"Noz adversaires s'efforcent, comme i'ay dit, de persuader au monde que le principal et quasi le seul lien de l'unité Ecclésiastique est d'adhérer au siège Romain, et persister en l'obéissance d'iceluy."<sup>1</sup> Calvin, evidently, was not averse to elaborate administration in his quest for unity. "Il est nécessaire, que le corps de l'Eglise, pour le rendre bien uni, soit lié ensemble de discipline: tout ainsi comme un corps est renforcé de nerfs."<sup>2</sup> This Reply to Sadolet is altogether a moving appeal for unity in the Church, based on the fact that Christ is its head. (It is, of course, a key idea of the Institution, but the Reply seems to gather into a very few pages most of what is said elsewhere at length or scattered over several volumes.)

"De ma part, j'ai toujours montré en paroles et en faits, quel désir j'avais à union et concorde: toutesfois j'entendais celle union de l'Eglise, qui prend son commencement de toi, et finit en toi-même. Car toutes fois et quantes que tu nous a commandé icelle paix et union: tu t'es déclaré quand et quand être le seul lien pour la conserver et maintenir...."<sup>3</sup>

It is not easy to see what 'unity of the Church' is opposed to here. The very least Calvin could accord to Sadolet was that he, too, was striving after unity of the Church; the only possible ground for disagreement would have been the nature of the Church.

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1. Inst. IV. 6. 1.
  2. Epître à Sadolet, ed. SCHMIDT, pp.77 - 8; c.f. Inst. IV. 12. 1. and IV. 3. 2.
  3. Epître à Sadolet, pp.83 - 4.



Calvin continues in the same vein:

"Car je sentais bien en moi quel désir j'avais à l'union d'icelle: pourvu que ta vérité fût le lien de telle concorde...."<sup>1</sup>

The work ends with a prayer for concord:

"Fasse le Seigneur, Sadolet, que toi et les autres tiens entendiez quelquefois, qu'il n'est point d'autre lien de l'union ecclésiastique: sinon que Christ notre Seigneur (qui nous a réconciliés à Dieu son père) nous retire de cette dissipation, en la société de son corps: afin qu'en telle sorte par sa seule parole et par son Esprit, nous soyons unis en un coeur et une pensée."<sup>2</sup>

The holiness of the Church is also to be studied as an attribute of the Body of Christ. Calvin differs from the Anabaptists in that their conception is static, whereas his is progressive. For Calvin, as we have seen, the members are not perfectly holy, but they are made holier every day by the action of the Holy Spirit. Holiness is not just a gift but a task.<sup>3</sup> "Calvin rejected in an impassioned way the delusive ideal of a spotless church."<sup>4</sup>

When he comes to write on the subject of the universality of the Church, Calvin goes against both the Church of Rome and the Anabaptists. Rome is thinking of diffusion throughout the world, a relative and moral universality, which is nonetheless actual. The Anabaptists represent an opposite but equally rigorous extreme; their theoretical and practical restriction of the Church to a privileged group renders

1. Ib. p.85.

2. Ib. p.97.

3. c.f. RICHEL, op. cit., p.190; Calvin, Inst. IV. 1. 13; IV. 1. 17;

4. NIESEL, op. cit., p.195; c.f. Inst. IV. 1. 13. (IV. 8. 12.)

catholicity meaningless. Calvin, wishing to judge who are true members and who are false, (though of course he leaves the ultimate judgement to God alone), accepts the fact that the Church as we know it is spread throughout the world; for him, catholicity is manifested in the fact that there are many individual churches under one Head. The clearest exposition of what Calvin understood by universality is to be found in the Reply to Sadolet.

He is answering Sadolet's definition of the universal nature of the Church.

"Ou tu erres en ce mot, Eglise: ou bien d'un certain mouvement, et de guet à pens, tu nous veut décevoir: auquel dernier t'attraperai au passage. Il se peut faire aussi que tu faus bien ailleurs. Car premièrement en la définition de l'Eglise, tu laisses ce qui te pouvait beaucoup servir en la droite intelligence du mot: quand tu la dis, être celle, qui de tout temps passé, comme aujourd'hui, par toute la terre, a toujours été une en Christ, consentant en un esprit de Christ, duquel en tout et partout elle est régie et gouvernée. Où est ici la parole de Dieu, icelle tant claire marque, laquelle tant de fois est recommandée par le Seigneur même, en la désignation de la vraie Eglise? Car lui prévoyant, combien il serait dangereux soi vanter de l'Esprit sans la parole: il a bien affermé, que l'eglise était gouvernée et administrée par le Saint Esprit. Mais afin que telle administration fût certaine, stable, et immobile, il l'a conjointe et alliée à icelle sienne parole... Et toi, Sadolet, chopant du premier pas au seuil de l'huis, as été puni de l'injure que tu as faite au

Saint Esprit: le séparant et divisant de la parole... Maintenant donc si tu veux endurer et recevoir une plus véritable définition de l'Eglise que la tienne: dis dorénavant, que c'est l'Assemblée de tous les Saints: laquelle étendue par tout le monde, est dispersée en tout temps, liée toutesfois ensemble par une seule doctrine de Christ: et par son seul Esprit garde et observe l'union de la foi, ensemble une concorde et charité fraternelle. Or que nous ayons quelque différent avec icelle, nous le nions: mais plutôt, tout ainsi que nous la révérons comme mere: ainsi désirons nous toujours demeurer entre ses bras."<sup>1</sup>

In the last place comes the mark of apostolicity. Succession is important for Calvin, but it is to be understood primarily as succession of doctrine, not as of persons. Those who have departed from the teaching of the Apostles, writes Calvin, cannot be accounted their successors.<sup>2</sup>

One of the merits of seeing Calvin through this four-fold scheme is that it gives a good idea of the difficulties involved in finding a suitable basis of distinction. These four marks are to be thought of as characteristics rather than as pointers to the presence of the Church; but they also could serve as pointers to someone in search of the Church - if a community can boast of these qualities in its midst, then there is the true Church. The snag is the difference of stress,

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1. Epître à Sadolet, ed. SCHMIDT, pp.50 - 52.

2. RICHEL, op. cit., p.195; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 2. 2 - 3; IV. 5. 13; IV. 8. 9.

which occasionally develops into a difference of sense, between Calvin and others who make use of these counters.

Grosclaude is anxious to draw out whatever difference there is between the visible Church and the invisible. In this instance he lists different characteristics for the two aspects of the Church. For the invisible Church he has unity, catholicity, and exclusiveness; for the visible Church, infallibility (with the Word of God at the base), therefore unity, therefore universality, and exclusiveness (which results from infallibility). The signs of the visible Church remain, of course, Preaching and the Sacraments. We learn from this the impossibility of distinguishing visible from invisible. Infallibility is hardly a sufficient differentiating mark, since the only reason it is not applied to the invisible Church is that it would be superfluous to do so.<sup>1</sup> Corbière had distinguished the characteristics of the visible and the spiritual Church. The marks of the latter are invisibility (rather obviously) catholicity and exclusiveness. Corbière's reason for including invisibility was the fact that the Church is the communion of all saints; this has become Grosclaude's first point. The visible Church has as its marks infallibility, unity and therefore universality; and the possession of the Keys (or Power). This demonstrates how closely linked all these characteristics are. Grosclaude has not added to Corbière's analysis; he has merely transposed some of the points in the earlier treatment. Any assessment

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1. GROSCLAUDE, *op. cit.*, pp. 7 - 13.

of these characteristics which tries to account for the causality involved is bound to be arbitrary. It is just as easy to say 'unity and therefore universality' as to say the converse.<sup>1</sup>

An interesting approach to the subject of the marks of the Church is to be found in Littell's work on the Anabaptists. This gives us a list of the marks of the fallen Church.<sup>2</sup> (The author warns us of the extent of the fallen Church; it lasted from the time of Constantine until their own movement, and the Reformers belonged to it.) Briefly the marks are: the union of Church and State, widespread warring in Christendom, dead formalism and a lust for power and position, and the practice of infant baptism. The topic was one which lent itself to a vivid treatment; there are many passages in the Institution which describe the qualities of the false church, as Calvin understood it, but description is easier than definition; its marks, one might imagine, are legion. Later on in the same work Littell gives the marks of the true Church according to the mind of the Anabaptists.<sup>3</sup> In the first place there is the Believers' Baptism; then come spiritual government, community, the Lord's Supper, the authority of civil government, and passive obedience. The underlying theme of several of these notes is the subject of the next chapter. Their importance lies not so much in the fact

1. CORBIERE, op. cit., pp.6 - 7.
2. F. H. LITTELL, op. cit., pp.64 - 72.
3. LITTELL, op. cit., pp.82 - 106.

that they characterize the Anabaptist idea of the true Church as in the attitude Anabaptists adopted towards these topics. As was the case with the lengthier list of notes in some of the later writings of Luther and Calvin, they are an expression of the sum of Anabaptist doctrine.

## C H A P T E R N I N E

### Church and State

The problem of the relations between Church and State was one which deeply concerned Calvin. His interest resulted from the fact that he wished to put into practice new ideals of leadership, in Church and State; but not, of course, for their own sakes, in just the same way that the whole Calvinistic reform was not reform for the sake of reform. Honour and glory are the prerogative of God alone; the motivation for whatever we do must be grounded on God. But Calvin's work is addressed to the whole man. "La Réforme calviniste, une réforme intégrale de la société.... Pour Calvin, en effet, il n'est pas douteux que la Parole de Dieu s'adresse à l'Homme tout entier, dans sa vie présente comme dans sa vie future, dans son âme comme dans son corps, dans sa vie spirituelle comme dans sa vie matérielle, dans son être personnel comme dans sa vie en société." Yet Calvin's reform was primarily theological.<sup>1</sup> The proximate cause of Calvin's attitude was his complete dissatisfaction with the currently fashionable theorizing, partly because of the abuses it had led to, and partly because he thought it was misguided anyway. On this question he draws near to Luther; their conclusions may not have been identical, but their starting point was. Luther was deeply sympathetic with the reaction against 'extravagant late medieval Canonist claims of Papal "plentitude of power" ;<sup>2</sup> he made

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1. BIELER, op. cit., p.179.

2. W. ULLMANN, quoted in RUPP, op. cit., p.311.

a very clear distinction between the two kingdoms. Rupp notes that 'kingdom' in this context denotes 'rule' rather than 'realm of government', after βασιλεία<sup>1</sup>. Luther envisages the problem from God's point of view. There are two kingdoms - of God and of the world, and God uses two different instruments to rule the two spheres. These two kingdoms should not be confused. Authority should be obeyed, and up to a point non-resistance is desirable. "God has established two kinds of government among men: the one is spiritual: it has no sword but it has the Word by which men... may attain everlasting life. The other is Worldly government through the sword which aims to keep peace among men and this he rewards with temporal blessing."<sup>2</sup> The two kingdoms are, then, distinct, but even with Luther there is the conviction that they must not be kept apart. "It is clear that Luther does not think of these two regiments as two magnitudes excluding each other or competing with each other for rule, but as the two overlapping aspects of the one Regnum Dei Invisible"<sup>3</sup>. Torrance goes on to quote Luther's own words: "There are two kinds of regiment in the world as there are also two kinds of people; the believing and the unbelieving. Christians yield themselves to the control of God's Word; they have no need of civil government for their own sake. But the unchristian portion require another government, even the civil sword, since they will not be controlled by the Word of God."<sup>4</sup> The two kingdoms are distinct, but they

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1. RUPP, op. cit., p.289.

2. LUTHER, W.M.L. 5, 39; quoted in RUPP, op. cit., pp.291 - 2.

3. TORRANCE, op. cit., p.24.

4. LUTHER, W.A. 45 p.252; (TORRANCE, ib.).



are not to be separated, because they are both dependent on Christ and belong to the overall kingdom of God.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is possible to read into Luther's comments on the political scene a coherent political theory, this does not come from Luther himself. Biéler speaks of "la tragique insuffisance de la réforme luthérienne et sa différence essentielle d'avec les réformes zwinglienne et calviniste qui la complètent: il lui manque une doctrine politique et sociale (et elle n'a qu'un embryon de doctrine ecclésiastique)."<sup>2</sup> And Strohl: "Mieux qu'aucun autre Reformateur, Calvin a élaboré une pensée politique".<sup>3</sup> The reason for this is partly that Calvin was writing at a later stage in the history of the reformation and partly that he was particularly suited to write on the subject, not as a man of experience, but as a trained theorist with a legal background. In support of the first reason Biéler writes, "Dans la Bible, Luther avait retrouvé la foi primitive de l'Eglise, la communion directe avec le Dieu vivant; mais il en était resté là; absorbé par tant d'autres problèmes urgents, il n'avait pas su y découvrir le souci de la cité temporelle qu'elle inspire".<sup>4</sup> But much of what Calvin was able to take for granted was due to the preliminary work done by Luther.

Calvin was equally anxious to have no part in the medieval papal theory. His reaction against the views typical of the middle ages is summed up by J. W. Allen as follows: "For Calvin the Church Universal

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1. TORRANCE, op. cit., p.32.

2. BIELER, op. cit., p.23.

3. STROHL, op. cit., p.248.

4. BIELER, op. cit., p.23.

is either a group of localised churches or a thing altogether invisible, apprehended only by faith. His visible Church is bounded by and contained in a single State. The State itself is a church and is under no human external authority." Allen adds, however, that medieval thinkers, too, sought a unity of Church and State, where *respublica generis humani* was equal to *ecclesia universalis*.<sup>1</sup> Calvin agreed with them that God's providence was the source of secular government. "He Himself has instituted them in order that they may govern the world according to law and righteousness."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin's treatment of the topic of civil government is now the last chapter in the work, but the principle which is its foundation had been established.

"Nous avons à noter qu'il y a double régime en l'homme. L'un est spirituel, par lequel la conscience est enstruite et enseignée des choses de Dieu et de ce qui appartient à piété. L'autre est politique ou civil, par lequel l'homme est appris des offices d'humanité et civilité qu'il faut garder entre les hommes."

Calvin adds that the usual terminology is 'spiritual' and 'temporal', and that temporal is not synonymous with 'material', but embraces "loix, selon lesquelles les hommes puissent vivre honnestement et instement les uns avec les autres."<sup>3</sup> Torrance finds in these words the basic difference between Calvin's view and that of Luther, and he points especially to the words 'en l'homme'.

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1. ALLEN, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century, London, 1960, p.68.
  2. CALVIN, C.R. 49, 249, quoted by NIESEL, p.230.
  3. Inst. III: 19. 15.

"Under the overarching Kingdom of God the two kingdoms, the spiritual and the political, overlap, not only in their common aim, the glory of God, but in their effect, which might be best described as humanitas, humanité, which is a constant theme in Calvin's sermons."<sup>1</sup>

That is why the matter is left to the end of the Institution. It is the practical working out of everything that has gone before. Calvin is aware that he will appear to be digressing, if not from the path he proposed to follow, at least from the manner in which he proposed to proceed. But he is compelled to turn his attention to the topic to counteract the influence of the dissident and the time-servers. And even if this stimulation had been lacking, the logicity of such a conclusion to his work, and its inherent practical nature would have assuredly led him to treat of it.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest of the nineteenth century theses devoted to Calvin's ecclesiology, concerns itself almost entirely with the subject of the relations of Church and State, the theory and the practice.<sup>4</sup> Lys had chosen as his title, Etude sur Calvin considéré comme Organisateur de l'Eglise. He begins by describing the threefold powers of the Church: doctrinal, legislative, judical. He sees this theory in which power is exercised in the name of Christ alone as based completely on Scripture, in opposition to the new Roman dogmas. He makes two further points, that there must be a separation of the two powers, and that the spiritual

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1. TORRANCE, op. cit., p.157.

2. Inst. IV. 20. 1.

3. LYS, op. cit., pp.6 - 33 for the theory, and pp.34 - 60 for the practice.

4. c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 8. 1; WENDEL, op. cit., p.232.

power must be exercised democratically, not tyrannically by one man. Lys goes on to show that Rome had come between the civil authority and God, and had claimed that she was delegating the power. "L'Eglise romaine était l'âme dont l'État était le corps; il était naturel que le corps obéît servilement au principe plus noble destiné à le commander."<sup>1</sup>

The reformers had given it a firmer basis by wiping away the intermediary and making it directly of divine origin. He agrees that Church and State must support one another and concludes from that to a certain incoherence in the reformers' principles. If the State has the task of supervising religious purity, what becomes of the freedom of conscience? The result is conflict in practice. Calvin followed Luther in refusing to let the magistrate have jurisdiction over doctrine, but he was not always able to follow this out in practice. Conversely, the spiritual ministers should have no temporal authority. Nor should those who resist ecclesiastical authorities be turned over to the civil authorities. This would be a tacit recognition of the State as a court of appeal. Lys sums up this 'mutual support' as slightly one-sided. Even in theory the two societies mingled together, and in practice they were sometimes almost indistinguishable. Calvin's ideal, was theocratic. "Ce siècle de foi ardente ne sut pas faire de différence entre le délit et le péché."<sup>2</sup> We shall make reference later on to the second part of this Montauban thesis.

Corbière, writing four years later, repeats the main points of Lys' study, but does not add anything. Straub does not directly touch

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1. LYS, op. cit., p.24.

2. LYS, op. cit., p.28.

on this topic at all. His interest lies merely in an analysis of the ministry in the Church, and considered purely as government of the Church. Grosclaude tallies with Lys and has nothing to add. He writes, that Calvin thought that the mere fact of one's birth made one a member of both the civil and the religious societies "L'Eglise devient autant politique que religieuse."<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that Calvin was more interested in the way the spiritual society should be ruled, than he was in the details of civil administration, in just the same way as he was more attached to talking of God and man, than to talking even about spiritual government. But his sense of perspective enables him to assign to each topic its proper place. And if on occasion it appears that the State is a mere tool of the Church, then this is in order: both societies are working towards a common end, and in the last analysis this is often expressed most clearly in religious terms. Civil reform is only a by-product of the reformation, though it is a necessary one.

Spiritual government has to do with the relation of the subject to God; its domain is the co<sup>n</sup>science. Temporal government "appartient à ordonner seulement une iustice civile, et reformer les moeurs extérieurs."<sup>2</sup> Calvin wishes his reader to realise the profound difference between the two spheres; this will often be more evident from an examination of their natures than from their functions, because of the unavoidable overlapping

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1. GROSCLAUDE, *op. cit.*, p.31.

2. Inst. IV. 20. 1; c.f. IV. 11. 3; IV. 11. 5.

which takes place.<sup>1</sup>

"Car iceluy règne spirituel commence desia sur la terre en nous quelque goust du royaume céleste, et en, ceste vie mortelle et transitoire quelque goust de la béatitude immortelle et incorruptible; mais le but de ce régime temporel est de nourrir et entretenir le service extérieur de Dieu, la pure doctrine et religion, garder l'estat de l'Eglise en son entier, nous former à toute equité requise à la compagnie des hommes pour le temps qu'avons à vivre entre eux, d'instituer noz moeurs à une iustice civile, de nous accorder les uns avec les autres, d'entretenir et conserver une paix et tranquillité commune."<sup>2</sup>

The protection of the Church in the matter of worship and doctrine is not in the 1536 edition, but is added in 1559. In the earlier edition Calvin is feeling his way towards an expression of his thought which will embrace all eventualities, and the experience of setting up the Church of Geneva had taught him the need of being more specific.

At the beginning of Section Two of Chapter XX Calvin rejects the Anabaptist idea of the State as something polluted. Far from being something with which we should not contaminate ourselves, it has a very necessary part to play in our education to holiness. Basil Hall speaks of the Anabaptists as those who "proposed a Church gathered out from the world, which was to be a society of the redemmed keeping itself pure by excommunicating those who failed to obey its rules and by repudiating all relations with the State or secular society."<sup>3</sup> How far

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1. DOUMERGUE, op. cit., V. pp.408 - 12.

2. Inst. IV. 20, 2.

3. HALL, op. cit., p.24.

removed this is from the opinion of Calvin is seen from the account Calvin gives of the natures of the two societies, and from the important functions he attached to the State. The Anabaptists, of course, were not able to deny the existence of the civil powers; "In Anabaptist teaching, the magistrate as policing authority was of historical origin, given by God as a necessary control over men's drive to sin". But perhaps the nearest they approached to a positive relationship with the civil authority was a passive obedience, coupled with an opposition to any form of religious compulsion, which would have ill-suited the voluntary nature of their association. "The Anabaptists asserted that political compulsion in religion was the denial of spiritual government and an affront to the spiritual power in the church. The potestas ecclesiae of the Christian congregation could not be maintained in a union of church and state." This did not, however, stop the association from enforcing its own discipline over its members.<sup>1</sup>

Calvin sums up the function of the State in these words:

"Qu'il apparaisse forme publique de religion entre les Chrestiens, et que l'humanité consiste entre les humains'.

And having written that, Calvin sees at once the possible objection that he is laying the Church open to the danger of interference from the civil authority.

"Et ne doit sembler estrange que ie remets maintenant à la police la charge de bien ordonner la religion, laquelle charge il semble que i'aye ostée cy dessus hors de la puissance des

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1. LITTELL, op. cit., p.66.

hommes. Car ie ne permets icy aux hommes de forger loix à leur plaisir touchant la religion et la manière d'honorer Dieu... combien que i'approuve une ordonnance civile, laquelle prend garde que la vraye religion qui est contenue en la Loy de Dieu ne soit publiquement violée et pollue par une licence impunie."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin is trying to bring about a state of affairs where the Church is not merely protected by the government, but where the State has a very positive role to play without the possibility of usurping any of the prerogatives of the Church. Calvin's legal mind was able to distinguish clearly between the discipline exercised by the Church and that exercised by the State.

Discipline is basically a question of administration rather than a moral issue. "It is in general true of all this worldly ordinances and laws that they have no authority over the inner life of man. God alone can search man's heart and call him to account with regard to his most secret thoughts."<sup>2</sup> On the same subject, Wendel thinks that Calvin did not avoid the danger of furnishing us with a protestant Code of Canon Law, though for Calvin this legislation was not binding on consciences.<sup>3</sup>

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1. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 20. 3.
  2. NIESEL, op. cit., p.235; c.f. Strohl, op. cit., p.213; CALVIN, Inst. IV. 10. 27; Ib. II. 8. 6.
  3. WENDEL, op. cit., pp.233 - 4.



## C H A P T E R T E N

### Organisation of the Church

The preceding section dealt with Calvin's general theories of the relations between the Church and the State. We are now concerned with his theory of the organisation of the Church, and his proposals for reform in this matter. In the following chapter we shall see how far these ideals were put into practice at Geneva.

While wishing to give the fullest possible importance to freedom of conscience Calvin sees readily the need of some sort of order or organisation in the Church. So Luther, at a time when he was clamouring for a purifying of the papacy, advocating the universal priesthood of Christians, and setting up distinctly national churches, yet retained a fairly strong strain of conservatism: He thought it necessary to preserve in the Church a hierarchical authority. He joined an awareness of Christian liberty with an acceptance of the notion of orthodoxy and the obligation of external practices.<sup>1</sup>

Discipline is necessary from the point of view of man who of his nature must rely on others to satisfy his needs, but more fundamentally from the point of view of God, who has quite simply willed that this is the way His Church should be governed;<sup>2</sup> it is open for us to look for reasons why this is so, as an exercise for our humility, for example, but the ultimate reason is God's will. "Dieu a conioint son Eglise

1. Le XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle, ed. SÉE, RÉBILLON, PRÉCLIN; Paris, 1942, pp.135 - 6.

2. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 3. 1.

d'un lien, lequel il voyoit estre le plus propre à conserver unité, assavoir quand il a commis le salut et vie éternelle aux hommes, afin qu'elle fust communiquée par leurs mains aux autres."<sup>1</sup> Calvin then quotes the Letter to the Ephesians where St. Paul is writing about individual vocation and the differing roles in Church life: Christ is present in his ministers.<sup>2</sup>

It has been said above that Luther's ecclesiology is haphazard. This is not intended to be pejorative, but merely to indicate a basic difference between the two writers. The reason for Luther's attitude can be seen at this point because it is from here that the working out of details takes its origin. "In the Lutheran view all forms of Church life and order on earth are adiaphora, and will come under judgment at the advent of Christ as part of the schema mundi. The Reformed Church laid greater emphasis upon shaping the Church here and now in accordance with the divine commands, and in building up its structure on the Word. For Luther, on the other hand, Reformation meant primarily letting the Word of God act critically upon the existing order and liturgy of the Church."<sup>3</sup> When Torrance comes to deal more particularly with Calvin in the course of the same work he makes three telling remarks about the order of the Church in Calvin. Firstly, though there is a fixed form and a 'firm polity' yet this is perfectible, (just as man in Calvin's thought is perfectible). In Calvin's words,

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1. Ib.

2. Ib. IV. 3. 2; c.f. WENDEL, op. cit., p.50.

3. TORRANCE, op. cit., p.63.

"For we know that every Church has liberty to frame for itself a form of government that is suitable and profitable for it, because the Lord has not prescribed anything definite." (Comm. on I Cor. 11. 3. - C.R. 77, p.474). Secondly, while the form is perfectible it has instead been corrupted by men. Thirdly, there is a different constitution for the Church as it goes through the radically different stages of its existence, the Church under the Cross as opposed to the Church in the glory of the Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The details of ceremonial have not been rigidly set down but are to be worked out according to the requirements of the age.<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that Calvin's attitude was very much coloured by the way in which he looked at the Church of his own day...

"I'entrepren la cause commune de tous les fidèles, et mesme celle de Christ, laquelle aujourdhuy est en telle manière de tout descirée et foulée en vostre royaume, qu'elle semble advis désesperée."<sup>3</sup>

We shall see how some other writers of the time painted a picture equally black, but, apart from extolling the virtues paramount in the ideal state, were unable to rise to Calvin's practical suggestions.

The fourfold ministry of the 1541 Institution is often taken as the classical and definitive statement of Calvin's views; it is however interesting that Calvin's treatment differed so much over the

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1. TORRANCE, op. cit., pp.134 - 5; c.f. pp.64, 122, 139 - 142 on the persecution of the Church. 4
  2. Inst. IV. 10. 30; c.f. WENDEL, op. cit., pp.229 - 30.
  3. c.f. Inst. III. 3. 9; III. 6. 1; IV. 1. 2.
  4. STROHL, op. cit., p.218; c.f. BIELER, op. cit., p.93.

years. The edition of 1536 discussed only pastors, though deacons were mentioned in the rather negative context of Roman abuses; the elders made their appearance in 1537 after Calvin's contact with Bâle. Furthermore, Calvin's full theory of the Presbyterate does not find expression until 1543 at Strasburg.<sup>1</sup> Calvin speaks first on some extraordinary offices which, for the most part are unique - so, for example, the office of apostle.<sup>2</sup> Of the other more permanent offices there is nothing against one person exercising more than one office.<sup>3</sup> Such a theory was put into practice at Strasburg and Geneva, where we occasionally find the office of pastor and doctor held by one person at the same time. Wendel notes that these two offices are quite distinct in theory, and adduces as his evidence the Commentary on Ephesians, but it must also be stated that there is provision made for the office of doctor being held by a pastor, and vice versa in Inst. IV. iii. 4. Niesel observes that "In the final edition of his Institutes even, Calvin speaks in one important passage of three rather than four orders in the Church, reckoning the office of pastor and that of doctor as the same." Niesel goes on to show that "the thought of the priesthood of all believers... plays no part in his doctrine. Here again the strong Christo-centric tendency of his theology becomes clear."<sup>4</sup> This is not to deny that there could be a belief in a universal priesthood which was also Christocentric up to a point. Luther, for

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1. WENDEL, op. cit., pp.50, 231.
  2. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 3. 4.
  3. NIESEL, op. cit., p.202.
  4. Ib. pp.201 - 3; CALVIN, Inst. IV. 4. 1.

example, had much to say on the subject of the priesthood of the faithful, but his Christology was just as highly developed. "Thus there is one ultimate Christian estate (Stand), though to each Christian there may come a different office (Amt). It is this ultimate estate in which all Believers are counted priests and kings. The Priesthood of all Believers never means for Luther what it has sometimes meant in degenerate Protestantism, the secularization of the clergy, the doctrine that we are all laymen."<sup>1</sup> And the basis of the ultimate Christian estate is Christ.

Straub's thesis bears directly on the topic under discussion. His proposed scope is 'Opinions de Calvin sur le ministère ecclésiastique comme gouvernement extérieur de l'Eglise'. In the course of his work he shows what relation Calvin's theory bears to the practice of the early Church (pp.14 - 17). In the following chapter he tabulates the rights of ministers in their capacity as the leaders of the Church: teaching, jurisdiction (and special reference is made to excommunication), making laws and statutes, and 'le droit de régler les usages ecclésiastiques et l'ordre du service divin'.<sup>2</sup> He emphasises, however, that there is to be no elaborate ceremonial. Chapter Six is a very general comparison of Calvin with Catholics on this subject. Four main points are made. Firstly, vocation is non-existent 'chez les Catholiques' since the doctrine of Christ as foundation of the whole Church, and consequently of all ecclesiastical ministry, does not exist for them.

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1. RUPP, op. cit., p.315.

2. STRAUB, op. cit., Strasbourg, 1865, p.18.

His quotation of Inst. IV. v. I does indeed give the statement of his assertion but the gratuitous reasons are lacking from it. Secondly there are Catholic abuses, of which one is the existence of child-bishops. Thirdly, the Catholics do not hold with election by the people. Fourthly, monks should not be thought of as priests because they do not govern the Church. Then follows a discussion of Calvin's attitude to the papacy and especially to the primacy of the Pope.

Straub's next main section (pp.29 - 32) deals by way of comparison with Luther's views on the subject. Luther stressed universal priesthood, and for him the minister represented the community and was more of a priest than Calvin would allow, since Luther admitted the expiatory death of Christ. "C'est bien à cette distinction que l'on peut attribuer l'organisation presque républicaine des réformés, tandis que chez les luthériens le gouvernement religieux est devenu presque monarchique."<sup>1</sup> The concluding comparison which Straub makes of the three schools of thought is marred by an obtrusion of the author's own standpoint, and adds next to nothing to what is implied in the very juxtaposition of Calvin, Luther and the Catholics.

Grosclaude gives more attention to the four parts of the ministry; others had perhaps minimised it since it is clear enough in Calvin. The pastors look after teaching and the administration of the sacraments, the elders discipline, the doctors teaching and the deacons have charge of the poor; there are two sorts of deacon, one to govern and dispense the goods of the poor, the other to administer to the sick and other

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1. STRAUB, op. cit., p.30; c.f. STROHL, op. cit., p.237.

poor people.<sup>1</sup>

The government of the Church is not something which can be left to chance, or to anyone who cares to set himself up as a minister of religion. This applies to both the administration of the Church and teaching in the Church.

"Parquoy afin que plusieurs esprits volages et séditieux ne s'ingérassent témérairement à l'office d'enseigner ou régir l'Eglise, nostre Seigneur a nommément ordonné que nul n'entrast en office public sans vocation."<sup>2</sup>

It is not just the calling which is necessary if a man is to be a true minister, but also he must accept the call and carry out his charge. Vocation, of course, can be both external and internal, and it is with the former that Calvin is concerned here. "Je parle seulement de la vocation extérieure, laquelle appartient à l'ordre de l'Eglise, me taisant de la vocation secrette, de laquelle un chacun ministre doit avoir tesmoignage en sa conscience devant Dieu, et dont les hommes ne peuvent estre tesmoins."<sup>3</sup> But if a man enters upon the ministry in bad faith, and his deceit is not discovered, then he is still validly called externally by the Church. In Inst. IV. iii. 13 Calvin discusses the election of Bishops. He first deals with the validity of a comparison with the election of the apostles and decides against it on the grounds of the extraordinary nature of their office. The apostles were ordained by God and Jesus Christ, not by men. Bishops

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1. GROSCLAUDE, op. cit., pp.16 - 21.

2. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 3. 10.

3. Ib. IV. 3. 11.

however, (and for Calvin this develops into a generic term for minister, c.f. Inst. IV. iii. 8), must be elected by their fellow men. Calvin then enters more into detail, though the subject necessarily remains largely on a speculative level.

"La question est maintenant, assavoir si un ministre doit estre esleu ou par toute l'Eglise, ou par les autres ministres et gouverneurs; ou bien s'il doit estre constitué par un homme seul."<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the last form of election Calvin shows that the apparent Scriptural instances of such a practice amount to no more than that the person concerned presided over the election by the people. In his account of this topic Lys observes, "Il y a donc eu dans ses idées un progrès dans le sense démocratique: les pouvoirs qu'il accorde à la communauté, dans ses dernières éditions, sont plus étendus."<sup>2</sup> In contrast to this we might wonder with Wendel whether election is at bottom anything more than a ratification of the previous decision of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Inst. IV. 3. 15.
  2. LYS, op. cit., p.33.
  3. WENDEL, op. cit., p.230.



## C H A P T E R E L E V E N

### Calvin's Church Practice

A study of Calvin's actions at Geneva before he started to organise his church seem to verify Basil Hall's statement that "his thought is not speculative but pragmatic: his theological principles are aimed directly at planning a visibly reformed Church."<sup>1</sup> In 1535 Farel was in process of organising the church in Geneva; because of the difficulties he encountered in the course of his attempt he asked Calvin in to help him. Writing later of this period Calvin said,

"Et combien que la vraie religion fût jà dressée et établie, et la forme de leur Eglise corrigée, avant qu'illec fusse appelé: neanmoins, pour ce que j'ai non seulement approuvé par ma voix et opinion, mais aussi me suis parforcé tant qu'il m'a été possible, de conserver et confirmer les choses paravant instituées par Farel et Viret: je ne puis bonnement être forclos ni séparé d'iceux en cette cause."<sup>2</sup>

This is, of course, an understatement of the contribution which Calvin made to the development of the Church in Geneva. On the twenty first of May, 1536, the people of Geneva declared its desire to live according to the Gospel. This was too vague for Farel and Calvin: they managed to have accepted by the Councils a resolution that there

1. HALL, op. cit., p.16.

2. CALVIN, Epitre à Sadolet, éd. SCHMIDT, pp.36 - 7.

should be an official visitation of the houses to procure formal acceptance.<sup>1</sup> By November the tenth they were ready to present to the Grand Council their profession of faith. They wanted all the citizens of Geneva to swear to keep its proposals, and urged that the civil authorities should ensure its observance. Furthermore, they requested that the ministers should have the right of applying religious sanctions and especially excommunication.<sup>2</sup> These Articles sur le gouvernement de l'Eglise were accepted by the Grand Conseil, but they were not finally voted by the ordinary Council until January, 1537. During that month the repetition of their forthright assertions served merely to antagonise many of the people in authority. "With great zeal but little tact, they were soon opposing the Council's view of itself as replacing the Bishop in all matters concerning the Church, for in January 1537 they laid down as the essential requirements for creating a worthily reformed Church, first, the Church's exclusive powers and vigorous use of excommunication, and, second, the subscription by all citizens to a confession of faith under penalty of banishment. The Council very hesitatingly, and with qualifications gave its consent."<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that Calvin is not asking for the power of the Sword to be accorded to the Church. The Church's power remains spiritual; the State has the duty of enforcing the penalties.

In the following year Calvin and Farel were exiled from the city

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1. GROSCLAUDE, op. cit., p.36.
  2. Le XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle. ed. SÉE, REBILLON, PRÉCLIN; pp.196 - 7; c.f. Biéler, op. cit., p.84.
  3. HALL, op. cit., p.19.

because of their intransigency; the promoters of this motion were a laxist party within the Grand Conseil. In 1540 they were recalled from exile, and in the next year Calvin returned. He agreed to do so only when the Council accepted the principle that the moral discipline of all citizens should be supported and enforced by the magistracy.<sup>1</sup> It was on the twentieth of November, 1541, that the text of the Ordonnances Ecclésiastiques was accepted by the Councils after years of remote preparation and two months of fairly intensive committee work. Calvin had not, however, achieved all he had hoped for. The right to the sanction of excommunication, for example, was not fully granted until 1555. Yet when Basil Hall writes that they nevertheless mirror his ideas,<sup>2</sup> we may feel that he is underestimating how close the Ordonnances are to Calvin's real thought. Apart from their providing greater detail on the function of the different parts of the ministry, and making some arrangements concerning the public life of the Church (regulations about marriages, for example, burials, and the religious education of the young), the importance of the Ordonnances lies in what they decree concerning the Consistory. This is, in fact, to be the 'instrument of the moral discipline'.<sup>3</sup> Its province is partly behaviour and partly orthodoxy of belief. The Consistory was made up of six ministers, who were elected by their colleagues, and twelve elders who were elected yearly by the different Councils, thus ensuring the representation of both Church and State. More exactly, the elders were chosen from the Councils by the Petit-Conseil, and this election

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1. Le XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle, op. cit., pp.196 - 7; HALL, op. cit., p.27.

2. HALL, op. cit., p.27.

3. Ib.

was ratified by the Grand Conseil. The people did not obtain the right of veto until the text of the injunctions was revised thirty years afterwards.<sup>1</sup> In 1541, according to the Ordonnances the Petit-Conseil should sound the opinion of the ministers and then proceed to the designation - two members from its own numbers, four from the Council of the sixty and six from the Council of the two hundred. Re-election was to take place annually.<sup>2</sup> The members of the Consistory had access to spiritual sanctions, and even (by means of the Councils) to secular penalties. Their authority with regard to education was not merely negative; they were expected to organise, or at least supervise the organisation of teaching and preaching in schools and colleges. The practical result of this was the founding, in 1559, of the Academy, which boasted in due course Mathurin Cordier, Sébastien Castellion and Théodore de Bèze as three of its teachers.<sup>3</sup> Yet there were some respects in which Calvin had been constrained to modify what he had originally thought and intended; apart from the question of excommunication, (and we may note with Wendel that Calvin would not give in, and brought about an obscure text in the Ordonnances which could be interpreted as giving the power of excommunication to the Consistory or to the Councils),<sup>4</sup> Calvin surrendered partially to hostile pressure by decreeing reception of the Eucharist once every three months instead of monthly, and allowing prayers and a sermon in the installation of

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1. LYS, op. cit., p.46.

2. GROSCLAUDE, op. cit., pp.39 - 40.

3. Le XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle, op. cit., p.197.

4. WENDEL, op. cit., p.49.

new pastors, in place of the imposition of hands; finally, for the nomination of ministers, Calvin's proposal of initial presentation by the pastoral body was opposed by the Council who wanted themselves to share the right of choosing.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps open to debate whether Calvin's influence over the Academy and Consistory, while remaining moral and indirect, was yet too intolerant;<sup>2</sup> if it was, it was not too illogically so. The greatest merit of Lys's work lies in his treatment of this subject.<sup>3</sup> He describes the Vénérable Compagnie which consisted of the ordinary ministers (the town and country pastors) and some professors of theology: its aim was the study of theology, the preservation of doctrine, the consecration of ministers, and the election of pastors, subject to the ratification of the magistrates and the flock. Now during his lifetime Calvin presided over this. This does not indicate an inclination towards episcopacy, just "une présidence synodale, et une certaine initiative destinées à imprimer l'unité à l'action ecclésiastique."<sup>4</sup> He qualifies the use of the word 'theocracy' with reference to Geneva. "Le gouvernement de cette ville fut une théocratie. Seulement il est difficile de savoir qui, de l'Eglise ou de l'Etat, domina dans ce régime théocratique." He concludes that it was the Church which was subordinate to the State, and not the opposite, and points as testimony of this to the predominantly lay structure of the Consistory.<sup>5</sup> Though

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1. Ib. pp.41 - 9.

2. c.f. DOUMERGUE V, 197 - 9.

3. LYS, op. cit., pp.34 - 60.

4. LYS, op. cit., p.42.

5. Ib. p.45.

Calvin's alleged intolerance was consistent with the aim of the Ordonnances, this idea of the compelling force of religion clashes somewhat with the more liberal tone of the Institution. The Church has lost something of its spiritual character. Lys looks for a reason for this 'consistorialism', (he feels that Calvin was not solely responsible for the role of the State in Geneva - the problem was not a new one) and finds it in Calvin's overall purpose: the regeneration of a people which could not be effected without rigidity of discipline.<sup>1</sup> Corbière carries this further by stating that the fault, if there be any, lies not so much in Calvin's idea as in what it developed into; in the first place, "la surveillance du consistoire devint tout à fait inquisitoriale," and secondly, election by the common voice of the people was to degenerate into consistorial succession; the lay elders became in effect part of a clerical body.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the Consistory should not be minimised. Grosclaude denies that the Consistory has any actual civil jurisdiction, yet there is a confusion of the two spheres. "Il veut fonder une communauté chrétienne qui renferme dans son sein l'organisme de la vie politique aussi bien que celui de la vie ecclésiastique: il veut que ces deux sphères, que sa pensée distinguait clairement, demeurent inséparablement unies dans les faits. C'est pourquoi il attribue à l'Etat la surveillance extérieure sur l'Eglise, et à l'Eglise, celle sur la vie intérieure de l'Etat."<sup>3</sup> Grosclaude then compares Calvin with

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1. Ib. p.48 - 9.

2. CORBIÈRE, op. cit., p.25; 29 - 30.

3. GROSCLAUDE, op. cit., 40; 45.

Luther, and Zwingli. Luther saw the State as a mere auxiliary, intended to take the place, provisionally, of the suppressed bishops; Zwingli saw it as the tacit representative of the faithful. Grosclaude's concluding remark is worth noting, since it shows the link-up between authority, and the purpose of the Christian life. "Il fallait que la communauté veillât elle-même à sa sanctification".<sup>1</sup> The community is the school for developing holiness, and discipline ensures that all alike are free from interference from those who are more apathetic, and even positively hostile to their purpose.

It is all too easy to brand Calvin with the title of tyrant or theocrat. There are, however, several points to be considered in this connection. All those in authority are, for Calvin, the representatives of God; and Calvin was himself aware of the temptation to bring about a fusion of the two powers.<sup>2</sup> Biéler makes some telling additions to these two points of Richel. At the very beginning of the setting up of the Calvinistic society, the magistrates enjoyed exceptional powers of examination, but these were not meant to last; there is no theocracy here. "Toute la question qu'il faudra examiner sera de savoir si la prétendue théocratie de Calvin est née de cette conjoncture occasionnelle ou si elle fait partie d'un principe de base de la théologie réformée."<sup>3</sup> A further important modifying factor is that Calvin never exercised any political power in the government of

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1. Ib. p.45.

2. RICHEL, op. cit., p.86; c.f. STROHL, op. cit., p.250.

3. BIÉLER, op. cit., p.86.

Geneva; and his theory of the spiritual independence of the Church was never accepted in its entirety by the government.<sup>1</sup> Once the relationship of the Church and State in the opinion of Calvin is clearly understood, the imputation of all that is implied in the term 'theocracy' becomes meaningless.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ib. pp.128 - 9.

2. DOURMERGUE, op cit., V. 197 - 9.



PART TWO - CALVIN'S CONTEMPORARIESCHAPTER ONEMarot(a) Marot's religious position, and the problem of the Church

Although Clément Marot was an acquaintance of Calvin and even worked with him for a short time in Geneva, the two had little in common. The primary difference was that Marot was not interested in theology. He was still less concerned about the particular study of the idea of the Church. Yet an examination of his satire of the Church as a whole and of some particular aspects of it, and an appraisal of what he leaves out, can tell us much about his conception of the Church. Since he never attempted a systematic account of the subject from a clearly-established standpoint, it is important to know what exactly his religious position was. In spite of recent scholarly work on the subject this is not easy. As long ago as 1923 Pierre Villey sounded a warning against those who would see in Marot an out-and-out exponent of any particular sect or style of religious thinking.

"Enfermer Marot dans le dilemme qui depuis Calvin va contraindre les consciences à opter entre deux disciplines, c'est commettre un anachronisme, c'est oublier qu'il avait 40 ans déjà quand a paru l'Institution chrestienne."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Pierre VILLEY, Marot et Rabelais, Paris, 1923, p.140.

That he had very deep sympathies with some of the principles of the reformers is beyond doubt; but that he was not entirely 'persona grata' in their circles is evident from their apathy, and even hostility towards him in Geneva, with the exception, of course, of Calvin; but it seems that he had an opposite and almost equal leaning to orthodoxy, of belief if not of manners. Since he was not even tenuously a theologian it would be inappropriate to regret the omission from his work of some salient Catholic doctrines; nor can we argue from such lacunae to what Marot felt about the topics. We do not know, for example, what the Mass meant to him, apart from his attack on the repetition of Masses for the dead. It is not, however, satisfying, to argue that since he did not treat of it he considered it either unimportant or unacceptable.

Could it be that Marot was not sure himself what his religious position was, or what it should be? Almost all the evidence we have on the subject comes from the pen of a self-righteous Marot deprecating charges of heresy. This is not to suggest that he was a time-server or a hypocrite, but since he was patently on the defensive we should not see any profound theology even in these religious pieces. On at least three occasions he disclaimed the title of 'Lutheran' which had been given to him. The apologetic tone of these writings was the result of the spread of Lutheranism in France, especially between 1520 and 1525, and its condemnation by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Mayer shows that Marot's friends as well as his opponents were aware of his reputation for Lutheranism, which

led to his two periods of exile and the condemnation of some of his books.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult, however, to attach a precise meaning to the word 'Lutheran' at this early date; it often meant nothing more than 'with tendencies towards evangelism', though there is usually the suggestion of heresy attached. The first of Marot's replies is addressed to M. Bouchart, Docteur en Théologie, by 'un tien amy'.<sup>2</sup> Marot, imprisoned for having 'mangé du lard en carême', had been accused of heresy, as he thought, unjustly; he presumed that his friend had been misinformed on his account and asked for his support in order to regain his freedom. The imprisonment was in March, 1526; there is an important variant in the texts of the poem printed in 1534 and 1538, representing a change from a dangerous verse to a less objectionable one. The earlier edition had

".... Point ne suis Lutheriste

Ne Zuinglien, encores moins Papiste:

Je suis de Dieu par son filz Jesuchrist."

In 1538 this had been changed to

"Ne Zuinglien, et moins Anabaptiste:"

Mayer disagrees with Villey's tendency to suppress the variant reading as unauthentic; he points again to the very great difficulty in deciding about Marot's religion, but feels that the riskier reading

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1. C. A. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, Geneva 1960, pp.71 - 96.

2. MAROT, Les Epîtres; édition critique, par C.A. MAYER, London 1958, pp.124 - 7; c.f. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, p.14, where it is shown that Bouchart represented the civil and not the religious authorities.

would have been quite feasible in 1534, at a time when Marguerite de Navarre and her husband, and even Francis himself openly supported the evangelicals. Mayer recalls Marot's contemporary sallies against the Sorbonne, (see, for example, his letter to Marguerite of this time).

"Il est inconcevable qu'à ce moment-là Marot eût pu songer à publier un poème dans lequel il fait une soumission complète à la Sorbonne et où il proclame hautement son orthodoxie. S'il s'est décidé à faire imprimer son épître au docteur Bouchart, il ne pouvait évidemment le faire qu'à condition d'en changer le texte d'une façon qui fît comprendre ses vrais sentiments."<sup>1</sup>

Marot's apparent carefreeness at this time is reflected in his other writings against the Sorbonne. The straightforwardness of the earlier text is, however, disconcerting, because it renders almost pointless the plea of orthodoxy; Marot would in effect be saying no more than that he was a devout Christian. But all the terms are not equal; it was all very well in 1534 for Marot to deny that he belonged to one of the new religious bodies, but to deny the Pope in this context was not calculated to appease Marot's persecutors. While the phrase is not flippant it lacks genuineness (though not authenticity); it comes from the impetuous, and perhaps immature, Marot, snatching up the slogans of the reformers yet falling short of their knowledge and breadth of vision. Four years later, when open

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1. MAROT, Les Epîtres, ed. MAYER, pp.69 - 70.

support of the reformers was less in evidence, we should not see Marot's emended text as a mere sign of the times, but also as a tacit recognition of the incongruity of the earlier version. In the text of 1538 the temptation is to understand the words as mere tokens, almost political catchwords. Was Marot well enough informed, after all, to distinguish between the doctrine of Zwingli and Luther, or is he not rather referring to the different parties who followed these two? Marot could not on this occasion have thought that he had shown to anyone's satisfaction, except perhaps his own, that he did not hold with Luther's doctrine. The proof for his statement that he is not a Lutheran is the further statement that 'Je suis de Dieu par son filz Jesuchrist.'<sup>1</sup> Since Luther's own apologia could have read almost identically Marot's is not very telling. The only conclusion we can draw from the rest of this poem is that Marot wishes, to establish his orthodoxy, not in respect of any Church or any external teaching authority, but according to the Divine Law.

"Je suis celluy qui ay faict maint escript,  
 Dont ung seul vers on n'en scauroit extraire  
 Qui à la LoY divine soit contraire.  
 Je suis celluy qui prens plaisir et peine  
 A louer Christ, & sa Mere tant pleine  
 De grace infuse: et pour bien l'esprouver,  
 On le pourra par mes escriptz trouver.

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1. Ib. p.125, Epitre IX, line 9.

Brief, celluy suis qui croit, honnore et prise

La sainte, vraye & catholique Eglise;"<sup>1</sup>

The reference to the Mother of Christ is not a convincing proof that Marot acknowledged allegiance to the Church of Rome, though the suggestion is there; why otherwise should 'sa Mere tant pleine De grace infuse' be introduced in such a context, and coupled to the praise Marot accorded to Christ? Marot's final summing up of his own position is purposely tantalising. The implication remains, 'Make of that what you will.' Leblanc notes the omission of 'apostolic' and 'Roman' from the text, "deux adjectifs ordinairement inséparables du mot Eglise dans les professions de foi de ce genre."<sup>2</sup> While it is true that 'apostolic' was normally present from the earliest creeds onwards, the word 'Roman' needs qualifying. There is abundant evidence to show that Catholic writers equated the holy, apostolic Church with their own, by making it indirectly clear in the context,<sup>3</sup> but they found little need to specify the Roman Church in their professions of faith until the differentiation of sects, though the phrase does appear earlier in Papal documents. So it is that the Tridentine Profession of Faith contains the statement "Sanctam catholicam et apostolicam Romanam Ecclesiam omnium ecclesiarum matrem et magistram agnosco";<sup>4</sup> but this was composed nearly forty years

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1. Ib. lines 10 - 18.

2. LEBLANC, La Poésie Religieuse de Clément Marot, Paris 1955, p.69.

3. DENZINGER, Enchiridion Symbolorum, Index systematicus, III, etc.

4. Ib. 999, editio 31, p.348.

after Marot's letter to Bouchart. The omission of 'en' before 'Eglise' may be either necessitated by the metre of the poem, helped by the fact that its two companion verbs normally take a direct object, or it could be construed as a calvinistic touch avant la lettre. We may compare with this early manifesto the fuller and more theological one published at Paris in 1533, along with some other prayers. Marot's translation of the Apostles' Creed contains the article,

"Au Saint Esprit ma ferme foy est mise;  
 Je croy la sainte et catholique Eglise  
 Estre des saintz et des fideles une  
 Vraye union, entre eulx en tout commune;"<sup>1</sup>

Leblanc rightly compares this with Institution, IV, 4, where Calvin contrasts believing the Church and believing in God, and gives his reasons for making the distinction. "Cette variante (Leblanc has first given an earlier, less precise version of the text) montre que l'Eglise catholique est, pour Marot, la société des saints et des fidèles, et n'est que cela. C'est le seul article de la foi chrétienne qu'il ait jugé bon de préciser, et il l'a fait en restant dans la ligne de la tradition qu'avait exposée Erasme... et qui tend à voir dans Sanctorum communionem, une apposition à Sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam." He adds that the insertion of 'vrai' here in 1533 attracts attention, as it must have done in 1526. "Or le mot vrai qui n'a en

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1. MAROT, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. B. SAINT-MARC, Paris (Garnier), n.d. Vol. II, p.275; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 2. - 3.

soi rien d'hérétique fait aussitôt dresser l'oreille, parce qu'il est précisément celui qu'aux époques de conflits religieux les différents partis revendiquent pour caractériser leur foi, accusant par là même implicitement d'erreur ceux qui adhèrent à des articles de foi différemment formulés."<sup>1</sup> But it is harmless enough in itself, perhaps too colourless; is it not something of truism to say one believes in the true Church? Marot's self-defence was bound to be meaningless unless he had said what he meant by the true Church.

The second reference Marot made to this charge of Lutheranism comes in his letter to the King of 1535 while Marot was in exile at Ferrara.<sup>2</sup>

"De Lutheriste ilz m'ont donné le nom:"

Qu'à droict ce soit, je leur respondz que non.

Luther pour moy des cieux n'est descendu,

Luther en croix n'a point esté pendu

Pour mes pechés, &, tout bien advisé,

Au nom de luy ne suys point baptisé."<sup>3</sup>

If Marot's defence was intended to be serious, (and presumably there was a practical point in the letter to the King), then these are surely the reasons he wishes to give why he should not be classed as a Lutheran.

1. LEBLANC, op. cit., pp.135, 143 - 5.

2. MAROT, Les Epîtres, ed. MAYER, pp.194 - 207.

3. Ib. pp.200 - 1, ep. IX, lines 87 - 92.



They amount, however, to no more than a denial of Luther's divinity, with which even the least enlightened among the 'papelart' would not seriously have taxed the followers of Luther. It is to be noted that Marot again counters the charge of heresy by a straightforward and emphatic denial; the reasons he gives have something of the tangential about them and are even somewhat evasive. As in 1525 Marot contrasts the following of Luther with the following of Christ. Since he says nothing specific of the way in which Christ should be followed the reader is left to surmise what exactly Marot believed. When it was his very orthodoxy which was under scrutiny it was poor pleading indeed to revert to an assertion of it. At least we know he was a Christian; but it would seem that he was anxious to dissociate himself from anything that smacked of a diminution of his freedom, and assumes superiority over institutions and regimentation of any kind. If he had wished to show acceptance of the Roman position this would have been a suitable occasion on which to do so without any inconvenience. That he does not do so shows that he did not wish to. The irrelevancy of Marot's defence is ably echoed in the Epistre du general Chambor which appeared in reply to it. It repeats the statement that Luther is not Marot's Saviour and adds,

"Tu as dict vray, car c'est ton traditeur,

Mais tu apers te estre contradicteur,

Car tu l'ensuys & sa secte defendz

Contre divins & souverains deffendz."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ib. p.201.

The third occasion is a few years later when in L'Enfer Marot addresses himself to his 'Juge plutonique' in these words:

"Et pour monstrer qu'à grand tort on me triste:  
 Clement n'est point le nom de Lutheriste;  
 Ains est le nom (à bien l'interpreter)  
 Du plus contraire ennemy de Luther.  
 C'est le saint nom du Pape, qui accolle  
 Les chiens d'Enfer (s'il luy plaist) d'une estolle;  
 Le crains tu point? C'est celuy qui afferme  
 Qu'il ouvre Enfer quand il veut, et le ferme;  
 Celluy qui peult en feu chauld martyrer  
 Cent mille espritz, ou les en retirer."<sup>1</sup>

This is another rather deliberate avoidance of the issue. Not only is there clear satire in the superficiality and futility of the argument, (Clement n'est point...), but the whole aim of the passage is to introduce the irrelevant and lengthy treatment of the supposed powers of the Pope. The points of Calvin's critique are present (s'il luy plaist, celuy qui afferme, quand il veut),<sup>2</sup> and the apparent lack of any basis for the doctrine, except the Pope's alleged arrogation of the right to himself, and its dependence on Papal whim, are clearly alluded to.

While Marot's religious pieces are not ex professo theological,

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1. MAROT, O. Sat., L'Enfer, ed. MAYER, pp.349 - 358.
  2. c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 7. 19.

we can justifiably accept as Marot's the theology they do in fact express. Since Calvin was an initiator of the systematic study of ecclesiology, we would naturally not expect Marot to have much to say on the subject. This is not simply due to the fact that Calvin was a theologian and Marot was not. It stems partly from Marot's own character and the attitudes he adopted; his theology is quite precise, (though jejune and threadbare), except on those topics which divided the exponents of the different sects. To this we could ascribe his vagueness on the subject of the Church. His broadminded tolerance stretched over everything but injustice and the inherent petty stupidities of institutions.

If we accept the view that Marot's emphatic denunciations of the accusation of Lutheranism were little more than neck-verses, then we can readily understand his inability and unwillingness to come to grips with the problem of the Church. Once again this is not to convict Marot of complete hypocrisy; his greatest limitation is the immaturity of his religious approach, and besides, we have not accounted for the remaining bulk of his religious writing. We can leave aside for the moment his satires on the Church because they were not accompanied, as Calvin's very similar pictures were, with positive suggestions for betterment. One-sided anticlerical satire, unless subtle and balanced enough to include by implication constructive remedies, is hardly religious writing and certainly not theology. It is not sufficient to write off Marot's translations of the Psalms

as a currently fashionable exercise, or as a daring thrust against convention. Marot's preference of the genre to that of classical mythology indicates his fundamentally Christian outlook. "Marot a fait ainsi entrer la Bible non seulement dans sa vie de croyant, mais dans son art de poète, et il suffit à son humanisme que le Christ soit venu sur la terre pour y rendre saint tout ce qui est beau. Aussi ne met-il pas de cloison étanche entre la culture profane et la science sacrée. S'il donne naturellement à la Bible le pas sur les oeuvres des poètes classiques, il sait du moins que ces deux richesses s'éclairent et se fortifient l'une par l'autre, et que les lettres profanes peuvent disposer l'homme à accepter la révélation et à croire au Christ."<sup>1</sup> While it is true that Marot was able to draw upon and translate from both pagan and Christian literature, we must beware of reading too much into Marot and seeing his profane writing as a propaedeutic to religion. His Psalms owe whatever merit they possess to his sympathy with their content; they appealed to him as prayers as well as lyrics and it was this congeniality of author and subject which Calvin played upon in his collaborative encouragement of Marot's work. Marot's prayers, too, though occasional pieces, reflect an inherently religious bent. But it should be stressed that the religion all these writings express is highly individualistic and personal to Marot. The Church for him is

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1. LEBLANC, op. cit., p.362.

a peripheral idea, and might well have been no more than a convenient fiction. Marot is not utterly self-centered in this respect, witness his love of justice<sup>1</sup> and his desire for peace, but the idea of the Church as an institution or as a teaching community is not part of his thought. He has no desire to be persuasive; apart altogether from his hesitancy and lack of conviction, he would not have seen the need for teaching others. He does accept that there should be some people whose duty it is to exhort others to do good, but this is not the task of the individual Christian.

"Et si tu quiers raison  
 Pourquoi Proces sont si fort en saison,  
 Sçaiche que c'est faulte de charité  
 Entre Chrestiens. Et à la verité,  
 Comment l'auront dedans leur cueur fichée,  
 Quand par tout est si froidement preschée?"<sup>2</sup>

Mayer sees humanitarianism as the guiding principle of Marot's evangelism, and as the best explanation of his wavering. "C'est par l'indifférence pour les questions proprement religieuses qu'il convient d'expliquer, dans une large mesure, ses tergiversations, son abjuration en 1536, son depart de Genève et sa tentative de retour en France, aussi que l'accident de la salutation angélique à Genève". He looks on Marot as a typical example of the early French renaissance, more interested in man and his potentialities than in questions of dogma.

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1. c.f. His long satire of injustice in L'Enfer, MAYER, O. Sat., pp.56 et sqq. also, Aux Dames de Paris, line 80 et sqq. O. Sat. ed. MAYER, p.8
  2. MAROT, L'Enfer 187 - 192; O. Sat. ed. MAYER, p.56.

"Dès que la Réforme devint dogmatique à son tour, Marot n'y trouva plus son compte, pas plus du reste que Rabelais et des Périers. Après l'engouement initial, Rabelais se tourna contre le protestantisme, en condamnant le 'demoniacle Calvin', fils d'Antiphysis."<sup>1</sup> The non-religious reformers could not, however, accuse Calvin and his fellow theologians of a change of ideals. Rabelais' disillusionment is not a result of Calvin's dogmatic writing, though it may have been a concomitant of it, and progressed proportionately. Rather is it that the humanitarians have realised that their ideals were not those of Calvin, who must have known this all along while he gently tolerated the undisciplined Marot. It was the prospect of all that full commitment to the cause entailed that turned away Marot and Rabelais, not a studied rejection of dogma as a foundation. Mayer makes a more valuable point when he says, "Pour comprendre les hommes de la Renaissance, il faut adopter le point de vue qui était le leur, le seul, selon eux, qui eût une valeur réelle, la morale. Ni la scolastique, ni la théologie, ni même le platonisme ressuscité ne sauraient nous révéler la pensée d'un Rabelais ni d'un Bonaventure des Périers.... Il en est de même de la poésie de Marot."<sup>2</sup> Yet it must not be forgotten that Calvin was antiphilosophical and especially antischolastic,<sup>3</sup> though he did not find it easy to cast off all the thought-forms of the Schoolmen. The difference is that Calvin understood the metaphysical approach before rejecting it. His dogmatism is the fruit of his meditation on the subject of morality, and his

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1. Ib. p.137.

2. Ib. p.134; c.f. also, LEBLANC, op. cit., p.374.

3. CALVIN, Inst. I. 13. 21, etc.

generalisations are of the sort Marot might have made had he been less occupied with secular pursuits. Marot's adoption of the moral approach and his disdain of moralising are indeed compatible with one another, but serve to show how inferior his intellectual training was to Calvin's and how lacking in force and clarity was his vision.

(b) Marot's satire of the Church and some of its institutions

Satire of the Church and the clergy was far from being an innovation in the early days of the reform movement. Even the way of presenting the satire and the images employed all owed much to a tradition in European literature. What was new was the writers' intention, which, in the context of reform, resulted in the undermining of the authority of the Church; also new was 'l'image d'une Eglise qui menace ceux qui la critiquent.'<sup>1</sup> This hostility on the part of the Church shows that it appreciated the seriousness of the criticisms; the attacks on the Church were coming more and more from without.

Calvin makes use of powerful imagery when talking of clerical abuses, but usually contents himself with factual description. Marot's imaginative outbursts are more destructive and less controlled. The basic difference is to be put down to the respective purposes of the two authors. Marot's satire is less persuasive, because hardly ever constructive, though it is not often bitter. Calvin's is not meant as

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1. KINCH, La Poésie satirique de Clément Marot, Paris, 1940, p.14; c.f. LEBLANC, *op. cit.*, pp.24 - 5; c.f. also MAROT, Aux Dames de Paris, O. Sat., ed. MAYER, p.80.

satire but as a statement of what is wrong with the Church, and how Calvin thinks it should be reformed to bring it in line with primitive Church usage. One feels that Marot could have exercised his satirical ability equally well on civic functionaries and the weakness and hypocrisy of other groups of men, the medical profession for example, had he so wished. The Church was more obvious as an object of attack and more fashionable.

One of the commonest objects of satire at this time was the life led by the monks; we can see the beginnings of a form of antimonasticism which was quite different in intention from that of the medieval satirists in Jean Marot, Jean le Maire des Belges and Marguerite de Navarre. Rabelais attacked the monks on many occasions and yet treated the seculars well as a rule.<sup>1</sup>

Marot's tirades on the subject are persistent and protracted.

"Marot s'est moqué des moines à mainte reprise. En cela il n'a fait parfois que suivre une tradition bien établie..."<sup>2</sup>

His criticism was nonetheless serious and fundamental. Because of his insistence we must conclude that his opposition to the monks is as earnest as Calvin's. The superficial nature of Marot's remarks suggests that he would have done better to leave the subject alone; he realised his own incompetence to give the topic the treatment it deserved, and yet he indulged in it.

1. SCREECH, L'Évangélisme de Rabelais, Geneva, 1959, p.95.
2. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, pp.108 - 109.



"Il appartenait en effet à d'autres de traiter de tels problèmes. Marot, qui n'était que poète, et point théologien, pouvait seulement rappeler au public quelques-uns des principaux thèmes débattus, sans entrer dans le détail des discussions."<sup>1</sup>

Although his subject-matter is trivial, his coloured treatment of it is artful; but it is repetitive within the tradition:

"Que diray plus? Bien loger sans danger,  
 Dormir sans peur, sans coust boyre et manger,  
 Ne faire rien, aucun mestier n'apprendre,  
 Rien ne donner, et le bien d'autruy prendre,  
 Gras et puissant, bien nourry, bien vestu,  
 C'est (selon eux) pauvreté et vertu.  
 Aussi (pour vray) il ne sort de leur Bouche  
 Que motz succez: quand au Cueur je n'y touche,  
 Mais c'est ung Peuple à celluy ressemblant  
 Que Jan de Mèhun appelle Faulxsemblant,  
 Forgeant Abus dessoubz Religion."<sup>2</sup>

This is directed in the first place against current abuses, but the ideal of monasticism is also assailed; the hypocrisy is seen to inhere in the creation of a further religious bond within true religion. This poem appeared before the end of 1533, ten years before Calvin's detailed exposition of his views on the matter.

1. LEBLANC, op. cit., p.124.

2. MAROT, Le Second Chant d'Amour Fugitif, O. Sat., ed. MAYER, pp.53 - 63; c.f. Le premier coq-a-l'âne, lines, 16 - 17; (1531); c.f. CALVIN, Inat. IV. 5. 7.- 8; IV. 13. 15.

"Combien qu'il s'en faille beaucoup que ce fust l'intention des Pères, d'establiir une telle perfection qu'ont depuis forgée les Moynes en leur cahuet, pour constituer une double Chrestienté... La chose est toute patente, que ceux qui entrent en un cloistre pour se faire Moynes se séparent et aliènent de l'Eglise. Qu'ainsi soit, ils font un gouvernement à part, et une administration des Sacramens séparée des autres. Si cela n'est dissiper la communion de l'Eglise, ie ne say quelle plus grande dissipation il y peut avoir."<sup>1</sup>

Calvin does, at least, admit that in the primitive Church there was some point in the monastic life, and that its devotees were seriously pursuing holiness; Marot does not appear to have had the slightest idea of what the monks were aiming at; their life is seen as misguided in practice and the matter is left there.

Much of what Marot has to say against the monks is contained in his translations from Erasmus; it does not lose thereby or become any the less 'marotique'. In his 'Aux lecteurs' to the Dialogue Abbatis et Eruditae Marot claims rather more than his due:

"Qui le sçavoir d'Erasme voudra veoir,  
Et de Marot la rythme ensemble avoir,  
Lise cestuy colloque tant bien faict,  
Car c'est d'Erasme et de Marot le faict."<sup>2</sup>

Erasmus's own version is not without elegance, and the content of Marot's is more impressive than the form. Marot's creative attempts at this vein of writing are equally clever from the point of view of diction,

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1. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 13. 14.

2. MAROT, Colloque d'Erasme, Oeuvres II, p.231.

but are often totally devoid of subtlety. The epigram 'D'un gros prieur' is an artistic appreciation of the vice of ecclesiastical worldliness, but is heavy-handed not penetrating. The last two lines jar because they are too much out of keeping:

"Mon Dieu, dit-il, donne moy patience;  
Qu'on a de maulx pour servir sainte Eglise!"<sup>1</sup>

Erasmus has mellowness as well as far-sightedness; his dialogues mirror personalities as well as ideas. He realises that all are not included under his virulent satire:

"Mais, l'abus un peu descouvrant,  
Des gens sçavants l'honneur ne touche:  
Ainsi l'entends en le lisant.  
Qui sera morveux, si se mouche."<sup>2</sup>

Marot does not rise to this maturer approach. He who brought out the best in individuals when they felt with him was unable to see them as persons when they were opposed to him.

Marot's anti-institutionalism is seen at its best in his attacks on the Sorbonne, and on the clergy in general; the Sorbonne because of its stupidity and its legalism, the priests because of hypocrisy and worldliness.<sup>3</sup> One of his diatribes against the Sorbonne is to be found

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1. MAROT, D'un gros prieur, Oeuvres II, p.60.
  2. ERASMUS, Au Lecteur, in Marot, Oeuvres II, p.231.
  3. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, pp.112 - 117.

in his letter 'Au Roy, du temps de son exil a Ferrare.'

" sans cause qui soyt bonne,  
 Me veult de mal l'ignorante Sorbonne:  
 Bien ignorante elle est d'estre ennemye  
 De la trilingue & noble Academie  
 Qu'as erigée...."<sup>1</sup>

He writes against all clerical hypocrites who were ex hypothesi  
 ignorant in the 'Sermon du Bon Pasteur et du Mauvais'.

"Ilz nourrissoient leurs grans troupeaux de songes,  
De ergos, d'utrum, de quare, de mensonges,  
 Et de cela ilz faisoient du pain bis,  
 Que bien amoyent leurs seduities brebis;...  
 L'eau ont laissée de la fontaine vive,  
 Pour user d'eau de fontaine chetive;  
 Ilz ont laisse la vraye olive et franche  
 Pour s'appuyer sus une morte branche;  
 Ilz ont receu vaine philosophie,  
 Qui tellement les hommes magnifie,  
 Que tout l'honneur de Dieu est obscurcy,  
 Et le haut mur d'ergotis endurcy...."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin would willingly have subscribed to this denunciation of  
 scholasticism and the sclerosis of free thought which detracted from

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1. MAROT, Les Epîtres (XXXVI lines 39 - 43) ed. MAYER, p.197; c.f. CALVIN  
 Inst. III. 18. 9, 'ces accariastres (Lat. stulti) Sorboniques'.
  2. MAROT, Oeuvres I, pp. 75 - 6; for 'vaine philosophie', c.f. CALVIN,  
Inst. IV. 10. 8; 13 - 16.

the honour due to God;<sup>1</sup> and at that time, scholasticism, at its most decadent, was considered almost synonymous with the philosophical and theological position of the Church of Rome. It was to such an extent intricately and almost inseparably linked with it that to sheer away from it was tantamount to repudiating Roman theology and the embryonic Roman doctrine of the Church.

Marot is careful to point out that he sees value in customs and aspects of institutions which have not yet become corrupted into what he would think of as unreasonable and magical practices. When he writes of conventional funereal customs he castigates hypocrisy among the mourners but blames the clergy for the rank growth of ceremonies.

"Et quant au port du drap plus noir que meure

Hypocrisie en a taillé l'habit,

Dessous lequel tel pour sa mere pleure

Qui bien voudroit de son pere l'obit.

Messes sans nombre et force anniversaires,

C'est belle chose, et la façon j'en prise;

Si sont les chants, cloches et luminaires;

Mais le mal est en l'avare prebstrise."<sup>2</sup>

We might argue, then, that Marot was an exponent of an ideal Church, which would make use of human rites and customs because it had to cater for man and his insufficiency, but which held itself aloof from such forms as being adiaphora. This is possible but it is doubtful whether

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1. CALVIN, Inst. I. Chapters 3, 4.

2. MAROT, Deploration de Messire Florimond Robertet, Oeuvres I, p.481.

Marot would have understood it. He is more concerned that we should avoid all solemnities because of their emptiness in the eyes of God:

"Salut ne gist en tumbaen ny en terre."<sup>1</sup>

There are two striking examples of Marot's antipapal writing. The first of these is contained in a letter from Venice to the Duchess of Ferrara, unpublished until Guiffrey's edition of Marot.

"O Seigneur Dieu, faictz que le demourant  
 Ne voyse pas les pierres adorant.  
 C'est ung abbus d'ydollastres sorty,  
 Entre chrestiens plusieurs foys amorty,  
 Et remys sus tousjours pour l'avarice  
 De la paillarde et grande meretrice,  
 Avec qui ont faict fornicacion  
 Les roys de terre, et dont la potion  
 Du vin public de son calice immonde  
 A si longtemps enyvéré tout le monde."<sup>2</sup>

Mayer comments on this passage that it is not merely an attack on papal abuses or the temporal power of the popes, but is directed against the very existence of the papacy; the Apocalyptic backing is proof of the weight Marot wished to give to his poem.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ib. p.482.

2. MAROT, Les Epitres, ed. MAYER, XLIII, lines 57 - 66, p.228.

3. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, pp.113 - 114.

An equally bitter but less stylised description of the Roman Church's power is to be found in the Deploration de Messire Florimond Robertet.

"..... une fee  
 Fresche, en bon point, et noblement coiffée,  
 Sur teste raze ayant triple couronne,  
 Que mainte perle et rubys environne.  
 Sa robe estoit d'un blanc et fin samys,  
 Où elle avait en poutraicture mys,  
 Par traict de temps, un million de choses,  
 Comme chasteaulx, palays et villes closes,  
 Villages, tours et temples et conventz,  
 Terres et mers, et voiles à tous ventz,  
 Artillerie, armes, hommes armez,  
 Chiens et oyseaulx, plaines et boys ramez,  
 Le tout brodé de fine soye exquise,  
 Par mains d'autruy torse, taincte et acquise;  
 Et pour devise, au bord de la besongne  
 Estoit escript: Le feu a qui en grongne."<sup>1</sup>

This is a finely drawn picture of the Roman Church as it appeared to Marot; every word is well chosen to add some detail. Everything has been thought of, from the love of riches, power and position, to militarism, idle exploitation of others and the use of torture.

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1. MAROT, Deploration, Oeuvres I, p.472; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 7.

In contrast to this colourful portrait of "la grand'Dame Rommaine" Marot appends a drab vignette about the different orders of monks. In contrast to Marot, Calvin's closely reasoned paragraphs dealing with the same abuses are balanced by similar and often lengthier tracts on what is the ideal which is being abused and how it can be realised. We look in vain through Marot's works for a sympathetic account of a good minister of religion, or of the Church as the society of the elect, though we shall see in the following section that Marot was not unacquainted with these ideas. It will become clear that he did not wish to do away with established religion and morality, and that he does hold before the reader several ideals and virtues to be cultivated. But even when we allow that the poet's mode of argument is vastly different from that of the prose theologian, we are still left with the fact that Marot's ideals seem to bear no relation to the vices which he castigates.

(c) Marot's social and religious ideals

In his letter to the Duchess of Ferrara of April 1535 Marot claims for himself the elevated motive of writing always, in the first place, for God's honour alone. Of his pen he says,

"Car l'Eternel me l'a (certes) donnée

Pour en louer premierement son nom",

but this is hastily followed by,

"Puis pour servir les princes de renom



Et exalter les princesses d'honneur",<sup>1</sup>

as though propriety demanded that precedence should be given to God and conventional flattery dictated the next line. Most of Marot's work has little to say in God's honour, and could only tenuously be thought of as written from this motive. This does not prevent Marot, in his more pious moments, from having desired to write always from the motive of the honour of God, and of living according to God's law. Read, for example, his Oraison devant le Crucifix, composed five years earlier:

"Fais qu'en mes ans ta haultesse me donne  
 Pour te servir saine pensée et bonne;  
 Ne faire rien qu'à ton honneur et gloire,  
 Tes mandements ouyr, garder et croire,  
 Avec souspirs, regretz et repentence  
 De t'avoir faict par tant de foyz offense."<sup>2</sup>

A recurrent idea in Marot is the exhortation to follow Christ and so to arrive at union with him. A by-product of such union is peace of soul:

"Par tel chemin Christ à luy nous attire,  
 Et en ce point aux siens se represente;  
 Par ce moyen du monde nous retire,  
 Et vraiment sa gloire nous presente

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1. MAROT, Les Epitres, ed. MAYER, XXXIV, lines 48 - 51; c.f. CALVIN, Au lecteur, and Au Roy, to Inst.
  2. MAROT, Oeuvres II. p.274.

Ainsi de tout nostre ame se contente,  
 Regnant desja avec Jesus es cieulx."<sup>1</sup>

We shall see later how, on a cosmic scale, this becomes for him another key idea.

The kingdom of Christ is already present, distinct from worldly kingdoms, yet established in the midst of them. The condition of membership of this kingdom is baptism, in the name of Jesus, which is also a sure sign of salvation.

"Baptizé suys au nom qui tant bien sonne  
 Qu'au son de luy le Pere eternal donne  
 Ce que l'on quiert: le seul nom soubz les cieulx  
 En & par qui ce monde vicieux  
 Peult estre sauf; ...  
 Le nom par qui du seigneur Dieu la main  
 M'a preservé de ces grandz loups rabis  
 Qui m'espioient dessoubz peaulx de brebis."<sup>2</sup>

By trusting in Christ, says Marot, one is sheltered from the insidiousness of one's enemies, and from the temptation to worldliness and heresy.

"Par ceste foy nul n'aura fantasie  
 Suyvre le monde, ou secte ou heresie,  
 Qui est à Dieu abomination,  
 Ains vous l'aurez en detestation;  
 Car suivre faut la reigle et loy de Christ,

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1. MAROT, Le Riche en Povreté, Ib. I. p.83; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 17. 2.
  2. MAROT, Les Epîtres, ed. MAYER, XXXVI, 92 - 102.

Comme il l'a baillée par escrit,  
 Sans quelque part nullement decliner,  
 Qui ne voudroit se perdre ou ruyner."<sup>1</sup>

Marot's belief in Christ goes hand in hand with a deep awareness of the importance of the Fatherhood of God; an expression of this is to be found in the poem placed in front of the translation of the New Testament, published in Geneva in 1543 by J. Girard, and edited by Calvin himself. It is entitled, 'Aux amateurs de la sainte Escripiture'.

"Bien peu d'enfans on treuve qui ne gardent  
 Le testament que leur pere a laissé,  
 Et qui dedans, de bien pres, ne regardent,  
 Pour veoir comment il l'a faict et dressé.  
 O vous, enfans, a qui est adressé  
 Ce Testament de Dieu, nostre bon pere,  
 Affin qu'à l'oeil son vouloir vous appere,  
 Voulez vous point le lire volentiers?  
 C'est pour le moins, et plus de vous i'espere.  
 Comme de vrays celestes heritiers."<sup>2</sup>

The children of God show their filial love by putting into practice their Father's wishes, not just according to the letter but striving to please out of their own good-will. Marot is aware that the right intention, though necessary, is not sufficient, and asks the Father for the grace of obedience. The reader is struck by the genuineness and

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1. MAROT, Sermon du Bon Pasteur et du Mauvais, Ceuvres I. p.72.
  2. quoted in LEBLANC, op. cit., p.344.

spontaneity of his writings on this subject:

"Qui ayme Dieu, son regne et son empire  
Rien desirer ne doibt qu'à son honneur." <sup>1</sup>

Another good example of the idea of the Fatherhood of God as the foundation for the kingdom, and the resulting importance for the life of man in this world is found in the Deploration de Florimond Robertet.

"Tien toy donc fort du seul Dieu triumpnant,  
Croyant qu'il est ton vray et propre pere;  
Si ton pere est, tu es donc son enfant,  
Et heritier de son regne prospere.  
S'il t'a tiré d'eternel impropere  
Durant le temps que ne le congnoissoys,  
Que fera il s'en luy ton cueur espere?" <sup>2</sup>

Marot looks forward to a time when there will be, even on this earth, a closer approximation to the true idea of the kingdom of Christ; the Golden Age when all activity will have God as its end, and honour and peace and justice embrace all creation.<sup>3</sup>

"Quand viendra le siecle doré  
Qu'on verra Dieu seul adoré,  
Loué, chanté, comme il l'ordonne  
Sans qu'ailleurs sa gloire l'on donne?  
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1. MAROT, Chant Royal Chrestien, Oeuvres I p.333.

2. MAROT, Déploration ... Oeuvres, I, p.479; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. II. 6. 1 - 2

3. LEBLANC, op. cit., p.311 - 312; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 20. 2.

O bien heureux qui veoir pourra  
 Fleurir le temps que l'on orra  
 Le labourer à sa charrue,  
 Le charretier parmy la rue,  
 Et l'artisan en sa boutique,  
 Avec un pseaume ou cantique  
 En son labour se soulager! "<sup>1</sup>

The Golden Age is that in which the kingdom of Christ reaches its fullness, and when all men are striving, though still, for Marot, very much as individuals, to do the will of Christ.

The mainspring of Marot's religious thought is the power and the necessity of faith. Justification is by faith alone without any merit on the part of the believer, and salvation is from God alone. It is this aspect of Marot's writing, above all, which earned him the label of protestant and even of calvinist. "Car, quoiqu'il fasse, l'homme est naturellement pécheur; plus il vit, plus il pêche, dit Marot lui-même, et plus est grande sa dette envers Dieu. Ce n'est pas en s'embarrassant d'une foule de défenses et de préceptes que l'homme méritera la vie éternelle. Il ne peut absolument pas mériter. Il peut seulement prier Dieu de lui donner, par grâce, la vive foi, et le reste lui sera aussi donné par surcroît."<sup>2</sup> Again we notice that all this concerns the relationship of the person towards God; the Church does not enter in; it will be observed, too, that Marot fights shy of disciplinary

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1. MAROT, Letter - preface to the 50 Psalms, Aux Dames de France, Oeuvres II, p.283 - 4.
  2. LEBLANC, op. cit., p.112.

restrictions of any kind, no matter how great the authority of the body which imposes them.<sup>1</sup> Of the Atonement Marot writes in the Petits Devis Chrestiens,

"Et qui croira en ceste verité  
 Par foy passant sens et entendement,  
 Aymant d'un cueur remply de purité,  
 En grand'clarté cognoistra vivement  
 Que par Dieu seul il a son saulvement,  
 Sans que jamais en rien l'ait merité."<sup>2</sup>

In this passage he reminds us again, by showing the difference between faith and ordinary human knowledge, of his distrust (shared by Calvin) of the use of philosophical systems to classify this knowledge. Contrasted with the obscurity and subtlety of philosophy is the transparency of faith, linked with love. That this faith is a grace which each Christian must ask from God for himself is made clear by the Deploration:

"Prie à Dieu seul que par grace te donne  
 La vive foy, dont saint Paul tant escript;"

Marot goes on to echo the calvinistic thought of the abiding presence of sin in the life of the world:

"Ta vie après du tout luy abandonne,  
 Qui en peché journallement aigris."<sup>3</sup>

He emphasises elsewhere that it was sinners that Christ came to save.

1. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, p.124.
2. MAROT, Oeuvres II. p.278; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 11. 1 - 2; III. 16. 1., III. 11. 18, etc.
3. MAROT, Oeuvres I. p.479; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 2. 1; III. 3. 10.

"L'homme dispos, qui est sain et entier,

Du medecin n'a besoin de mestier."<sup>1</sup>

From what has been said so far we should not expect Marot to have any interest in the marks or signs of the Church; he is seldom even interested in talking of the Church as an entity at all. No matter how many individuals are striving towards a common end, and no matter how closely united in fact, the unity is for Marot an aspect of the relationship of the individuals and not an ontological bond linking them together. Marot did not see much sense in giving us pointers to where the true Church was to be found, nor characteristics whereby we might distinguish this Church. He is, however, interested in the signs by which the individual knows he is saved and from which others can deduce this truth.

"Clair temps de loing est signe que l'orage

Fera de l'air tost separation;

Aussi tel'foy au mourant personnage

Est signe grand de sa salvation."<sup>2</sup>

This thought is repeated in the Petits Devis Chrestiens, in the lines quoted above, where it is said that belief in the Atonement, and a sincere love are a sure token of personal salvation. A further mark of the elect (for such are those who can be assured of salvation - the conception is integral to Marot's thought,

1. MAROT, Sermon du Bon Pasteur et du Mauvais, Oeuvres I p.69.

2. MAROT, Deploration, Oeuvres I, p.480.

"O Seigneur Dieu, permettez moy de croire  
Que reservé m'avez à vostre gloire,"<sup>1)</sup>

is the persecution they will have to undergo in the name of religion.

"Tel est des siens la mercq et le vray signe,  
Duquel ne fut et n'est le monde digne."<sup>2)</sup>

But 'siens' does not denote for Marot 'his Church' collectively, but his followers one by one; in the next few lines Marot makes the application of his point to these persons, addressing them, and not the abstract, overall Church.

"Et recevans tel'persecution  
Esperez en remuneration,  
Qui est au ciel tresgrande et copieuse,  
Parquoy sera vostre ame bien heureuse."<sup>3)</sup>

Marot's prayer 'O Seigneur Dieu' in the last quotation from the letter to the King from Ferrara, comes very near to Calvin's doctrine. He is at once humble and egotistic, and typical of the early French Renaissance; perhaps so much so that it is more of a pious desire of the whole man on a spiritual than a religious level. Of this section of the letter Mayer comments, "Au fond, ce qu'il proclame dans ces vers, c'est avant tout la dignité de l'esprit humain. De même sa protestation émouvante contre les bûchers montre un respect fondamental pour la personne humaine.

1. MAROT, Les Epîtres, ed. MAYER, xxxvi lines 103 - 4, p.201; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 21. 7.
2. MAROT, Sermon du Bon Pasteur et du Mauvais, Oeuvres I p.72; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. Au Roy, ed. Benoît, p.28. c.f. also, Inst. II. 8. 14.
3. MAROT, Sermon du Bon Pasteur et du Mauvais, Oeuvres I. p.72.



C'est cette conscience des valeurs humaines et de la dignité de l'esprit qui fait l'originalité et la très réelle grandeur de ce poème."<sup>1</sup>

But this is only a starting point for religious writing; a scientific study of it would come in the realm of psychology, not theology.

Leblanc, writing of Marot's incompatibility with the rigourists at Geneva, speaks of his "spiritualisme large, capable de toucher non seulement tout chrétien, mais tout homme qui a foi à l'esprit." He finds Marot's exhortation to cultivate poetry a far cry from Calvin's sobriety: "Combien sombre paraît, à l'arrière-plan le rigorisme de la 'sainte cité', et combien plus accueillant à toutes les richesses humaines, à toutes les activités spirituelles, se montre au contraire ce christianisme compréhensif et souriant, qui sait oublier quelquefois qu'il est une religion et un culte, pour ne parler, bonnement, qu'un langage d'hommes."<sup>3</sup>

In spite of Leblanc's admiration for the part-time religion he describes, he does not accurately depict Marot's outlook. Marot does not appear from his work as someone with a broad enough religious mentality to tolerate the excellencies of all men, however irreligious; he is not wilfully 'souriant' and his lapses from purity of religion are not the occasional condonings of a benevolent religious leader, but digressions which he regretted in his moments of devotion.

In Geneva Marot is the champion of the individual, of good (but

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1. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, p.132.
  2. LEBLANC, op. cit., pp.297, 299.
  3. Ib.

balanced) living, and of a cultured fulfilment of the self.<sup>1</sup> But not of religion. He is not so much a dabbler as a professed eclectic. He counsels, for example, in his translation of Erasmus's Dialogue, that Catherine should retreat to the solitude of her own room and there commune with God as she felt inclined; the recognised stimuli to piety should be called but not slavishly adhered to.

"Tenez vous en vostre chambrette,

Et, en devotion secrette,

Avecque Dieu là devisez,

Psalmodiez, priez, lisez,

Louez sa bonté eternelle....."<sup>2</sup>

And in his letter to the King from Ferrara he openly expounds the principle of the self-sufficiency of Scripture which could only have branded him more as a Lutheran when he desired the completely opposite result.

"Car l'Escriture est la touche ou l'on treuve

Le plus hault or..."<sup>3</sup>

Marot has just proclaimed the individual conscience as the sovereign judge.

1. c.f. LEBLANC, op. cit., p.293.

2. MAROT, Colloque de la Vierge mesprisant mariage, Oeuvres, II. p.259; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 20. 28.

3. MAROT, Les Epîtres; ed. MAYER, XXXVI, lines 150 - 1, p.204; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. 7. 5.

"Le grand donneur m'a donné sens: d'eslire  
 En ces livretz tout cela qui accorde  
 Aux saintz escriptz de grace et de concorde..."<sup>1</sup>

It was presumably Marot's intention to give the impression that he was orthodox, however liberally he himself interpreted the word, but he succeeds on this occasion in showing himself as a convinced protestant, even according to the school of Luther. That Marot was taken with Calvin's doctrine of election is seen from his introductory letter to the translation of the Psalms.

"Icy sa voix sur les reprouvez tonne,  
 Et aux esleuz toute assurance donne,  
 Estant aux uns aussi doulx et traictable  
 Qu'aux autres est terrible et redoubtable..."<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Marot's acceptance of the idea that election is for holiness, though differing from Calvin's theory in the lack of stress given to influencing others, is seen in Marot's only real snippet of ecclesiology, the article of the Creed already quoted.

"Je croy la sainte et catholique Eglise  
 Estre des saintz et des fideles une  
 Vraye union..."<sup>3</sup>

This excerpt is only slightly marred, from the point of view of the

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1. MAROT, Les Epitres, ed. MAYER, XXXVI, lines 146 - 8.
  2. MAROT, Oeuvres II, p.281; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 21. 7; III. 23. 1.
  3. MAROT, Oeuvres II, p.281; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 2 - 3.

expression of deep or original Marotian thought, by being a paraphrase of a stylised Profession of Faith. We should notice the presence of the elements of unity, holiness, catholicity, but not apostolicity.

Marot was a populariser even as a poet; there is little elusive in his verses and nothing recondite in his religious writing. This capacity for appealing broadly, inviting rather than persuading, has often been commented on; it can be illustrated from the last work of Marot, Le Balladin, where the prefatory dizain claims that it is written, "Pour consoler tout fidelle chrestien" and avows that

"Glens et docteurs disent qu'il n'y a rien  
Qui sonne mal...."<sup>1</sup>

Such genial, all-embracing but non-committal conformity was calculated to attract. It can be perceived, too, from the translation of the Nunc Dimittis,

"Salut mis au devant  
De tout peuple vivant  
Pour l'ouyr et le croire,  
Ressource des petitz,  
Lumiere des gentilz,  
Et d'Israel la gloire."<sup>2</sup>

Leblanc's comment on this is useful: "Dans la strophe prophétique, le poète insiste, plus que l'évangéliste, sur l'universalité du message du Christ. Christ est, dit-il, le salut de tout peuple vivant, et le devoir de tout homme est de l'ouïr et de le croire. Ce sont là deux

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1. MAROT, Oeuvres, I p.95.

2. Ib. II, p.370.

dés points essentiels de l'évangélisme de Marot."<sup>1</sup> But for Marot hearing does not necessarily come through an established Church, but primarily through Christ speaking to the heart of each man. Since Marot has no vivid conception of the sacramental life of the Church, the theme of universality enunciated in Simeon's canticle must work itself out on a political or social rather than a religious level. He inherited from Jean Marot his passion for universal peace as the correlative of Christianity. ("... qu'elle peust dominer/ Chrestienté et soubz elle regner", and "... pour gouverner/Tous les climatz de terre universelle.")<sup>2</sup> Peace is the principal theme of several major works of Marot. See for example the Cantique de la chrestienté sur la venue de l'Empereur et du Roy au voyage de Nice, written in 1538, or the letter to Madame la Duchesse d'Alençon, touchant l'armée du Roy en Haynaut. This is in keeping with the enlightened writing of Marot's contemporaries; more exceptional is his account of justice.<sup>3</sup> Suffering is, we have seen, a mark of the elect; and far from seeking to avoid suffering, one must welcome it as an essential part of the lot of those who would follow Christ.

"Je nommeray heureuse la personne  
Celle qui est au joug d'adversité,  
Qui souffre ennuy, mal ou perplexité,

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1. LEBLANC, op. cit., p.351.
  2. JEAN MAROT, quoted in LEBLANC, op. cit., p.8; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. II. 7. 10; IV. 20. 2 - 3.
  3. c.f. MAROT, L'Enfer, O. Sat., ed. MAYER, p.56 sq; Aux Dames de Paris, ib. p.80; c.f. KINCH, op. cit., pp.48 et sqq.

Et qui du monde est pour nulle tenue;  
 Car c'est un signe et marque, en verité,  
 Que le Seigneur pour sienne l'a esleue."<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, the elect in their turn must preserve due order among their fellowmen. Marot's treatment of this virtue as the essence of true religion is almost Thomistic in tone; but if St. Thomas and Marot draw similar conclusions, their premisses are vastly different.<sup>2</sup> "C'est à Marot que revient l'honneur d'avoir, le premier, élevé la voix contre la torture; il est sans doute le premier en France, à condamner l'obscurantisme, à protester contre la censure et à réclamer la liberté de la lecture. ... La meilleure expression de sa pensée humanitaire, c'est sans doute sa pitié pour les victimes de l'iniquité judiciaire, religieuse ou sociale."<sup>3</sup>

"Contre le corps d'eglise diligente"

writes Marot in the Rondeau à Notre Dame, on one of the rare occasions on which he thinks of the Church collectively,

"Gens sans raison de tout bien indigente

Et contre vous a mise sa parcelle;"

Persecution of men of God and the oppression of the poor often go together, so Marot prays earnestly

"Monstrez vous Mere, et que ayons paix par celle

1. MAROT, Le Riche en Povreté, Oeuvres I, p.81; CALVIN, Inst. II. 8. 14.
2. c.f. Summa Theologica, II - II ae, q.122; (For MAROT justice is almost a substitute for, or escape from religion; for St. Thomas it was the basis of religion).
3. MAYER, La Religion de Marot, pp.137 - 8.

Qui a le pouvoir: la cause en est urgente  
 En temps obscur."<sup>1</sup>

Justice for Marot is the virtue which ensures that society will not revert to a state of chaos; it calls for not only benevolence on the part of rulers, but a filial obedience from their subjects. Marot is a royalist by conviction as well as by force of circumstances; he does, of course, flatter, but never grossly, and not always conventionally. He sees the King as a person set up by God over society, and with the duty of preserving true Christian order, but with the right to obedience.<sup>2</sup> He applies to Francis the qualities of the King as described in the Psalms, and also compares him to David.

"Tant est cest oeuvre et royal et chrestien,  
 Que de soy mesme il se dit estre tien  
 Qui as par droict de treschrestien le nom,  
 Et qui es Roy, non de moindre renom  
 Que cestuy là qui, meu du saint Esprit,  
 A le dicter et le chanter se prit."<sup>3</sup>

This religious obedience to a secular superior is not something which is the prerogative of the King; it has its counterparts throughout the structure of society, but the basis of all these is their similarity to the divine authority vested in the king.

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1. MAROT, Oeuvres, I p.401; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. Au Roy, ed. Benoît, p.28.
  2. CALVIN pays greater attention to the dangers of monarchy, yet he would readily admit the king's right to obedience, and the advantages to the subjects under a good ruler. Inst. IV. 20. 8.
  3. MAROT, Oeuvres II, p.279.

"En ceste foy l'homme s'humiliera,  
 Et à chacun seigneur obeyra,  
 Car le roy est d'ordonnance divine." <sup>1</sup>

In 1540 Marot addressed these words to the Emperor:

"Et pour garder ce que tu as acquiz  
 Aucune force y tenir n'es requiz,  
 Mais seulement une paix bien fermée,  
 Par alliance en amour confermée,  
 Dont adviendra ferme tranquillité,  
 Et soubz la foi catholique unité." <sup>2</sup>

If peace is sought after by those who have the responsibility of governing society, (and Marot is struck by the stupidity of all war), <sup>3</sup> then true religion will flourish and mankind will be on the brink of the new era which is the Golden Age; perhaps the greatest difference between this age and those which have preceded it, will be the freedom enjoyed by all. Sanctification will mean the full development of the personality on several levels; this will be achieved without the need for religious institutions.

"Mon cueur qui ayme estre franc et delivre  
 Ne pourroit plus parmy telles gens vivre," <sup>4</sup>

wrote Marot in 1538. This individuality sums up his attitude to the

1. MAROT, Sermon du Bon Pasteur et du Mauvais, Ceuvres I, p.73.
2. MAROT, Ceuvres I, p.349.
3. c.f. Aux Dames de Paris, ll. 89 - 91, and Le 3<sup>e</sup> Coq à L'Asne, ll. 188 et sqq;  
 c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 20. 11 - 12, on the reasons for a just war, and the humanity to be exercised in the conduct of it.
4. MAROT, Epîtres, ed. MAYER, XLII, p.223.



subject of the Church; it is readily observable how far distant he is from the Calvin of the Fourth Book of the Institution.

## C H A P T E R T W O

### Du Bartas

Du Bartas was no more of a theologian than Marot, but he was far more interested in religion; Marot's occasional flippancy was quite foreign to him, and he was not given to satire. Du Bartas had much to say about the Church, but, as with Marot, we are not able to tabulate any ecclesiological principles; we are restricted to an account of what the Church meant to him, and of the ideals which he felt the Christian community should aim at if it was to achieve its purpose.

A recurrent theme in his writings is the heartfelt plea for peace in his time, a peace which would bring about religious unity and security, for all men. In his Advertissement au lecteur of the Muse Chrestienne, 1574, he inveighs against the Wars of Religion: "Mais, je m'asseure que tous hommes de bon jugement reconnoistront que de propos délibéré j'ay obmis plusieurs choses, pour n'aigrir par un stile partial et envénimé les esprits des hommes de ce siècle, qui sont assés et par trop aigris à cause des présentes controverses de la religion, lesquelles je désire voir non seulement esteintes, ains mesme ensevelies sous un éternel oubli."<sup>1</sup> This is characteristic of all his work.<sup>2</sup> The first bitter mutual slanderings are over and the two parties, for such they have become, are beginning

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1. DU BARTAS, The Works of Guillaume de Salluste Sieur du Bartas, edited by HOLMES, LYONS and LINKER. Chapel Hill, N.Carolina, 1935-40. Vol I. p.212.

2. *Ib.* p.11.

to learn to coexist peaceably; in Marot's time it was more accurate to talk of Protestant or Catholic tendencies or aspects, but when Du Bartas wrote there is a question of affiliation to one group or another. Because of Du Bartas' deep concern for political affairs it is tempting to dismiss some of his religious attitudes as the result of political exigencies; but politics were, at least in part, determined by the religion of the principals, and the picture of Du Bartas which emerges from his writings is that of a sensitively religious man. He was not unaware of the danger of bowing to expediency:

"Hé! combien voyons-nous de tels Ephraïmites  
 En ce tems mal'heureus, qui suivent, hipocrites,  
 L'Eglise cependant qu'un zephire clement  
 Contre sa sainte poupe halaine heureusement,  
 Et d'un zele incroyable embrassent l'Evangile  
 Cependant qu'il leur est honorable ou utile?  
 Mais si la chance tourne...  
 Soudain quittent le fil de leur premiere route,  
 Et non-contans de faire au Seigneur banque-route,  
 Ils se font de sa loi plus fiers persecuteurs,  
 Qu'ils n'en furent jamais fideles zelateurs..."<sup>1</sup>

Du Bartas' pacifism led him to gloss over in his poems points of religious controversy; deliberately so, since they would have been

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1. DU BARTAS, La Judit, III, 61-67, 69-72.

no more out of place than the contemporary political allusions which he includes. We cannot, then, say for him, as we did for Marot, that justification by faith alone, or anything else, is the mainspring of his theology. That he is a better informed religious writer than Marot is evident from his use of more of the Bible than the Psalms and a few key passages of the New Testament. The manipulation of the major concepts of the Old Testament and above all their application to the Church of his own day show a familiarity with this part of the Bible as intimate as Calvin's, and richer than it in the way Du Bartas draws upon biblical imagery. Although Du Bartas is as much a populariser as Marot he achieves more and loses less of the content of the original. Another reason why it is less easy to pinpoint any one idea as the foundation of all the others in Du Bartas, is the intricate, though not complex, linkage of ideas, similar to that of the Scriptures themselves, coupled with a disregard for logic and systematisation. We might, indeed, take as the leading theme responsiveness to the Word of God, or consciousness of God speaking to the soul, but this is not very specific.

Du Bartas shares Calvin's mistrust of philosophy. "To Du Bartas the Bible was divinely inspired and superior to all reason:

'J'ayme mieux ma raison desmentir mille fois,

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Qu'un seul coup desmentir du Saint Esprit la voix' "

He sees excessive addiction to the powers of reason as the cause of rupture in the Church; Calvin had laid stress on the corruptive force

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1. Chapel Hill edition I, p.135, quoting DU BARTAS, Iere Sepmaine, II 1027-8; of CALVIN, Inst.IV.10.8; of

of rationalisation as an adjunct to moral decadence. On many occasions Du Bartas appeals to the Scriptures as the school in which the Truth and the Light are made manifest. The compelling clarity of the Bible and its own interior light which is its *raison d'être*, are described in La Magnificence.

"Vous qui fermez les yeux à ceste grand clarté  
 Qui luit en nostre temps, dont l'esprit, aheurté  
 A des rances erreurs, la verité rebute,  
 Qui de jour, qui de nuict, à vos portes tabute;  
 Et qui ne voulez pas ouvrir tant seulement,  
 Pour parler avec Dieu, son double Testament;  
 Hé, ne craignez-vous pas que ceste grand princesse  
 Condamne au dernier jour vostre ingrate paresse?"<sup>1</sup>

At the very outset of the Premiere Sepmaine Du Bartas contrasts the value of reason and revelation as guides:

"Tout beau, Muse, tout beau, d'un si profond Neptune  
 Ne sonde point le fond; garde-toy d'approcher  
 Ce Charybde glouton, ce Capharé rocher  
 Ou mainte nef, suivant la raison pour son Ourse,  
 A fait triste naufrage au milieu de sa course.  
 Qui voudra seurement par ce gouffre ramer,  
 Sage, n'aille jamais cingler en haute mer;  
 Ains costoye la rive, ayant la Foy pour voile,  
 L'Esprit saint pour nocher, la Bible pour estoile."<sup>2</sup>

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1. DU BARTAS, La Magnificence, 1145-1152; CALVIN, Inst.I.7.5
  2. DU BARTAS, Iere Sepmaine, I, 76-84; cf Le Triomfe, II, 17-28.

Du Bartas seems to have gone to the extreme of denying any value to reason; his dissatisfaction appears to be with reason in itself rather than with the abuse of it. He is not a man of the early renaissance and has travelled far from the ideal of the perfection of man on the merely moral level. His concept of the whole man gives greater scope to the working out of spiritual and especially religious values. For Du Bartas the humanist's ideals are meaningful only in so far as they are also basically Christian. Like Calvin he lives and works for God's honour alone. He explains, for example, in Le Septiesme Jour, the purpose of gathering together in a church:

"Il veut que là dedans, comme à l'envi des anges,  
 Nous facions retentir ses divines louanges,  
 Par l'hommage et le fief des biens que nous tenons  
 En sa riche directe."<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion he prays for personal security to enable him to continue his work to the honour of God.

"Et fay que jouyssant des douceurs du repos,  
 Je celebre en mes vers de plus en plus ton los."<sup>2</sup>

Praising God is an activity to be performed either communally or on one's own behalf. One aspect of the Golden Age which Du Bartas looks forward to is the leisure and opportunity to praise God at all times:

1. DU BARTAS, Iere Sepmaine, VII, 411-414; of CALVIN, Inst.I.12.1-2, II. 2.11
2. Le Schisme, 19-20.

"Voy le peuple assemblé qui, les larmes aux yeux,  
 Prononce ce beau chant: 'Io, qu'on s'esjouisse,  
 Que du los du Seigneur tout nostre air retentisse,  
 Du grand Dieu qui nous donne un bien non pourchassé,  
 Un bien qui semble un songe, un bien par nous chassé!"<sup>1</sup>

The virtue of humility is seen as the starting-point for praising God; man is aware of his own contingency and inadequacy and so honours Him from Whom he has his being. In talking of the angels in Le Premier Jour Du Bartas reckons pride as the reversal of the right order and the negation of God's authority; its opposite is the filial reverence given to God by the humble.

"Mais comme à contre-cœur ceste apostate bande  
 S'attache aux fiers tyrans, et pour les bons se bande,  
 L'escadron innocent, qui ne desire pas  
 Ny s'eslever trop haut, ny descendre trop bas,  
 De gayeté de cœur à tous moments chemine  
 Où le pousse le vent de la bonté divine;  
 Et son sacré dessein n'eut jamais autre but,  
 Que la gloire de Dieu et des Saints le salut."<sup>2</sup>

Since Du Bartas wishes his work to contribute to the glory of God, he claims for himself a thoroughly Christian educative aim:

"Car bien que mon esprit durant si long voyage  
 Voltige cà et là, si n'ay-je en mon courage

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1. Hymne de la Paix, 20-24.

2. Iere Sepmaine, I, 667-74; of CALVIN, Inst. III.12-6

Autre plus grand desir qu'à mener par la main  
 Mes lecteurs à l'Enfant divinement-humain." <sup>1</sup>

Because of the great proportion of his work which is directly inspired by the Old Testament, it is not surprising how much the idea of election means to Du Bartas; not so much that he discourses of the election of the faithful in his own day, though this is not absent, but that he traces the history of the Chosen People and sees therein the work of God looking after His own with fatherly care. Du Bartas does not need to make the application to his own times on every occasion. The repetition would be intrusive and he makes it clear enough that much of what he says about the Chosen People could be transferred to the Protestant Church of the sixteenth century. His verses in Le Judit, for example,

"Doncques n'estrivés point de parole ou de fait  
 Avecques l'Eternel, qui fait tout ce qu'il fait  
 Pour le proffit des siens; et qui sa chere Eglise,  
 Tout-puissant, remettra, quoi qu'il tarde, en franchise", <sup>2</sup>

illustrate the combination of different levels of application.

The ideas of the majesty and transcendency of God is taken by Du Bartas straight from the Bible, but the stress he gives to it may owe a little to Calvin. Du Bartas shows that in spite of God's absolute otherness He still condescends to keep a paternal eye on His Church.

1. Les Colonies, 17-20; of Galvin's purpose, Inst. ed. Benoit, p.23

2. Le Judit, III, 361-4.



"Je suis Celui qui suis en moy, pour moy, par moy,  
 Tout autre n'est point; s'il est, il n'est en soy,  
 Ni par soy, ni pour soy, ains de moy l'estre il puisse,  
 De moy Prince du monde, et Pere de l'Eglise,  
 Le principe, la fin, et le milieu du Tout."<sup>1</sup>

The seven days of the universe are the seven ages against the background of which the story of election unfolds. We are guided through the days of Adam, Noah, Abraham (whose importance for election Du Bartas makes plain by repeated reference), David, Zedekiah, and Christ himself.

"Et l'autre a pour soleil le Messie attendu,  
 Qui battu, qui chassé, qui moqué, qui pendu,  
 Qui mis dans le cercueil, a de nostre injustice,  
 Bien que juste, souffert l'exécrable suplice."<sup>2</sup>

The final age is that of the Resurrection and Judgment, the end towards which all men are tending, and the final goal of election. The Chapel Hill edition notes that the race of men just preceding the Last Judgment are, in Du Bartas' eyes, his own contemporaries. He strongly echoes Calvin when, in Le Septiesme Jour, he writes of the loving-kindness of God which extends over all, but more particularly over the Chosen.<sup>3</sup>

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1. La Loy, 219-223; CALVIN, Inst.I.1.3; I.5.5; of II.6.1
  2. Les Artifices, 619-622
  3. of CALVIN, Inst.II. 16.1; III.21.6; III.22.10.

"Le soucy du grand Dieu par ses effets divers  
 De membre en membre court par tout cest univers;  
 Mais d'un soin plus soigneux il couvre de ses ailes  
 La semence d'Adam, et sur tous les fideles,  
 Car il ne veille point qu'en faveur des humains  
 Qui luy dressent, devots, et leurs voeux et leurs mains." <sup>1</sup>

And in La Loy, in the comparison of the manna to Christ, Du Bartas writes of the particular and the general election, and the rejection, by some of the invitation extended to them.

"Es mains de quelques-uns elle est changee en vers;  
 Christ le Verbe eternal est scandale aux pevers. <sup>^ r</sup>  
 Elle ne tombe ailleurs que sur la sainte race;  
 Et dans le parc des saints Christ confine la grace." <sup>2</sup>

There is no question of man's meriting the love and attention of God. Du Bartas' view is that those over whom God's special providence reaches are de facto the elect who are striving to honour Him and give Him praise.

From the history of Abraham he extracts the idea of the Covenant between God and His people.

" 'Mon filz, c'est avec luy que je passe instrument  
 D'eternelle amitié; s'il garde constamment  
 Les pactes convenus, j'espandray sur ses races

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1. Iere Sepmaine, VII, 237-42; of CALVIN, Inst. III.22.11

2. La Loy, 787-790.

De ~~ma~~ grand cruche d'or un ocean de graces...

Je luy donray le ciel, je me donray moy-mesme."<sup>1</sup>

His contention is not just that God made a pact with one of His followers some centuries previously, but that it is of vital importance as an application to the Church of his own time.

"Abram, las! que dis-tu? tu veux trop entreprendre.

Celuy que le phenix ravive de sa cendre,

Et du tombeau luisant du fileur vermisseau,

Pour parer les plus grands, fait naistre un petit oyseau,

Oublira-il Isac, la sainte pepiniere

De sa future Eglise, et l'unique lumiere

Qui fera jour au monde?"<sup>2</sup>

The same idea is underlined later in the same book, where Isaac is compared to Christ in their roles as founders of kingdoms.

"Tous deux sont bien-aymez, tous deux enfans uniques,

Tous deux saints fondateurs de deux grands republicues."<sup>3</sup>

The idea of the Church is the fact common to both these kingdoms; that of Isaac looks forward to and finds its completion in that of Christ. Du Bartas makes use of the idea of the coming of the Messianic King as the constant which runs through both the Old Testament and the events leading up to and beyond the age he lived in. In speaking of the manna he says,

1. La Vocation, 919-922, 926; of CALVIN, Inst.I.10.2

2. Les Peres, 151-157; CALVIN, Inst.II.10. 1-6.

3. Les Peres, 449-50.

"Voy dans ce clair miroir, contemple, ô peuple hebrieu,  
 Dans un si beau tableau l'eternel Fils de Dieu,  
 Le Messie promis, le magnifique Prince  
 Qui des confins du Ciel doit borner sa province.  
 Et quand pour t'enseigner il reviendra çà-bas,  
 Isac, hélas, pour Dieu ne le mesconoy pas."<sup>1</sup>

Christ is present in the Church of his elect, according to the image of Du Bartas, as the manna was contained in the Ark in the midst of the Jewish people. Christ is the exemplar of the Church and union with Christ is necessary for the life of the Christian.<sup>2</sup> Du Bartas is aware of the unworthiness of the Church as the receptacle for Christ, just as the Jewish people had succumbed to idolatry and rebelled against the light. God purges but wishes a remnant to remain; the Church is incorruptible just as the Covenant was an indestructible bond.

"Le prince de Juda n'a gueres plus de zele,  
 Abias suit de pres la rage paternelle,  
 Et le peuple oubliant du Tout-puissant les loix,  
 Accomode <sup>s</sup> des moeurs à l'exemple des rois.  
 Mais nonobstant cela, la divine clemence  
 Eternise le sceptre ès mains de la semence  
 De David son mignon, ombrage de lauriers  
 Le front victorieux de ses enfans guerriers,

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1. La Loy, 759-764

2. ſf CALVIN, Inst. IV.17.1-2; IV.15.6.

Et veut que dans Sion à tousjour mais reluisse,  
 En despit des tyrans, quelque forme d'eglise."<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that Du Bartas took for granted the idea of the Church as an institution, the visible Church, without, however, laying any stress on it. He repeatedly refers to the Church as those who are (outwardly) members of this body. The presumption is that most of them are also among the number of the elect but for Du Bartas the Church is normally the external Church rather than the body of the elect known only to God. Among other examples which show how by the time of Du Bartas the novelty of qualifying the word 'Church' had worn off, and that it had regained some of its general qualities as a necessarily established institution, we might select the following one from the account of the death of Moses:

"Lui, s'eslevant plus haut,  
 Du bien public dispose, et pourvoit à l'Eglise,  
 Puis d'un devot accent son discours autorise."<sup>2</sup>

It is doubly useful in that we see Moses providing for the material needs of the Church, which are on a par with the welfare of the secular state.

Du Bartas shared Marot's inclination towards peace and the universal practice of justice. His spirit of tolerance carried over into the religious sphere, and this makes it difficult to determine what, if any, would have been for him the distinguishing marks of the Church. He

1. Le Schisme, 173-182
2. La Loy, 1152-4.

does assign characteristics to the Church but these are not meant to differentiate it from other societies or religious bodies. The Church, for example, is holy because it is the instrument of God. Ezechiah, lamenting the impurity of the religion of his own time, prays,

"Monstre-toy donques tel, ô Dieu, prens la deffence

Et de ta propre gloire et de nostre innocence;

...

Et donne, ô Tout-puissant, à ton eglise sainte

Quelque argument de joye..."<sup>1</sup>

The Church must be holy because its members should be striving to perfect themselves;

" 'Je hay l'homme de sang. Je suis saint, soyez saints.'"<sup>2</sup>

The process of becoming holy is the purpose of the Church.

"Et comme un peu d'argent, un peu d'estain encor,

Par une docte main, riche, se couvre d'or,

Moy qui ne suis que plomb, voire du plomb la crasse,

Dans l'amoureuse ardeur du creuset de ta grace

Je me couvriray tout de l'or de sa beauté,

Je renaistray fidelle en sainte nouveauté,

Et d'esprit et de moeurs Christ sera mon exemple,

Son esprit mon esprit, et je seray son temple."<sup>3</sup>

1. La Decadence, 503-504, 507-8.

2. L'Arche, 427; cf La Loy, 240-244, where Moses is described as 'sauveur et chef de colonie... sacrée'.

3. Les Capitaines, 419-426; cf CALVIN, Inst. IV.1.17; IV.8.12.

That this Church is apostolic is usually a presupposition for Du Bartas. It lies tacitly behind the treatment of the present-day Church as the continuation of the Church in the history of the Old Testament. Since the Church today is equated with the Chosen People, it is a fortiori continuous with the Church as it was understood by the first followers of Christ. Du Bartas, in one celebrated anti-Catholic sally, bemoans the loss of the pristine single-mindedness of the Church. In writing of the Sabbath Day he contends,

"Car par le Tout-puissant ceste sainte journee  
Ne fut aux bals, aux jeux, aux masques destinee,  
...

Pour prier d'autres dieux, pour servir sa grandeur  
Suyvant les vaines loix dont l'humaine arrogance  
De l'Eglise premiere a sapé l'innocence."<sup>1</sup>

Besides being one of Du Bartas' rare explicit attacks on the Church of Rome, this passage is also a condemnation of the excessive importance attached to institutionalism or formalism of any kind. It is noteworthy that Du Bartas' quarrel with Rome is not on any deeply doctrinal point of controversy - there is no evidence that he would even have been interested in the dogmatic implications which might have been drawn from the topic he was discussing - but it is almost adventitious. He decries the aberrations to which uncontrolled legalism can lead. "Distinctly Protestant concepts can be traced, although the poet, in

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1. Iere Sepmaine, VII, 391-2, 398-400.

general, sought to avoid condemnation from too great explicitness of doctrine."<sup>1</sup> This is notably the case when he comes to treat of the questions of the unity and universality of the Church. The latter is rooted in the universality of salvation.

"Tout son grain est pilé; Christ, l'Aigneau sacré-saint,  
 Au pressoir de la croix est tellement espreint,  
 Que de son sang divin la riviere profonde  
 Decoule de Sion par tous les coins du monde."<sup>2</sup>

We have already seen the description of the Messiah ruling over a limitless kingdom; its application to the sixteenth century is to be found in the universal scope of the Church. But whereas the call to salvation is universal not all avail themselves of the opportunity; evidently not all are holy.

The unity of the universal Church is manifested in its desire to follow Christ and to preserve intact the modified version of the mosaic law which he had given to them. In La Loy Du Bartas compares the Ten Commandments with the codes of positive law tabulated by other nations, and what he finds lacking in the latter is permanence and universal appeal.

"Mais le droit positif de la race fidele  
 Est un vray droit des gens, une loy naturelle,  
 Qui, sainte, retentit par tout ou le soleil,  
 Pour contreroller tout, flammeux, jette son oeil."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Du Bartas, Works, Chapel Hill edition, p.134.
  2. La Loy, 791-794; cf CALVIN, Inst.II.16.3; III.22.10; MAROT, Rondeau, sur: Jupiter ex alto perjuria ridet amantum, Oeuvres II, p.404.
  3. La Loy, 973-976.



He is careful to point out that the mosaic law has point for the men of his own day since it found its fulfilment in Christ.

"Qu'Isac ne trouvera la divine puissance  
 Moins terrible à venger qu'à dicter l'ordonnance,  
 Et que du testament dans deux tables escrit  
 Le joug est trop pesant au prix du joug de Christ.  
 Qu'il monstre le peché, qu'il frappe, qu'il menace,  
 Au lieu que le dernier nous presente sa grace."<sup>1</sup>

The idea of unity in the Church is, for Du Bartas, partly a question of politics. He is more ready than Calvin to include all but the blatantly heretical under the title of Church; he has less to say about the recaltrance of the Church of Rome than Calvin had and the unity he envisages is one which would ensure the security necessary if Catholicism and Protestantism are to exist peacefully together. In the Cantique d'Ivry he addresses the Duc de Mayenne,

"Peut-estre tu combas pour la foy catholique;       ?  
 Mais dy-moy, qui conduit la barque politique,  
 Qui commande en son camp, que ceux qui plus que toy  
 Zelez, vont embrassans la catholique foy?

...

L'atheisme en son coeur il ne couve bigot!  
 Il est chrestien monarque, il est prince devot:  
 Il croit qu'avec le laict de sa chere nourrice  
 Il a sucé de Dieu le reformé service.

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1. Ib, 885-890.

Mais il n'est partial, escervelle, testu:  
 Et si le Temple saint à peu pres abatu  
 Par nos prophanes mains, par nos plumes mutines,  
 Superbe, doit un jour reparer ses ruines:  
 Et si l'Eglise encor doit esperer jamais  
 Un estat bien-heureux, une profonde paix,  
 Sans doute ce sera sous un Prince si vuide  
 D'aveugle passion."<sup>1</sup>

Such impartiality does not exonerate completely the Church of Rome; the security it will enjoy is the result of the liberality of the prince, it does not come by its own merits or by the justice of its claim to be a part of the true Church. For Du Bartas the Ligue was not simply a political crime; it was also a sin against religion.

"Je ne veux qu'à ce coup ma docte Caliope  
 Corne par l'Univers, que tandis que l'Europe,  
 Abusant du saint nom de l'Eglise et du Roy,  
 S'estoit obstinement liguee contre toy ..."<sup>2</sup>

Although he sees as possible, if somewhat grudgingly, the situation where the Catholic Church would return to a peaceful status, this cannot be said to be a condoning of what he saw as the error of her ways. At the end of his catalogue of heretics, in two of the earlier editions, reference is made to some of the more recent exponents.

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1. Cantique d'Ivry, (Works III p.499), 291-294, 297-308.
  2. Ib., 31-4.

"Tairai-je point Servet? Tairait-je (sic) ces deistes,  
 Dont ore est trop fecond le terroir polonois?  
 Oubliurai-je Muncer, dont l'inconstante vois  
 A produit cent façons de fols Anabaptistes?"<sup>1</sup>

The 1574 edition of La Muse chrestienne concluded this second book of Le Triomfe de la Foi with the following verses:

"Puis je voi l'Antechrist, je voi les Scismatiques  
 Qui, divisant de Christ le non-cousu-manteau,  
 Ont lancé dans l'Eglise un funeste couteau,  
 Immitant à-peu-pres les faits des heretiques."<sup>2</sup>

This edition does not make clear that the Church of Rome was seen by Du Bartas as in heresy, though the reference to Antichrist was explicit enough. It is, however, close to heresy since it is schismatical.

In 1579 and in 1585 the text is expanded:

"Puis je voi l'Antechrist, et la grande paillarde  
 Qui ça-bas s'attribue un honneur tout-divin;  
 Qui, sur set mons assise, enivre de son vin  
 Les princes de la terre et la race batarde.  
 J'aperçoi puis apres marcher les schismatiques."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Le Triomfe de la Foi II, inserted after line 160, Chapel Hill edition, II p.153; it is possible that Du Bartas is using 'deistes' as synonymous with 'atheistes', but the word had been used already in its later sense. cf Pierre VIRET, Préface à l'Eglise de Montpellier (1563) quoted in BUSSON, Le Rationalisme dans la littérature française de la Renaissance, Paris 1957, p.517.
  2. Ib, 169-172.
  3. Ib, 169 expanded; cf CALVIN, Inst. IV.2.12.

In this version the context is one of heresy rather than schism, and it is almost as though 'l'Antechrist' is distinguished from 'les scismatiques'. In any case, Du Bartas' dissatisfaction is only circumstantially religious. This tirade against the Papacy is not in keeping with the rest of his work and is not even in harmony with the surrounding verses. If, then, Rome is to return to a position of full orthodoxy she must first discard at least some of her errors, and principally her political aspirations.

It is the divinely appointed task of the Christian ruler, as it was the task of the rulers of the Old Testament, to support the cause of religion to the utmost of their power.

"Et comme l'estomach d'avec les alimens  
 Separe l'espaisseur des plus lours excremens,  
 Ils doivent separer du faux la chose vraye,  
 La foy de l'heresie, et du froment l'ivraye..."<sup>1</sup>

And in the hierarchy of princes worthy of renown,

"Ceus qui vont les premiers, ce sont ces braves princes,  
 Qui, saints, ont employé leur sainte autorité  
 Pour fouler sous les pieds la vaine impieté,  
 Et pour faire regner la FOI dans leurs provinces..."<sup>2</sup>

This praise of the princes is followed by an exhortation to them to employ their force in the furtherance of religion:

1. Iere Sepmaine, VII, 673-676; cf CALVIN, Inst.IV.20.3
2. Le Triomfe de la Foi, IV, 9-12

"...

pour maintenir du Seigneur la querelle

Puis que c'est du Seigneur que receu vous l'avés,

Pour reprimer l'orgueil des hommes depravés,

Et pour tenir les bons à l'ombre de vostre aïse."<sup>1</sup>

The respective scopes of the secular and religious powers are inextricably interwoven; the Christian is subsumed into the 'sainte police' of which Christ is the founder.<sup>2</sup> Though the Church enjoys the support of the state it is not in any way subservient to it; 'la sainte police' points to the primary purpose of the community. Du Bartas is neither concerned with the invisible Church as it exists now nor with the abstract idea of the Church; he is not primarily either a theologian or a philosopher. He is nearer to Marot than to Calvin in that his approach is moral rather than spiritual, but it is not merely moral. What does characterise his thought is a deepening and a broadening of the idea of the Golden Age. Du Bartas reveals himself as an idealist and a visionary; his ideal Christian community will be formed in the future on this earth, though he is also aware that this ideal is a preparation for eternity.

"Car de nostre Sauveur la chaire faite divine

S'en vola par dessus la voute cristalline,

Et Christ veut que les siens, francs de peine et d'ennuy,

N'ayent apres leur mort autre logis que luy."<sup>3</sup>

1. *Ib.*, 37-40; cf., *La Decadence*, 608, where Ezechiah is described as 'Le roy chasse-daemons, le tuteur de l'Eglise'.
2. *La Vocation*, 928-9.
3. *Le Schisme*, 567-570.

The concept of the Golden Age is an expression of Du Bartas' passion for peace and political security and for the setting up of a truly Christian order; it is to be a harmonious working out of the two spheres of government, an approximation to all that the Messianic Age implied. It should be noted that this is not something of the distant future; Du Bartas saw it as imminent.

"Et le Triomfe heurus, que je chante, est fort proche."<sup>1</sup>

He proceeds from the oppressive feeling of the wickedness of his contemporaries to the desire for escape into a more Christian atmosphere. In considering the Golden Age as the antithesis of the predominant worldliness of the sixteenth century, Du Bartas gives vent to a pessimism which was foreign to Calvin, since Calvin while realising better than most the extent of evil in the world, and even that within the visible Church there was a mixture of good and bad, did not consider his own time as the worst in the history of the world. Du Bartas is less aware of the need for perpetual renewal on the part of the Christian and of the Church as a whole; he wants the Kingdom of God to be immediately present in its fullness without effort on the part of the remnant which is the Church.

" Helas! veillant je voi l'impure sinagogue  
 Triomfer de l'Eglise: helas! helas! je voi,  
 Que l'infidelité triomfe de la FOI,  
 Et plus que la vertu le vice ores a vogue

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1. Le Triomfe de la Foi, IV, 156

Je voi, las! qu'en ce tems des Chrestiens tout le zele  
 Ne consiste, bastard, qu'au massacre inhumain,  
 Et que celui qui plus respand de sang humain,  
 Est de vous réputé le plus zelé fidele...

...

Nostre siecle est, de vrai, une cloaque infecte,  
 Un trespuant esgout, où des siecles passés  
 Tous les vices se sont ensemble ramassés,  
 Et dont l'orde vappour le ciel mesmes infecte...  
 Si je ne me deçoi, le siecle d'or approche,  
 Le siecle fortuné, par qui nos coeurs dis-joints  
 Seront d'un sacré noeud pour tout jamais rejoints..."<sup>1</sup>

Du Bartas represents the inverse of the idea that all time was leading up to the culmination of progress in the late renaissance period. The progression is away from perfection and there has been a gradual degeneration since biblical times. The Golden Age comes not as a crowning of what has gone before but as a complete contrast to it. It is a time of material affluence but only incidentally - the fertility of land and people promised to Abraham does not end with the coming of Christ - but above all Christ with his religious and social teaching, is the exemplar for the members of the kingdom.

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1. Le Triomfe de la Foi, IV, 125-132; 137-143; cf CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1.7-9.

"Moy donc estant en Christ, et Christ estant en moy,  
 Voudrois-tu, pourrois-tu, nous chasser loin de Toy,  
 Priver contre raison du promis heritage  
 Christ ton image saint, et moy de Christ l'image?

...

Fils tout saint, du Tout-saint par la bonté supreme,  
 Doncques transforme-moy tout d'un coup en toy-mesme,  
 Afin que tel je sois bienvenu de mon Dieu,  
 Que je possede en paix, non le terrouer hebrieu,  
 Ains Sion la celeste, et que tu sois la cole  
 Qui, solide, m'unisse au Createur du Pole."<sup>1</sup>

Christ typifies in a threefold way the virtues which will be characteristic of his kingdom:

"Le sacré fondateur d'une sainte police,  
 Du monde la rançon, la paix et la justice."<sup>2</sup>

In La Loy Du Bartas emphasises the need man, the hypocritical sinner, has of salvation and his recourse to Christ the Redeemer.

"Me voila peint au nu, voila l'anatomie  
 De mon coeur vicieux. O fontaine de vie,  
 O Christ, du Tout-puissant la tout-puissante voix,  
 Vests-moy de ton manteau, ainsi que d'autrefois  
 Tu t'es vestu du mien; dans ton pur sang me lave,  
 Et ces loix de ton doigt dans ma poitrine engrave."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Les Capitaines, 427-430, 437-442.
  2. La Vocation, 929-930.
  3. La Loy, 1001-1006.



The Messianic Age is for Du Bartas that which was inaugurated by the coming of Christ, and which is still with us; it will find its most perfect expression in the Golden Age and after the Last Judgment.

The second element characteristic of the ideal Christian community is the attitude of the members to peace. Du Bartas' thought runs on several levels at the same time, and the consequent overlapping makes it difficult to separate the elements; we can, however, pick out peace as the keynote of Christ's teaching, peace as Du Bartas wished it to be practised in his own day and the flawless peace of the Golden Age. Du Bartas is deeply perturbed by the barbarities of war in the name of religion and this in itself would be a sufficient explanation of the importance he attaches to peace in the life of the Church; he is furthermore so imbued with the spirit of toleration and 'humanitas' that this craving for peace is almost obsessive.

"Et nous parmy l'horreur des sacrileges armes,  
 Qui comblent l'univers de sang et de vacarmes,  
 Pourrons-nous refuser le secours de nos mains  
 A ceux qui par la foy nous sont plus que germains.  
 De moy, je ne voy point en quel endroit le sage  
 Puisse trouver ça bas un plus parfait image  
 D'un estat franc de bruits, de ligue, de discords,  
 Que l'ordre harmonieux qui fait vivre nos corps.  
 L'un membre n'a si tost souffert la moindre offense,  
 Que tout le demeurant souffre pour sa souffrance."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Iere Sepmaine, VII, 693-702; cf Cantique d'Ivry, 399-401.  
 ('Une gangrene... occupe tout ce corps...')

The body he speaks of is not, indeed, the Mystical Body, but it is nonetheless the spiritual and secular body of the Christian people which suffers persecution for the sake of justice. In 1582, a year or so after the Peace of Fleix, Du Bartas published his Hymne de la Paix, as a thanksgiving and yet also as a plea to his people to cherish the treasure they had obtained.

"Sainte fille du Ciel, deesse qui rameines  
 L'antique siecle d'or, qui, belle, r'assereines  
 L'air troublé des François: qui fais rire nos chams:  
 } Uniques' espoir des bons, juste effroy des meschans:  
 Vierge depuis vingt ans aux Gaules incogne,  
 O Paix, hereuse Paix, tu sois la bienvenue."<sup>1</sup>

It is not that all war is evil, witness his praise of the Crusades ( "France, je te salue, ô mere des guerriers,"<sup>2</sup> ) but that decades of religious strife have shattered the true state of Christian harmony and alienated men from God.

"La seule paix te manque. O Dieu, qui tiens ouvers  
 Tousjours les yeux sur nous, de l'eau de ta clemence  
 Amorti le brasier qui consume la France,  
 Balaye nostre ciel, remets, ô Pere doux,  
 Remets dans ton carquois les traicts de ton courroux."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hymne de la Paix, 1-6; Works III, p.487; cf also Les Artifices, 1-6.
  2. Les Colonies, 711.
  3. Les Colonies, 740-744.

On a practical level and with reference to Du Bartas' own day, he feels that the best guarantee of peace, since it will best ensure the right conditions for peace to thrive, will be a truly Christian monarch. In the Cantique d'Ivry Du Bartas appealed to Henri IV to implement the ideals of kingship which he, Du Bartas, advocated. The king must pattern himself on Christ, the Messianic king, and if he does so he will keep himself clear of the temptation to lapse into tyranny. Tyranny is an offence against God, since it is a calculated insult to His specially appointed representative.<sup>1</sup> The king is, like all other men, made in the image of God, but he enjoys the added privilege of a share in God's authority.

"Las, plutost en ma main coule de veine en veine" says David to Saul,

"Le venin porte-mort d'une ardente gangrene,  
Qu'elle touche à mon christ, et que j'aïlle cassant  
L'image sacré-sainct du trois fois Tout-puissant."<sup>2</sup>

Ezechiah, too, prays, with reference to Sennacherib,

"Monstre-toy donques tel, ô Dieu, prens la deffence  
Et de ta propre gloire et de nostre innocence;  
Purge ton nom de blasme, empesche que ce roy,  
En triomphant de nous, ne triomphe de Toy..."<sup>3</sup>

1. CALVIN, Inst. IV.20.30-31.

2. Les Trophees, 523-526; cf L'Arche, 430-31.

3. La Decadence, 503-506.

Du Bartas contrasts the security obtained by those who live under a good prince with the uncertainty and injustice under a tyrant.

"O, que c'est un grand heur de vivre sous un prince  
Qui prefere à son bien le bien de sa province.

...

Mais c'est bien un enfer de passer en servage  
Sous un cruel tyran tout le cours de son age;

...

Imprime, ô Roy du ciel, dans le coeur de nos rois  
L'amour de leurs vassaux et l'honneur de tes lois."<sup>1</sup>

His thought is forward-looking, in that he has seen with anxiety the havoc caused by minor political figures and feels that the only way of ensuring the liberty of the Christian state in the future is by a whole-hearted return to the ideal of monarchic government which is indirectly under criticism. After a debate on the relative merits of a democratic and an aristocratic form of government Du Bartas sees a monarchy as a positive need.

"Et que diray-je plus? Un bon et sage roy  
Est du peuple l'appuy, le nerf, la vive loy:  
Il est de sa cité l'ame, l'oeil, la prudence,  
Il est le vif pourtrait de l'eternelle Essence."<sup>2</sup>

1. Babylone, 1-2, 13-14, 31-2.

2. Les Capitaines, 1055-8; cf. La Magnificence, 57-64.

In Le Schisme we find a plan for political unity under one king, which is also directed to a unity of religious worship.<sup>1</sup> Du Bartas' royalism is, then, partly inspired by his own particular situation, though he is too honest to descend to flattery which is a sort of inverted tyranny, and partly by the history of kingship in the Old Testament; we have already seen something of Calvin's view that a monarchy is not necessarily the best form of government.<sup>2</sup>

The third element in the Christian order which Du Bartas saw as already exemplified in Christ is corollary to the second: justice is the manifestation of the desire for peace; when men practise justice towards their fellows they help to avert that transgression of order which is involved in war, and justice must always be tempered by love. Du Bartas realises that it is insufficient to sing the praises of an abstract virtue. He appeals first to those who will be looked up to by others - those in any position of authority, and those whose task it is to administer justice. Here again we should observe that Du Bartas is writing on several different levels. Certainly there will come a time when justice, without being merely negative, will mean that all are living together in harmony, each keeping his own place, but he is writing for the present in an age when justice has primarily to do with litigation.

"Vous, juges, vous, pasteurs, et vous, chefs de gendarmes,

Ne corrompez vos loix, vos sermons, et vos armes,

1. Le Schisme, 5-20.
2. CALVIN, Inst. IV.20.8.

De peur que ce venin glissant de toutes parts  
 N'infecte vos sujets, vos troupeaux, vos soldars.  
 Gardez que vostre mal le mal d'autrui ne traine,  
 Car le reste est peu sain quand la teste est mal-saine.

...

Ceux à qui l'eternel a commis son bercail  
 Doivent estre tousjours en soin, veille et travail,  
 Pour souffler par leurs moeurs, et par doctrine exquise  
 L'esprit vivifiant dans le corps de l'Eglise."<sup>1</sup>

The most telling result of the return of peace in 1580 is the restoration of the judicial system.

"Voy comme le Senat, jà, par toute la France,  
 Reprend son escarlate, et la loy sa puissance."<sup>2</sup>

But the existence of the law does not make the citizens holy; Du Bartas thought that in his own day selfishness rather than respect for the law was the rule.

"Las! que doy-je esperer de la race voisine  
 Du feu qui doit, vengeur, cendroyer la machine;  
 Des hommes qui n'auront que leur desir pour loy...?"<sup>3</sup>

The resultant injustice is that for which Christ suffered:

"... le Messie attendu,

...

Qui ... a de nostre injustice,

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1. Iere Sepmaine, VII, 661-6, 679-682; cf. CALVIN, Inst. IV.20.18-19, on the permissibility of litigation.
  2. Hymne de la Paix, 13-14.
  3. Les Artifices, 628-630.

Bien que juste, souffert l'exécrable supplice."<sup>1</sup>

In L'Arche God Himself gives as the reason for justice His own holiness.

"Je hay l'homme de sang. Je suis saint, soyez saints.

Donc ne vous souillez point au sang de vos germains.

Fuyez la cruauté, detestez le carnage,

Et ne rompez, brutaux, en l'homme mon image."<sup>2</sup>

Since Du Bartas is writing primarily for the men of his own time he makes frequent reference to the sufferings of the Church in his own day and to the persecutions it must undergo before the end of time. The Burning Bush is given as a type of the Church, remaining inviolate in the midst of persecutions.

"Il void, miracle grand, qu'un buisson espineux

S'enveloppe soudain d'un feu tourbillonneux,

Qui flamboye et n'ard point, qui craquette sans force,

Qui baise et ne mord point, non pas mesmes l'escorce:

Vrai pourtrait de l'Eglise et disert sacrament...

Ce feu semble l'esprit du trois-fois Tout-puissant,

Qui devore l'inique, et purge l'innocent..."<sup>3</sup>

And since the honour of the Church and of God is ultimately not at stake, the Christian reaction to persecution must be one of patient charity.

1. Ib, 619, 621-2.

2. L'Arche, 427-430; CALVIN Inst. II.8.3-5.

3. La Loy, 203-207, 215-216; CALVIN Inst. II.8.14.

Du Bartas does not share Marot's excessive reliance on the individual to furnish himself with a religion of his own choice. - He is nearer to Calvin in the consciousness he has of the teaching Church. He refers to the Law of the Covenant as,

"Pedagogue eternal, ô fidele compas  
De nostre fresle vie, ô lampe de nos pas."<sup>1</sup>

and David's work is spoken of as

" un tableau qui, scavant,  
Nous presente le Christ non tant peint que vivant.  
O volume divin, claire voix de l'Eglise..."<sup>2</sup>

In Les Peres, which is itself a testimony to the handing on of religious belief from father to son, Isaac is portrayed as saying,

"Monstrons que nous avons demeuré dans l'eschole,  
Moi de vous, vous de Dieu..."

and God's word as creative of perfection,

" et qu'encor sa parole  
Qui forma, qui soustient, qui conduit l'Univers,  
Mene a son but le saint, et traine le pervers."<sup>3</sup>

Du Bartas' acknowledgement of the force of the word of God in Scripture led him on to the idea of the word spoken by God's ministers.

1. Ib., 939-940.
2. Les Trophees, 859-861.
3. Les Peres, 375-378.



"Car bien que la leçon des deux plus saintes pages  
 Faite entre murs privez esmeuve nos courages,  
 La doctrine qui part d'une diserte vois  
 Sans doute a beaucoup plus d'efficace et de poids."<sup>1</sup>

The passage goes on to show that this present life is like a school fitting us for the life to come. Du Bartas evidently shares Calvin's idea of a developing holiness. The seventh day is contrasted with the "bien-heureux Sabat de la vie future."<sup>2</sup>

Du Bartas compares the influence exercised by Satan in the world with that of God:

"L'un nous induit au mal, l'autre nous pousse au bien;  
 L'un nous veut degrader des ordres de Chrestien,  
 L'autre fait dans le coeur de l'Eglise fidele  
 Clairement à jamais flamboyer nostre zelle;"<sup>3</sup>

and the result of this zeal is the instruction of our associates.

Du Bartas explicitly refers to a teaching ministry within the Church and on the same occasion shows the need for a fixed place where all the members of a local Church will gather on Sundays to praise God.

"Dieu veut qu'en certain lieu on s'assemble ce jour  
 Pour de son nom apprendre et la crainte et l'amour  
 Il veut que là dedans le ministre fidele  
 De l'os des saints escrits arrache la mouelle..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Iere Sepmaine, VII, 407-410.
  2. Ib., 420.
  3. Les Peres, 31-34; cf. La Magnificence, 220.
  4. Iere Sepmaine, VII, 401-404.

If it is to be effective, all must share this zeal for conversion by example.

"Car ainsi que la chaux dans l'onde se dissout,  
 Saute, s'enfle, s'espand, fume, petille, bout,  
 Et resveille ce feu, dont l'ardeur paresseuse  
 Dormoit sous l'espesseur d'une masse pierreuse,  
 Celui qui peut marcher sous l'enseigne de Christ,  
 Veut laisser dans son coeur regner le saint Esprit,  
 Doit faire qu'au milieu des tormens il resveille  
 Son zele qui souvent en temps calme sommeille...  
 ... l'homme ayant dans son ame  
 Receu quelque rayon de la divine flamme  
 Le doit faire briller aux yeux de son prochain,  
 N'enterrant le thresor que Dieu luy met en main  
 Pour luy donner grand cours, et faire qu'en l'Eglise  
 Une centieme usure en une heure il produise."<sup>1</sup>

It is this slow gradual influencing of one's neighbours which is most likely to recreate the minds of men, and further the spread of the Church both intensively and extensively.<sup>2</sup>

Du Bartas is on the whole less easy-going than Marot without sharing Calvin's earnest dedication; his lack of interest in the nature of the Church is not to be ascribed, as Marot's was, to the

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1. Ib., 517-524, 539-544.

2. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1.5, 12.

myopia of the populariser, but to the feeling that the quest was unprofitable and was even suggestive of the verbal juggling of the schoolmen; his lack of sectarianism preserved him from the pettiness of satire and ensured that for him the problem was that of the Church in the world and not that of the Church among churches. Although the reformation was now far advanced he found need to revert to some of the ideals of the early reformers which had been obscured by the war among Christians.

## C H A P T E R T H R E E

### Agrippa d'Aubigné

Agrippa d'Aubigné's importance does not lie merely in his literary achievement, or in his prowess as a soldier; his influence is due also partly to the length of his life as a writer (he lived from 1552 to 1630 and was interested in writing from his earliest years), and partly to the extensive scope of his work, which embraced poetry, history, polemics and satire, all permeated with a deeply religious attitude. His major works, Les Tragiques, which was begun in 1577 and printed in 1616, is an expression of this concern for the fortunes of the Protestant cause, and traces the dealings of Providence through history and in D'Aubigné's own day. Epic is mingled with satire. The first book, entitled Les Miseres, treats of the persecutions rife in his own day; Princes shows the corruption of the ruling class and suggests that their inadequacy is the cause of the chaos; La Chambre Dorée is a satire of the processes of justice, very similar in tone to Marot's; Les Feux carries on the theme of the first book, the sufferings of martyrs for religion; Les Fers is the history of the huguenot cause; Vengeances, as the title indicates, shows that God has not forgotten His People and will punish the persecutors; Jugement recounts the final triumph of the Church and its resurrection. The story of the persecutions is the theme also of D'Aubigné's Histoire Universelle; it is easy to

see that his overall aim was to further the Protestant cause.<sup>1</sup> This is continued in two other works, the Confession catholique de Sancy (written about 1600, but not published until 1660), which is a satire on the apologies written by converts, and the Aventures du Baron de Faeneste (1617 - 1630), a dialogue which satirises many aspects of life in the early seventeenth century.

This present chapter aims to show how D'Aubigné carries on many of Calvin's ideas, in a different vein, but nonetheless recognizable. In his dedication to the Protestant cause, and the earnestness of his writing, he is like Du Bartas, but he shares, too, Marot's ability to stand aside and satirise.

His enthusiasm for the Protestant Church is commensurate with his interest in the arts of politics and of war, and at the end of his long life he could almost imagine the realisation of his dream of the final triumph of the reformed Church.<sup>2</sup> In his view the Church is subjected to relentless persecution by her enemies, the Roman Church above all, and always lies open to the vice of worldliness. He has come to understand that the ideal of liberty had been obscured even by the reformers, and he directs his invective not only against the insufficiencies of Rome, but against tyranny and officialdom in whatever form it was to be found. In 1622 he addresses a letter to the citizens of Bâle, complimenting them on their tolerance and piety: "Deux choses aujourd'huy sont en bute aux Rois qui servent l'Antechrist, à sçavoir

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1. c.f. CALVIN, Au lecteur, and Au Roy, ed. BENOÎT, pp.23 - 24, 27 - 28.  
 2. PLATTARD, Agrippa d'Aubigné, Paris, 1931, pp.59, 67.

la Religion et la liberté. Ces deux choses sont à défendre ensemble et bénis estes vous de Dieu de ce que il se fait vostre partisan en ces deux querelles, à cause de la première principalement."<sup>1</sup> He looks beyond the reformers to the primitive Church, though of course his inspiration comes from his immediate predecessors. In its submission to persecution the Church was following the example set by the primitive Church with its flawless spirit of detachment. "Car encor en ces actes derniers vous trouvez les premières marques de l'Eglise en son enfance... En ce petit traité et au traitement qui commence par la France, vous verrez que l'esprit de Dieu a toujours eu sa force, qu'il la communique à son Eglise, et puis qu'il l'honore des triomphes passez: il n'est pas las d'elle, il la tient par la main et la relevera au-dessus de ses ennemis."<sup>2</sup> The single-mindedness which the Church of the reformation shared with the early Church is well expressed in Les Feux:

"Et Cyprian disoit: 'Les personnes charnelles  
 Qui aiment leurs plaisirs cherchent-ils des fins telles?  
 Comment pourroit la mort loger dans des desirs  
 De ceux qui ont pour dieu la chair et les plaisirs?'  
 Jugez de quel crayon, de quelle couleur vive  
 Nous portons dans de front l'Eglise primitive."<sup>3</sup>

Just like the child of royal birth, found exposed by shepherds and brought

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1. D'AUBIGNÉ, Pages Inédites (transcrites par Pierre-Paul Plan, Geneva 1945) pp.101-2.
  2. Traité sur les Guerres Civiles, ed. REAUME-CAUSSADE, Paris 1877, II. pp.11-12.
  3. Les Feux, ed. GARNIER-PLATTARD, Paris 1932, II.1341-6.

up by them, so the Church appears to have been neglected and to have suffered outrage at the hands of the ungodly, but one day she will come into her inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

"Quelquesfois en me pourmenant  
 La verité m'alloit menant  
 Aux lieux où celle qui enfante,  
 De peur de se perdre, se perd,  
 Et où l'Eglise qu'on tormente  
 S'enferma d'eaudans le desert."<sup>2</sup>

The reason for the present distress of the Church is that since the loss of her original simplicity she has laid herself open to the vengeance of God.

"Un temps, de son Eglise il soustint l'innocence,  
 Ne marchant qu'au secours et non à la vengeance;  
 Ores aux derniers temps, et aux plus rudes jours,  
 Il marche à la vengeance et non plus au secours."<sup>3</sup>

D'Aubigné is conscious of the different ages in the growth of the Church, analogous to the continuity of the human person or to the seasons of the year.

"Le printemps de l'Eglise et l'esté sont passés,  
 Si serez vous par moi, vers boutons, amassés,  
 Encor esclorrez-vous, fleurs si franches, si vives,  
 Bien que vous paroissiez dernieres et tardives;  
 .....

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1. Vengeances, G - P, lines 709 - 18; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. II. 8. 14.
  2. Preface to Les Tragiques, G - P, ll. 164 - 9.
  3. Vengeances, G - P, 1129 - 1132; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 4. 33.

Une rose d'automne est plus qu'une autre exquise:

Vous avez esjoui l'automne des l'Eglise."<sup>1</sup>

And the idea of the fruitfulness of autumn is not far from the harmonious maturity of the Golden Age, though the parallel is not explicitly made.

In his account of his religious discussions with Fr. Cotton, S.J., D'Aubigné shows an unwillingness to allow that the Church of Rome is a Church and illustrates this by the statement that it lacks that succession of doctrine which he sought after.<sup>2</sup> In Sa Vie à Ses Enfants, with reference to the year 1601, he describes a meeting which took place between himself and four pastors and others on the subject of the concord of religions. He puts forward the proposition that it would be advisable "de reduire toutes les controverses de l'Eglise aux regles qui se trouveroyent avoir esté fermement establies en l'Eglise primitive jusques à la fin du quatriesme siecle et commencement du suivant." The assembly agrees with him and when the result of the discussions is brought to the notice of the King he sends D'Aubigné to Cardinal du Perron; D'Aubigné advocates that since "les choses bien ordonnees venants en decadence se restituent en les amenant à leur premiere institution" then a true basis for mutual agreement would be found by a common adoption of "les constitutions de l'Eglise establies et observees en elle jusques à la fin du quatriesme siecle."<sup>3</sup> A practical mode of procedure would be for either

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1. Les Feux, G - P, 1127 - 1130; 1133 - 4.

2. ed. RÉAUME - CAUSSADE, I. p.391.

3. Sa Vie à Ses Enfants, ed. RÉAUME - CAUSSADE, I. pp.78 - 9.



party to propose in turn articles of reform. On another occasion, in a letter to 'Madame, Soeur unique du Roy', he describes what he sees as the basic difference between his own attitude and that of the Church of Rome, a disagreement about the nature of authority and the sources of doctrine in the Church. "Nous honorons tant l'antiquité, que nous ne voulons recevoir pour principes que la primitive Eglise en sa pureté, Jesus-Christ, et ses Apotres, et ce qui est du vieil Testament. Eux au contraire maintiennent pour axiomes les traditions incertaines et nouvelles, les escrits de leurs Peres pleins d'heresies et contrarietz, et les plus sains, de doubtes et imperfections. Jugés qui a pour principe la venerable anticquité. Nous n'avons pour loix que celles du vieil et nouveau Testament; eux, toutes les inventions et nouveautez des Papes, comme les voeux, et la desfence des mariages et des viandes..."<sup>1</sup>

D'Aubigné finds no reason to hide his feelings about the Church of Rome, though he often treats the Roman Party with the disdain he showed towards his political opponents.<sup>2</sup> His criticism is not superficial; he aims to overthrow the very principle of Papal Supremacy, but on psychological and not on theological grounds.

"Imperio Satanae se vovit Papa, suoque

Se totum Papae Rex dedit imperio.

Pluribus ut mediis specie tolerabilis aequi

Cogimur inferno subdere colla jugo."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Lettre à Mme., Soeur Unique du Roy, R - C, I. p.542; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 10. 18.
  2. c.f. Les Fers, G - P, 11.1413 - 6; Misères, 1377 - 1380.
  3. Pages Inédites, De Rege et Papa, p.180.

Any form of discipline, apart from self-discipline, he found irksome, yet he was not so radical as to discard the Church as an institution. Religion was pre-eminently an affair between individual persons and God, but there was still the need for external communication among men in the matter of religion, and scope for corporate activity, provided that the individual's freedom was not jeopardised. D'Aubigné is concerned to support the ideal of monarchy and at the same time to build in restrictions which guard against the possibility of tyranny.<sup>1</sup> One of the ways in which a king could be guilty of tyranny was the attempt to gain dominion over the individual conscience, and in the same way, for D'Aubigné, the underlying principle of the papacy is tyrannical in that it aims to bind in the internal forum, where God alone is judge, and in the case of people who would not admit to being under the jurisdiction of the Pope.<sup>2</sup>

"J'ai presché que le Pape en terre n'est point Dieu,

Et qu'il est seulement evesque d'un seul lieu:

Les docteurs, luy donnans du monde la maistrise,

Le font visible chef de la visible Eglise."<sup>3</sup>

It is this alleged usurpation of jurisdiction which D'Aubigné finds so hard to bear; he drew upon all the conventional antipapal argument and imagery, because he felt that his personal freedom had been infringed.

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1. c.f. Miseres, G - P, 191 sqq. - note Vol. I, p.55; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 20. 8.

2. PLATTARD, op. cit., pp.76 - 7; c.f. Du Devoir Mutuel des Roys et Des Subjects, R - C, II., p.55; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 19. 14.

3. Les Feux, G - P, ll. 687 - 690; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 6. 1.

"En ce fascheux estat, France et Francois, vous estes  
 Nourris, entretenus par estrangeres bestes,  
 Bestes de qui le but et le principal soin  
 Est de mettre à jamais au tyrannique poin  
 De la beste de Rome un sceptre qui commande  
 L'Europe, et encor plus que l'Europe n'est grande.  
 Aussi l'orgueil de Rome est à ce point levé  
 Que d'un prestre tout Roi, tout Empereur bravé  
 Est marchepied fangeux; on void, sans qu'on s'estonne,  
 La pantoufle crotter les lys de la couronne."<sup>1</sup>

D'Aubigné almosts equates the papacy with tyranny, since the main point in the attack he directs against the Pope is the nature and the extent of papal power, which he considers an unwarranted imposition.

A further object of bitter attack is the work of the theologians, not as such, since theology does not have central importance for D'Aubigné, but as tyrants in their own sphere, with the monopoly of free thought; his dissatisfaction lies with the sacrosanct character of their pronouncements, the shackling force of tradition, and their esoteric obscurity which he saw as a direct contrast to the simple message of the reformers.<sup>2</sup> Though his disapproval of the logomachia of the Sorbonne was antitheological as well as antiphilosophical, his purpose, for all that, was a profoundly moral and religious one.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Misères, G - P, ll.1209 - 1218; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 7. 22, etc.
  2. Jugement, G - P, ll.1085 - 92; c.f. note p.189; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 15. 6 - 7, etc.
  3. Ib. ll.543 - 549.

His acquaintance with the Bible does not seem to have been as intimate as Du Bartas' was, but he does appreciate its educative importance. In dealing with the apparent lack of miracles after the first Pentecost he says,

" à eux qui esperoyent en ombre  
Ces ombres profitoyent, nous vivons en clarté,  
Et à l'oeil possedons le corps de verité." <sup>1</sup>

and in Les Feux he says of Richard de Gastines (died 1569),

"Asseuré de sa mort il prescha l'Evangile.  
L'escole de lumiere, en cette obscurité,  
Donnoit aux enferrés l'entiere liberté." <sup>2</sup>

Complete satisfaction is to be found in a reliance on Scripture:

"O que c'est grand'sagesse à l'homme de pouvoir  
Et vouloir ignorer ce qu'il ne faut savoir!  
O combien est heureux celuy qui se contente

De ce que l'Esprit Saint par escript luy present!" <sup>3</sup>

D'Aubigné is however, aware of the need of tradition in the life of the Church. God is speaking to us today as he did to the Jews of old, and D'Aubigné threatens a repetition of God's punishments for a lack of response today. He is himself captivated by the persuasive tone of the Bible, and wishes to emulate it in his work.

1. Vengeances, G - P, ll. 754 - 756.

2. Les Feux, G - P, ll. 726 - 728.

3. La Creation, I, ad fin. R - C, III, p.335; c.f. CALVIN, Inst., III. 2. 6.

"Nous sommes ennuyés de livres qui enseignent, donnez-nous en pour esmouvoir, en un siecle où tout zele chrestien est peri, où la difference du vray et du mensonge est comme abolie, où les mains des ennemies de l'Eglise cachent le sang duquel elles sont tachees sous les presens, et leurs inhumanités sous la libéralité." <sup>1</sup> At the same time as he boasts of his high moral purpose he admits his prejudice and that his appeal will not be universal. He lacks Du Bartas' ability to mollify everybody.

"Le livre qui suit le cinquieme s'appalle Vengeances, théologien et historial. Lui et le dernier, qui est le Jugement, d'un style eslevé, tragicque, pourrant estre blasnés pour la passion partizane; mais ce genre d'escrire a pour but d'esmouvoir, et l'auteur le tient quitte s'il peut cela sur les esprits desjà passionnez ou pour le moins aequanimes." <sup>2</sup>

Like Du Bartas D'Aubigné saw the atmosphere of his own time as not conducive to the exercise of religion.

"As-tu esteint en nous ton sanctuaire? Non,  
De nos temples vivans sortira ton renom.  
Tel est en cest estat le tableau de l'Eglise:  
Elle a les fers aux pieds, sur les geennes assise,  
A sa gorge la corde et le fer inhumain,  
Un pseume dans la bouche, et un luth en la main.  
Tu aimes de ses mains la parfaicte harmonie:  
Nostre luth chantera le principe de vie." <sup>3</sup>

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1. Aux Lecteurs, G - P, p.3; c.f. CALVIN, Au Lecteur, ed BENOIT, p.23.  
2. Ib. pp.16 - 11.  
3. Miseres, G - P, 1337 - 44.

And he gives as the first of his reasons for writing, "l'amour de l'Eglise qui a besoin de fomentations."<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigné sees himself as a prophet selected by God for the purpose of supporting religion in the sixteenth century against the deprivations of its enemies.

"Le doigt de Dieu me leve et l'ame encore vive  
 M'anime à guerroyer la puante Ninive,  
 Ninive qui n'aura sac ne gemissement  
 Pour changer le grand Dieu qui n'a de changement.  
 Voici l'Eglise encor en son enfance tendre:  
 Satan ne faillit pas d'essayer à surprendre  
 Ce berceau consacré...."<sup>2</sup>

His writing, too, is carried out for the honour and glory of God, and in performing this task he is fulfilling the role allotted to him in the kingdom which is the Church:

"Servir Dieu, c'est regner: ce regne est pur et doux."<sup>3</sup> D'Aubigné is called to set free the Church in bondage.

"Mais dessous les autels des idoles j'advise  
 ? De visage meurti de la captive Eglise,  
 Qui à sa delivrance (aux despens des hazards)  
 M'appelle, m'animant de ses tranchants regards."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Aux Lecteurs, G - P, pp.6 - 7.
  2. Vengeances, G - P, 137 - 143; c.f. Traité sur les Guerres Civiles, ('le soutien de la cause de Dieu'), RC II. 30; c.f. also, "Le Chrestien ne cherche autre utilité que de servir à Dieu qu'il le mette en compte de regner, et satisfaire selon qu'il peut aux debtes que nous avons envers Dieu, qui sont la crainte et l'amour." (Pages Inédites, p.77). c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. 2. 1.
  3. Aux Lecteurs, G - p, p.15.
  4. Miserés, G - P, pp.13 - 16.

The role of liberator is not one which falls to the lot of every Christian, however zealous, but all are indeed bound to be aware of the persecutions of the Church in so far as they affect other members as well as themselves: "...c'est une très mauvaise marque d'estre membre de l'Eglise que de ne compatir point à ses afflictions, de ne point sentir la froissure de Jacob, parler de nos misères en mespris, et proprement diffamer les allures de l'oinct de Dieu, qui ne sont point sans la croix."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the rather elevated idea he had of his own position in the history of the Church, D'Aubigné accepts wholeheartedly the axiom, shared by Marot and Du Bartas, of 'soli Deo gloria'. It is well expressed in Les Fers,

"Ne chante que de Dieu, n'oubliant que lui mesme

T'a retiré...

...

Tu m'as montré, ô Dieu, que celui qui te sert

Sauve sa vie alors que pour toy il la perd:

...

Tu m'as donné la voix, je te louerai, mon Dieu."<sup>2</sup>

His religious purpose is to contribute according to his means to the sanctifying aim of the Church: "...ayant pour but principal d'eslever les coeurs plus haut que la terre et mener les esprits dans le Saint des Saints, appellé le sanctuaire du Fort, mon bust est de découvrir au secret de ce temple à quel trébuchet il faut peser les miséricordes

1. Pages Inédites, p.78.

2. Les Fers, G - P, ll.1425 - 6, 1431 - 2, 1435; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. 2. 2.

et les justices de celui qui règne sur les rois." <sup>1</sup>

The specific malice of those who arrogate to themselves the function of the king is not that they are parodying the image of God; it lies in the lack of humility which makes them unwilling to see the application of 'soli Deo gloria' to themselves.

"Charognes de tyrans balancés en haut lieu,

Fantastiques rivaux de la gloire de Dieu." <sup>2</sup>

The point is found illustrated time after time in the Old Testament, and God's purpose is clear.

"Il veut vaincre par soy et rendre consolés

Les camps tout ruinés et les coeurs desolés,

Les tirer du tombeau afin que la victoire

De luy, et non de nous, eternise la gloire.

C'est pourquoy Dieu maudit les Rois du peuple hebreu

Qui contoyent leurs soldats, non la force de Dieu." <sup>3</sup>

D'Aubigné points to the perennial temptation in human triumphs to ascribe success to our own effectiveness, and contends that the true Christian turns everything to the honour of God. This rendering to God what is His due is a sign of the holiness of the Church. In Les Fers Satan says to God,

"Deschaine-moy les poings, remets entre mes mains

Ces chrestiens obstinés qui, parmi les humains,

1. Hist. Universelle, ed. DE RUBLE IX, pp.455 - 6 - quoted in G - P, under Miserés, 1263 sqq. (p.130).

2. Vengeances, G - P, 503 - 4.

3. Les Fers, G - P. 437 - 442.



Font gloire de ton nom: si ma force est esteinte,  
Lors je confesseray que ton Eglise est sainte." <sup>1</sup>

While D'Aubigné is happier when he is describing the glory of God in purely Calvinistic terms, he does occasionally give it a philosophical rather than a religious basis.

"De tout la gloire est Dieu; cette essence divine  
Est de l'universel principe et origine;" <sup>2</sup>

For D'Aubigné, as for Du Bartas, the personal application of this was that he should participate in the teaching mission of the Church through the means of his poetry.

"Pour me faire instrument: à ces effets divers  
Donne force à ma voix, efficace à mes vers." <sup>3</sup>

The fact that D'Aubigné thought of the Church in political terms explains the querulous tone of much of his work; by the end of his life, (and he was still writing in 1630), the cycle has been completed and the Church has regained something of her character as an institution, and, indeed, D'Aubigné has gone to the extreme of envisaging the Church, in so far as he dealt with it in a general manner, as an external social body, perhaps even visible - only for him the Church was the Protestant Church and nothing else. It is true, of course, that D'Aubigné develops the stock idea of the visible Church in a sarcastic vein. In the chapter, 'L'Eglise invisible, des reliques et bonne intention', of the 'Aventures du Baron de Faeneste', the two characters discuss the

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1. Les Fers, G - P, 171 - 174.
  2. Jugement, G - P, 483 - 4.
  3. Ib. 7 - 8.

visibility of the Church:

E. Que n'achevez-vous de nous reprocher, comme les sauvages, que nostre Dieu est invisible?

F. Nous outres boulons tout bisivle.

E. C'Est pourquoi entre les reliques de S. Front, on trouva dans une petite phiole un esternement du S. Esprit.<sup>1</sup>

And in a letter to M. de Montauzier D'Aubigné attempts to show by a syllogism which he writes in Greek that the Church, if it is to be Catholic must also be invisible, and in any case all the attributes (marks) of the Church are invisible. No satisfactory reply is given to these arguments in the text.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless D'Aubigné has a greater understanding of the Church as an institution than had his immediate predecessors in this kind of writing and even than his contemporaries. In contrast with this is his satire of the visible nature of the Church. In Les Avis de Luat (after 1597) he tells of an imaginary tapestry depicting the Church; his account becomes an amplification of the stock apocalyptic description.

"Au premier estoit un chariot tiré avec hault de bois par quatre démons enlevé de la place de derrière pour la place du Triomphant en laquelle estoit un monstre en forme de Femme vestue d'escarlatte. Elle avoit tout d'humain ormis qu'il luy estoit impossible de lever la face en haut, mais elle l'avoit courbée en terre, à la mode des brutes..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Aventures du Baron de Faeneste, R - C.

2. R - C, I. p.384.

3. Pages Inédites, pp.154 - 5.

This passage is followed by a reference to the Pope and the Cardinals who are satirised mainly for their ignorance and stupidity. This is made all the more striking by the juxtaposed eulogy of the simplicity and austerity of the early Church. D'Aubigné is interested in that institution which has continuity (or more strictly homogeneity) with the primitive Church.

The virtues he applauds in her are generally outward-looking and descriptive of the relation of the individual and his fellows. Apart from a few scattered remarks he does not have much to say about the theological virtues; all his ideals could be seen as slightly sublimated versions of the social qualities advocated by early Renaissance humanists, divorced from any Godward tendency. His repetition of what Du Bartas had had to say about the qualities attendant upon the Golden Age is in a rather desiccated manner. He frequently denigrates the worldlings of his own day, but in sharp contrast to the forward-looking enthusiasm of Du Bartas: "Enfans de vanité" and "Enfans du siècle vain, fils de la vanité" are typical phrases in this regard.

"O enfans de ce siècle, ô abusez mocqueurs,  
 Employables esprits, incorrigibles cœurs,  
 Vos esprits trouveront en la fosse profonde  
 Vrai ce qu'ils ont pensé une fable en ce monde." <sup>1</sup>

In Vengeances D'Aubigné picks up this theme again:

"Les enfans de ce siècle ont Sathan pour nourrice", <sup>2</sup>  
 and since on another occasion he describes the Pope as 'l'aisné fils de

1. Jugement, R - C, 361, 857, 981 - 4.

2. Vengeances, G - P, 49.

Satan<sup>1</sup> it is reasonable to assume that the principal offender against the spirit of the interior life was the Papal party.

While it is true that he advocated the love rather than the fear of God,

"Dieu veut que son image en nos coeurs soit empreinte;

Estre craint par amour et non aimé par crainte,"<sup>2</sup>

he does not relate this strictly to the practice of the virtue of charity among men. His statement concerning France that,

"On voit perir en toi la chaleur naturelle,

Le feu de charité, tout' amour mutuelle",<sup>3</sup>

could be taken as a refined expression of Renaissance philanthropism. Much of what he says about peace, too, could be the result of such a frame of mind, except that peace is the condition for the Church to perform her function unmolested.

"J'ai la terre laissée - It is peace who is speaking -

"Qui me laisse (dit-elle) et qui m'a déchassée;

Tout y est abruti, tout est de moi quitté

En sommeil lethargie, d'une tranquillité

Que le monde chérit, et n'a pas connaissance

Qu'elle est fille d'enfer, guerre de conscience,

Fausse paix qui vouloit desrober mon manteau

1. Jugement, G - P, 825.

2. Ib. 11. - 17 - 18.

3. Miseres, G - P, 653 - 4; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. 17. 2; II. 16. 1.

Pour cacher dessous lui le feu et le couteau;

A porter dans le sein des agneaux de l'Eglise

En la guerre et la mort qu'un nom de paix desguise."<sup>1</sup>

He castigates the superficiality of a peace which is so only in name, not because it lacks a firm religious foundation but that it is not genuine.<sup>2</sup> In one of his many apostrophes to his own country he says,

"Tu te crevois de graisse en patience, mais

Ta paix estoit la soeur bastarde de la paix."<sup>3</sup>

There is nothing particularly Godward in,

"J'appelle Dieu pour juge, et tout haut je deteste

Les violeurs de paix, les perfides parfaicts,

Qui d'une salle cause amenant tels effects."<sup>4</sup>

Peace is here a purely human quality. D'Aubigné makes an application of the story of Cain and Abel to the contemporary scene of domestic strife.

"En eux deux on peut voir (beau portrait de l'Eglise)

Comme l'ire et le feu des ennemis s'attise

De bien fort peu de bois et s'augmente beaucoup."<sup>5</sup>

While the issue is prejudiced by the use of two such highly-coloured figures, it does serve to show D'Aubigné's insistence on the innocence of the suffering Church. The passage continues with a different

1. La Chambre Dorée, G - P, 69 - 78.

2. Pages Inédites, p.29.

3. Misères, G - P, 691 - 2.

4. Ib. 430 - 2.

5. Vengeances, G P, 161 - 3.

allegory, which describes graphically D'Aubigné's theory of what happened at the Reformation.

"Satan fit ce que fait en ce siecle le loup  
 Qui querelle l'agneau beuvant à la riviere,  
 Luy en haut vers la source et l'agneau plus arriere.  
 L'Antechrist et ses loups reprochent que leur eau  
 Se trouble au contreflot par l'innocent agneau;  
 La source des grandeurs et des biens de la terre  
 Decoule de leurs chefs, et la paix et la guerre  
 Balacent à leur gré dans leurs impures mains:"<sup>1</sup>

It is abundantly clear from this whom Cain represents and that the enemies of the Church are not just the irreligious, but the members of the Church of Rome... and for D'Aubigné the responsibility for the shattering of peace lies with them; here again, peace is synonymous with political stability.

As Du Bartas did, so D'Aubigné makes peace dependent upon the practice of justice.

"Rien n'estoit honoré parmi toi que le vice;  
 Au ciel estoit bannie en pleurant la justice,  
 L'Eglise au sec desert, la verité apres."<sup>2</sup>

Truth has been banished and is now in hiding.<sup>3</sup> D'Aubigné's horror of

1. Ib. 164 - 71 et sqq; c.f. Du Devoir Mutuel des Roys et Des Subjects, R - C, II p.39. and Preface to Les Tragiques, G - P, II.229 - 234.
2. Miseres, G P - 693 - 5.
3. Ib. 1307; c.f. Préface des Tragiques, passim; Princes, 162 - 5.

the mercilessness of impersonal officialdom, and of positive injustice, led him to denounce the Inquisition as it appeared to him. In the following passage he attacks those who preached the use of coercive measures and the officials who implemented them.

"Et vous qui le faux nom de l'Eglise prenez,  
 Qui de faicts criminels, sobres, vous abstenez,  
 Qui en ostez les mains et y trempez les langues,  
 Qui tires pour couteau vos meurtrieres harangues,  
 Qui jugez en secret, publics solliciteurs,  
 N'estes-vous pas juifs, race de ces docteurs  
 Qui confessoient tousjours, en criant: 'Crucifie! '  
 Que la loy leur defend de juger une vie ...." <sup>1</sup>

But it was not God's law which he thought was being contravened so much as the spirit of humanitas.

" ..... celui est plus subtil,  
 Le plus loué de tous, qui sans changer de face  
 Pousse le sang au vent avec meilleure grace,  
 Qui brise sans courroux la loy d'humanité." <sup>2</sup>

The greatest hardship brought about by the 'pesante domination de l'Injustice'<sup>3</sup> is the stifling of freedom of conscience; the greatest

1. La Chambre Dorée, G P, 595 - 602.

2. Les Fers, G P, 576 - 579; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 20. 3 ("... et que l'humanité consiste entre les humains".) c.f. D'AUBIGNE, Traité sur les guerres civiles, RC II 30.

3. Devoir des Roys, RC II p.67.

indignity is the enforced submission to the See of Rome,<sup>1</sup>

Though the virtues listed above are those characteristic of the Golden Age, D'Aubigné does not stand out as a visionary; he wished to promote these qualities in the society of his own day to ensure for the Church an undisturbed sphere of action, even if sometimes he sees the Church only as an institution, to enable her to carry out her vocation of modelling that society. He would wish for a community more appreciative of the mystical elements in religion.

"Comme tu as promis, donne en ces derniers ans  
Songe à nos vieillards, visions aux enfans.

Fay paroistre aux petits les choses inconues."<sup>2</sup>

This, however, is something he wants to come about here and now, and would be an enriching of the state of affairs already existing rather than a projected reconstruction in the future, no matter how near. The king who will be the binding force in this reorganized society, though specially favoured by God, is not so much the earthly counterpart of the Messianic King, as a human monarch (who must nevertheless imitate Christ,) on whom limitations are imposed to ensure that he will be 'juste dans sa pitie'.<sup>3</sup>

"O Prince, ton propre est de bien dire et mieux faire,  
De parler du Sauveur, mais plus de l'imiter."<sup>4</sup>

1. Ib. p.68; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 19. 4; IV. 10. 1.

2. Vengeances, G P, 15 - 17.

3. Princes, G P, 522.

4. Ode à la louange de Maurice de Nassau, Pages Inédites, p.120.



The very close union between 'Le glaive temporel et celui de l'Esprit'<sup>1</sup> is seen in one of the Royal Sonnets.

"O Prince valeureux, le phoenix qu'on adore

....

Tu as esté, tu es, du char le fort limon,

Ta patrie est la nef dont tu es le timon;

Les voiles tes subjects; le quadron, l'Evangile;

Le bon vent, Jesus Christ et vérité le Nort;

L'ancre, la foy; la mer, l'eglise et puis le port,

Liberté, dont l'Un-Trois est le nocher agile."<sup>2</sup>

D'Aubigné is one of the least prone to flattery of his contemporaries.

He has too acute an awareness of the proximity of tyranny to allow a king more than he merited.<sup>3</sup> Some people saw him even as an opponent of the system.

"Quant à n'aymer pas la Royauté, cette invention est deue au Duc de Bouillon, qui vouloit récriminer sur moy quand je touchois la marchandize du publicq. J'appelle à ma deffense sur ce point mes propos et mes escriptz publics, qui sont les seuelles voyes par lesquelles on peut faire le bien et le mal..."<sup>4</sup>

Because of D'Aubigné's equation of the Church with the visible Protestant Church there is no need to look any further than this for the distinguishing marks. He sees the one outstanding note as that of suffering.

1. Ib. p.121; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 19. 15; IV. 20. 1.

2. Pages Inédites, p.123.

3. Confession Catholique du Sieur de Sancy, Bk.2. Ch.7. RC II. p.348; c.f. Aux Lecteurs, G P. p.15.

4. Pages Inédites, p.45.

"Dieu fit la force vaine et l'appui vain perir  
 Quand l'Eglise n'eut plus la marque de souffrir,  
 Connoissant les humains qui n'ont leur esperance  
 En leur puissant secours que vaincus d'impuissance." <sup>1</sup>

The same thought is very clearly expressed in Vengeances:

"O martyres aimez! ô douce affliction!  
 Perpetuelle marque à la sainte Sion." <sup>2</sup>

It is a permanent trait of the Church that there should be a sort of dialectic between victim and oppressor.

"Ne caressez chez vous d'une pareille veuë  
 Le chien fidelle et doux et le chien enragé,  
 L'atheiste affligeant, le chrestien affligé.  
 Nous sommes pleins de sang, l'un en perd, l'autre en tire,  
 L'un est persecuteur, l'autre endure martyre." <sup>3</sup>

The tribulations of the Jewish people are today reenacted in the Church which must first be purged of its impurities if it is to qualify for its inheritance.

"Qui voudra se sauver de l'Egypte infidelle,  
 Conquerir Canaan et habiter en elle,  
 O tribus d'Israël, il faut marcher de rang  
 Dedans le golfe rouge et dans la mer de sang..." <sup>4</sup>

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1. Les Fers, G P, 425 - 428; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. II. 8. 14.
  2. Vengeances, 703 - 704.
  3. Les Fers, 1545 - 9.
  4. Ib. 521 - 526.

D'Aubigné accepts that persecution is sent by God to test the faith of the elect, but there is no excuse for deliberate social injustice on the part of Christians themselves.

"Quand Dieu eut tournoyé, la terre toute en feu  
 Contre sa verité, et après qu'il eust veu  
 La souffrance des siens, au contraire il advise  
 Ceux qui tiennent le lieu et le nom de l'Eglise  
 Ivres de sang, de vin, qui, enflés au milieu  
 Du monde et des malheurs, blasphement contre Dieu  
 ...  
 Jugeoyent et partageoyent, en grondans comme chiens,  
 Des pauvres de l'Eglise et les droicts et les biens  
 ...  
 Il se repentit donc d'avoir formé la terre." <sup>1</sup>

The extent of oppressive injustice in the world of his own time seemed to D'Aubigné unparalleled in any period so short.

"Où le siecle qui court nous offre et va contant  
 Autant de cruautés, de jugemens autant  
 Qu'aux trois mille ans premiers de l'enfance du monde,  
 Qu'aux quinze cens après de l'Eglise seconde." <sup>2</sup>

But truth is always present in the Church and will prevail.<sup>3</sup> Like Calvin, D'Aubigné knew only too well that much of the unhappiness was unnecessary and that the Church itself was composed of bad as well as good members. They are variously described as the 'maquignons de Satan'

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1. Les Feux, G P, 1363 - 8, 1375 - 6, 1397.
  2. Vengeances, G P, 741 - 746.
  3. Méditation sur Ps. 84, RC II p.141.

and 'rogneuses brebis, les pestes du troupeau, "Ou galles que l'Eglise arrache de sa peau."<sup>1</sup> When Satan asks God for permission to test the staying power of the Christians God permits him to do as he pleases but assures him,

"Ton filet n'enclorra que les abandonnés

Qui furent nés pour toy premier que fussent nés."<sup>2</sup>

D'Aubigné does on several occasions rise above his more usual attitude of a collective self-consciousness or self-pity in the Church in this matter of suffering, when he relates the persecution of the Church to that of Christ.

"Sont-ce des eschaffauds, sont-ce des buchers, premiers eschellons, premieres elevations pour quitter la terre?

Disons: Nous sommes membres de Christ puis qu'il parfait ses souffrances en ses membres et qu'il veut les continuer en nous...."<sup>3</sup>

D'Aubigné returns to this theme, which was evidently of great importance to him, on several occasions.<sup>4</sup>

The mark of persecution is closely allied with the thought that it is the elect who are being singled out as victims of the injustice of their enemies.

1. Jugement, G P, 109, 114 - 116; c.f. GALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 7.

2. Les Fers, G P, 179 - 180.

3. Devoir des Roys, RC II, p.69; c.f. GALVIN, Inst. III. 8. 9.

4. c.f. Méd. sur Ps.73, RC II. p.172; c.f. also RC I, 548; Jugement, GP, 27 - 28.

"Il faut que nous voyons si les hautes vengeances  
 S'endorment au giron des celestes puissances,  
 Et si, comme jadis le veritable Dieu  
 Distingua du Gentil son heritage hebrieu,  
 S'il separe auhourd'huy par les couleurs anciennes  
 Des troupes de l'enfer l'eslection des siennes."<sup>1</sup>

God's discrimination of the good and the wicked is described in  
 Biblical terms in Jugement:

"Dieu tient son van trieur pour mettre l'aire en point  
 Et consumer l'esteule au feu qui ne meurt point."<sup>2</sup>

More specifically D'Aubigné gives evidence of Calvinistic tendencies  
 in Les Fers where he makes God say to Satan:

"Je te permets, Satan, dit l'Eternel alors,  
 D'esteindre par le fer la pluspart de leur corps."<sup>3</sup>

A key passage for the understanding of D'Aubigné's thought is  
 contained in the meditation on Psalm 51; while it is true that the  
 text is an interpretation of the psalmist's words, D'Aubigné seems to  
 be in sympathy with them, and his commentary sums up his attitude to  
 election (especially the historical progress of election), God's  
 providential care for the Chosen People, and the holiness of the Church.

"C'est une charité hors la mesure de nos sens, que le Tout  
 Puissant createur de tout l'Univers, conservateur de tout ce qui a  
 estre...ait voulu choisir de tant de Royaumes un Royaume, de tant de

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1. Vengeances, GP, 697 - 702.

2. Jugement, GP, 35 - 36.

3. Les Fers, GP, 175 - 176; CALVIN, Inst. II. 8. 14; IV. 1. 7, 15.

Provinces Canaan, de tant de montaignes Sion, de tant de peuples un peuple acquis, saint et separé... que ce troupeau bienheureux soit seul par qui il veut estre loué. Mais voici une seconde charité qui surpasse la premiere, que la nation esleuë ayant renoncé ou crucifié le Sauveur et Dieu de gloire, il a mis la main sur nous, et sans occasion de choix, en ce qui estoit du nostre, nous a tirés d'entre les idolatres courans après les bois et la pierre, pour nous adopter en la place et au rang des enfans d'Abraham: si bien que nous puissions dire de nous, que c'est en sa très sainte cité qu'il a choisi sa demeure, et que c'est de nous qu'il veut ses loüanges."<sup>1</sup>

The Church has occasion to allow the wicked to remain temporarily within her sphere of influence, but they are present only on sufferance, and are rejected by the Church more violently than Calvin would have advised.

D'Aubigné makes extensive use of the Biblical metaphors to describe the sufferings of the elect and the way in which God has singled some men out, and how at various stages in the history of the Church only a remnant has been left to start almost afresh the renewal of the face of the Church. In talking of the massacre of St. Barthélemy he shows how the Church gathers strength in the face of persecution.

"Telle resta l'Eglise aux sangliers eschappee  
Que d'un champ tout fougé la face dissipee,  
Dont les riches espics tous meurs et jaunissans  
Languissent sous les pieds des chevaux fracassans..."

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1. Méd. sur Ps.51, RC II. pp.186 - 7.

But a remnant remains:

"Ceux-ci, dessous l'abri de ces haliers espais,

Prennent vie en la mort,

...

C'est ainsi que seront gardés des inhumains,

Pour resemer l'Eglise, encore quelques grains

Armés d'afflictions, grains que les mains divines

Font naistre à la faveur des poignantes espines,

Moisson de grand espoir: car c'est moisson de Dieu

Qui la fera renaistre en son temps, en son lieu."<sup>1</sup>

We may assure ourselves that we possess God's heritage by the evident fact of the existence of this remnant and the renewal of life in the Church.<sup>2</sup> Those who reject God's Church are compared to the prodigal son and to Esau, whereas those who are like Jacob, "possèdent avec la maison et heritage la paternelle benediction avec moins d'esclat que les prodiges, mais en douceur et en seurté."<sup>3</sup>

Though D'Aubigné was well aware of the need for preaching and an expansive holiness of example, (he says of kings, for instance,

"... beaux pilliers de son temple,

Vous estes de ce temple et la gloire et l'exemple:"<sup>4</sup>),

he did not wish us to lose sight of the fact that the primary purpose of election was the enjoyment of life with God in heaven.<sup>5</sup> His

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1. Les Fers, GP, 721-724, 731-32, 739-744.

2. Lettre à Mme. de Rohan, RC I. p.397.

3. Méd. sur Ps. 16, RC. II. p.213.

4. Princes, GP, 401-402.

5. c.f. Jugement, GP, 875-882 etc; Méd. sur Ps.51, RC, II pp.186-7; Méd. sur Ps.84, RC II. pp.148-9. cf. CALVIN, Inst. III.21.1, III.22.3.

preoccupation with the daily happenings of his own time, while steering him away from the idealism of the Golden Age, did not prevent him from thinking of the heavenly kingdom as the only true one in contrast to the makeshift community of this earth.

The Church is holy because it was chosen by God, (un peuple acquis, saint et séparé);<sup>1</sup> he protected it when it was relatively free from fault and his apparent rejection of it now is therapeutic.<sup>2</sup> D'Aubigné ensures that the membership of the Church is holy by effectively excluding all those who are not.<sup>3</sup> It is apostolic because it models itself on the Church of the apostles. D'Aubigné has an imperfect conception of tradition; his apostolicity is one of similarity rather than identity of continuity. Universality is not a term which he would find readily acceptable. He was aware that the Protestant Church as he knew it was not universal, and part of his antipapal satire was directed at this very quality.

"Mon regne est à jamais, ma puissance éternelle,  
 Pour monarque me sert l'Eglise universelle;  
 Je maintiens le Papat, tout-puissant en ce lieu  
 Où, si Dieu je ne suis, pour le moins vice-Dieu."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Méd. sur. Ps. 51, RC II. p.187; c.f. Les Feux, GP, 1400 - 1406; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 17.
  2. Vengeances, GP 1129 - 1132.
  3. The wicked are present in the Church, but are not true members; c.f. Jugement, GP, 109, 114 - 116; CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 7.
  4. Jugement, GP, 831 - 834.



Had he been more of a theoriser he might have seen that since Christ's reign was universal his own Church could not be more than a part of a whole, but he was perhaps too hidebound by the very narrowness of outlook which he thought he was discountenancing. His attempt to show that an appeal to mere numbers as a proof of catholicity is valueless as a distinguishing mark leads him to the extreme of denying any importance to this quality.<sup>1</sup>

Unity, too, is not particularly meaningful for him, except in so far as he advocated a rigid orthodoxy, and a mutual charity which was not specifically religious.<sup>2</sup> The kingdom of God is contrasted with that of Satan in the same way as the 'enfants du ciel' are contrasted with the 'enfants de ce siecle'.

"Je vien de redresser emprise sur emprise,

Les fers apres les feux encontre ton Eglise",<sup>3</sup>

says Satan. Although we may find here a suggestion that D'Aubigné was generalising the forces of evil in the world, we should take literally the conception that God and Satan have all the powers of human kings within their respective monarchies without the limitations attached to them.

"Dieu fit là merveille, ce lieu

Est le sanctuaire de Dieu;

Là Satan n'a l'yvroye mise

Ni la semence de sa main;

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1. Lettre à Mme. Soeur Unique du Roy, RC I pp.543 - 4.
  2. c.f. Pages Inédites, pp.9 - 10.
  3. Les Fers, GP, 89 - 90.

Là les agnelets de l'Eglise

Sautent au nez du loup romain."<sup>1</sup>

D'Aubigné does not make very much reference to the kingdom of Christ, but this is not the result of a lack of religion; we do not expect from him the elaborate Christology of the theologian, but it is surprising that he went no further in this matter than he did. His several veiled or overt references to the mystical body have as their purpose an analogical description of the framework of the State and not the Church, and even if this can be taken as the totality of the corpus christianum, the stress, if any, is on the secular side.

"Le peuple estant le corps et les membres du Roy,

Le Roy est chef du peuple..."<sup>2</sup>

Princes have the task of uniting this (political) body, which, de facto, embraces the elect.

"Dieu veut punir les siens quand il leve sur eux,

Comme sur des meschans, les princes vicieux,

Chefs de ses membres chers...."<sup>3</sup>

In his Harangue to the Syndics de Genève, one of the qualities which must be found in those who are placed as leaders of the people is the spirit of concord. It is described as 'ceste union entre vous qui est l'instrument precieux aux mains de Dieu à vous faire subsister'.<sup>4</sup>

D'Aubigné's religious philosophy and the little theology he had

1. Préface des Tragiques, GP, 229 - 234.

2. Princes, GP, 467 - 468.

3. Ib. 391 - 393.

4. Pages Inédites, p.90; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 20. 3.

assimilated, are summed up in his manifesto in Les Feux. The speaker is Giovanni Mollio (de Montalcino) who died in 1553.

"J'ay dit que Jesus seul est nostre intercesseur.

...

J'ay dit qu' en la foy seule on est justifié,

...

J'ay dit que l'Ancien et Nouveau Testament

Sont la seule doctrine et le seul fondement.

...

O chrestiens, choisissez: vous voyez d'un costé

Le mensonge puissant, d'autre la verité;

...

... Pour moy, j'ay fait le choix:

Vien Evangile vray, va-t'en fausse doctrine!

Vive Christ, vive Christ! et meure Montalchine!"<sup>1</sup>

Theology for D'Aubigné is parenthesis to his life work of making peace in France.

"Je veux peindre la France une mere affligée,

Qui est entre ses bras de deux enfans chargée..."<sup>2</sup>

Esau and Jacob come to blows because of the greediness of the former.

Jacob is innocent and in self-defence he has started the battle 'dont le champ est la mere'.<sup>3</sup> Utterly sickened by civil religious war

D'Aubigné learns one profound truth about the Church.

"Malheur advint sur nous François

1. Les Feux, GP, 667, 670, 679 - 80, 699 - 700, 704 - 706.

2. Misères, GP, 97 - 98.

3. Ib. 103 - 110.

Quand nous bastimes sur François,  
Et ses mal-contentes armées,  
Les forces d'un prince plus fort:  
Helas! elles sont consumées,  
Et nous sur le seuil de la mort.  
Autant de tisons du courroux  
De Dieu courroucé contre nous  
Furent ces troupes blasphémantes:  
Nous avons appris ceste fois  
Que ce sont choses différentes  
Que l'Estat de Dieu et des Rois.<sup>1</sup>

But the knowledge he has gained does not affect him in any practical way since politics and religion are for him quite inseparable.

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1. Préface des Tragiques, GP 283 - 294.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Jean de Sponde

Jean de Sponde, born in 1557, was baptised a Catholic, but brought up according to the principles of the reformed religion, since his parents later became zealous Calvinists.<sup>1</sup> We are not sufficiently informed about his early years to know how much his religion meant to him. We do know that in 1584 Bèze had occasion to reprimand him for deceiving him and neglecting his religious duties,<sup>2</sup> but we have no professedly religious works from the early period. His interest in theology proper seems to date from his conversion and his lengthy discussions with Du Perron. His works before 1593 are for the most part either love poems where theology would be an intrusion, or poems on the subject of death where Sponde alternates between being a classical humanist and a non-denominational Christian.<sup>3</sup> It is not until we turn to the volume of Méditations (1588) that we are presented with a substantial amount of purely religious writing. Because of the lack of evidence there is uncertainty about the dating of much of Sponde's work; we have a definite date for the Méditations and for all the later theological books, but many of his poems, the bulk, in fact, of his literary output, are occasional pieces and were published much

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1. A. BOASE, in Jean de Sponde, Meditations, Paris, 1954, p.xiv; c.f. also F. RUCHON in Jean de Sponde, Poésies, Geneva, 1949, p.15.
  2. BOASE in Méditations, p.xxxvii.
  3. *Ib.* p.CLIV.

later in anthologies. From the internal evidence of various poetical works we can establish their dates with reference to the date of the Méditations. I follow Boase in his tentative scheme which places the Essay de Poèmes Chrestiens (containing the Stances et Sonnets de la Mort and the Stances de la Cène) just before the Méditations; the love sonnets would seem to have been written not long before the poems on death.<sup>1</sup>

In 1589 appeared the Advertissement au Roy où sont deduictes les Raisons d'Etat pour lesquelles il ne luy est pas bien-seant de changer de religion. It contains an argument from political expediency rather than one based on religious conviction.<sup>2</sup> From the following year Sponde was in close contact with Du Perron and his conversion took place in 1593. The stages of his conversion are treated so well by Boase,<sup>3</sup> that they do not need repeating here. Immediately afterwards he composed his Response d'un Catholique Apostolique Romain au Protestant de Reformation and later the same year a more detailed manifesto, the Déclaration des Principaux Motifs qui induisent le Sieur de Sponde... à s'unir à l'Eglise Catholique, Apostolique, et Romaine. When he died in 1595 he left unfinished his Response au Traité des Marques de l'Eglise fait par Théodore de Bèze, which was published the same year by Florimond de Raymond. It seems evident that after 1593 Sponde ceased to write poetry and devoted all his energies to polemics. These

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1. Ib. p.XLVII ss., and CXLVIII; c.f. also BOASE in Poésies, pp.103.
  2. BOASE, in Méditations, p.XLIX, ss.
  3. Ib. pp.LXXI - LXXXVII.

theological works owe much to the influence of Du Perron; Sponde has, however, assimilated the material well, and produced works more truly literary than those in a similar vein of many of his contemporaries.

Sponde does not seem to have attached particular importance to the idea of the Church in any writing before the Méditations. We can point to some Calvinistic ideas - his view of the Eucharist, for example - but his early religious training does not appear to have made much reference to formal theology. The general bias is perhaps Calvinistic, but it is never studied or polemical. The Méditations is a devotional literary exercise in which his early background is clearly felt but does not obtrude. His later absorbing interest in the nature of the Church has no necessary connexion with the fact that he was a Calvinist for so long; it could be explained entirely by the fact that by 1593 the problem of the nature of the Church was seen as central to all controversial religious discussions, and so fundamental as to be their starting point, instead of their conclusion as in the Institution Chrestienne.

We may wonder why Sponde was not more of a conciliatory figure. He has the zeal of the newly-converted and an awareness of the important ways in which the religion of the reformers and that of the Church of Rome were irreconcilable. He shows no deeper sympathy with the ideals of the reformers than do the earlier Catholic apologists. This lack of toleration is partly a result of his earlier indifference in controverted matters and the vagueness of his thought. After 1593 he is anxious to take up a definite stand, and the pose he adopts is ultra-Catholic.

## 1) Works of Spønde before his conversion

It is convenient to divide the writings of Spønde into two general classes, since such a division corresponds to the real distinction between works which, for the most part were purely literary in intention, and works which were only incidentally so, apart altogether from the importance of this division for the study of his ecclesiology. In the first section we will refer to three classes of writing; the main body of the poems, the Méditations, and the Advertissement au Roy.

### 1) Stances et Sonnets

Most of these poems have not the slightest bearing on the present topic. We are left with scattered references, mere hints which do not give us any clear idea of what Spønde thought about the subject in general, but just his views on parts of it, however important the parts. The Stances de la Cène do not suggest that at the time of writing it (the poem is undated) Spønde had any specific theory on the Church. The treatment of the theme is too general to be described as distinctly Calvinist, though there is a Protestant denunciation of the value of good works.

"Cest innocent Agneau te demande innocence;  
Si pour la luy donner tu n'as point de puissance,  
Mon Ame, il te demande au moins la volonté!



C'est ceste volonté, mon Ame, qu'il faut prendre,  
 D'où soudain le desir de bien faire s'engendre,  
 Et le desir conçoit les desseins plus parfaicts;  
 Les desseins à la fin aux effects se conduisent;  
 Toutesfois rien de toy; c'est les Cieux qui produisent  
 Ce vouloir, ce desir, ces desseins, ces effects."<sup>1</sup>

A little later in the same poem there is the further Protestant emphasis, that while it is the responsibility of the individual to dispose himself to receive the Word of God, once he has opened himself to it, it works on him of its own force.

"Mais, hélas! mon Sauveur; mais quoy? faut-il encore  
 Que je manage ce corps, ce saint corps'quienj;adore  
 ...  
 Tu veux, et je le scay, que ta simple parole  
 Soit toute la raison qu'on cherche en ton escholâ,  
 Cet immobile appuy soustient ta verité."<sup>2</sup>

The Essay de quelques Poèmes Chrestiens has little to say about the Church, and some, even, of the Sonnets de la Mort have little to say about Christianity. The second of the Stances de la Cène shows a certain affinity with Calvin's views though by the time they were composed these ideas were common property.

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1. SPONDE, Stances du Sacré Banquet et Convive de Jesus Christ, Ruchan-Boase, p.245. c.f. CALVIN, Inst. II. 4. 7.
  2. SPONDE, Stances du Sacré Banquet et Convive de Jesus Christ, (Boase, Méditations, p.173).

"Ici le poète somme à comparaître d'abord ceux qui ont peur d'un Dieu qu'ils savent avoir offensé; ensuite ceux qui bandent les yeux à sa lumière et dont le désespoir coupe l'envie Ainsi que le chemin d'une plus belle vie; enfin les fidèles, simples Agneaux destinés à être le Temple même où Dieu fait son séjour."<sup>1</sup>

The last class bears a close relationship to Calvin's idea of the Church.

"Agneaux, Je parle à vous qui passez vostre vie  
Avec vostre Berger dedans sa Bergerie,  
D'où depuis vostre entrée, onques ne vous chalust  
De sortir pour chercher ailleurs vostre salut.  
...  
C'est à vous que je parle à qui l'honneur suprême  
Proprement appartient d'estre le Temple mesme  
Où Dieu fait son séjour. Vous l'héritage exquis,  
Qu'il s'est hors de la mort avec sa mort acquis."

The image is one of a chosen community which is characterised by its complete trust in God.

"Ce Dieu qui fait trembler, dans les horribles peines  
Dont il comble le mal, les Ames plus hautaines,  
Cestuy-là, mes Amis, estançonne aujourd'huy  
Vos Esprits esbranlés du roc de son appuy."<sup>2</sup>

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1. BOASE in Méditations, p. cxlviii. c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 2. 4.

2. SPONDE, Autres Poème Sur le Mesme Subject, Boase, Méditations, p.177 c.f. CALVIN, Inst. III. 20. 30.

How important this feeling of security was to Sponde will be understood from the analysis of some of the themes of the Méditations.<sup>1</sup>

It is something more than a placing of blind trust in God; it is linked by Sponde with the educative force of the Scriptures,

"Il vient à vous, mais vous, venez à son Eschole,

Où d'un gosier d'airain retentit sa parole",

which is the primary power in effecting the union of men within the community:

"Mes Amis, c'est à vous, c'est à vous, tous ensemble,

Que ce Dieu tend ses mains à fin qu'il vous rassemble,

Et que par l'union de ses troupeaux espars

Il vous rassure tous au pourpris de ses parcs,

Où ce soigneux Berger vous garde en telle sorte

Que le loup ravisseur un seul de vous n'emporte."<sup>2</sup>

The gathering together of all the faithful brings the assurance of their salvation. The call which God makes to mankind is universal,

"... il appelle

Comme l'humble et le doux, le fier et le rebelle,"<sup>3</sup>

but some who appear at first sight to have received the word with due humility turn out to be nothing but hypocrites. "Toutefois, parmi ces appelés, il y en aura seulement une partie qui seront les véritables élus. Par conséquent, trois droits de faveur sont indiqués,

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1. c.f. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.65; sur Ps.L, p.85.

2. SPONDE, Autre poème sur le même subject, BOASE, Méditations, p.176; CALVIN, Inst. IV. l. 5.

3. SPONDE, Autre poème... p.178; c.f. Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.51; Méd. sur Ps.L, pp.88, 93.

dont le premier est la repentance et la volonté d'être sauvé, le deuxième l'élection, et le troisième la conservation de l'élection par l'efficace de l'Eucharistie."<sup>1</sup> The second half of the poem concerns the Eucharist.

The last of the Sonnets de la Mort is the only one which has any bearing on the present topic. Here again Sponde evinces the need of some fixed point of reference in a changing world. The first stanza poses the problem of the forces against which man has to fight.

"Tout s'enfle contre moy, tout m'assaut, tout me tente,  
Et le Monde et la Chair, et l'Ange revolté,  
Dont l'onde, dont l'effort, dont le charme inventé,  
Et m'abisme, Seigneur, et m'esbranle, et m'enchante."

He finds in the Church, which contains the holiness of God, the support of which he has need.

"Quelle nef, quel appuy, quelle oreille dormante,  
Sans peril, sans tomber, et sans estre enchanté,  
Me donras tu? Ton Temple où vit ta Sainteté,  
Ton invincible main, et ta voix si constante?"

The last six lines give a strong affirmative answer to the question.<sup>2</sup>

The idea is taken up again in the Stances funébres du Sieur de Porcheres sur la vie, la mort, et les escrits du feu Sieur de Sponde (published in 1607) where Sponde is made to say.

1. BOASE, in Meditations, p.CL; CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 7.
2. SPONDE, in Poésies, p.244.

"De l'Eglise je voy le navire assureé,  
 Il faut entrer dedans pour sortir de l'orage,  
 Je veux en ce mal heur me rendre bien-heuré  
 Et pour toucher le port faire un heureux naufrage."<sup>1</sup>

ii) Méditations

From the title-page of the Méditations we learn that they were published in 1588, and Boase has made out a good case for their having been written in the winter of 1587 - 8 at La Rochelle.<sup>2</sup>

"Si l'on passe en revue le sens de ces quatre méditations on s'aperçoit que l'auteur y a présenté avec cohérence les principaux aspects de sa foi." Boase summarises the themes of the Méditations under the following four heads:

(a) "On n'a qu'à regarder l'homme dans son orgueil et sa misère pour sentir le besoin de Dieu. Or Dieu existe, et sa providence a décrété dans sa sagesse mystérieuse qu'il y aura des élus et des réprouvés..."

(b) "La grandeur de Dieu se manifeste dans sa création certes, mais particulièrement dans les délivrances miraculeuses."

(c) "Il ne suffit pas de chercher Dieu dans l'Eglise, car la véritable communauté religieuse est faite d'élus égaux devant Dieu, dont chacun est prophète en puissance pour dénoncer la dévotion extérieure..."

(d) "Vanité donc des actions humaines..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Stanches Funèbres, Poésies, p.268.

2. BOASE, in Méditations, p.XLIII ss.

3. Ib. pp.CXXX - 1.

Their inspiration is clearly Calvinistic;<sup>1</sup> we shall see how some of the leading themes were worked out in the different meditations. But Sponde is not a conscious reformer. There is nothing polemical about the Méditations. They are the expression of the feelings of a deeply religious man (though one who had thought little about theology) on some of the psalms; because of this theological apathy it is not so surprising that within five years he had shifted his ground so radically.

The first of the Méditations, (Sur le Pseaume XIII ou LIII) is largely taken up with an elaboration of the opening sentence;

"Rien de si miserable que l'homme, mais rien de si superbe,"<sup>2</sup> and the complementary awareness of the existence of God in his majesty. There are many ramifications - a discussion, for example, of predestination, (note Boase, pp. cx-cxi, 'Ces pages s'inspirent assez directement du chapitre de l'Institution de Calvin sur la Justification. C'est la partie la moins satisfaisante de la méditation'), and the problem of sin with its related topics. The last few pages of this meditation treat of the position of the Chosen People among the Gentiles, or the Church in the world, with all the incidental hypocrisies which seem a concomitant of systematic religion.

"La prospérité des méchants, la persécution des débonnaires, les propres Pasteurs du troupeau devenus les loups, les allusions a Saül et à David - sont évoqués avec une grandeur et une force qui ne rendent que plus sensible l'application évidente à la situation politique

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1. Ib. p. CXII and CLXX.

2. SPONDE, Meditations, p.5.

de la France en 1588, partagée entre le roi régnant que Dieu abandonne parce qu'il a abandonné Dieu et l'héritier présomptif qui lui est resté fidèle, et à qui tout l'ouvrage de Sponde s'adresse."<sup>1</sup>

Sponde is well aware of Calvin's theory of election,<sup>2</sup> and of how the wicked, both within and without the Church, have rejected God's generous offer. The renegade Chosen People is punished by the hand of God's enemies.<sup>3</sup>

"O Dieu, jusques à quand? Voys-tu point que ce peuple ne te void point? Cognois-tu point que ces fous ne te cognoissent point? Car, Seigneur, quiconque pêche, ne t'a point vu, et ne t'a point cognu... O qu'il y en a desjà bien peu de reste qui te voyent et qui te cognoissent! O que peu de gens nagent en ce gouffre! Le mal n'est plus aux membres, tout le corps s'en ressent, voyre tout ce corps n'est que mal... Ceste vigne est en friche, il n'y a nul qui la cultive. Il n'y a plus que de changeurs en ton Temple, et les gens ont ravagé ton héritage."<sup>4</sup>

The same idea is developed through a list of images of corruption. Sponde continues with a lament for the passing away of justice and the true spirit of religion.

"La loy est périe avec les Prophètes, et tout le peuple demande à toute force le veau d'Or." A remnant, however is left, 'ceste

1. BOASE, in Méditations, p.CXI.

2. cf. BOASE, in Méditations, p.CXI.

3. c.f. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.58; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. 4. 2.

4. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLIII, p.32.

poignée d'Apostres.<sup>1</sup> It appears that God has turned His back on His people; who, then, can blame the fool for his atheism? Yet if man would only return to God...

"Qui cherche Dieu, il le trouve, car Dieu cherche aussi ceux qui le cherchent... Cherchez premièrement le Royaume de Dieu, dit ton Fils, et le reste vous sera adjousté. Chercher ton Royaume, c'est te chercher toy-mesme, s'enquérir de ta volonté, et la faire. Car ceux qui te cherchent, sont tousjours prêts à te rencontrer: ils te rencontrent en ta parole, mais il faut qu'ils t'embrassent par oeuvres."<sup>2</sup>

The security enjoyed within the kingdom is basically synonymous with an utter trust in God, based on the knowledge of the history of God's dealings with His people; there is so far only a tenuous suggestion of the idea of community, and of the 'navire assuré', which is the Church, of the Stances Funebres.<sup>3</sup> Sponde develops the theme of God's past dealings with the Chosen People, in the following meditations, in order to draw a parallel with his own time; there was not the slightest reason for thinking that God would be any less generous than he had shown himself in the past.

"Seigneur, nous nous consolions toujours en ceste espérance, nous avions tousjours nostre fondement en tes promesses, et scavons que tu és le Dieu de vérité. Car noz Pères t'ont esprouvé, ils ont eu fiance en toy, et tu les as délivrez."<sup>4</sup> There follows a lengthy list of some

1. Ib. p.33.
2. Ib. p.34.
3. SPONDE, Poésies, p.262.
4. SPONDE, Méd. Ps.XLVIII, p.63.



occasions on which God has come to the aid of His people. "L'Eternel maintiendra son oeuvre éternellement: les siècles passeront, mais la maison du Tout-puissant outrepassera les siècles."<sup>1</sup>

While he does not say that the sixteenth century was any less religious than preceding centuries Sponde does underline the corruption which had taken place, and makes a direct comparison with the Old Testament Church.

"Ce siècle te semble-t-il moins corrompu que ce premier Siècle? - Tu l'as veu, et n'y as point veu de différence."

He is insistent that much of the evil is from within, and embarks on a scathing denunciation of hypocrisy within the Church, and all those in authority.

"Qui sont ces Loups icy? Les propres Pasteurs du troupeau. Qui sont ces tyrans? Ceux qui tu avois établis pour Rois. Qui sont ces bourreaux? Ceux que tu avois donné pour Médecins." But if the Chosen People is to master the external oppression and preserve inviolate the heritage it has been entrusted with, then God must come to its aid immediately.

"Quel Moyse, quel Ange nous envoies-tu? Nous sommes, nous, Seigneur, ton peuple, ton héritage, le jouët de ces tempestes, la proye de ces forcenez."<sup>2</sup>

Man pleads with God to intervene 'in His own interest' since it is the divine cause which is at stake.

1. Ib. p.66; c.f. p.78.

2. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XIIII, p.37.

"Nous sommes ton peuple esleu, nous sommes les habitans de ta montagne, qui s'en prend à nous il s'en prend à toy, voire à toy seul, mais tu nous fais part du merite de ta cause, et ton droit est nostre droit."<sup>1</sup>

The first of the Méditations ends on a note of messianism.

"Qui secourra cest affligé? qui relèvera de la fosse ce misérable? qui luy tendra la main? ... Ce sera certes toy, qui habites en Sion, toy, en qui le salut d'Israël habite. Ce salut n'est point du monde: il est du Ciel, mais pour le monde: pour le monde, Seigneur, qui monte en Sion, et te cherche en ton Temple, et non pour ceux qui croupissent aux vallons du monde."<sup>2</sup>

With salvation will come peace, in the first place, and 'la restauration de ces ruines', integrity, which is a reflection of the holiness of God ('Toy, Seigneur, qui n'es rien qu'intégrité),<sup>3</sup> and wisdom for those in authority, and the liberated people will thank God with hearts full of joy.

"Ouy, Seigneur, quand tu restabliras la liberté à ton peuple, il se resjouira librement en toy: en toy de qui luy viendra la liberté, et non pas en luy-mesme, qui n'a rien que de toy... Il semeroit donc des larmes, il moissonnera maintenant liesse, et toy gloire, et toy louange és siècles de siècles, Amen."<sup>4</sup>

1. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.71.

2. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.41.

3. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.68.

4. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.42.

The note of praising God for His great mercies and His majesty, which is the practical application of the theme of the last paragraph of the first meditation, and the state of joy which it induces is the principal topic, among several important ones, of the meditation on psalm XLVIII. The affinity to Calvin is clear in this favourite idea of Sponde's.<sup>1</sup> The earliest reference to it in Sponde's writings comes in the edition he produced of Homer in 1584; he is vitally interested in the religious origins of poetry, and in its function through the ages, of praising God.

"Dans son ensemble, cette poétique s'inscrit presque en marge du catéchisme calviniste: Quelle est la véritable connaissance de Dieu? C'est Le connaître afin de Lui rendre l'honneur qui Lui est dû."

Boase thinks that Sponde's religious conception of poetry 'possède une certaine individualité par sa cohérence',<sup>2</sup> but, at the very least, this individuality is shared by Marot, Du Bartas and D'Aubigné.

Sponde returns again and again to man's deep-seated duty of praising God.

"Il te faut donc louer pour estre vrayment citoyen de ta Cité, pour monter saintement en ta sainte montaigne."<sup>3</sup>

The latter half of this meditation is devoted almost exclusively to the subject of the praise which is rendered to God by His Chosen People, within His Temple.

1. c.f. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, pp.70 ss; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. 5. 6. etc.

2. BOASE in Méditations, p.XXXVIII

3. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.52.

"...Où ta Sainteté resplendit, je trouve le repos, et le temps pour esplucher soigneusement ta benignité, pour chanter tes louanges... Ton Eglise, Seigneur, s'assemblera, et glorifiera ton Nom..."<sup>1</sup>

He appreciates the need for preaching and persuasion: if the effects of God's loving-kindness are to be remembered by His people, and for his part his poetry in his own act of thanksgiving and praise.

"Il ne faut point ensevelir la mémoire des bienfaits de Dieu, il en faut empenner la renommée, il faut qu'elle vole par tout, qu'elle soit connue à tout le monde... Preschons à tous peuples les faveurs qu'il détaille à son peuple, annonçons ses merveilles, et faisons découler de ceste source les ruisseaux de sa bénignité sur toute la Terre."<sup>2</sup> All posterity must hear of God's dealings in the past and in our own time. Spode echoes here the whole purpose of the Institution, outlined in the preface.<sup>3</sup>

"C'est raison donques (writes Spode) qu'il soit également connu de tous, et que nous fournissions de documens à ceux qui nous succederont, pour s'instruire de la grace de Dieu, de la justice de Dieu, et que nos exemples servent de règle à la fiance qu'ilz auront en luy."<sup>4</sup>

If the Word of God is the ultimate authority in God's school then those who teach it are burdened with a heavy responsibility to those who have neither the leisure nor the inclination to explore it fully.

1. Ib. pp.70, 72.

2. Ib. p.77.

3. CALVIN, Au Lecteur, 1560, passim; also Préface to earlier editions Inst. ed. Benoit, pp.23 - 4, 25 - 6.

4. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.78.

Apart from the explicit statement that the Word is man's instructor and that it is the task of the poet to sing God's praises, Sponde's religious writing is instinct with Biblical imagery and concepts. Boase rates Sponde even higher than D'Aubigné in his ability to express the biblical modes of thought of his co-religionists.

"On sent à quel point une réalité vécue est présente derrière la figure-figure à peine - du passé hébreu."<sup>1</sup>

It is debatable whether Sponde is superior to D'Aubigné in this respect. The latter is more self-conscious and more of an apologist, but the atmosphere he conveys is nonetheless real for being more explicit. Sponde, it is true, is able to bring to life the parallel between the history of Judaism and that of his own day without having to have recourse to heavy-handed comparisons.

The topic of the majesty of God leads Sponde on to treat of the refuge to be found in the company of God - man's personal relationship with the Creator, but in community with others. At first the imagery is of the Holy City and the Holy Mountain, but the Temple is also spoken of, not as a visible place of worship but as the symbol of God's presence among men.

"O Dieu, tu remplis toutes choses: Il est vray, mais tu remplis le Monde de ta fureur, et ta Cité de ta faveur: tu es ailleurs avec ta puissance, mais tu es en ta montagne avec ta benediction..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. BOASE, in Méditations, p. EXVIII. In his contribution to the earlier study on Sponde, Boase wrote, with reference to the biblical images remembered, 'En souvenirs de ce genre, le poète des Tragiques est infiniment plus riche'. (Ruchon - Boase, p.126) His later reference is qualitative.

2. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps. XLVIII, p.52; c.f. p.62.

Sponde has a deep sense of the presence of God and the communication of the individual soul with God,<sup>1</sup> but his account of God's transcendent majesty is tempered by the thought of His protective love for the Church.<sup>2</sup> The pictures of the holy place where alone sacrifice can be offered are symbols of an invisible Church.

"O Seigneur, tu ravis mon Ame jusques dans tes mystères. Car ceste Jérusalem, et ce Sion que ton peuple habitoyent, brusloient de secheresse, mais ta grace arrouse ton Église de ses ruisseaux, et c'est la joye de la Terre..."

The universal nature of this Church is readily understood.

"Tu as posé Jérusalem au milieu des nations... Elle est au milieu, et l'un ne s'en peult, en soy-mesme, dire plus esloigné qu'un autre... C'est pourquoy tu as dit par Esaïe, ma maison sera appellée la maison d'oraison à tous peuples."<sup>3</sup>

The all-pervading Word of God is the guarantee of the universality of the Church.

"Il n'y a plus de limite à ceste voix: ceste voix a appellé tout le Monde, et tout le Monde l'a entenduë, depuis Orient jusques en Occident. On a beau boucher ses oreilles, ceste bouche perce tout de sa voix, ceste voix entre jusqu'aux fonds du coeur, et se fait sentir de mille pointes acérées qu'elle descoche, elle tranche jusqu'au vif."<sup>4</sup>

1. c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. l. 2 and throughout Bk. I.

2. Ib. I. 17. 6.

3. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.54.

4. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.L, p.90.

The Church is subjected to the ravages of her oppressors, but God preserves enough good men to ensure a resurgence. God is King in His own city.

"Les Rois de la Terre n'y sont que par emprunt et à hommage de toy."<sup>1</sup>

Under God there is a hierarchy of persons to enable society to put into practice that civic harmony which is essential for the furtherance of the kingdom. From reflecting on the invisible Church Sponde reaches a further stage where he is humbly conscious of man's infidelity to God who in return protects him from the evils which threaten to engulf him. It is not sufficient to praise God on one's own.

"Et qui se soulera de méditer ta miséricorde, non seulement à part soy, mais au milieu de ton Eglise?"<sup>2</sup>

In purely private devotion there is the danger of presumption, idolatry and distraction.

"Si j'entre en mon cabinet, je te voy, je te considère, mais c'est en solitude: et combien que tu sois avec moy, je ne suis pas pourtant en la compagnie de mes frères, qui te voient, qui te contemplent comme moy. J'acours donc à ceste compagnie, je mesle mes méditations à leurs méditations, et par l'union de noz assemblées, nous tesmoignons l'union de noz courages: tant de membres, qui font un corps, monstrent que nous n'avons tous qu'un Chef, à sçavoir ton Fils, Seigneur: Or ce Chef est

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1. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII, p.56.

2. Ib. p.69.

tousjours joint à ces membres: voire, ne fussent-ils que deux accouplez en son Nom."<sup>1</sup>

In the following meditation Sponde shows that the dangers listed can equally well apply to public worship<sup>2</sup> which can degenerate into an excessive adherence to ceremonial, but he indicates his feeling that the problem was not insurmountable and was quite clear about the theory. Boase points out that his treatment of 'au milieu de ton temple' contains the Protestant notion of "le sens de la communauté en Dieu, de l'assemblée, où le Chef est joint à ses membres" and notes that "une conception spirituelle de tabernacles et ramparts qui ne sont qu'ombre et peinture, l'affirmation d'un Dieu qui est celui de tous les fideles és siècles des siècles y sont exprimées."<sup>3</sup>

The third meditation, that on the messianic psalm L, is the most fruitful for a study of Sponde's conception of the Church in his Protestant days. The opening paragraph sums up his dissatisfaction with ecclesiastical practices. The criticism throughout is not directed against the idea of the Church but rather at the ingratitude of its members. He does not find God either in the world or among men (though he is often at great pains to argue from the wonders of nature to the existence of God,)<sup>4</sup>

and even,

"en l'Eglise... je ne t'apperçoy point."

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1. Ib; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. l. 3; III. 20. 29, etc.
  2. Ib. IV. 10. 29.
  3. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XLVIII. p.76; BOASE, in Méditations, p.CXVII.
  4. c.f. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.XIIII, p.5. ss. etc.



At first he finds disconcerting the apparent absence of the omnipresent God.

"Certes je ne suis point trompé: car tu ne sçaurois compatir avec les ténèbres, et le Monde n'est que ténèbres: parmy les hommes, car ce n'est que folie: avec l'Eglise, car c'est une adultère, à qui ses iniquitez minuent ordinairement la lettre de divorce."<sup>1</sup>

He takes upon himself the responsibility of a prophet who will rail against this prostitution of the Church's true self,<sup>2</sup> and though the denunciation of pharisee-ism is a timeless one,<sup>3</sup> Sponde does seem to think it had a more stringent application to his own day where Roman excesses were paralleled by the sclerosis of the reformers' ideals. During the temporary recession, however, the two constants were, the presence of God-throughout these meditations<sup>4</sup>- and the Word of God contained in the Scriptures.

"Car ta parolle est pleine de vertu, pleine d'efficace. Certes, Seigneur, parle, autrement tes brebis ne cognoistront plus ta voix, ta voix muette par si longtemps: parle, di-je, Seigneur, et visite ceste misérable compagnie de tes débonnaires: contemple ceste Eglise, et regarde comme elle s'est abastardie."<sup>5</sup> Sponde's description of the hypocrisy within the Church runs to several pages, and is not original; it is at times an unsubtle transcription of biblical phrases without

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1. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.L, p.81.
  2. BOASE, in Méditations, p.CXIX.
  3. Ib. p.CXX; Inst. I. 4. 4; III. 14. 7.
  4. c.f. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.L, p.122.
  5. Ib. p.85.

amplifications.<sup>1</sup> In the comment on 'Assemblez-moy/<sup>mes</sup> Débonnaires, qui ont faict alliance avec moy sur le sacrifice'<sup>2</sup> Sponde shows how God does not deal harshly, as might have been expected in accordance with His justice, with those who have rejected Him, but remembers His covenant and treats them mercifully. Having sanctified them God has regard to the small number of just men among so many wicked.<sup>3</sup> Yet man must not be presumptuous on account of the covenant.

"Ne disons pas, Nous: avons fait alliance avec le Seigneur sur le sacrifice. Nostre alliance est conditionelle."<sup>4</sup> Sacrifice was the symbol of the covenant, but this has been abused, and God will no longer put up with the verbiage of ritual.<sup>5</sup> He will not renounce His people, but they must listen to His voice pleading for purity of intention and simplicity of worship.

"Tu es son peuple si tu l'escoutes... Escoute donc Israel, mais avec tremblement, avec humilité."<sup>6</sup>

After several pages of repetitive comparisons between the true sacrifice of obedience and idolatrous sacrifices Sponde arrives at the condition of mankind under the new covenant,

"Et voylà les termes où nous en sommes aujourd'hui, nous, Seigneur, qui ne sommes que l'olivier sauvage, mais entez au vray tronc de tes enfans, voyre en leur place, tant qu'il te plaira, nous, di-je,

1. Ib. esp. pp.126 ss.

2. Ib. p.99.

3. Ib. pp.100 - 101.

4. Ib. p.101.

5. Ib. pp.110 - 11.

6. Ib. pp.104 - 5; c.f. CALVIN, Inst. IV. 1. 16.

comme dit ton Apostre, la sacrificature royalle, la gent sainte, le peuple acquis, la génération esluë."<sup>1</sup>

The keyword is 'holy'; election is for holiness.<sup>2</sup> The new sacrifice itself will be holy,<sup>3</sup> and one of praise.

"Que demandes-tu donc, Seigneur, mais que commandes-tu? Un autre Sacrifice. Tu veux donc certes Sacrifice, mais un Sacrifice tout différent de l'autre, voyre un Sacrifice qui soit tien et non pas des hommes. Les hommes sacrifieront, mais ce ne sera rien du leur, car tu leur donnes la matiere. Et quoy? Louange..."<sup>4</sup>

The consequence of the revised idea of sacrifice is a deepening of the personal awareness of God.

"Voilà vostre conscience est vostre autel."<sup>5</sup>

God will create a new heart in man and His Spirit will remain with him. In the midst of tribulation there is hope.

"Ains tu veux redresser à force ce baston recourbé, non pour le rompre, mais pour le redresser."<sup>6</sup>

It is not out of keeping with the rest of the piece that on the last page Sponde refers to the incident of the Good Thief's salvation. 'Prompte demande, prompt octroy!' <sup>7</sup> The moral he draws is that God pays more heed to the internal acceptance in the heart<sup>8</sup> than to a

1. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.L, p.115.

2. CALVIN, Inst. III. 22. 3.

3. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.L, p.115.

4. Ib. p.119.

5. Ib. p.120.

6. Ib. pp.121 - 2.

7. Ib. p.135.

8. Ib. p.109; c.f. Méd. sur Ps.LXII, p.153, 167.  
c.f. CALVIN, Inst. I. 2. 2.

lip-service of praise, but there is the further suggestion that one can serve God obediently without paying too much attention to the community of the Church.

"Apportez à Dieu tout vostre coeur, Dieu vous emporte soudain aux délices de son Royaume: vous n'estes plus à vous-mesme, mais à Dieu, ni Dieu plus à soy-mesme, mais à vous!"<sup>1</sup>

In sharp contrast to man's spiritual dependence on God is the obsession of many churchmen with material interests.

"Je vous dy, Que ces abondans Thrésors de l'Eglise sont autant de chaisnes, qui nous gardent de monter à nostre Dieu."<sup>2</sup>

The last of the meditations, on psalm LXII, does not add much to the other three, from the point of view of ecclesiology. In its description of the soul's reliance on God it analyses the manifestations of man's inadequacy and portrays God's unvarying response.

"... Je me repose seulement en toy, abbatu certes et harassé de mes traverses; mais ô que ton repos est doux et récréatif, Seigneur!"<sup>3</sup>

His passion for security breaks out here again.

"Ceste chair, à qui les choses invisibles sont les moins croyables, bransle aux coups de ces tempestes, qui battent à l'encontre, mais mon Ame dict que tu es la Roche où elle a fiché l'anchre de sa seurté..."

Sponde is certain of his own salvation.

"Je suis certain que tu m'as préparée la voye de salut, pour ce bien, à quelle sorte de traverses ne me prépareray-je?... O que je me

1. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.L, p.135.

2. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps.LXII, p.167; CALVIN, Inst. III. 10. 3 - 6.

3. Ib. p.143; c.f. pp.155 - 6; 163.

sens bien résolu, et bien affermy!"<sup>1</sup>

The number of those who can be thus certain is small; it is the number of those who are called to holiness.

"Car Dieu est volontiers avec les siens, voire avec le plus petit nombre des siens, mais nombre d'eslite, et qui ne se souille point aux ordures de la multitude."<sup>2</sup>

He reminds his readers of the many memorable occasions on which God has liberated His Church; this is tied up historically with the sifting and refining of the remanant.<sup>3</sup>

"Il faut, dis-je, que nous soyons moindre nombre afin de faire place à Dieu, qui n'est pas volontiers avec les plus grandes troupes: il faut, il faut que nous soyons criblez et vannez à cest orage, et qu'il ne demeure rien en l'aire de Dieu que le grain de sa sainte moisson."<sup>4</sup>

(iii) L'Advertissement au Roy

In 1589 Sponde wrote his Advertissement au Roy, où sont deduictes les Raisons d'Estat pour lesquelles il ne luy est pas bien-seant de changer de Religion." His motive was thoroughly political; the principal reason he gives is that the king would otherwise be undermining the loyalty of his subjects since they will consider him unreliable.

"Car, Sire, pourés-vous devenir si promptement Catholique Romain sans violer laschement la foy et l'union que vous avés si souvent jurées

1. Ib. pp.144, 148.

2. Ib. p.154.

3. Ib. p.159.

4. Ib. pp.160 - 1.

aux Reformés?"

He should rather aim to make use of Roman Catholics in his service.<sup>1</sup> This would provide a partial satisfaction for both parties. The work is not that of someone deeply imbued with the principles of Calvin's theology. Again, though superficially inconsistent, it is not out of keeping with his later course of action, because it is irrelevant to a discussion of the integrity of his later motives. At this stage he has little interest in theology, and none in apologetics. He is not saying that in 1589 the king was morally bound not to change his religion; it would merely have been inconvenient.

From 1591 Sponde was in correspondence with Du Perron. We know that the leading topic in these preliminary discussions was the question of the marks of the Church, one which engaged the attention of Sponde until his death, and which shows how important this apologetic factor had become in the enquiries about the nature of the Church. Two other key subjects were: the self-sufficiency of Scripture, and the subsidiary problems of authority and individual judgment, and the visibility or otherwise of the Church. Sponde's final acceptance of the Catholic religion took place approximately two months after Henry's own.<sup>2</sup> It was easy enough for Sponde's enemies to brand him as a time-server. D'Aubigné even accused him of influencing the king in his decision.<sup>3</sup> We

1. BOASE, in Méditations, pp.L - LI.

2. RUCHON, in Poésies, p.55.

3. Ib. p.57; c.f. Confession de Sancy, Ed. RÉAUME-CAUSSADE, II. p.363.

have already seen that the striking characteristic of Sponde's religious writing is his deep-seated personal piety which could not have admitted the slightest hypocrisy; in his letter to the king which prefaces the Déclaration he writes,

"Qu'on m'attaque en fin comme on voudra, on ne scaurait suprendre mon innocence,"<sup>1</sup>

The Advertissement is evidence of his interest in politics. It was perhaps the publication of this work which made necessary his later denial that his conversion was politically-motivated. We have Sponde's own assertion - proof, if any is necessary, that there were those ready to impute base motives - that his conversion was the logical step for him to take.

"Je proteste ... devant la Sainte Trinité, qui me sonde jusqu'aux reins, que le changement de la Religion en laquelle j'ay esté nourry mais non baptisé, n'a autre but que la gloire de mon Dieu et l'assurance de mon salut."<sup>2</sup>

## II) Works of Sponde after his conversion

While it is clear that Sponde had had no formal training whatever as a theologian - he remained essentially an amateur all his life - from 1593 until his death two years later theology, or rather the writing of apologetics is his main occupation. His first publication, slight

1. SPONDE, Déclaration des principaux motifs,... Lyon, 1595, p.3.

2. Ib. c.f. Stances Funébres, RUCHON, Poésies, p.58.

enough in itself, is La Response d'un Catholique, Apostolique Romain au Protestant de Reformation which came out immediately after his conversion and was almost simultaneously expanded into La Déclaration des Principaux Motifs qui induisent le Sieur de Sponde... à s'unir à l'Eglise Catholique, Apostolique et Romaine which appeared in the following year. The first draft in pamphlet form necessarily omits much corroborative detail and proof.<sup>1</sup>

We see in the Déclaration a desire for the unity which he felt that Protestantism had destroyed, and the idea of the Church as one of the two or three leading points of religious division.<sup>2</sup> He writes almost racyly that the very idea of Protestantism is a relative term calling for the prior existence of the Catholic Church.

"Di moy d'où tu es sorti, et où tu es allé avec tes Protestants? Vous estes sans doute sortis de ce qu'avoit forme d'Eglise, et estes allés où il n'en avoit point du tout. Qu'estes-vous donc? Ce que vous n'estiés point. De non Eglise vous estes devenus Eglise, et celle qui l'estoit est venue à n'estre point."

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1. BOASE, in Méditations, p.LXXVII.
  2. c.f. A Refutation of Sponde's work, Paris, 1595; 'Pour se resoudre en l'article de l'Eglise qui est aujourd'hui le plus en controverse, de toute necessité il faut scavoir que c'est que l'Eglise Catholique ou universelle, hors laquelle il n'y a point de salut.' Ch.I. ad init.  
c.f. also the Defense de la Declaration du feu Sieur de Sponde, par Henry de Sponde, Bordeaux, 1597, where De l'Eglise, is the first chapter.



This literary elegance, foreign to many of the apologists of both parties is rather a novel way of rephrasing the problem which Calvin and his followers had found so absorbing and which had become a testing-ground for orthodoxy. The passage is effective if it is remembered that, like all apologetics, it takes no account of the side-issues which have a bearing on the truth of the main contention. In a similar vein is Sponde's proposition that to claim that the body of the Church is something never seen in the world 'c'est chose forgée dans le cerveau des Protestants et qui mérite une bonne reformation.<sup>1</sup> While this does sum up one side of the current controversy it really begs the question since stated in these terms no reasonable person could have disagreed with the argument.

"L'Arche de Noé qui est figure de l'Eglise estoit-elle pas visible? Ceste Cité Sainte de Jérusalem qui en est une autre figure dans l'Apocalypse n'est elle point visible?"<sup>2</sup>

The Church of the Old Testament was as visible as that founded by Christ on Peter. The Church has been torn asunder by a diversity of Protestant sects.

"Un point trouve-je estrange qu'au lieu d'accourir au mal que vous prétendés estre en l'Eglise vous vous en separés, et ce corps qui ne doit estre un vous le desmembrés en tant et tant de parts qu'il est malaysé de les rassembler, et d'un chemin battu où nous fécitions vous nous avés tracé de nouvelles routes contraires les uns aux autres..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. SPONDE, Response, pp.7 - 8; quoted by BOASE in Méditations, p.LXXVIII.
  2. Ib. pp.11 - 12.
  3. SPONDE, p.25; quoted by BOASE in Méditations, p.LXXX.

This argument has already been met by Calvin<sup>1</sup> and is similarly explained by Sponde's opponents by an appeal to the perversity of mankind. Boase feels that Sponde must soon have realised that his initial sally was a mistake,<sup>2</sup> because there were many more qualified than himself ready to take up the cause. Yet he is eager to repeat the mistake within a very short time; he must have known that his work could boast of a poetic refinement lacking in many others, and that it was valuable as being an attempt to introduce urbanity into polemics, by one who had the distinction of having had close Calvinist affinities for the best part of his life.

The Déclaration bears on its title-page, after the words 'Eglise... Romaine' the phrase 'adressée a ceux qui en sont separez...' The motive is clear. Sponde professes surprise that his recent activity should have had such repercussions, and announces that he will give an account of his belief, 'comme Saint Pierre me commande: mais plustost comme Jesus-Christ, lequel me desavoüeroit devant son Pere celeste, si ie ne le confessoys devant les hommes.'<sup>3</sup> In the Epistre au Roy he has dwelt on the reasonableness of his conversion and stated that he will spare no effort in his own defence, not out of self-esteem but because such a defence will be of advantage to the cause. Once convinced of the truth of the Roman Church he must use all his talents in its employ.

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1. c.f. Inst., Epistre au Roy, p.45.
  2. BOASE, in Méditations, p.LXXXI.
  3. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.7.

"Il ne me reste que luy prester mon oreille et mon Âme, l'oreille pour la Foy, et l'Âme pour la charité: mais encore le coeur et la bouche; le coeur, pour y croire à justice, et la bouche pour y faire ma confession à salut. Car de ces deux parties est composé le devoir d'un vray Chrestien, afin que personne ne se flatte sus l'un ou sur l'autre."<sup>1</sup>

From the topics he touches on and his various emphases Sponde makes it clear that his conversion did not entail a wrench with his previous feelings. He had carried over many of his earlier attitudes, now looked on with a slightly different bias perhaps, but transferable because they were either part of the common Christian heritage or those religious values which meant most to him personally. His cravings for security and certainty, for example had gained rather than lost for being in part assuaged.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the stress which the reformers laid upon certainty<sup>3</sup> Sponde had been overwhelmed by the diversity of religious practice<sup>4</sup> and welcomed the feeling of safety which he now experienced. The second part of this treatise reverts to this theme.

"Messieurs, chacun desire d'estre sauvé, mais chacun n'en vient pas à bout. Je croy que c'est faute d'une colonne de feu, et d'une nuée dans ces deserts, où les diverses routes l'esgarent du droit chemin,

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1. Ib. p.108.

2. c.f. Stances Funébres, in Poesies, p.262.

3. CALVIN, Inst. III. 24. 4, 6; IV. 1. 3.

4. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.15.

qui le conduiroit à cette terre sainte de l'Eglise de Dieu."<sup>1</sup>

The third and final section which is intended as a direct answer to the fourth book of the Institution Chrestienne introduces the notion of security in connection with the varying theories about the Eucharist.

"Chacun allegue textes, et raisons, et vous voulez que ie flotte tousiours dans ces coups de vagues. N'aurez-ie iamais un port pour me sauver? Si auray. Et quel? Celuy d'où vous estes sortis, pour descouvrir ces nouvelles routes; mais pour ce qu'aussi tost que vous avez prins le largue, l'orage vous a dissipez, il vaut mieux que ie retourne dans la tranquillité de l'Eglise."<sup>2</sup>

The central problem in the Déclaration is, What is the Church and where is it to be found?<sup>3</sup> The followers of the Genevan school claim that they have it, and so, says Sponde, did I believe. Many other religious bodies, however, make identical claims. He puts a question to those whom he is addressing which indicates how he looks at the Church:

"Je vous demande donc, si vostre compagnie est ceste Eglise visible, en laquelle Dieu veut que ie face mon salut?"; Sponde asks for a reasoned, not an impassioned reply.<sup>4</sup> The visibility of the Church is not introduced here provocatively; he defends elsewhere the apparent Roman emphasis on 'visible', but his present concern prescinds

1. Ib. p.44.
2. Ib. p.220.
3. Ib. p.15; c.f. p.150.
4. Ib. pp.42 - 3.

from this topic. He merely wants to know where salvation is to be found. His sensitivity to the personal relationship between man and God preserves him from the danger of erecting an artificial structure and calling that the Church.

"Ce n'est pas donc du voulant, ny du courant, il faut que Dieu mesme, ayant compassion de nous, nous trouve devant que nous le puissions chercher, autrement les hommes volontiers en le cherchant, ne trouvent rien qu'eux-mesmes: c'est à dire, les peintures de leurs imaginations... bref une religion à leur modele."<sup>1</sup>

But this is not to suggest that there is no external structure. In his Protestant days Sponde had made little reference to the external aspect of the Church, and now in 1594 he defines the Church in terms which might have come from the pages of the Méditations.

"Et pour le dire en un mot, il n'a qu'une Eglise composée de ces hommes qu'il appelle généralement à soy, et dont il trie particulièrement ceux qu'il veut pour soy."<sup>2</sup> Election is both general and particular.

Having formed this general notion of the Church Sponde found himself confronted with many differences or rather contradictions in religious worship and doctrine:

"...ie la cherchez, et si bien, que considerant la pluralité de ceux qui se l'attribuent, il me sembla qu'ils ne la pouvoient tous avoir toute entiere."<sup>3</sup>

From this minimal and tentative position he progresses to a

1. Ib. p.44.

2. Ib. p.46.

3. Ib. p.13; c.f. pp.15, 111, 156, 220.

repudiation of all local variance in religion, ('Chasque estat presque a son Eglise à part... Et moy pauvre errant et vagabond, où iray-ie?'),<sup>1</sup> and a passion for unity.

Since the dichotomy between 'visible' and 'invisible' had become part of the technical jargon of polemics, and basically separated Catholics from non-Catholics (though clearly both parties saw the Church as now one, now the other) Sponde felt constrained to refer to the topic on more than once occasion.

"Je tien donc, comme i'ay dict, pour tout certain qu'il y a tousiours une sainte Eglise, laquelle se void en partie, et se croit en partie. Nous y voyons la compagnie visible des hommes, mais que ce soit la vraye Eglise de Dieu, nous ne le voyons point, et nous suffit de le croire."<sup>2</sup>

His argument with the reformers is that they will not tell him exactly where the Church is to be found<sup>3</sup> when their own Church is blatantly visible.

"Qui voulez-vous donc qui me retienne en vostre Eglise n'agueres invisible, et maintenant visible?"<sup>4</sup>

Sponde disagrees with Calvin's suggestion that God alone knows who are the true members of the Church.<sup>5</sup> If God alone sees the Church then He is not helping the individual towards his salvation.

"Je n'ay garde de croire que ceste Eglise soit ainsi deliee et

1. Ib. p.48.
2. Ib. p.58.
3. Ib. p.150.
4. Ib. p.136.
5. CALVIN, Inst. IV. l. 2.

subtile, qu'elle en soit tout invisible... D'avantage, chacun est d'accord que Jesus-Christ est le chef principal de ceste Eglise. Or le chef visible, aura-il un corps invisible?"<sup>1</sup>

A corollary of Sponde's view of the visible Church is that he adduces in evidence that he can see assemblies 'où les uns enseignent, et les autres sont apprentifs'.<sup>2</sup>

The visibility or otherwise of the Church is, of course, behind all discussions of the marks of the Church, and although Sponde does not list the four marks in the manner of the more recent Catholic apologists, he does touch on all of them at great length, and he does dismiss Calvin's marks as insufficient. His dissatisfaction with these two marks is that they are subjective.

"Car cette predication, et cette administration son termes relatifs qui presupposent un Predicateur, et un administrateur".<sup>3</sup> In other words, visible persons are called for, and indeed Calvin admits this in his three reasons for the need of a ministry in the Church.<sup>4</sup>

"Car autrement, où veut-il que ie trouve ces marques, si ce n'est dans le chaos des Idees de Platon?... N'est-ce pas nous oster le moyen de recognoistre ces marques, si lon ne nous dit quant et quant qui est celui qui les a?"<sup>5</sup>

1. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.49.

2. Ib.

3. Ib. pp.152 - 3.

4. CALVIN, Inst. IV, 3. 1 - 3.

5. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.154; c.f. the very close parallels in Luther & Melanchthon, quoted above, p.44.

He puts his finger on the vital point when he says,

"Car, quand ie cherche l'Eglise, c'est ceste Parole et ces Sacramens que ie cherche. Guidez-vous que ie ne cherche que l'ame? C'est le corps aussi que ie cherche."<sup>1</sup>

Because of the unreliability of Calvin's marks, he seeks other signs by which he can tell for certain where the true Church is. Everyone who is able to must be visibly united to the Church and at least in spirit if he has not this opportunity.

"Nul ne peut estre visiblement uny à l'Eglise qui ne la cognoist, nul ne la cognoist que par ses vrayes marques, dont la plus signalée est celle de l'antiquité (au regard de celles qui sont seulement d'un jour) et puis celle d'une perpetuelle succession de ceux qui en ont tousiours eu la conduite, avec le consentement universel, et de tout temps. Esquelles trois marques ensemble, consiste visiblement la promesse que Dieu luy a faite de ne l'abandonner jamais."<sup>2</sup>

Since there is only one Church which makes a profession of all these marks, he is absolutely certain that this is the one God wants him to join. The first two of Sponde's marks go to make up the mark of apostolicity. It will be noted that the word 'apostolic' occurs in the titles of both the Response and the Déclaration; because of their later date these two works include also the word 'Roman'.<sup>3</sup> Sponde's

1. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.155.

2. Ib. p.144.

3. c.f. MAROT, Epître IX, line 9 (c.f. Epîtres, edited by C.A. Mayer, p.125).



assertion of the importance of this first note is borne out by his repeated reliance on the testimony of the Fathers in the Déclaration, and especially in the section directed against Calvin. He even quotes Calvin in his own defence.

"Et souvenez vous que Calvin, au 4. livre de son Instit. chap. 2. section 3. et en l'Épistre qu'il adresse à Sadolet, nous propose pour miroir ceste vieille face de l'Eglise..."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that a Church has undergone persecution does not of itself prove its authenticity and apostolic origin, as some of the reformers seemed to suggest.<sup>2</sup> There must have been a constant history of war with the world.

"Donnez moy donc une compagnie qui aye faict une si longue et si penible resistance, sans tomber, voire sans branler jamais, et ie la recognoistray pour la vraye Eglise: Il faut que ce soit des le commencement, d'an en an, de siecle en siecle, jusques à present."<sup>3</sup>

Mere age, of course, does not suffice; there is need also of the Scriptures and the teaching authority of the Church to interpret them. Sponde finds here the strength of his proof for this principal mark of the Church. The Church was in existence before the Scriptures<sup>4</sup> and the Church of today, relying on the order established by Christ, preserves unbroken succession with the Church of all time.<sup>5</sup> The Déclaration

1. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.38.

2. Luther, for example, W.A., 51, 447.

3. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.60.

4. Ib. p.63.

5. Ib. pp.67 - 8. 74.

goes to great lengths to prove, from Scripture and the Fathers, that Peter is the foundation of the Church and the supreme court of appeal; it shows, too, what is the nature of his supremacy and how the reformers have broken continuity.

"En quel temps ie vous prie, mais, ie vous prie en quel temps avez vous leu, ou bien ouy, que la primauté de l'Eglise Romaine (Image perpetuelle de celle que le Fils de Dieu a réglée tandis qu'il a esté au monde) fust debattue d'usurpation et de nullité, iusques a ce que Wicles (sic), Jean Hus, Luther, ou Calvin ont crié?"<sup>1</sup>

His solution is simple; the Roman Church has lasted the longest and so commands his allegiance. Continuity is principally of persons - those in authority in the Church<sup>2</sup> - and secondarily of doctrine.<sup>3</sup> It is not sufficient to have a doctrine similar to or even identical with that of the apostles; continuity of tradition is also required.

The other mark of the Church specifically mentioned by Sponde is that of universal and perpetual consent, which is more or less synonymous with the mark of catholicity, ('Or ce corps de Jesus Christ s'entend en son tout, et non pas seulement en ses parties l'une à part l'autre'),<sup>4</sup> though it overlaps the mark which Sponde puts first.

"Je ne scay donc quel grand profit on a recueilly de tout ce remuement d'Eglise. Car de dire qu'ils soient plus sauvez que les

1. Ib. pp.74 - 5.

2. Ib. p.144.

3. Ib. p.17.

4. Ib. p.119.

autres, ie n'ay peu encore faire confesser à pas un d'entre eux, que tous ceux qui n'estoient point de leur Eglise fussent damnez; là où c'est un poinct resolu de la Foy, que tout ce qui est hors de l'Eglise Catholique ne peut estre sauvé. Non pas que tout ce qui est dans cette Eglise Catholique soit précisément sauvé: Mais au-moins hors d'icelle nul ne le peut estre..."<sup>1</sup>

While he accepted the maxim that there is no salvation outside the Church, Spode made it clear elsewhere that there are different ways of belonging to this Church. The Church's mission is universal in order to keep pace with God's will that all should be saved."<sup>2</sup>

"Puis qu'il veut que nous soyons sauvez, par où irons-nous à ce salut? Car il est certain que tous les hommes n'y vont pas, mais pour le moins, il y en va plusieurs, et Dieu ne vous veut pas tous perdre; au contraire, il veut que nous soyons tous sauvez."<sup>3</sup>

The next mark is one which Spode omits in the present context because it does not differentiate enough; any Church can claim to be holy, appear so, and even be noteworthy for the holiness of its members. He felt, however, that his own Church while far from perfect possessed the quality to a remarkable degree.

"Tout ce corps est saint, non pas pource que tous ceux qui en sont les membres visibles soyent saints: Mais pource que tout ce dont il est composé, est saint; comme le Baptesme, la profession Chrestienne

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1. Ib. p.143.
  2. CALVIN, Inst. III. 24. 15.
  3. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.45.

de la Foy, des moeurs, et de la doctrine des Chrestiens, l'union des membres entre eux, et avec leur chef, au moins exterieure, et en c<sup>i</sup>e qui concerne la Religion, laquelle union est sans doute sainte..."<sup>1</sup>

The last mark, that of unity, again is not distinctive, since all aspire to unity, and even arrogate it to themselves, though not always interpreting it in the same way. Since he felt that the reformers had blatantly flaunted the principle of unity, and to no purpose - many of the proposed reforms could have been effected with comparative simplicity,<sup>2</sup> and within the old order<sup>3</sup> - he could not accord to them any real understanding of the meaning of unity.

"...Le corps de l'Eglise estoit malade à vostre opinion, il le falloit guerir, et non pas le desmembrer, qui estoit le rendre plus malade..."<sup>4</sup>

The Church must be governed according to the principles Christ intended for it, otherwise unity becomes impossible.

"... Ne recognoistre point l'ordre que Jesus Christ a ordonné, c'est ne vouloir vivre qu'en division, et par ceste division se separer de Jesus Christ mesme, avec lequel nous ne pouvons estre, si nous sommes esloignez de son corps mystique, qui est l'Eglise..."<sup>5</sup>

Sponde makes use of the usual metaphors (sheepfold, ark, etc.,) to describe the nature of unity of belief and confession, 'le tout sous

1. Ib. p.119.

2. Ib. p.176 - 7.

3. Ib. p.192; c.f. p.143.

4. Ib. p.140.

5. Ib. p.74.

la sainte conduite de ceux à qui il baille l'intelligence de ses mysteres... The true Church is 'la compagnie de l'union de la charité, toute entiere, toute d'accord depuis un bout du monde iusques à l'autre... la bergerie unique... Ainsi ceste assemblee n'est qu'une; une non pas de lien mais d'unité d'esprit, et de foy, et de doctrine.'<sup>1</sup>

Both the first and third sections of the Déclaration end with a plea for unity. The conclusion of the book is premature because the author has to leave off to attend to his family affairs.

"Après que i'auray reprins haleine, nous r'entrerons au reste du combat Dieu aidant; lequel ie supplie nous donner à tous l'esprit de vérité et de concorde; Afin que comme il n'est qu'un en essence avec le Pere, et le saint Esprit, nous soyons un par charité avec nous mesme, et avec luy à iamais, Amen."<sup>2</sup>

The ending of the first part of the book is similar, adding only the word 'peace', and the Pauline idea that this unity will be brought about 'en l'Eglise, et en Jesus Christ.'<sup>3</sup>

The last great topic, which is spread throughout the work, is the study of authority as the basis for Church life and worship. While he nowhere denies the force of the Scriptures, Sponde recalls the disastrous results of private interpretation and claims the need of some magisterium.<sup>4</sup> In his altercation with Calvin about the Eucharist

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1. Ib. pp.46 - 7.

2. Ib. p.235.

3. Ib. p.42.

4. Ib. p.221.

he distinguishes mere opinion from the genuine interpretation which the Church has given to Christ's Words.

"Nous voyons bien que vous avez ceste opinion, mais qu'elle soit meilleure que celle de l'Eglise, nous ne le voyons point. Tant d'ergotismes, tant de subtilitez que vous voudrez? mais tout cela n'a autre autorité que la vostre. Et croire pour croire simplement, pourquoy croiray ie plus la vostre qu'une autre?"<sup>1</sup>

He refers, too, to the debt even the reformers owe to the Church in which they were brought up and appeals to the common ground he has with them which a pagan has not, 'moy qui suis Chrestien, et qui recognoy et croy la sainte Esriture, comme l'Eglise nous l'a appris à vous et à moy.'<sup>2</sup> He relates the question of authority to that of the marks of the Church as Calvin understood them:

"Encores direz vous, que c'est la pureté de la doctrine qui fait l'Eglise, et non pas les moeurs. Mais au contraire, pour parler proprement avec vous, c'est l'Eglise qui faict la pureté de la doctrine... Autrement, s'il failloit commencer à cognoistre l'Eglise par la cognoissance de la doctrine, qui nous enseignera ceste doctrine? Si c'est par inspiration extraordinaire, i'ay grand peur qu'au lieu d'une Eglise invisible, nous n'en ayons point du tout."<sup>3</sup>

An appendix to Spode's theory of authority is his view of the need for kingship within the community. This can be illustrated from

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1. Ib. p.220.
  2. Ib. p.42; c.f. p.163.
  3. Ib. p.53.

the meditations, where the lordship of God is a key idea.<sup>1</sup>

"Tu te sers des hommes comme il te plaist; tu leurs détailles les honneurs à ta discretion, les uns sont Rois, et les autres subjects, mais ces Rois et ces subjects respondent également au ressort universel de ton Empire."<sup>2</sup>

The relatively subordinate place of the king in society is seen also in the Stances Funebres:

"Puis je voy ce grand Roy des Princes l'ornement  
Fils aîné de l'Eglise, et père de la France,  
A l'Eglise sa mère obéir seulement,  
Et commander à tous par son obeysance."<sup>3</sup>

Sponde's monarchism led him to denounce the radicalism and subversiveness of those who would do away with a hierarchy of authority, either in the Church or the State.<sup>4</sup>

From the Déclaration we learn that the function of Pastors and Magistrates is quite distinct.<sup>5</sup> Sponde shows that election of Church leaders by the people is arbitrary in that it is not the universal practice in Scripture, but depends on local custom, and he submits that the people are manifestly less capable of electing than a group of learned and discreet men.

"Je vous appren ce pendant une chose, que ie suis de ceux qui aiment et honorent la Monarchie, et deteste a toute outrance la

1. c.f. SPONDE, Méd. sur Ps. XLVIII, p.56.

2. Ib.

3. Stances Funebres, Poésies, p.262.

4. c.f. RUCHON, in Poésies, p.73.

5. SPONDE, Déclaration, p.137.

simple Démocratie. Or en ceste Monarchie, ie considere les dependances et liaisons de l'Aristocratie, desquelles, comme de ses nerfs, l'estat Monarchique prend sa ferme solidite."<sup>1</sup>

There is much else in the Déclaration which has a bearing on the study of the Church but Sponde has managed to subordinate it to his central theme. He treats, for example, of images and the invocation of saints, and answers objections about the Sacrifice of the Mass. Though the Déclaration avoids the sterility of a work of sheer apologetics in the discussion of such topics, it does not discard all theological precision.

Boase overstates his case when he writes,

"Et paradoxalement cet Apostat reste essentiellement protestant par le meilleur de son oeuvre."<sup>2</sup>

His contemporaries thought just the opposite. Sponde himself goes out of his way to profess his acceptance of doctrines which were regarded as typically Roman. What he does is to remain essentially Christian.

The Response...au Traicté des marques de l'Eglise faict par Th. de Bèze (Bordeaux 1595) deals more fully with the last main topic of the Déclaration, authority within the Church and the authority of the Church. It repeats, besides, most of the Déclaration at greater length, though rarely more deeply. It is impossible to give a detailed summary of the Response; there are no chapter headings and the progression is not logical. Ruchon summarises the work briefly by saying that it is

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1. Ib. p.186; c.f. the different attitude adapted by CALVIN, Inst. IV. 20. 8.
  2. BOASE, in Méditations, p.CLVIII.



in support of Sponde's main contention (que seule l'Eglise catholique est une véritable Eglise, qu'elle est la seule dépositaire de la vrai<sup>te</sup> foi, qu'elle remonte à Jésus-Christ et aux apotres, et que l'ordre établi par eux n'a jamais été rompu.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning Sponde attempts to put into their proper perspective the events of the preceding sixty years; he sees the reformers as essentially innovators and the reformation as a conscious break with the past. The result in his own day was the chaotic proliferation of Protestant sects. For this reason Sponde starts with the question of the definition of the Church; whatever definition is to be given, the Church will<sup>be</sup> that alone which has true continuity with the apostles. This leads him to a discussion of the primacy of the Pope and the nature of the Papal office, a theme which is clearly central to his purpose as an apologist, and which takes up a large proportion of the book. It is followed by a more general account of the marks of the Church. It is significant that in spite of his intransigence and wholehearted opposition to compromise of any kind Sponde has so much to say about the mark of Christian unity. The chief characteristic of the Response is its completeness and the wealth of scriptural and patristic evidence (mainly the latter) which Sponde quotes in the support of his cause; its excessive length (over eight hundred pages) produces unwieldiness. A further drawback is that it follows closely the scheme used by Bêze in De veris et

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1. RUCHON, in Poésies, p.72.

visibilibus Ecclesiae Catholicae notis tractatio, (Geneva 1579).

Bêze's treatise ran to a mere ninety pages, and Sponde's inflated answers, touching on all possible objections and related topics, are the reverse of Bêze's directness. In spite of their apparent comprehensiveness Sponde's replies often have little bearing on what Bêze had written. This is partly because Bêze did not intend his work as the definitive statement of reformed ecclesiology which Sponde took it to be; and partly because Sponde's enthusiasm for his cause led him on, by way of digression, to topics of current apologetics either not envisaged by Bêze or purposely excluded by him as subsidiary. Bêze's work is not directly concerned with the marks of the Church either as Calvin understood them or as the Roman theologians did. He is primarily interested in succession; the Roman idea of mere personal succession is not a 'true and genuine...mark of the Church.'<sup>1</sup> Sponde replies that Roman theologians do not consider succession to be the essential mark of the Church.

"Mais bien disons nous, que ce en est une marque necessaire: ce que vous ne pouvez nier qu'en niant l'essence de la vraye Eglise. L'Eglise a tousiours esté, et sera tousiours."<sup>2</sup>

More importantly, Sponde asserts that mere personal succession in the episcopacy does not in fact distinguish completely the true Church from the false.

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1. 'vera ac genuina...Ecclesiae nota', BÊZE, op. cit., p.22.
  2. SPONDE, Response...au Traicté des marques de l'Eglise faict par Th. de Bêze, Bordeaux, 1595, p.72, c.f. p.480.

"Et c'est pourquoy nous adioustons aussi la doctrine, sans laquelle nous ne presenterions que des corps sans ame".<sup>1</sup>

Successions of doctrine is tacitly presupposed under that of persons. The matter is pursued even further: a mere claim to succession of doctrine is not sufficient (witness the Anabaptists) without succession in the teaching authority.<sup>2</sup> For Bêze the two principal marks of the Church are the doctrine contained in Scripture, and (to a lesser extent) all that is implied in the exercise of the ministry: succession, vocation, ordination.<sup>3</sup> Sponde's basic answer to this is that the Roman Church has these marks and more besides.

In his prefatory letter to M. du Perron, Florimond de Raemond picks out as the theme running through the whole of Sponde's work an appeal for the return of Christian peace to 'la pauvre et desolée France.'<sup>4</sup> From the opening paragraph Sponde is concerned with the futility of religious disputes. They would never have occurred, he writes,

"Si nous nous fussions tous contentez des solides resolutions de tant de siecles passez."<sup>5</sup>

He appreciates the importance of the new science of ecclesiology, but finds a danger inherent in it,

"...si l'on met en jeu le point de l'Eglise, ce n'est desormais

1. Ib. p.178.
2. Ib. p.336.
3. BÊZE, op. cit., p.89 - 90.
4. SPONDE, op. cit., preface.
5. Ib. pp. 1 - 2.

qu'un estoef, qu'on balote parmy la Chrestienté."<sup>1</sup>

The reformed notion of the Church is a new one; the bond of unity which had existed for centuries had been broken.

"Aussi l'Eglise sera celle, qui estoit lors, et qui est depuis successivement parvenue à nostre siecle, jusques à ce premier point, que Jean Hus, Wiclef, Luther, Calvin ou Beze en ont disputé."<sup>2</sup>

Sponde lists patristic examples to show that the Church outside which there was considered to be no salvation was the Church of Rome. Now that unity has been lost he is particularly strong against any compromising attempts to recover it.

"C'est aussi ceste mesme subtilité inventée, à vostre dire, qui faict, que plusieurs cherchent un entredeux en la religion. Vous vous tromperiez fort, si vous croyez que les vraiz Catholiques approuvassent ces ames hermaphrodites. Nous detestons tous ces moyenneurs, et ne souffrirons iamais que la foy Catholique, qui est si resolute, tombe en l'incertitude des arbitrages. Ou tout, ou rien."<sup>3</sup>

The gulf had so far widened that there was now no easy way of return; Sponde had once and for all shown that his singlemindedness could be as firm as that of the most conservative Roman theologian. Not only, wrote Sponde, had the non-Roman sects cut themselves off from the see of Peter; their internal discord was such as to discourage those

1. Ib.

2. Ib. pp. 4 - 5.

3. Ib. p.21; Bèze, of course, was equally opposed to compromise. c.f. PAUL - F. GEISENDORF, Théodore de Bèze, Geneva 1949, p.322.

who would have attempted to join them.<sup>1</sup>

After an introductory twenty pages about unity Sponde professes his intention of setting about his subject in a methodical way. (On several occasions throughout this book he selfconsciously uses the phrases and forms of the logician - it will be remembered that in his early years he had brought out an edition of the Organon - and he even proposes to reduce all religious disputes to the principles of logic:

"...nous en traicterons un iour plus à loisir, lors que ie resoudray toutes les disputes de la religion par les loix demonstratives de la Dialectique, si Dieu me preste la vie, le loisir, et la santé, que ie vouë à son saint service."<sup>2</sup>)

He agrees, then, that any discussion of the Church should start with a definition, but feels that many had missed the point by looking for a definition of the wrong thing.

"Ainsi il nous faut sçavoir quelle Eglise nous voulons définir, plustost que luy chercher aucune definition. Quant à nous, nous cerchons plustost les marques exterieurs de ceste Eglise, c'est à dire sa distinction, plustost que son essence: Sa distinction (dis-je) visible, et sa figure plustost que sa forme subsistante, qui est chose interieure, et incogne bien souvent aux plus clair-voyans..."<sup>3</sup>

The result is that whereas his definition may not, according to strict logical principles, be a good one, his account of the marks of the Church is mere practical than that of Bêze. He is here repeating

1. Response, p.349.

2. Ib. p.76; c.f. pp.82 - 3, 97, 486, 598.

3. Ib. p.26.

an idea from the Déclaration, that he is more interested in being able to tell where the Church is to be found than to know its definition. He reverts to the same theme at the end of the Response:

"Car vous demandant quelle est la vraie Eglise, vous me la remarquez par une chose qui m'est encore plus obscure, quand vous dites que c'est celle ou la doctrine de Jesus Christ est preschée... ie ne demanday pas une definition generale de l'essence de l'Eglise, mais une difference notoire, et publique de la vraie, d'avec les faulses: l'espece, et non pas le genre, voire presque l'individu, non pas l'espece." He continues by asking whether it is in the Catholic, Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinist, Puritan, or Anabaptist Church that he will be saved.<sup>1</sup> Sponde contends that the titles 'Roman' and 'Catholic' are themselves true marks of the Church with explicable historical origins; they show where the Church is to be found without saying anything at all about its nature. In itself the Church is primarily Christian.

"L'Eglise signifie congregation et assemblée, et par tant elle tend à l'union et à l'unité, mais sur tout quand il est question des Chrestiens, desquels assemblés en un corps, se fait le corps mystique de nostre Seigneur, dont il est le chef. La cognoissance de ce corps nous est en tout temps si necessaire, que sans elle nous ne pouvons faire estat quelconque d'estre sauvez, ny de pouvoir discerner la foy et l'union, qui sont les deux parties du christianisme, d'avec

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1. Ib. p.704.

l'infidélité et la division."<sup>1</sup>

In his appeal for the necessity of the visible elements in the process of our salvation Sponde links the subject of the visible nature of the Church with that of succession.

"On dict que le fleuve Alphée, qui a sa source dans le Peloponese, ayant son canal au travers de la mer, passe ainsi sous la terre, jusques à ce qu'il sort dans la fontaine d'Arethuse en Sicile. Vous nous en voulez faire toutde mesme de l'Eglise: mais comme ce que l'on dit ce fleuve, est du tout faux, aussi cest invisible passage de l'Eglise jusques à vous, ne peut estre que fabuleux. Au contraire il en va comme de vostre Rosne, qui passe visiblement au travers de vostre lac de Genève, et se jette dans sa fondriere, faisant tousiours de soy mesme sans aucun autre meslinge, un fleuve perpetuel, jusques à ce qu'il se desgorge dans la mer. L'Eglise a passé de la sorte jusques à ce temps: et ne laissera d'avoir son cours jusques à ce qu'elle nage à son aise dans la large mer de la felicité, qui l'attend au ciel, où est la source de sa perpetuité."<sup>2</sup>

To the reformers' claim that their own Church practices were those of the primitive Church and that consequently they were the Kingdom of God, Sponde replied in the first place that their teachings were not always those of the primitive Church, and secondly that they should not even boast of succession of doctrine, let alone that of persons. The chief fault in the reformers' case was their rejection of authority

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1. Ib. p.30; c.f. p.346.

2. Ib. pp.37 - 38.

within the Church. They had substituted for the monarchy an ill-defined democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Sponde's definition of the Church is not far removed from that which Calvin gave.

"Le mot d'Eglise... signifie assemblée et congregation: et en ceste matiere c'est celle, en laquelle sont compris tous les fideles, c'est a dire tous ceux, qui font profession d'une mesme foy avec l'observation de l'ordre, et l'administration legitime, establee de Dieu."

The difference lies in the interpretation of 'order'.

"J'accorde donc que les Pasteurs et les troupeaux sont proprement enveloppez sous ce nom. Et vous prenez par là: car l'Eglise est un tout, qui a ses deux parties visibles composées de ceux qui enseignent, et ceux qui sont enseignez."<sup>2</sup>

The importance Sponde here attaches to teaching is perhaps a result of Calvin's earlier influence upon him. Though some of the reformers were completely devoted to the cause of religious education (Bugenhagen is a particularly good example), it was not their prerogative; it was one of the main preoccupations of the Tridentine fathers. Nevertheless, we have seen how Calvin saw the whole Christian arrangement as one in which men taught one another, and the teachers themselves were taught by the Scriptures: Institutio Christiana here comes into its fullest meaning. In much the same way as, during these

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1. *Ib.* p.53.

2. *Ib.* pp.76 - 77; c.f. p.643.



years, Ramus was telling his students that philosophy (and especially logic) was futile unless it could be readily taught even to the very young, so Calvin, and later Bêze and Sponde, felt strongly that theology was eminently teachable.

"Nul ne se peut, ny ne se doit attribuer temerairement l'autorité de s'enseigner soy-mesme, car puisque Dieu a voulu, que les hommes fussent enseignez par les hommes, et que la voye en est desia toute ordinaire, toute battue d'usage, cela sent meshuy son esuenté de tailler du maistre, sans avoir iamais esté bon apprentif."<sup>1</sup>

Unity is a mark of the Church, and it consists mainly in agreement in faith which can be obtained only if the preachers are in union: 'et n'y peut avoir prescheur sans commission legitime.'<sup>2</sup> Sponde spends ten pages or so<sup>3</sup> in showing that union with Rome as the supreme teaching authority brings about a broad rather than a parochial outlook. He contests the suggestion that the Roman Church relies on the strength of its numbers; it is numerically important but this does not of itself prove its veracity. On the other hand, for Sponde the idea of the Church as the remnant is something which belongs to its past:

"L'Eglise du fils de Dieu n'est pas une poignée de gens errans, et cachés aux deserts, aux cavernes, aux montaignes, comme vous pretendez: c'est un ciel tout brillant d'estoiles, une terre toute couverte de poussiere, une mer toute regorgeante de sablon."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ib. p.78.
  2. Ib. p.169; c.f. 86, 727.
  3. Ib. pp.91 et sqq.
  4. Ib. p.98.

Sponde makes full use of other scriptural images of the spread of the Church and backs them up with lengthy and detailed quotations from the fathers, especially Augustine. The true faith is 'commune, ancienne, et solide' - words which Sponde repeats again and again. The Church has no obligation to justify this faith to the contentious. He tells Bêze,

"On vous en instruira bien: mais ce sera si vous y apportez l'esprit docile d'un disciple et d'un apprentif, et non pas d'une personne preoccupée en contradictions. On ne vous sçauroit jamais contenter, si vous estes tousiours sur les piques, sur l'animosité, sur la hayne."<sup>1</sup>

Sponde's absolute confidence in the truth of his own cause leads him to some inconsistencies. We have already seen his intention of applying the art of logic to the science of theology; now, on the subject of teaching within the Church, he writes,

"Aussi à vray dire l'Eglise n'est pas pour disputer, ny pour raisonner, mais simplement pour enseigner ce que nous devons apprendre par l'art, et par les principes particuliers de la Theologie. Il y va icy de la foy, qui nous a esté revelée, et non pas prouvée, qui ne se fonde point sur raison, mais sur autorité: qui ne se verifie point par arguments, mais par tesmoignages."<sup>2</sup>

His dissatisfaction with the state of religious controversy, and even with its very existence was reasonable enough, even though

1. Ib. p.130.

2. Ib. p.160.

paradoxically he himself was making an unusually large contribution to it. He was not the only writer who thought that his own work was definitive and so outside the general run of religious argument. He quotes in full Bèze's appeal for 'un esprit docile, et amateur d'une sainte concorde en la verité de Dieu',<sup>1</sup> though he qualifies it by saying that Bèze's rebellion against the Church was the opposite of docility.<sup>2</sup> To Sponde it was clear that the reformers were not the true Church, because of the centuries-old conception that the heretic is one who cuts himself off from the Christian body.

"Or d'entre nous et vous, qui est sorty l'un de l'autre, qui s'est separé? Nous estions, nous subsistions visiblement: vous estiez avec nous en mesme communion de la parole et de sacramento: vous estes sorty et avez crié contre nous. Il y a donc grande apparence, que c'est vous l'heretique, et non pas le corps, duquel vous vous estes retranchés vous mesme."<sup>3</sup>

Where was the Church to be found, asks Sponde, between the patristic age and that of the reformers? "En tout depuis Jesus Christ on a esté sauvé: on ne peut estre sauvé qu'en l'Eglise: l'Eglise ne peut subsister sans Docteurs, puis qu'il est ainsi ordonné de Dieu."<sup>4</sup>

The conclusion is that there has always been a Church and Doctors, but not, until recent times, had there been anyone professing the doctrine of the reformers. They are self-appointed ministers of the

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1. Ib. p.695.

2. Ib. p.698.

3. Ib. p.189.

4. Ib. p.191.

gospel; authority should reside in the Church, 'laquelle donne non pas autorité à l'Escriture en soy, qui ne la prend que de Dieu, mais pour nostre regard la marque et la distingue de toutes les autres Escritures.'<sup>1</sup> As in the Déclaration Sponde makes evident his need for security, for the certainty which the reformers professed but which had not been able to satisfy him in his younger days.

Since the Response aims at completeness and yet follows closely Bèze's scheme which is far from complete, hiatus often occurs in the argument. At one moment he is analyzing Bèze's phrases and at the next gives a quotation of several pages from a letter of the Egyptian bishops.<sup>2</sup> It provides an answer to one small point, but the imbalance is striking. Thence he is led on to treat of another related topic, this time an important one providing the matter for the next hundred and fifty pages, the relation of spiritual and temporal. When Sponde promised a thoroughly logical version of theology he had no doubt realised the inconsequence of much of the Response.

In this next main section the gist of his thought is that the spiritual and temporal spheres within the Church are not essentially incompatible (he refers to Melchisedech; Moses, Heli, and the Maccabees); nor is it inherently wrong for spiritual leaders to have the enjoyment of lawfully acquired temporal goods. This section on clerical power and possessions is interspersed with references to the true nature of the papal office. Christ is the principal foundation of the

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1. Ib. p.205.

2. Ib. pp.254 - 8.

Church,<sup>1</sup> and after him Peter and 'la chaire d'unité'.<sup>2</sup> This chair of Peter is similarly the head of the body (the members) of the Church.<sup>3</sup> Though he devotes much energy to answering minor points about the failings of some of the Popes, he is clear on the main issue: 'Le Pontificat de Rome est de la pure institution de nostre Seigneur... Ce corps d'Eglise, est un corps mystique, qui ne laisse pas de vivre encore qu'il n'aye pas tousiours toutes ses parties...'<sup>4</sup> Most of the supporting material is either quotation from the fathers and other early writers (pp.443 - 450 are more than half explicitly from St. Bernard) or show Sponde's refusal to accept as historically well-founded Calvin's and Bèze's allegations against the Popes.<sup>5</sup> Many of the accusations, writes Sponde, are misdirected; so-called 'abuses' are often arbitrary administrative institutions, for which the only sanction is their comparative antiquity. That they could well have been otherwise does not prove that they should have been.

"Quant à nous, nous tenons que l'Eglise qui n'a jamais faite du saint Esprit, peut disposer des charges ecclesiastiques selon l'utilité publique, pourveu que ce ne soit rien de contraire à la parole de Dieu, ce que'elle ne fera jamais."<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ib. p.364.
  2. Ib. p.384.
  3. Ib. pp.407 - 8; c.f. p.758.
  4. Ib. pp.424, 429.
  5. Ib. pp.457 - 8.
  6. Ib. p.461.

From the first pages of the book until page 480, the overall theme has been dictated by Bêze's emphasis on the question of succession in the Church. Sponde admits succession as a certain and necessary mark, 'et puis que l'Eglise Romaine a ceste succession personelle, que c'est la seule vraye Eglise de Dieu, en laquelle il faut vivre et mourir, si nous voulons estre sauvés.'<sup>1</sup>

Sponde then turns to the second mark which Bêze says is proposed by the Roman theologians of his day - canonical ordination. He agrees in principle with Bêze since ordination is obviously a part of succession; the difference between the two parties lay in what constituted true ordination. No one should have office in the Church unless sent by God and vocation is according to the order established by God. So far Sponde is in agreement with Bêze; but if the order ever ceased (as Bêze claimed it had done) where then was the Church? The reformers' claim to an extraordinary mission did not convince Sponde. Under this mark of ordination are included Calvin's two marks of preaching and the Sacraments. Sponde omits all reference to them in his commentary though he had earlier quoted in full a passage from Beze which stated them fairly explicitly.<sup>2</sup>

As in the preceding section on the papacy, so here Sponde treats any abuses which had arisen in the matter of ordination. He shows the usefulness of what outsiders thought of as abuses (the lower orders of the ministry for example) and concludes that in any case abuse is not synonymous with uselessness; heretics abuse the sacred texts of scripture.

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1. Ib. p.480.

2. Ib. p.494.

"Nous sommes tous prests à requérir reformation de tout ce qui se ressent de la difformité, et la requérons de bon coeur: mais non pas de souffrir qu'on desmembre si cruellement ce saint corps d'Eglise, et qu'au lieu de sa solidité on nous en trace une figure toute nouvelle ... nous demandons les mains de Medecins, et non pas des bourreaux: de ceux qui sçavent bastir, et non pas de ceux, qui ne taschent que destruire."<sup>1</sup>

Sponde is not in principle against change; he attacks innovation which is for its own sake, or which is no better than what is replacing.<sup>2</sup> This brings him back to his main theme of succession; there is no need for radical change because personal continuity has ensured unity of doctrine. The question of the marks of the Church is reintroduced here, with special reference to the mark of succession.<sup>3</sup> Bèze presupposes that the Church is the assembly of those who recognize Christ as their only Saviour. Sponde agrees; "Mais ce n'est pas là nostre débat. Car je demande les marques de l'Eglise, et non pas son essence, et si vous voulez encore, je la veux plustost cognoistre que l'aimer."<sup>4</sup>

The reformers were wrong, in Sponde's opinion, in decrying the visible nature of the Church. Assembly necessitates visibility.

"Nous vous disons avec S. Augustin, que l'Eglise est composée de corps et d'ame: le corps c'est l'assemblée des hommes, l'ame c'est la cognoissance de Jesus Christ."<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ib. pp.526, 547.
  2. Ib. p.580.
  3. Ib. p.591.
  4. Ib. pp.592 - 3.
  5. Ib. p.601.

Sponde accepts Bèze's appeal to Scripture, but feels that one should also take account of the Church described in Scripture and persisting in his own day.<sup>1</sup> There follows a discussion of the teaching mission of the Church.

The last eighty pages of the book are concerned with all the incidental topics of controversy which Bèze includes under the general heading of 'accretions', exorcisms for instance. Sponde allows that they are adventitious, but shows their value in the life of the Christian.

"Les mysteres du christianisme sont tous divins, tous merveilleux, et tous dignes en fin de nous ravir à leur reverence: les signes participent au merite des saintetez qu'ils nous representent: les ombres ont une si grande proportion avec leurs corps, que quand il est question d'honorer l'un, on ne peut desdaigner l'autre..."<sup>2</sup>

After treating of the honour given to the cross because it is the instrument of our salvation, Sponde goes on to discuss our relationship with the martyrs and other saints, considered in the light of the Mystical Body.

"Nous advouons tous une Eglise: les Saints et nous en sommes les membres, membres unis à un mesme chef, qui est Jesus Christ, et à un mesme corps, qui est l'Eglise. Or entre les membres d'un corps il y a necessairement une mutuelle correspondance, par laquelle ils s'entre'employment et

1. Ib. p.626.

2. Ib. pp.735/6.



s'entre secourent les uns les autres."<sup>1</sup>

The bond is charity which will not cease in the world to come. In the last few pages Sponde discusses the use of images for the illiterate, especially, but also for all Christians, who are more easily reached by way of the imagination, and the need for fasting and repentance. On page 813 Sponde begins to deal with the Mass, and the nature of Sacrifice; although he has arrived at the final section (§ 72) of Beze's work, he did not have time to finish this part of his commentary on it; the work was published posthumously. It lacks a conclusion of any sort (in which it differs from the Déclaration; presumably Sponde would have rounded the work off in much the same way as the earlier work, with a plea for peace and unity); it is possible, too, that Sponde might have wished to divide the book into chapters, though it is difficult to see how this could have been done without an extensive rearrangement of the material.

As it stands, even allowing for its incoherence, it is a detailed and systematic reply to Bèze, and to Calvin, too, since Bèze is used merely as the spokesman of the reformers. It is evidence of how central the topic of the Church had become for apologetics. Its importance for the present study is that it is the work of one who, though not a professional theologian, had taken great pains to study the nature of the Church, and who had the benefit of being able to make use of Calvin's mature work, as well as that of those who had followed him, and those who had attacked him.

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1. Ib. p.758.

### CONCLUSION

There is little evidence of direct textual relation between Calvin and the four writers considered here. They all show, however, an acquaintance with Calvin's doctrine and especially an awareness of the problem of the Church and its mission. It is quite possible that many of their ideas come from Calvin's followers and even from the account his opponents gave of his thought, but because of Calvin's very prominent place in the development of these themes it is reasonable to credit him with their authorship. Since Marot is the earliest he owes the least to Calvin, in spite of having been in personal contact with him; he owes far more to the climate of vague evangelism of the early Reformation. Du Bartas and D'Aubigné share Calvin's earnestness and single-mindedness, but they do not have his precision.

All four writers have much in common with one another, and with Calvin. Sponde, of course, is a case apart; only his earlier writing is in complete sympathy with the doctrine of the reformers. After his conversion few traces remain of his former religion. He does, however, carry over a deep appreciation of the nature of the Church, which he sees not just as an apologetic counter but as an integral part of religious thinking. They all possess a strong sense of the presence of God, and of the honour due to Him, together with a consciousness of humility, foreign to the non-religious humanists. Combined with a yearning for individual freedom (freedom, that is,

from the restraints imposed by authority, tradition and arbitrary customs) is an increasing community feeling. Another common possession of all five is a distaste for, and sometimes horror of, the institutionalism of the monks, the clergy and the theologians. In contrast to the abuses they saw in the Church and society of their time they extolled the virtues of justice, humanity, peace and unity. The topics of election, membership of the Church, apostolicity, and the marks of the Church, are too technical for the pages of these poets; they appear, as a result, only sparsely and embryonically. Calvin's stress on unity has a parallel in these writers, but it does not always refer to strict theological unity. Their basic desire is either for a political unity which would bring respite from the ravages of the religious wars, or a moral unity, secular rather than spiritual, which would be based on brotherhood and common humanity. It finds its clearest expression in the ideal of the Golden Age.

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