

PREFACE

Anyone who has tried to study Calvin's Biblical commentaries carefully will have shared my own frequent frustration in being hampered by the lack of the first necessity of such study, reliable critical editions of those works. Students of the *Institutio* are well-served by the edition in *Calvini Opera Selecta* and by the French edition of J.D. Benoît. For his sermons we are also well-served, if only in part, by the volumes appearing as *Supplementa Calviniana*. But they who would study the commentaries must do the best they can with inferior editions.

It is in an attempt to make things easier for such scholars that I have prepared this present edition. My aim has been simple and straightforward: to present the text of the three editions of the commentary on Romans accurately and in an easily apprehensible form. For the first time the reader has before him within one volume the Latin text of *Romans* as Calvin wrote it, revised it, and revised it again. He may without difficulty both discover Calvin's exposition at the three different stages of his career and also see how the commentary was step by step built up into its final form.

The work has occupied me, off and on, for twenty years and more, beginning in my early Tudor rectory at Great Ponton, continuing in my Victorian vicarage at Oakington, and now concluding amid the Romanesque splendours of Durham. The centuries have indeed blended and blurred. I have over these years contracted many debts of gratitude. First and foremost I owe warm thanks to Professor Rodolphe Peter of Strasbourg, whose generosity with information out of his immense knowledge of Calvin-bibliography has never failed. In the world of libraries, my thanks go to the University Library, Cambridge, and to the staff of what used to be the Anderson Room and is now the Rare Books Room; to the Durham University Library and particularly to Dr. A.I. Doyle, the Keeper of the Rare Books; to the Durham Chapter Librarian, and particularly to Mr. R.C. Norris; to the Librarian of Bodley, who has on three occasions made it possible for me to study the 1540 edition of the commentary at my leisure; and to the Librarians of Emmanuel College and Corpus Christi College in Cambridge. I must express my gratitude to several Continental scholars who read a short sample of the work and gave me the benefit of their advice and encouragement — and I think especially of Dr. Helmut Feld, Professor

Alexandre Ganoczy of Wurzburg and Professor Pierre Fraenkel of Geneva, as well as of my colleagues on the Präsidium of the Calvin Congress. I am grateful to the University of Durham for giving me a grant to spend a month working in Cambridge libraries in 1978. Finally a special word of thanks to Professor H. A. Oberman for much kind encouragement and for including this work in his series *Studies in the History of Christian Thought* and to Messrs. E. J. Brill for generously undertaking the publication of a difficult and somewhat rarefied book.

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