

CALVIN AND NATURAL LAW
by
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The problem of natural law in Calvin has proved to be a major battle-ground in twentieth century scholarship. Two main groups have contended on this critical issue, each claiming to be the true interpreters of Calvin's teaching. One group of scholars holds that natural law plays no real part in Calvin's thought. The other group claims that Calvin built his social, ethical, and political ideas on the foundation of natural law, and a few of them even profess to find in Calvin's view a basis for establishing a Christian theory of natural law for our day.

After a century of intensive research and vigorous--if not at times acrimonious--debate, we are, I believe, in a better position to focus again on this issue and to draw some conclusions about Calvin's teaching. As the ensuing discussion will make evident, I shall take a middle position, or to be more accurate, I shall dart back and forth between the deeply-dug and strongly defended trenches of the opposing sides. I am well aware that to do so is to take the risk of being caught in the cross-fire of the opposing sides. My one hope is that the warring factions will not fix their sights and fire on someone who has foolishly strayed into "no-man's land."

In the discussion which follows, I propose: first, to survey some of the significant twentieth-century studies of Calvin and natural law; second, to set forth his teaching, taking into account some of the significant findings of recent research; and finally, to try to draw a number of conclusions.

Survey of Twentieth Century Scholarship

At the beginning of the century, August Lang, the German Calvin scholar, asserted that Calvin was no "friend of natural law" because he held "too strongly the fundamental Reformation conviction of the universal sinful corruption of the natural man."¹ Natural law is a Catholic and a later liberal Protestant concept, Lang said, which played no part in Calvin's "judgment of legal and social conditions."² Lang's views were countered by G. Beyerhaus in his work, Studien zur Staatsanschauung Calvins, in which he sought to relate natural law to Calvin's view of the sovereignty of God.³ In spite of Beyerhaus' critique, Lang held resolutely to his position that the connections of Calvin's theology to natural law were "external and superficial."⁴

Beyerhaus' position was supported by Ernst Troeltsch, who stressed Calvin's acceptance of a concept of relative natural law.

Like Melancthon and Luther before him, Calvin, Troeltsch said, identified natural law with the Decalogue and made this identification a means of incorporating political and social knowledge into Christian ethics, "of uniting Old and New Testament with Aristotle and Cicero. . . ."5 But whereas Luther regarded natural law as "an irrational law of force," Calvin understood it more rationalistically.6 Troeltsch believed that an inner contradiction ran through Calvin's theology between the rationalism of natural law and the irrational character of the divine will,7 a contradiction which Troeltsch believed was resolved as the idea of the state became more rational in Calvinism under the impact of such thinkers as Althusius, Grotius, and others.

Emile Doumergue, the doyen of early twentieth-century Calvin scholars, was the next to address the question of natural law. He rejected Lang's position but he also distanced himself from Troeltsch's interpretation. Calvin, Doumergue said, spoke of an order of nature (ordo naturae), created by God, which gives birth to the law of nature.8 For Calvin, natural law not only renders humanity inexcusable but also has a positive role. As proof, Doumergue provided a long list of what, according to Calvin, nature teaches.9 He concluded that Calvin did not espouse a juridical system of natural right but rather affirmed "the existence of an order and law of nature;" and on it, supported "the edifice of legal and moral relations among men."10 But Doumergue also insisted that Calvin denied the existence of an independent law of nature and of an independent morality with considerable vehemence.11

In 1934, Josef Bohatec published a major work entitled Calvin und das Recht. According to him, neither Lang, Beyerhaus, Troeltsch, nor Doumergue had done justice to "the elements to which prominence must be given in the problem of natural law." In Bohatec's estimation, they had failed to offer a description of nature as the origin of natural law and of the psychological and ethical presuppositions of natural right, to distinguish clearly between the purely natural and the Christian elements, to present Calvin's attempted synthesis, to discuss the doctrine historically, and finally to show its relation to Calvin's other ideas.12 This became Bohatec's agenda.

At the very time Bohatec was concerned with these questions, the debate between Karl Barth and Emil Brunner regarding the reality of a natural knowledge of God and of his will by means of a natural law began to rage in European theology. Brunner argued that Calvin made frequent use of the concept of natural law. Nature was both a concept of being and a norm, and he repeatedly used such expressions as natura docet and natura dicitur.13 His position, Brunner said, was that the ". . . lex naturae is identical in content with the lex scripta . . . the lex scripta has no other function but to make the lex naturae effective again. For the lex naturae is the will of God in

creation."¹⁴

To this position, Karl Barth replied that although Calvin "spoke of a Duplex cognitio Domini, from creation and in Christ. . . ." he "did not regard it as a capacity which man has retained and which has to be reconstituted by faith, as a point of contact for revelation and for the new life in Christ." A real knowledge of God derived from creation is for Calvin "a possibility in principle but not in fact. . . . One might call it an objective possibility created by God, but not a subjective possibility open to man. Between what is possible in principle and what is possible in fact there inexorably lies the Fall. Hence this possibility can only be discussed hypothetically: si integer stetisset Adam (Inst., I,ii,1)."¹⁵

It was not long before the Calvin specialists took up arms and engaged in battle. Gunter Gloede¹⁶ provided ammunition for Brunner's position, while Peter Barth,¹⁷ Peter Brunner,¹⁸ and later Wilhelm Niesel¹⁹ were the ammunition suppliers for Karl Barth. Each side used its scholarly artillery to fire citations from Calvin's writings at the other side. One should not make light of a serious scholarly debate in which crucial issues were at stake. Yet one cannot help observing that the Swiss predilection for neutrality apparently did not in this case extend to theological matters.

In 1937, a Genevan legal scholar, Marc-Edouard Cheneviere, enlisted on the Barthian side with a work entitled, La Pensée Politique de Calvin. He attacked Brunner's view that for Calvin the Decalogue simply serves to render the natural law "perfectly clear" (vollkommen deutlich). On the contrary, Cheneviere said, Calvin taught that the written law expounds purely and simply what the natural law could no longer teach because of sin.²⁰ Cheneviere contributed significantly to the discussion by focusing on Calvin's teaching regarding conscience. Conscience for Calvin was "an interior voice which has no need of reason," a God-given faculty, obscured by the Fall and in Calvin's view effectively superseded by the Decalogue, by which humanity distinguished good from evil, not according to any general principle, but case by case.²¹

After the war, the Calvin scholar John T. McNeill published an important article entitled, "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers," in which he emphasized the continuity of the Reformers with their predecessors regarding natural law. In a not-so-oblique reference to the Barth-Brunner debate, McNeill stated: "The assumption of some contemporary theologians that natural law has no place in the company of Reformation theology cannot be allowed to govern historical inquiry or to lead us to ignore, minimize, or evacuate of reality, the positive utterances on natural law scattered through the works of the Reformers."²² McNeill's conclusion was that while it might be permissible to

argue that natural law is of secondary interest to Calvin, this is because the earthly realm for him was subordinate to the heavenly. "Within the mundane society, natural law is not secondary but controlling--and this because it is not earthly but divine in origin, engraved by God on all men's hearts."²³

The scholarly battle resumed in 1949 with the publication of T. F. Torrance's fine book, Calvin's Doctrine of Man, the last two chapters of which were devoted to a discussion of natural theology. Torrance made no reference to the Barth-Brunner debate or to "works on Calvin, ancient or modern, so that [his] presentation might be free from the imputation of partisanship."²⁴ Yet the book was far from being a soliloquy--Calvin speaking for himself--but another "voice in a vehement debate."²⁵

The Barthian side was not to gain the upper hand so easily. In 1952 Edward A. Dowey published his study, The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology. He stated that his reading of Calvin led him to follow, in general, Beyerhaus, Bohatec, Brunner, Gloede, McNeill, and, in some respects, Doumergue, as against Lang, Peter Barth, Niesel, Cheneviere, and T. H. L. Parker. The special characteristic of Dowey's presentation was his emphasis on the term conscience, which he set forth as follows:²⁶ the content of conscience and natural law is a knowledge of principles rather than detailed laws; this content cannot be definite because sinful humanity no longer has such complete knowledge; the formulation of law in the Decalogue is accommodated to our sinful incapacities and is therefore negative and fragmentary;²⁷ and the material Calvin used regarding natural law came from expressions of the innate knowledge in the bodies of law of pagan culture with which Calvin became familiar as a law student in Paris.²⁸

The next contribution was from Arthur C. Cochrane in an essay included in a collection entitled Church-State Relations in Ecumenical Perspective (1966). Cochrane noted that "The problem of natural law, at least in Calvin, will not die down."²⁹ Although Cochrane admitted that he did not believe that Calvin taught that there is a knowledge of God's will "through a natural law implanted in all men from creation,"³⁰ he acknowledged that Calvin's writings were so full of reference to the law of nature and conscience, that these could not be brusquely dismissed. He appeared to grant that Calvin used natural law in a positive as well as a negative sense. But this did not mean that "we could dispense with God's law and substitute natural law." Rather Calvin's "point is that God's law is in harmony with the true order of man's creatureliness which is itself known from God's law."³¹

Cochrane's discussion was followed by David Little's 1968 essay, "Calvin and the Prospects for a Christian Theory of Natural Law." Curiously, Little agreed with Cochrane's conclusions,³² and then proceeded in a chastened Troeltschian fashion, contrary to

Cochrane's intentions, to argue for a limited theory of natural law on the basis of Calvin's general approach.³³

There were other valuable discussions of natural law: Ronald S. Wallace, in his Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life, devoted a helpful chapter to the subject, "The order of nature and the Christian life."³⁴ François Wendel argued that Calvin "retained the notion of natural law that he had acquired from the Stoics, and did no more than accommodate it to Christian principles." Yet natural law remained a foreign body in his theology, and its existence alongside the divine law expressed in the Decalogue was hardly justifiable.³⁵ Harro Höpfl, in his The Christian Polity of John Calvin, stated that in Calvin's theology "natural law was systematically being ground into insignificance between the upper millstone of divine law and the nether millstone of positive law." Though Höpfl found that references to natural law are "not peripheral or casual," he believed that it had an "entirely secondary importance" in Calvin's thought.³⁶

Calvin's Teaching on Natural Law

I shall begin by quoting an important passage from the final chapter of the Institutes, a passage which remained unaltered from the 1536 edition. In other words, I shall commence where Calvin concludes and work back to the beginning and I shall begin, so to speak, at the top, looking at law from the perspective of God's gracious intention and then work down to Calvin's discussion of human nature.³⁷ The passage is as follows:

It is a fact that the law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience (naturalis legis testimonium id est conscientiae) which God has engraved (a Deo insculpta) upon the minds of men. Consequently, the entire scheme of this equity (aequitatis ratio) . . . has been prescribed in it. Hence, this equity alone must be the goal and rule and limit of all laws.³⁸

In this significant statement, the important concepts of the law of God, the moral law, natural law, conscience, and equity are not only brought into the discussion but are also closely associated with one another. They have a similar content or intent which might lead one to think they are identical. Yet Calvin's thought is more subtle than such a simple identification. I propose now to look at each of them in turn.

The Law of God

Law is a fundamental concept in Calvin's theology. As the revelation of the will of God,³⁹ law is the means of maintaining the relationship of humanity to God. When Adam is still in the Garden of Eden, "A law is imposed on him," Calvin says (in his

comments on Genesis 2:16), "as a sign of his subjection. . . ." To be sure, Calvin knows Paul's view that the "law was not made for the righteous" (1 Timothy 1:9) and that "the law is the minister of death" (2 Corinthians 3:7), yet Paul knew that this is so "accidentally and from the corruption of nature." Still at the beginning, Calvin says, "a precept was given man whence he might know that God ruled over him."⁴⁰

Calvin made a distinction between the positive, pre-fall function of the law and its negative or accidental post-fall function. As E. A. Dowey has commented instructively: "The concept of law here is seen to belong to the revelation of God the Creator and to carry no hint of sin or disharmony. It is not something that comes in between God and man, destructive of a personal relation, but is the mode of that relation."⁴¹ To be under law, to be under the command of the Creator, is, for Calvin, an essential condition of humanity, a signum subjectionis. We are by our very nature subjects under subjection to a sovereign Creator.

Calvin sets forth his view of law in the context of the discussion of civil government in Book IV, chapter 20 of the Institutes. Laws, he states, are the "strongest sinews of government" (validissimi rerum publicarum nervi), or in a statement ascribed to Plato by Cicero, laws are "the souls" of government.⁴² He notes that there are those who "deny that a commonwealth is duly framed which neglects the laws of Moses and is ruled by the common law of nations," and he brands this a "perilous and seditious doctrine." Then in a manner reminiscent of Aquinas,⁴³ he divides the Mosaic laws into moral, ceremonial, and judicial. Calvin grants that ceremonial and judicial laws relate to morals, but since they can be altered or abrogated without destroying morality, they are not properly called moral laws.

The Moral Law

The next term in the key passage is moral law. If law governs in the pre-fall state, it continues to regulate humanity in its post-fall condition in the form of moral law. The moral law is expressed in the Decalogue:

The moral law . . . is contained under two heads, one of which simply commands us to worship God with pure faith and piety; the other, to embrace men with sincere affection. Accordingly, it is the true and eternal rule of righteousness, prescribed for men of all nations and times, who wish to conform their lives to God's will. For it is his eternal and unchangeable will that he himself indeed be worshiped by us all, and that we love one another.⁴⁴

Four points should be noted about the moral law: (1) that it is eternal and unchangeable; (2) that it is universal, prescribed for

"men of all nations and times"; (3) that it teaches that God is to be worshiped by us all; and (4) that it teaches that we ought to love one another.

In identifying the moral law with the Decalogue,⁴⁵ Calvin understood the latter in a broader sense than simply the Ten Commandments but "as the form of religion handed down by God through Moses,"⁴⁶ or as he says in the Preface to his Commentary on the Harmony of the Pentateuch (1563), the Ten Commandments sum up "the rule of a just and holy life" but we must not separate "from them those interpretations which the Lawgiver has added disconnectedly."⁴⁷ Although Calvin's discussion and exposition of the Decalogue is located in Book II, "The Knowledge of God the Redeemer," it is evident, as Professor Dowey has pointed out, that the moral law is also related to God the Creator.⁴⁸ I am not, however, convinced by E. A. Dowey's argument that Calvin's location of the exposition of the Decalogue in the 1559 edition "is not a reliable index of Calvin's total evaluation of the law."⁴⁹ It is true that it was not until the 1559 edition that the relation of moral law to soteriology was made explicit, particularly in the title of Book II, chapter 7, "The Law Was Given . . . To Foster Hope of Salvation in Christ Until His Coming;" but even in the 1539 to 1554 editions, the discussion of law always follows the doctrine of sin and so is related implicitly to soteriology. Law is related to God who is both Creator and Redeemer.

Calvin's discussion of the Decalogue follows the traditional two-table division (commandments one through four defining duties owed to God and commandments five through ten, the duties owed to others). Two points need to be kept in mind in relation to this discussion. The first is the preliminary and crucial point that "Christ is the end of the law" which Calvin stressed repeatedly in the Institutes.⁵⁰ "The law in all its parts has a reference to Christ" is the way he expresses it in his Commentary on Romans 10:4.⁵¹ Secondly, in his exposition of the Second Table of the law, Calvin transposes each of the commandments from its negative to its positive form, thereby giving each commandment a universal character. We shall return to this point in our discussion of Calvin's view of equity.

Natural Law

If in the first place, moral law is to be understood in relation to the Decalogue, it is also to be understood in relation to natural law which precedes it both historically and psychologically. In the passage quoted from Institutes IV.20.16, Calvin describes the moral law as "nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved upon the minds of men." This close association of the moral law and the natural law (we will discuss conscience later) is made not only here but also in II.8.1, where Calvin argues that what the Decalogue asserts is the same as what is available in the natural or

"internal law":

Moreover, the very things contained in the two tables are, in a manner, dictated to us by that internal law (quadammodo nobis dictate lex illa interior), which . . . is in a manner written and stamped on every heart (inscriptam et quasi impressam superius dictum est).⁵²

Two initial comments need to be made before we look more closely at the meaning of the term "law of nature." First, the two phrases, "in a manner dictated" and "in a manner written" would seem to indicate that Calvin did not intend that we should understand the words "dictated" and "written" literally. They are simply metaphors that express figuratively the fact that God imposes a law upon us and that we know it with a certain degree of immediacy.

Secondly, for Calvin, unlike Aquinas,⁵³ there are not two laws, one law of "nature" and another of "revelation." There is only one law; that is, the moral law is ultimately identical with natural law.⁵⁴ The very things taught in the Decalogue are taught by the "internal law." Henry Stob has argued persuasively in an article on "Natural Law Ethics," that the reason for this is that: "The moral law under which human beings reside is the law of God, which is one and constant because it is the unitary reflection of God's self-consistent being and unchanging purpose."⁵⁵ To distinguish natural and divine law, as Aquinas did, is to fall into the danger of dualistic thinking. The attempted resolution in the formula "grace perfects nature" is problematic as this is formulated as occurring fundamentally by addition rather than by transformation. The whole that nature and grace constitute becomes, therefore, not a true unity but a sum.⁵⁶

What does Calvin mean by the term "law of nature"? We have explored briefly Calvin's understanding of law. We turn next to his understanding of nature. The idea of "nature" is used in a twofold sense in Calvin's writings. It can refer to the original created perfection, in other words the state of the world and of humanity before the Fall. But it can also refer, as in the phrases, "corrupted nature" and "fallen nature"⁵⁷ to nature as we now know it. Sin has caused nature to be other than what it should be. Yet for Calvin this is an accidental or adventitious quality which has come upon humanity rather than a substantial property. The two uses are placed side by side in a striking way in a passage in Institutes II.1.11:

Therefore we declare that man is corrupted through natural vitiation (naturali hominem vitiositate corruptum) but a vitiation that did not flow from nature (a natura non fluxerit). We deny that it has flowed from nature in order to indicate that it is an adventitious quality which comes upon man rather than a substantial property which

has been implanted from the beginning (ab initio indita fuerit).⁵⁸

Misunderstanding of Calvin's teaching about nature and natural law can easily arise if we fail to note the particular sense in which he employs these terms in a specific context.

Thus when Calvin says that moral law and the law of nature are identical, he appears to have in mind the first sense of "nature," that is, the uncorrupted, ordered nature of humanity and the world before the Fall. It is this "substantial property which has been implanted from the beginning." Calvin, I believe, also has this sense primarily in mind when he says "nature teaches," "nature dictates."⁵⁹ As Emile Doumergue, Edward A. Dowey, and Harro Höpfl⁶⁰ have shown in the lists they have compiled, nature teaches many things: the knowledge and fear of God,⁶¹ obedience of princes,⁶² authority of husbands over wives and parents over children,⁶³ sanctity of monogamous marriage,⁶⁴ degrees of marriage,⁶⁵ breastfeeding,⁶⁶ respect for the elderly,⁶⁷ simplicity of clothing and food,⁶⁸ the obligation of promises,⁶⁹ the need for a distinction of ranks in society,⁷⁰ and natural law prohibits incest,⁷¹ adultery,⁷² homosexuality,⁷³ murder,⁷⁴ slavery,⁷⁵ and even the rule of one man.⁷⁶

Harro Höpfl has observed that Calvin made these appeals to natural law with a seeming unconcern about the difficulties of this type of argument.⁷⁷ Some of these difficulties have been noted by critics of natural law theory, as for example by Richard Rorty, who in his book, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature argues that nature is but a mirror which reflects back the faces of those who peer inquisitively into it.⁷⁸ What we would like to know is: Did Calvin actually believe that nature teaches all of the above or was this a case of reading into nature what he had learned from the revealed law? Did he appeal to the jus gentium of his own cultural tradition. There is no certain way of knowing, although it is evident that Calvin believed in a God-given objective order of nature that taught certain important truths. Some of these truths were expressed in the corpus of pagan laws with which Calvin became familiar as a law student. It can be inferred that Calvin was aware of a certain degree of cultural relativity. Yet one cannot resist the conclusion that he saw these laws with the assistance of the spectacles of the revealed law, or at least that he used the revealed law as a criterion for evaluating them, as, for example, when he spoke of those "barbarous and savage laws" which gave honor to thieves and permitted promiscuous intercourse and which he judged to be not laws at all because they are "abhorrent not only to all justice, but also to all humanity and gentleness" (Inst. IV.20.15). Clearly they were examples of the corruption of nature.

This leads us to the next point. While natural law is ultimately identical with the divine law, the relation of the law of

nature as we know it and divine law are not now simply identical. Therefore, in the very section where he argues that what the revealed law asserts is the same as what is available in "inward" or "natural law," Calvin states that this natural law is ineffective by itself. It is ineffective because ". . . man is so shrouded in the darkness of errors that he hardly begins to grasp through this natural law what worship is acceptable to God." Calvin continues:

Surely he is very far removed from a true estimate of it. Besides this, he is so puffed up with haughtiness and ambition and so blinded by self-love. . . . Accordingly (because it is necessary both for our dullness and for our arrogance), the Lord has provided us with a written law to give us a clearer witness of what was too obscure in the natural law, shake off our listlessness, and strike more vigorously our mind and memory.⁷⁹

Sin obscures and darkens humanity's comprehension of the law of nature. The written law has been revealed to remove the obscurity, to shake off lethargy and to impress our minds and memories more vigorously.

Conscience

We turn next to a consideration of the fourth term in Calvin's equation-like statement--conscience. According to Calvin, the law of nature is discovered by the use of reason and conscience in cooperation. Marc-Edouard Cheneviere has argued that Calvin made a sharp break with the medieval tradition which had over-emphasized the role of reason and that instead he placed the emphasis on conscience.⁸⁰ Cheneviere's point is well-taken, as is evident from the definition Calvin gives of natural law in Institutes II.2.22:

. . . natural law is that apprehension (agnitio) of conscience which distinguishes sufficiently between just and unjust, and which deprives men of the excuse of ignorance, while it proves them guilty by their own testimony.

Cheneviere was wrong, however, in severing the connection between conscience and reason since for Calvin reason and conscience cooperate.

Calvin makes four points regarding the relation of natural law and conscience. First, he speaks of conscience as the natural knowledge of the law; that is, it is not itself the law but is the knowledge of the law. A distinctive of conscience is its noetic character. The close association of conscience and natural law is also made in the Commentary on Romans 2:14-16, even though it is more implicit than explicit. In speaking of the testimony of conscience, Calvin notes that it is "equivalent to a thousand witnesses." He refers to the pagan aphorism that "a good

conscience is the largest theatre, but a bad one the worst of executioners," and then he states: "There is, therefore, a certain natural knowledge of the law, (naturalis quaedam legis intelligentia), which states that one action is good and worthy of being followed, while another is to be shunned with horror."⁸¹ For Calvin, conscience distinguishes between good and evil and it is a convicting agency, "the worst of executioners."

Secondly, Calvin associates conscience with the understanding rather than with the will. After speaking of the fact that the Gentiles have "imprinted on their hearts a discrimination and judgment (discrimen et iudicium)" by which they distinguish between justice and injustice, Calvin adds immediately that Paul did not mean that they had it engraved on their will so that they pursued it diligently. Calvin's conclusion is: "There is no basis for deducing the power of the will from the present passage, as if Paul had said that the keeping of the law is within our power, for he does not speak of our power to fulfill the law, but of our knowledge of it."⁸²

Thirdly, the knowledge which reason or conscience has of the law of nature is not a full knowledge. Again after affirming that the Gentiles have imprinted on their hearts a discrimination, Calvin adds this proviso: "We cannot conclude from this passage that there is in men a full knowledge of the law but that there are some seeds of justice implanted in their nature." The "seeds of justice" (semina justitiae) have to do with both the first and the second table of the law.

For Calvin conscience is a knowledge of general principles. In the Institutes II.2.23, he says that the intellect is very rarely deceived in general definitions; but it is illusory when it "applies the principle to particular cases." Conscience, for example, teaches that murder and adultery are evil. "But he who is plotting the death of an enemy contemplates murder as something good. The adulterer will condemn adultery in general, but will privately flatter himself in his own adultery." These comments show that Calvin was a keen observer of human nature and behavior. There is a natural order of moral laws to be discerned and men and women do in fact discern it when it does not cross their personal interests. But when it conflicts with their own interests they engage in the foolish flattery that their particular situation is exceptional. Yet the objection could be raised that the same holds true of the written divine law. Presumably Calvin would argue that for those who know God's revelation in the Decalogue there can be no simple evasion of it, for it "stands written."

According, to Calvin conscience and reason cooperate in the natural knowledge of the law and therefore some attention must be devoted to the role of reason. Calvin spoke in an ambivalent way about reason. On the one hand, he states that "whatever is in man, from the understanding to the will, from the soul even to the

flesh has been defiled and crammed with . . . concupiscence."⁸³ On the other hand, he asserts, "the many pre-eminent gifts with which the human mind is endowed proclaim that something divine has been engraved upon it; all these are testimonies of an immortal essence."⁸⁴ The effects of the Fall extend to every part of human nature. Yet in the very chapters in which he speaks of total depravity Calvin holds that even fallen human beings seek for truth: "For we see implanted in human nature some sort of desire to search out the truth to which man would not at all aspire if he had not already savored it. Human understanding then possesses some power of perception, since it is by nature captivated by love of truth."⁸⁵ According to Calvin, "reason is proper to our nature; it distinguishes us from brute beasts."⁸⁶

The doctrine of total depravity does not mean that human reason is altogether powerless to govern human nature. In speaking of reason, Calvin makes use of the traditional Augustinian distinction between natural and supernatural gifts. He holds that "the natural gifts were corrupted through sin," while "the supernatural gifts were stripped" from us.⁸⁷ Yet something of understanding and judgment remain as a residue (residuum). The natural gift of reason by which we distinguish between good and evil, though it is "partly weakened and partly corrupted," is not "totally wiped out" (in totum deleri). Some sparks still gleam in degenerate nature. Yet in his customary fashion of saying "on the one hand" and then "on the other hand," Calvin cannot help adding that this light is "choked with dense ignorance, so that it cannot come forth effectively."⁸⁸ Similarly Calvin can speak of conscience as "this tiny little spark of light"⁸⁹ and can describe it as "a kind of medium between God and man" (quiddam inter Deum et hominem medium). But he can also state emphatically that conscience by itself is ineffective; it needs the assistance of the written law. We misrepresent Calvin if we come down heavily on one side or the other, as has been the case in the history of the interpretation of Calvin's views on natural law.

Calvin was aware of two perils. On the one hand, he knew that the doctrine of total depravity could be used to justify moral inactivity: "When man is denied all uprightness, he immediately takes occasion for complacency from that fact; and, because he is said to have no ability to pursue righteousness on his own, he holds all such pursuit to be of no consequence, as if it did not pertain to him at all." On the other hand, Calvin was insistent that "Nothing, however slight, can be credited to man without depriving God of his honor, and without man himself falling into ruin through brazen confidence."⁹⁰

These were the rocks on both sides on which one could easily crash, but Calvin believed that one could steer between them. In a seemingly hopeless situation there is a basis for realistic hope: we can be impelled to aspire to a good of which we are empty, to receive a freedom of which we have been deprived. Here

we are at the very heart of the whole intent of Calvin's theology. It is what gave Calvinism its dynamic character and made it such a transformative force in society.

Calvin spoke of two kinds of understanding. One was of heavenly things; namely, the pure knowledge of God, the nature of true righteousness, and the mysteries of the Heavenly Kingdom. Here reason did not have any power. The other kind of understanding was of "earthly things." In this category Calvin included "government, household management, all mechanical skills and the liberal arts."⁹¹

In Calvin's estimation, reason has a certain competence in earthly things, particularly in political matters:

Since man is by nature a social animal, he tends through natural instinct to foster and preserve society. Consequently, we observe that there exist in all men's minds universal impressions of a certain civic fair dealing and order. Hence no man is to be found who does not understand that every sort of human organization must be regulated by laws, and who does not comprehend the principles of those laws. Hence arises that unvarying consent of all nations and of individual mortals with regard to laws. For their seeds have, without teacher or lawgiver, been implanted in all men.⁹²

According to Calvin, "Men have somewhat more understanding of the precepts of the Second Table because these are more closely concerned with the preservation of civil society among them."⁹³ But Calvin adds immediately: "Yet even here one sometimes detects a failure to endure."

Fourthly, Calvin teaches that the purpose of our knowledge of natural law is to render us inexcusable before God. The strongest statement of this primary purpose of natural law is found in the Institutes II.2.22: ". . . Paul immediately adds that for them conscience stands in place of law; this is sufficient reason for their just condemnation. The purpose of natural law, therefore, is to render man inexcusable."

Equity

We come to the final term in Calvin's opening statement; namely, equity. In the quotation with which we began, Calvin states that "equity alone must be the goal and rule and limit of all laws" (Inst. IV.20.15). Laws may differ from nation to nation but they must "all equally press toward the same goal of equity." This is so because equity is natural and it "cannot but be the same for all, and therefore, this same purpose ought to apply to all laws, whatever their object." We have already seen that Calvin held that the two parts of the moral law are that God "be

worshipped by us all and that we love one another" (Inst. IV.20.15).

What is equity? Simply stated, it is "the perpetual rule of love," from which all legal as well as moral obligations derive and to which they all point. The perpetual rule of love is the law of creation, or the law according to which, as David Little says, "the entire natural-social order was designed."⁹⁴ As Calvin writes:

. . . surely every nation is left free to make such laws as it foresees to be profitable for itself. Yet these must be in conformity to that perpetual rule of love, so that they indeed vary in form but have the same purpose.⁹⁵

When Calvin offers his exposition of the Decalogue, he interprets a number of the commandments not only as prohibitory but as recommending positive obligations that would appear to derive from the "perpetual rule of love." To take an example, the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," means that since the Lord has bound all humanity together by a certain unity, that "each man ought to concern himself with the safety of all."⁹⁶ And even more explicitly on the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," Calvin writes:

The purpose of this commandment is: since God wills that our whole soul be possessed with a disposition to love, we must banish from our hearts all desire contrary to love. To sum up, then: no thought should steal upon us to move our hearts to a harmful covetousness that tends to our neighbor's loss.⁹⁷

He also argues that the word "neighbor" includes even "the most remote person": "We ought to embrace the whole human race without exception in a single feeling of love; here there is no distinction between barbarian and Greek, worthy and unworthy, friend and enemy, since all should be contemplated in God, not in themselves."⁹⁸ Occasionally one wonders whether Calvin did not, like Augustine before him, read the principle of love back from the end of history instead of up from a truncated nature within history. Love represents itself as true nature in the eschaton.

According to Calvin, love is also served when justice and order are preserved in society: "Perfect justice would undoubtedly prevail among us, if we were as faithful in learning active charity (if we may use the expression) as we are skillful in teaching passive charity."⁹⁹ Interestingly, for Calvin love is served not only by maintaining the rights of all but also in defending the civil magistrate as the guardian of peace and equity: "Paul meant to refer the precept respecting the power of magistrates to the law of love." Calvin says in his comments on Romans 13:8: "It is as though he [Paul] had said, 'When I require

you to obey princes I require nothing more than what . . . is demanded by the law of love. . . . He then who introduces anarchy, violates love."¹⁰⁰

Love also involves subjection to one another. "God has so bound us to each other," Calvin says, "that no one ought to avoid subjection. And where love reigns there is a mutual servitude."¹⁰¹ Calvin will not even exempt kings and governors, "for they rule that they may serve." Sometimes subjection to superiors is "contrary to the whole order of nature" and is a consequence of the Fall. But on the whole Calvin finds the origin and basis of all relationships involving superiority and subordination not in the Fall, but in the order of nature. Such order is necessary, not only to avoid confusion but to enable human beings to express their true humanity. At the same time the authority of superiors to inferiors--of rulers to their subjects, husbands to wives, masters to slaves--is not to be tyrannical and arbitrary. For the subjection is mutual--the superior to the inferior and vice versa.

One must therefore raise questions about Jane Dempsey Douglass' brief discussion of natural law in her fine study, Women, Freedom and Calvin. She notes that Calvin included the matter of women's silence in the church in the category of adiaphora. On that basis she argues that Calvin's authority can be used in support of women's ordination. Surely the issue is more ambiguous than Professor Douglass allows. Calvin, she says, "makes clear that no eternal law of God requires women's silence in church, and that customs which serve the edification of the church in one era can well be changed in another if they cease to serve the edification of the church."¹⁰² Although this may be where the argument logically leads, and where personally I would like it to lead, it is not where Calvin followed his own argument. It is doubtful that Calvin himself would have approved of women preaching and teaching in a regularly constituted congregation, although he acknowledged that situations might arise where there was a need for women to preach and teach. Professor Douglass is right when she says that the natural order is less than absolute.¹⁰³ Yet according to Calvin it is not to be rejected except where it comes into conflict with the command of God. Although we may disagree with Calvin on this point, what he teaches is the submission of women to men according to both the natural order and the command of God. As Calvin says in his Commentary on I Timothy, God's extraordinary acts do not annul the ordinary rules by which he wishes to be bound. According to Calvin, women by nature are born to obey: "Thus for a woman to usurp the right to teach would be a sort of mingling of earth and heaven. Thus he bids them be silent and abide within the limits of their sex."¹⁰⁴ The one compensating idea, which I am sure strikes women as not really compensating or of much comfort is that Calvin says God has not given men an infinite empire to hold women under their feet or oppress them or tyrannize them.¹⁰⁵

Still Calvin counsels that although men have a preeminence over women, "they ought to be connected together by mutual benevolence, for the one cannot do without the other"¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

Our first conclusion is that while there is some continuity with aspects of the earlier tradition, Calvin departed from this tradition and identified natural law with moral law. According to Calvin, ultimately there is only one law and not a separate and independent law for the Gentiles and a law for the Jews. The moral agreement which Calvin observed in the moral judgments expressed in the body of pagan laws compelled him to speak of a unitary law. That we are to reverence God, that we are not to lie, or steal, or kill, or betray a trust; that on the contrary we are to be loyal, helpful, and considerate--all this is part of the moral wisdom and heritage of the race. As Henry Stob writes: ". . . the proponents of a consensus gentium moralis are not wholly mistaken. Through the relative chaos there shines some evidence of a unitary law in relation to which people form their judgments and fashion their lives, thereby creating some sort of universal community."¹⁰⁷

Secondly, references to natural law are found throughout the corpus of Calvin's writings. Lang is wrong to say that these are "superficial and external." Höpfl is closer to the truth when he says that they are "not peripheral or casual." But as Höpfl adds, what diminishes the impressiveness of the array of allusions is that Calvin never allowed to natural knowledge of the moral law any independent adequacy as a guide to moral conduct for Christians. It was always treated as an inferior adjunct to the written divine law. Doumergue was right in stating that Calvin denied an independent law of nature and an independent morality with considerable vehemence. When Grotius a century later asserted that natural law would be valid "even if God did not exist," he had clearly left the Calvinistic fold.

John T. McNeill, it seems, overstates the matter when he says that within mundane society natural law is "not secondary but controlling." While this may have been the position of some of the Scholastics, it was not Calvin's view. What is controlling for him is the divine law. The primary function of natural law is to render humanity "inexcusable" and rob it of every pretext.

Höpfl has stated that for Calvin "natural law was systematically being ground into insignificance between the upper millstone of divine law and the nether millstone of positive law." It is a clever remark, but one is tempted to respond in the manner of the late Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, who once said of such a remark that it was too clever by half. To be sure, natural law is not of the same importance as divine law, but we must not evacuate it of any importance. Calvin had sound theological rea-

sons for doubting the capacity of fallen humanity for any worthwhile knowledge about God or about the "rule of righteousness" out of its own unaided reason. Experience, natural law, and custom are reliable guides to the will of God only when tutored by Scripture. Yet contrary to Höpfl, Calvin did not regard the references to natural law as entirely redundant. They provide enough moral knowledge to enable pagans to sustain a semblance of civility and to condemn them in their own consciences, and they are also supplementary political resources for the Christian.

Thirdly and finally, Calvin definitely believed that there is a natural order of laws which can be discerned and men and women do in fact discern it. "If the Gentiles by nature have law righteousness engraved upon their minds," Calvin writes, "we surely cannot say they are utterly blind as to the conduct of life."¹⁰⁸ Here we have a clue to the degree of moral light which Calvin believed unredeemed humanity possesses. It has power to distinguish between what is just and unjust, between what is good and what is evil. Men and women have a "natural instinct" for government and the preservation of society, a natural repugnance of cruelty, brutality, and bloodshedding, and even an inclination to give sympathy and succor to the weak.¹⁰⁹ Pagans understand many aspects of good behavior which are reinforced by the teaching of Scripture. Yet what is objectively available to them they subjectively repulse, or else misconstrue and pervert. God's righteousness may again and again be held down in unrighteousness. Yet Calvin was convinced that it could not be nullified. "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness cannot put it out."

Notes

¹August Lang, Die Reformation und das Naturecht (Gütersloh, 1909), 18; English translation by J. G. Machen, "The Reformation and Natural Law," Princeton Theological Review 7 (1909), reprinted in Calvin and the Reformation, edited by William Park Armstrong (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 68-69.

²William Park Armstrong, ed., 70.

³G. Beyerhaus, Studien zur Staatsanschauung Calvins (1910), 66 and footnote 4.

⁴A. Lang, Göttingesche gelehrte Anzeigen (1912), 272, quoted by Emile Doumergue, Jean Calvin, Tome 5: "La pensée ecclésiastique et la pensée politique de Calvin" (Lausanne: Georges Bridel & Cie Editeurs, 1917), 465.

⁵Ernst Troeltsch, "Calvin and Calvinism" in the Hibbert Journal 8 (1909): 116.

⁶E. Troeltsch, "Calvin and Calvinism," 116-17.

⁷Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, trans. by Olive Wyon (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1931), 2:897 n. 349.

⁸Emile Doumergue, Jean Calvin, Tome 5, 466.

⁹Emile Doumergue, Jean Calvin, Tome 5, 467-69.

¹⁰Emile Doumergue, Jean Calvin, Tome 5, 469.

¹¹Doumergue, 580. This point is made in the context of his discussion of Grotius who held that natural law is independent of religion. "Calvin nie le droit indépendant, la morale indépendante. Avec quelle véhémence!"

¹²Josef Bohatec, Calvin und das Recht (Neudruck der Ausgabe Feudinggen, 1934; Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1971), 2-3.

¹³Natural Theology. Trans. by P. Fraenkel (London: Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, 1946), 37.

¹⁴Natural Theology, 39.

¹⁵Natural Theology, 105-106.

¹⁶Gunter Gloede, Theologia naturalis bei Calvin (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1935).

¹⁷Peter Barth, Das Problem der natürlichen Theologie bei Calvin. Theologische Existenz Heute, Heft 18 (Munich: Kaiser Verlag, 1935).

¹⁸Peter Brunner, "Allgemeine und besondere Offenbarung in Calvins Institutio," Evangelische Theologie, 1. Hahrg. 1934, Heft 5, 189-215.

¹⁹Wilhelm Niesel, Die Theologie Calvins (Munich: Kaiser, 1938). English translation, The Theology of Calvin (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956).

²⁰Marc-Edouard Cheneviere, La Pensée Politique de Calvin (Geneve: Editions Labor et Fides, 1937), 75 n. 64.

²¹Marc-Edouard Cheneviere, 46ff., 69-70.

²²John T. McNeill, "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers," Journal of Religion 26 (1946): 168.

²³John T. McNeill, 182.

²⁴T. F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1949), Preface, 7.

²⁵The phrase is E. A. Dowey's in his Survey Article in Church History 24 (1955): 365.

²⁶Edward A. Dowey, The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 64-65. According to Dowey, "Conscience" is the term in Calvin's theology that equates the "natural" with the divine will and, because of sin, with divine judgment," 65.

²⁷E. A. Dowey, 70. Dowey points out that Calvin had to transpose each commandment from negative to positive, then derive its substance and finally expanded it synecdochically, before he could state what element of the universal and eternal will of God it taught.

²⁸Edward A. Dowey, 71. Dowey gives the following summation: ". . . God is to be worshiped and obeyed rather than cursed or ignored, that parents and rulers stand as the instruments of God for preserving order in society, and that bisexual, (Dowey means heterosexual), nonconsanguinous, monogamous intercourse is the ordained method of propagating the race, to the exclusion of polygamy, homosexuality, or incestuous marriage. These make up the orderly, revealed will of God in creation as distinct from his "secret" will or decrees. It includes also regard for property rights, helping the needy, respecting the aged, and preserving human life."

²⁹Arthur C. Cochrane, "Natural Law in Calvin," in Church-State Relations in Ecumenical Perspective, edited by Elwyn A. Smith (Dusquesne University Press, 1966), 181.

³⁰Arthur C. Cochrane, 180

³¹Arthur C. Cochrane, 206-207.

³²David Little, "Calvin and the Prospects for a Christian Theory of Natural Law," in Norm and Context in Christian Ethics, ed. Gene H. Outka and Paul Ramsey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), 185. Little, however, confessed that he had difficulty with Cochrane's view that Calvin makes a sharp distinction between the order of nature and natural law (Cochrane, 204-206).

³³David Little, 196-197. In Little's estimation, Calvin provides an attractive starting for natural law thinking, because he employs natural law categories "without doing what . . . a Christian ethicist must never do: make too much of, or make too all-encompassing, a theory of natural law. In Christian ethics natural law must remain at best a companion theory, one that is seen in relation to, and complementary with, the norms of

Christian revelation. It will, in some sense, always remain minimal, or, to use Calvin's word 'vestigial.' For the Christian who takes the fallenness of nature seriously, natural law will always be but suggestive or indicative of ethical norms beyond itself, norms which will have to be legitimated on grounds other than that they are 'natural' or 'empirical.' Without the revealed knowledge of the purpose for which man was designed, the Christian will not be able finally to justify the 'goodness' or 'rightness' of even the ethical universals" (p. 196). See also David Little, "Natural Law Revisited: James Luther Adams and Beyond", Union Seminary Quarterly Review 37 (1982): 217-28, in which he states that Christians, as well as members of other religious traditions, have an enormous stake in natural-law thinking. It is based on the "conviction that there is something prior to, and broader than, revelation which provides the floor for morality" (p. 218).

³⁴Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, Ltd., 1959), 141-47. See also 149.

³⁵François Wendel, Calvin: The Origin and Development of his Religious Thought, trans. Philip Mairet (London: Collins, The Fontana Library, 1965), 33 and 208.

³⁶Harro Höpfl, The Christian Polity of John Calvin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 181 and 184. Höpfl thinks that references to natural law served Calvin as partial justification for God's reprobation of those who had no access to Scripture; it was incidental confirmation of what was more adequately stated in divine law; and it served as a polemical weapon against those who appealed to reason against Calvin's interpretation of Scripture, or to Scripture against Calvin's notions of what was reasonable. Höpfl finds no serious examination of the idea of natural law in Calvin. Calvin's appeal to the consent of the ages and to specific articles of the natural law was unconcerned with the difficulties of this kind of argument (184).

³⁷I believe this is consonant with Calvin's purpose and particularly his statement, "Yet, however the knowledge of God and of ourselves may be mutually connected, the order of right teaching requires that we discuss the former first, then proceed afterward to treat the latter." Inst. I.1.3, 39.

³⁸Inst. IV.4.16, 1504.

³⁹Cf. Inst. II.8.5; IV.10.7-8; Comm. on Acts 2:23; Comm. on Exodus 15:25; etc.

⁴⁰Comm. on Genesis 2:16. CO 23: 44-45.

⁴¹E. A. Dowey, 225.

⁴²Inst. IV.20.14. The reference to Cicero is the Laws II. iv and v.1 (LCL edition, 378ff.).

⁴³Aquinas, Summa Theol. I IIae. lxxxix. 4. Cf. also Melanchthon, Loci communes (1521), ed. Engelland, 46.

⁴⁴Inst. IV.20.15, 1503. Cf. also Sermons on Deuteronomy, CO, 23: 393. English translation, John Calvin's Sermons on the Ten Commandments. Edited and translated by Benjamin W. Farley (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 249: ". . . the truth and substance of the law were not [confined] to one age; they constitute something permanent which shall abide forever."

⁴⁵See Inst. II.8. The title of the chapter is "Explanation of the Moral Law (The Ten Commandments);" Geneva Catechism (1537) (OS 1:383 ff.); Paul T. Fuhrmann, Instruction in Faith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949), 24 ff.; Geneva Catechism (1545) (OS 2: 96).

⁴⁶Inst. II.7.1, 348.

⁴⁷Comm. Harmony of the Pentateuch, "Preface" (CR 24, 7f.; CTS 1:xvi).

⁴⁸Inst. II.8.2, 369: "Now what is to be learned from the law can be readily understood: that God as he is our Creator, has toward us by right the place of Father and Lord; for this reason we owe to him glory, reverence, love, and fear; . . ."

⁴⁹E. A. Dowey, 231-232.

⁵⁰Inst. II.6.4, 347; II.7.2, 351; II.8.7, 373-374. Cf. also I.6.2, 72, and III.2.6, 548.

⁵¹Comm. on Romans 10:4 (CO 49)

⁵²I have followed Beveridge's translation. Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by Henry Beveridge (London: James Clarke & Co., Limited, 1953), 1:317.

⁵³Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theo., q. xcvi, 2a 4, 5; q. xcvi, a. 5.

⁵⁴Here Calvin agrees with the other reformers particularly Henry Bullinger who said: "We understand that the law of nature, . . . hath the same office that the written law hath; I mean, to direct men, and to teach them, and also to discern betwixt good and evil, and to be able to judge of sin. We understand, that the beginning of this law is not of the corrupt disposition of mankind, but of God himself, who with his finger writeth in our hearts, fasteneth in our nature, and planteth in us a rule to know justice, equity and goodness." The Decades, edited by Thomas

Harding (Cambridge: University Press, 1849), 2:194.

⁵⁵Henry Stob, "Natural Law Ethics: An Appraisal," Calvin Theological Journal 20 (1985): 58-59.

⁵⁶Henry Stob, "Natural Law Ethics: An Appraisal," 61.

⁵⁷Comm. on John 1:5 (CO, 47:6: corrupta natura and 7: corrupta collapsam).

⁵⁸Cf. also Inst. I.14.3: "For the depravity and malice both of man and of the devil, or the sins that arise therefrom, do not spring from nature, but rather from the corruption of nature."

⁵⁹Comm. Harm. Pentateuch, Lev. 18:6 (CO 24:66, 657, 662; also CO 23:51, 368).

⁶⁰E. Doumergue, 5:467-69; E. A. Dowey, 71-72; Harro Höpfl, 179-80.

⁶¹CO 28:282, 488, 489, 586, 659.

⁶²CO 24:605.

⁶³Comm. 1 Cor. 7:37; Comm. Eph. 5:31; Comm. 1 Tim. 2 and 5:8; Comm. Gen. 24:3.

⁶⁴Comm. Gen. 26:10 and 38:24.

⁶⁵Harmony of Moses (CTS, 1:137).

⁶⁶Comm. Gen. 21:8.

⁶⁷Harmony of Moses (CTS, 3:18).

⁶⁸CO 28:29, 31, 34, 35.

⁶⁹Comm. 1 Cor. 9:11.

⁷⁰Harmony of Moses (CTS, 2:221).

⁷¹Comm. Gen. 29:27; Harmony of Moses (CTS, 3:98); Gospel Harmony (CTS, 2:22).

⁷²Comm. Gen. 26:10; Harmony of Moses (CTS, 3:77).

⁷³Comm. Rom. 1:26 (CO 49:28).

⁷⁴Harmony of Moses (CTS, 3:20); Sermons on Deuteronomy (CO 26:323).

⁷⁵Comm. Gen. 12:15; Comm. Eph. 6:1.

⁷⁶Comm. 1 Cor. 5; cf. CO 49:379-80.

⁷⁷Harro Höpfl, 184.

⁷⁸Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), referred to by David Little, "Natural Law Revisited", 221. Little refers to Quentin Skinner's criticism with which I would also agree: "Rorty seems to risk eliding one very obvious but vital point: that scientific theories are tested not simply by their coherence with our other beliefs, but also by their capacity to explain and control the phenomena of nature."

⁷⁹Inst. II.8.1, 368.

⁸⁰Marc-Edouard Cheneviere, 46: "Calvin broke the bonds which attached the knowledge of the natural law to reason and rested it upon conscience--an interior voice which has no need of reason." That is clearly an over-statement. Sometimes Calvin connects natural law with conscience and at other times with reason as in his Letter to the King of England, CO 14:40: "the noble gem called natural law and reason is a rare thing among the children of men."

⁸¹Comm. Romans 2:15 (CO 49:48).

⁸²Comm. Romans 2:15 (CO 49:38).

⁸³Inst. II.1.8, 252.

⁸⁴Inst. I.15.2, 184-85.

⁸⁵Inst. II.2.12, 271.

⁸⁶Inst. II.2.17, 276.

⁸⁷Inst. II.2.12, 270.

⁸⁸Inst. II.2.12.

⁸⁹Inst. IV.10.5.

⁹⁰Inst. II.2.1, 255.

⁹¹Inst. II.2.13, 272.

⁹²Inst. II.2.13, 272.

⁹³Inst. II.2.24, 284.

⁹⁴David Little, 177.

⁹⁵Inst. IV.20.15, 1503-4.

⁹⁶Inst. II.8.39, 404.

⁹⁷Inst. II.8.49, 413.

⁹⁸Inst. II.8.55, 418-19. Cf. also Comm. Gal. 5:14, CO 50:251; Inst. III.7.7.

⁹⁹Comm. Harm. Gospels. Matthew 7:12 (CO 45:613).

¹⁰⁰Comm. Rom. 13:8-10 (CO 49:252ff.), quoted by Arthur C. Cochrane, 187.

¹⁰¹Comm. Eph. 5:21 (CO 51:221).

¹⁰²Jane Dempsey Douglas, Women, Freedom, and Calvin (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 46.

¹⁰³Jane Dempsey Douglass, 36.

¹⁰⁴CO 52:276

¹⁰⁵Sermon on 1 Cor. 11:11-16 (CO 49:737).

¹⁰⁶Comm. on 1 Cor. 11:11 (CO 49:477).

¹⁰⁷Henry Stob, 59.

¹⁰⁸Inst. II.2.22, 281.

¹⁰⁹Cf. Ronald S. Wallace, 142.