

# Calvin and Luther: The Continuing Relationship

Edited by R. Ward Holder



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R. Ward Holder

## Calvin and Luther: The Relationship that Still Echoes

In 1542, John Calvin wrote a letter to Martin Luther, but sent it to Philip Melanchthon hoping that Melanchthon would pass the letter on to Luther.<sup>1</sup> For Melanchthon, however, the letter arrived at an inauspicious time – Luther was in a perfect fury with the Swiss over the eucharist, and Melanchthon chose not to share Calvin's letter. Thus, the relationship that might have exercised enormous influence on the fortunes of the Protestant future actually ended before it began. Luther was the one figure whom all Germans accepted as authoritative, and perhaps no one worked harder at Swiss unity than the Frenchman Calvin.<sup>2</sup>

Instead of the successful unification for which Calvin so dearly hoped, Calvin and Luther came to represent the two sides of the magisterial Reformation. They, and the schools and confessions that would bear their names, were cast as opposites, two great Protestant protagonists locked in a battle for Europe's very soul. This despite the fact that Calvin spoke of Luther as an apostle, and always refused the chances to criticize him openly.<sup>3</sup> Calvin was wonderfully able to convince himself of unlikely things, and one of those was the idea that the Lutherans who opposed him were not following the truth that Martin had set down so clearly in the years before his death. For his part, Luther spoke sparingly, but occasionally positively of Calvin.<sup>4</sup> In the popular imagination, however, their differences became greater than their enormous areas of agreement.

So it came to pass that Lutherans would rather share the Holy Roman Empire with adherents of the Church of Rome than with Zwinglians, Calvinists, or whatever the Swiss were to be called. Luther himself used many terms to describe the Swiss, and few were complimentary. The ongoing antipathy between Zurich and Wittenberg fomented the *Consensus Tigurinus*, a document gleefully used by Calvin's Lutheran opponents as a damning piece of

1 Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 169.

2 This is by no means to suggest that a pan-European Protestantism would have definitely existed had Melanchthon delivered the letter. There are enormous problems with the likelihood of that alternative history. But the possibilities are interesting to contemplate.

3 For instance, see Calvin's reference to Luther as one who leads the way unto salvation, in *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, CO 6.459.

4 Luther's view of Calvin was far more mixed than Calvin's unflinching approval of Luther, even in those instants when he disagreed with a point of Luther's doctrine. See Gordon, 169 – 170.



evidence that Calvin was a Zwinglian.<sup>5</sup> Calvin's counterattacks against Westphal's polemics set the tone – Calvin and Luther, and the movements that bore their names, were two opposing and armed camps. Thinkers and authors who failed to understand this would pay a dear price in the early modern period.<sup>6</sup>

The oppositional setting of Calvin and Luther did not end with the onset of the modern world – the ongoing confessional divisions can be felt to the present. For example, Karl Barth, in his lectures to the students at Göttingen in the summer of 1923, stated that the spirit of Reformed confessionalism was significantly different from that of the Lutheran confessions. He claimed that the Augsburg Confession, in its “invariant” form, stood and stands within Lutheranism almost on par with scripture, that the “difference between Scripture and confession according to the teaching of the Formula of Concord is in fact only a quantitative one and not qualitative.” Against this, Barth saw the genuine spirit of Reformed Christianity as fundamentally unable to place anything beside scripture, and thus as setting out confessions that were radically historically contingent.<sup>7</sup> For Barth, Reformed and Lutheran faith were foundationally and irreconcilably divergent.

The reforms begun by Luther and Calvin became two of the largest and most influential movements to arise in the sixteenth century, and their influence has continued, with significant cultural and theological weight not only in Europe and North America, but also in South America, Asia, Australia and Africa. Karl Barth's argument from the 1920s continues to be representative of a generally accepted modern view that Calvinism and Lutheranism are completely separate, opposing movements and theologies. And yet, in many ways the movements built on the teaching of Luther and Calvin developed in relationship and resonance—not only opposition—with one another. Despite this fact, very few scholars have explicitly considered the relationship between Calvin and Luther or between Calvinism and Lutheranism.<sup>8</sup>

But does it have to be this way? Are the confessional divisions that historically defined these communities still as potent as they once were? It is part of the argument of this volume that the answer to this question is a qualified negative. Historically, of course, Lutheranism and Calvinism or Reformed Protestantism were rival confessions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some of the

5 And Westphal hoped to smear Melancthon through his relationship with the Swiss. See Gordon, 234–243. For a modern analysis of Calvin's position, see Anthony N. S. Lane's “Was Calvin a Crypto-Zwinglian?” in *Adaptations of Calvinism in Reformation Europe: Essays in Honour of Brian G. Armstrong*, Mack P. Holt, ed. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 21–42.

6 An example is illustrated in Henning Jürgen's article on Benedict Morgenstern in this volume.

7 Karl Barth, *The Theology of the Reformed Confessions*, translated and annotated by Darrell L. Guder and Judith J. Guder, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

8 Two important exceptions are Randall Zachman's *Assurance of Faith: Conscience in the Theology of Martin Luther and John Calvin* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); and Harro Höpfl's *Luther and Calvin on Secular Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). It is telling how few exceptions exist to this rule.

historical and historical-theological explorations in this volume bear that out. But it is hardly enough to say that Lutherans and Calvinists differed stridently. Through these explorations of the different ways that Calvin and Luther interpreted the scriptures, in both broad categories of the scriptures and narrow readings within it, modern thinkers get a sense of the manners in which Luther and Calvin diverged exegetically. Similarly, the assessment of the career of Benedict Morgenstern demonstrates the ways that various Protestantisms of the early modern period struggled with each other. Far from being a simple binary system of Lutheran vs. Reformed, various types of Lutherans sought to influence the direction of the reforms and to gain the upper hand in power and doctrinal struggles against both the Reformed and each other. The name-calling alone both makes for salacious reading, and gives an insight into what the protagonists thought was at stake.

But just as surely as the historical question of the boundaries between Calvin and Luther, or Lutheranism and Calvinism must be answered with a resounding yes, the ongoing doctrinal questions offer a different picture. In the more systematic doctrinal articles, an argument is forwarded that the broad confessional continuity between Luther and Calvin on the soteriological theme of union with Christ offers still-unexplored avenues to both deeper understandings of soteriology, and the manner in which these two great theologians were set in opposition by their camps, rather than by their thoughts. Another article sets out the historiography even more clearly, demonstrating how contextualized the two Reformers would appear as sources in later Protestant thought. Through these articles, we begin to see the possibility of a rapprochement between Calvin and Luther as sources, though not as historical figures. But that insight allows the conversation to extend, and bear far greater fruit.

The chapters are divided into three larger sections. The first is entitled “Reformers,” and is historical and historical-theological. G. Sujin Pak begins with an investigation of Luther and Calvin’s exegesis of the minor prophets, especially seeking to explicate their understandings of prophecy and its role in the early modern church. David M. Whitford analyzes the specifics of Luther and Calvin’s interpretations of the “curse of Ham” in Genesis 9, and finds that both built their interpretations upon slender textual footings, rather than extracting them from the text. This section continues with Paul Westermeyer’s consideration of how Calvin and Luther’s theological ideals contributed to their musical and liturgical theories. The first section closes with Timothy Wengert’s comparison of Calvin’s and Melancthon’s repudiations of Osiander’s doctrine of justification. While firmly situated in the sixteenth century, Wengert demonstrates the enormous importance of grasping the theology of the sixteenth century figures for the modern conversations about soteriological theology. The second section is entitled “Confessions,” and examines various aspects of how the two confessions handled different issues, both with deep investigations of a single confession or figure, and with comparative efforts.

Susan Karant-Nunn's analysis of Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed affective strategies in the preaching of the passion generates significant insights into the mentalities of the confessions and their adherents. The next two offerings are deep investigations into each tradition: Jeffrey Watt's examination of the Genevan Consistory finds that it was an instrument of communal formation, and that no analogue to this existed in Lutheran or Catholic territories. Robert Kolb investigates the role that Luther played in Lutheran culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a role that Calvin definitely did not play in Reformed thought and culture. Concluding this section, Henning Jürgens' consideration of Benedict Morgenstern's career in Poland and Prussia clarifies that there were not only issues between Reformed and Lutherans, but also different types of Lutherans.

The last section, entitled "Contemporary Perspectives", moves from the more strictly historical treatments of Calvin and Luther to the doctrinal loci. J. Todd Billing's consideration of the theme of union with Christ in both Luther and Calvin maintains that soteriological focus, and argues that Luther and Calvin have much to offer as foundations for building a biblical and catholic theology of union with Christ that takes theology beyond confessionalism. Theresa Latini's examination of the true *koinonia* in the image of the church as mother in both Calvin and Luther's theology finds that this motif directly addresses the contemporary crisis of loss of community. Finally, Christine Helmer's analysis of Calvin and Luther in modern Protestant theology demonstrates how frequently the use of these forebears is contextualized by the framework of the modern theologian.

Taken together, these essays demonstrate both the necessity of coming to greater understanding of the heritage of Calvin and Luther and Calvinism and Lutheranism, while establishing the still-untapped potentials of considering the two in their joint theological programs. Calvin and Luther's epistolary conversation never truly got off the ground, but the legacies that they left must be understood in light of each other, both in the past and the present.

The Calvin Studies Society would like to thank Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota for being such a wonderful host, and the North American Luther Forum for being such engaging conversation partners. Special thanks are due to Prof. Mary Jane Haemig of Luther Theological Seminary, whose tireless work on the program made this event so successful. Finally, the 2011 colloquium was blessed with the gracious sponsorship of the Office of Theology and Worship of the Presbyterian Church (USA); the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan; Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Lyle and Barbara Sall. And one last thank you goes to Jessika Garcia, a graduate student at United Theological Seminary who worked long and hard at making the bibliography come out right.

## Reformers



G. Sujin Pak\*

## Luther and Calvin on the Nature and Function of Prophecy: The Case of the Minor Prophets

Within the scholarship of the past decade there has been a noteworthy interest in developments in the views of history and prophecy in the early modern era. Works such as Anthony Grafton's *What Was History?* and Irena Backus's *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation* come foremost to mind, but also pertinent is a very current interest in Calvin's lectures on the Minor Prophets represented in two books recently published—Jon Balserak's *Establishing the Remnant Church in France* and Frederick Harms's *In God's Custody*.<sup>1</sup> It strikes me as a useful exercise to compare and contrast Martin Luther and John Calvin's interpretations of the Minor Prophets in particular for a number of reasons. First of all, a study of Luther and Calvin's readings of the Minor Prophets pinpoints their understandings of prophecy that are largely, if not quite thoroughly, free of apocalyptic content. Neither Luther nor Calvin read the Minor Prophets in an apocalyptic light.<sup>2</sup> Hence, one is able to arrive at other important aspects of their views concerning biblical prophecy, as well as explore the continuities and

\* English translations for Calvin's writings come from *A Commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, trans by Rev. John Owen (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1986), Volumes 1–5. Citations of these volumes are by the volume number and page reference. I have sometimes slightly revised.

1 Anthony Grafton, *What was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Irena Backus, *Historical Method and Confessional Identity in the Era of the Reformation (1378–1615)* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Jon Balserak, *Establishing the Remnant Church in France: Calvin's Lectures on the Minor Prophets, 1556–59* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); and Frederick A. V. Harms, *In God's Custody: The Church, a History of Divine Protection: A Study of John Calvin's Ecclesiology based on his Commentary on the Minor Prophets* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010). See also the article by Barbara Pitkin, "Prophecy and History in Calvin's Lectures on Daniel (1561)" in *Die Geschichte der Daniel-Auslegung in Judentum, Christentum und Islam: Studien zur Kommentierung des Danielbuches in Literatur und Kunst*, eds. Katharina Bracht and David S. du Toit (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 323–47.

2 At times Luther referred to an apocalyptic reading given by prior Christian tradition, but usually argued that it is not the better reading. More often, both Luther and Calvin explicitly argued against apocalyptic reading of the Minor Prophets. This may be a surprising fact for readers of Robin Barnes's study on Lutheran apocalypticism. Barnes demonstrates a "proliferation of last things" among Lutheran authors, but Barnes's study focuses mostly upon Lutheran apocalyptic treatises and readings of Daniel and the Apocalypse of John. See Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), esp. 60–99.

discontinuities this might have for their conceptions of any ongoing role of prophecy in the church.

Furthermore, both of these men turned to lecture on these twelve biblical books at significant points in their careers and employed these texts to address the immediate concerns they were facing at the time. Luther lectured on the Minor Prophets in Latin from about March 1524 until around March 1526—that is, during the years surrounding the Peasants' War. He also issued German versions of his lectures on Jonah (1526), Habakkuk (1526) and Zechariah (1527) at this time, which were not simply translations of his Latin lectures.<sup>3</sup> The prefaces to his German lectures on these three books indicate his clear concerns to argue against the Enthusiasts and to help the layperson focus upon the most important thing for exegesis and preaching: simple faith in Christ.<sup>4</sup> Hence, Luther employed these three prophets in particular, and the Minor Prophets more generally, to propound clear teachings about faith, the power of the preached Gospel, and justification by faith alone. In some ways, one might view these lectures as a culmination of his prior theological work on Psalms, Romans, Galatians and Hebrews now expounded from the genre of prophecy.

John Calvin's lectures on the Minor Prophets appeared at a significant point in his career, as well. He commenced his lectures on the Minor Prophets around late 1555 or early 1556. As Jon Balserak has set forth more thoroughly in his book, the year 1555 can be viewed as one of the turning points in Calvin's career. It was the year when the Peace of Augsburg was implemented. It was a time when French evangelicals were turning to Calvin and Geneva for support and also when Calvin's authority had become more secured in Geneva. Thus, one also finds that 1555 was the year when Geneva sent out its first official missionaries. Calvin, not unlike Luther, found persuasive power in the prophetic genre generally and in the writings of the Minor Prophets specifically to call and commission the teachers and pastors of Geneva to uphold the purity of Christian faith and worship in a time in which he understood these to be under acute attack.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, this article argues that there is a considerable link between Luther and Calvin's turn to biblical prophecy to address the events of their day, their understandings of the nature and function of prophecy, and the prophetic

3 The history of the transmission of the Latin texts of Luther's lectures is quite complex. The Weimar edition of Luther's lectures on the Minor Prophets provides the most detailed account. See WA 13:vii–xxxvi. Brief accounts of the transmission histories of both the Latin and German texts may also be found in prefaces to volumes eighteen to twenty in Luther's Works.

4 For example, Luther wrote in his preface to Zechariah: "Today everyone claims to be a master interpreter. One studies Daniel, another the Apocalypse, and so on, whichever is most difficult or offers the most allegories; and in this way they hope to show their cleverness. They do not consider, however, whether they are teaching the poor common man anything ... Now one might be able to put up with the splendid work of these spirits if they ... gave the unlearned people their due—that is, the simple teaching of faith in Christ" (LW 20:155–56; WA 23:485).

5 See Balserak, 3–5 for a more detailed account of this context.

awareness of each. The essay begins by outlining some of the most important agreements between Luther and Calvin on Old Testament prophecy as represented in the Minor Prophets. Then it turns to three key differences concerning their conceptions of the prophetic content, duty of the prophet, and vision of sacred history and the implications these have for Luther and Calvin's theology, exegetical practices, and prophetic self-awareness. The essay concludes with reflections upon the continuities between Luther and Calvin's views of Old Testament prophecy and their articulations of the possible, ongoing function of prophecy in the church.<sup>6</sup>

#### BASIC AGREEMENTS CONCERNING OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS AND PROPHECY

Not surprisingly, there are several basic points upon which Luther and Calvin agreed concerning the Minor Prophets and their prophecies. First and foremost, Luther and Calvin understood the Old Testament prophets as heralds of God's Word, who proclaimed God's will and called the people to repentance.<sup>7</sup> As Luther wrote in his preface to Amos, "[God] sends his prophets or ministers of the Word to announce his Word, to foretell the ills that are coming and, after preaching the Word, to turn at least a few hearts and call them to repentance."<sup>8</sup> Calvin, in particular, emphasized that the Old Testament prophets did not add anything of their own but proclaimed only that which God commanded, thus investing the prophecy with divine authority.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Luther and Calvin each viewed the Old Testament prophets as instruments of the Holy Spirit, who sealed their prophecies with authority and authenticity.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, they each acknowledged that true prophets were often not well received by the people.<sup>11</sup>

Luther and Calvin both found an observable pattern in Old Testament

6 Though beyond the means of this essay, these differences could lay a foundation for the role of biblical interpretation in confessional identity formation. This is not necessarily claiming anything new. Barbara Pitkin notes the important differences between Luther and Calvin's conceptions of history and points to their implications for confessional formation in her article, "Calvin, Theology and History" *Seminary Ridge Review* 12/2 (2010): 3. See also Backus's study previously cited.

7 WA 13:2, 158–59, 315, 424, 546–47, 614–15 and LW 18:3, 127, 232; 19:108; 20:3, 80. CO 42:202–203, 517–18; 43:1, 247, 265–66, 435; 44:188, 228–29 and Calvin, 1:42, 2:18–19, 148; 3:92, 122–23, 417; 5:116, 183.

8 WA 13:158; LW 18:127.

9 There are multiple references to the prophet not adding anything throughout Calvin's commentaries on the Minor Prophets. See CO 42:203, 395, 517; 43:1, 36, 178–79, 282, 307, 466, 467; 44:2, 94, 202–203, 228–29, 497 and Calvin, 1:42–43, 329; 2:18, 148, 200, 421–22; 3:152, 197, 467, 468; 4:184, 341; 5:141, 183, 630. On the divine authority of prophecy, see CO 42:517, 43:39, 437; 44:2, 202–203 and Calvin, 2:19, 203; 3:418; 4:184; 5:141.

10 WA 13:315, 555, 614–15; 19:245, 349 and LW 18:232, 19:97, 151; 20:12–13, 80. CO 42:199–200, 201, 203, 517–18; 43:1, 3, 31, 36, 44, 117, 179, 307, 314–15, 329 and Calvin, 1:38, 40, 42; 2:18, 19, 148, 150, 191, 200, 212, 323, 422; 3:197, 208, 233.

11 See, for examples, WA 13:159, 180 and LW 18:128, 157 and CO 42:510 and Calvin, 1:503.



prophecies, particularly in the prophecies of the Minor Prophets. Namely, these prophets interspersed threats with promises.<sup>12</sup> More importantly, Luther and Calvin interpreted this interspersion of threats with promises to denote the mixed nature of the people of God and point to a remnant theology at work. Calvin described this most thoroughly in his comments on Hos 6:4:

The prophets had to deal with the whole people; they [also] had to deal with the few faithful ... When therefore the prophets reproved the people, they addressed the whole body; but at the same time, as there was some remnant seed, they mingled consolations ... and mingled them that the elect of God might ever rely upon his mercy and thus patiently submit to his rod and continue in his fear, knowing that there is in him a sure salvation. Hence the promises that we see inserted by the prophets among threats and reproofs ought not to be referred in common to all ... but only to the faithful.<sup>13</sup>

Such a theology of a remnant and doctrine of election demonstrated for both Luther and Calvin the ways in which God remains true to God's covenantal promises in the midst of impending punishment or even destruction, which otherwise might undermine convictions about God's faithfulness and sovereignty.

Luther and Calvin also agreed on a couple of significant technical issues about the Minor Prophets. They each argued that the texts of the Minor Prophets should be understood as compilations of shortened versions of the original prophecies given. Hence, Luther commented from time to time that a prophet "undoubtedly" explained his prophecies in much more copious words than what was recorded in short form in the text.<sup>14</sup> Luther contended, as well, that each prophet's prophecies were given at different times, sometimes over a period of many years, and later collected together.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Calvin wrote in his opening comments on the fourth chapter of Hosea, "We must bear in mind that the prophets did not literally write what they delivered to the people, nor did they treat only once of those things that are now extant to us, but we have in their books collected summaries and heads of those matters that they wanted to address to the people."<sup>16</sup> Luther and Calvin also maintained that the

12 WA 13:2–3, 99, 100–101, 102, 158–59, 173–74, 178, 180, 192, 195, 241, 299, 317–18, 371–72, 424–25, 492, 493, 534, 546–47; 19:193, 355; 23:547–48 and LW 18:3, 95, 97, 98–99, 127, 148, 154–55, 158, 173, 177, 207, 237, 281, 282, 338, 339, 371; 19:3, 40, 108, 157; and 20:3–4, 210–11. CO 42:256, 325, 498; 43:197–98, 339, 430, 460; 44:34–35, 36–37, 40, 59–60, 62, 66, 305, 320, 321–22, 339, 358, 402 and Calvin, 1:122, 224, 485; 2:452; 3:250, 402, 456; 4:239–40, 243, 250, 282–83, 288, 293–94; 5:312, 337, 340, 369, 401, 473.

13 CO 42:325; Calvin, 1:224. See also his comments on Mic 4:1–2 (CO 43:339; Calvin, 3:250).

14 See, for examples, WA 13:22, 538 and LW 18:26, 378.

15 For example, Luther comments on Zechariah: "What I have said about the discourses of the prophets is true: that they delivered some at one time, others at another, and that they did not deliver them all in a single address" (WA 13:555; LW 20:13).

16 CO 42:265–66; Calvin, 1:136–37. See also CO 42:410; 43:525; Calvin, 1:503–504, 4:67. This echoes Calvin's account in his preface to Isaiah: "The prophets, after having publicly addressed

prophets did not necessarily follow each other in history in the same order in which they appear in Scripture.<sup>17</sup>

Another technical concern that Luther and Calvin shared is a marked attention to the language of the prophet.<sup>18</sup> For both reformers, Old Testament prophecy has a particular expression: it is expressed through metaphors and figures in order to place a “vivid picture” or “living image” before the eyes of the people that carries persuasive force.<sup>19</sup> Luther wrote that it is the “custom of the prophets to use poetic figures and expressions”; indeed, he added, “those whom we call the ‘minor’ prophets generally use more figures of language than the major prophets.”<sup>20</sup> For Luther, the prophet’s proliferation of metaphors and figures of speech was due to his abundance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> Metaphors, said Luther, may serve to enlighten or obscure, and prophets used such language in order to persuade a difficult audience.<sup>22</sup> Calvin concurred that these figures of speech served to persuade the people, but he added two more reasons for their usefulness. They assisted in the prophet’s ability to address two very different audiences—the wicked versus the children of God and the less mature versus the more mature in faith.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, argued Calvin, metaphors indicated the accommodated quality of the prophet’s speech. This accommodated quality includes the idea that prophets used figures to persuade a difficult audience, but more broadly Calvin argued that the prophet

the people, drew up a brief abstract of their discourse and placed it on the gates of the temple that all might see and become more fully acquainted with the prophecy. When it had been exposed for a sufficient number of days, it was removed by the ministers of the temple and placed in the treasury that it might remain as a permanent record. In this way, it is probable, the books of the prophets were compiled” (CO 36:24).

17 WA 13:89; LW 18:80. Calvin wrote in his preface to Isaiah, “Those who have carefully and judiciously perused the Prophets will agree with me in thinking that their discourses have not always been arranged in a regular order, but that the roll was made up as occasion served” (CO 36:24).

18 Jon Balserak discusses this point concerning Calvin’s treatment of the Minor Prophets in *Establishing the Remnant Church*, 133–37.

19 Luther described Haggai’s prophecy about the kingdom of Christ in these terms: “Here you see the prophet is describing the kingdom of Christ in such a way that it appears as if it were standing at the door” (WA 13:539; LW 18:379). Calvin, in particular, used the descriptions of “vivid picture” [hypotyposin] (CO 44:364; Calvin, 5:411), “painted picture” [pictam tabulam] (CO 42:204; Calvin, 1:45), and “living portrait” [viva pictora] (CO 42:204; Calvin, 1:45). In his comments on prophecy in the Institutes, Calvin wrote that the prophets’ exhortations were to give the people a “living image of God” (Institutes 4.1.5).

20 WA 13:161; LW 18:131.

21 WA 13:118, 328; LW 18:117, 253.

22 WA 13:118; LW 18:117. Luther wrote, “Habakkuk employs many words here. He portrays everything realistically and embellishes it with figures of speech. And it is necessary to do that when preaching to a hard and rude rabble; one must paint it for them, pound it into them, chew it for them, and resort to every means to see whether they can be moved” (WA 19:370; LW 19:171–72).

23 See the use of metaphor to persuade in CO 43:462, 464; Calvin, 3:459, 463–64. Concerning the different audiences, see CO 42:326, 44:118; Calvin, 1:225, 4:381.

accommodated himself to human weakness through the employment of metaphors by using images common to their life experiences.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, both Luther and Calvin emphasized that knowledge of the original language of the prophet is vitally important in order to read these metaphors and other figures of speech well. This is implicit in Calvin's careful attention to Hebrew terms and grammar throughout his exegesis of the Minor Prophets. Luther explicitly insisted on this importance in his comments on Mic 1:8, stating: "We are absolutely insane, then, when we undertake the interpretation of the prophets without a very great skill and understanding of the Hebrew language."<sup>25</sup>

A final point of agreement between Luther and Calvin on the prophecies of the Minor Prophets involves another aspect of their identification of the primary content of these prophecies. In addition to calling people to repentance and consoling the faithful, they both underscored the concern for true worship over and against false worship. They agreed that in exhorting the people to repentance, the prophets were specifically calling the people to turn from their idolatry and blasphemous worship to the true worship of God. Both reformers also deployed the prophets' castigation of false worship over and against Roman Catholicism. Yet, Luther and Calvin also exhibited important distinctions in how they defined this contrast between true and false worship. Luther summed up the contrast through the category of faith versus works. False worship trusts in human works, whereas true worship recognizes that only faith pleases God.<sup>26</sup> False worship not only relies wrongly upon works, works righteousness, and the Law, but it also operates apart from or contrary to God's Word.<sup>27</sup> Luther employed this contrast to denounce Roman Catholic worship practices as forms of works righteousness.<sup>28</sup> At the

24 For example, Calvin wrote that Joel "accommodates his manner of speaking or his discourse to the comprehension of his people, for he knew whom he addressed" (CO 42:569; Calvin, 2:95). Jon Balserak relates this practice to Calvin's "awareness of the social, cultural, and historical aspects of the text" so that Calvin conceives language as a "historical artifact" passed down to the reader (*Establishing the Remnant Church*, 134). See also CO 44:364, 43:176; Calvin, 5:411, 412; 2:413.

25 WA 13:304; LW 18:214. Luther made even more forceful statements on this topic in his address "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," where he insisted that "languages are absolutely and altogether necessary" to interpret Scripture well and rightly (WA 15:40; LW 45:363).

26 WA 13:3–4, 7–8, 17–18, 19, 34–35, 62, 186, 246, 254, 302–303, 332, 429, 482, 611, 655; 19:194, 207, 409–12, 414; 23:597, 636 and LW 18:4, 9–10, 21, 23, 39, 70, 166, 211–13, 260, 322–23; 19:11, 24, 41, 55, 115, 211–14, 217; 20:74–75, 133, 268, 314.

27 WA 13:176, 201, 303. LW 18:151–52, 184, 213. Luther wrote, "This is the source of every wickedness—namely, worship and sacrifices that God has not instituted and that the Word of God has not commanded. And here we see again—as we do in all Scripture—how it does not please God, and, in fact, how he hates it, if we establish anything outside the Word of God, however good and holy it may appear" (WA 13:303; LW 18:213).

28 WA 13:17–18, 184–85, 185; 19:207, 409–12, 414; 23:597. LW 18:21, 163–64, 165; 19:55, 211–14, 217; 20:268.

top of Luther's list were the monks and their monastic devotion, for they lead the people away from the Word of God and produced terrified consciences through their reliance on works.<sup>29</sup>

Though many of Calvin's concerns about worship in the Minor Prophets may also be understood under a general rubric of faith versus works, it is significant that the actual language of "faith" and "works" was not at all dominant—as it was for Luther—in his descriptions. Rather, Calvin was more prone to speak against superstition, corruption, and pollution—where worship mingles with human inventions. Most prevalent in Calvin's account of the concern for pure worship were the dual and often interrelated denunciations of superstition and a "blended" worship.<sup>30</sup> This "blended worship" resulted from the mixing of sacred things with profane things, especially when worship practices commanded by God were mixed with human inventions.<sup>31</sup> Like Luther, Calvin deployed these condemnations of false worship against Roman Catholics, though his rhetorical import centered less upon works righteousness per se and much more upon superstition and blended worship. Moreover, Calvin's criticisms of Roman Catholic worship were far more extensive, numerous and detailed than those of Luther.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, recent works on Calvin's commentaries on the Minor Prophets stress the vital importance of his context for these lectures, for he was in the midst of

29 WA 13:39, 201, 246, 314, 482, 664. LW 18:44, 184, 231, 322–23; 19:11; 20:145. Luther also assailed Roman Catholic practices of fasting (WA 13:611; LW 20:74–75), their continued enforcement of Law for Christians (LW 19:41), their injustice to the poor by making themselves rich (WA 13:309; LW 18:222), and their exaltation of the clergy that undermines the priesthood of all believers (WA 13:111; LW 18:108–109).

30 Calvin's condemnations of superstition are too numerous to list in full. For examples, see CO 42:230, 239, 245–56, 288–90, 329–31, 369, 379, 477–78, 480, 503; 43:49, 57, 74, 97–98, 126, 150, 222, 244, 290, 393, 558–59, 561–63; 44:3, 7, 8–9, 11, 13, 343, 427; Calvin, 1:84, 97, 106–107, 170–73, 230–33, 290, 305, 453–54, 457–58, 492; 2:219, 231, 256, 293–94, 336–37, 374; 3:51, 88–89, 166, 339; 4:125, 129–31, 185, 192, 194, 198, 201; 5:378, 381, 429, 448.

31 For examples of denunciations of blended worship and human innovation or invention, see CO 42:239, 369–70, 470; 43:20–21, 27–28, 73, 94, 222, 243–44, 291; 44:9–10, 94, 110–11, 343–44, 427; Calvin, 1:97, 291, 442; 2:176, 186–87, 255, 289; 3:51, 87, 167; 4:195–96, 341, 368; 5:378, 512.

32 Calvin condemns a number of specific attitudes and practices of Roman Catholic worship throughout his commentaries on the Minor Prophets. These include mistaken views of sacrifices and vows (CO 42:283–84, 377–78, 404–405, 407–408; 43:232–33, 245, 392, 393; 44:11–12, 348–50, 421; Calvin, 1:164–65, 302–303, 344, 348–49; 3:68–70, 89–90, 339, 341; 4:198–99; 5:386–88, 502, 507), trust in the title of priest (CO 42:274, 279; 43:287–88, 325–26, 333–34, 429, 432; 44:49, 174–75, 315–16, 346; Calvin, 1:150, 158; 3:160–61, 227–28, 241–43, 401, 405, 407; 4:265; 5:92–94, 330, 381), saints and images (CO 42:246, 284; 44:10, 12, 140–41; Calvin, 1:107, 165; 4:197, 199, 202; 5:38–39), fasting (CO 42:255, 257; 44:224; Calvin, 3:106, 109–10; 5:175), prayer (CO 42:357, 43:263; Calvin, 1:272; 3:119), vestments (CO 42:240, 44:348–50; Calvin, 1:99; 5:386–88), and authority of the church (CO 42:273, 44:110, 112–13; Calvin, 1:148; 4:368, 370–71), along with criticisms of Roman Catholic pride (CO 42:216, 231, 297, 405, 407–408; 43:143; 44:348–50, 424; Calvin, 1:63, 85, 183, 344, 348–49; 2:362; 5:386–88, 507), outward pomp (CO 42:217, 329; Calvin, 1:65, 231) and avarice (CO 43:324–25; Calvin, 3:225–26).

fostering, encouraging and training pastors and teachers to evangelize France and resist Catholicism.<sup>33</sup>

Naturally, Calvin also, like Luther, condemned works righteousness and worship that departed from God's Word.<sup>34</sup> Whereas he agreed with Luther that true worship obeys God's Word, Calvin equally named this as a worship that honors God's Law.<sup>35</sup> Calvin insisted that the Law provided everything necessary for the perfect worship of God. People wrongly understood the Law's guidance for worship if they viewed it as merely a set of external rites and rules, contended Calvin, for a *spiritual worship* has always been the intent of the Law. He affirmed an analogy "between the legal rites and the spiritual manner of worshipping God prescribed in the Gospel."<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, the Old Testament prophets were not condemning the external rites prescribed by the Law; rather, they were denouncing the *corruption* of these. These rites became corrupt when they were divorced from their true intent, when external rites were "torn asunder" from their true aims of faith and piety, the true spiritual worship of God.<sup>37</sup>

33 Balserak provides the most extensive study to date of the importance of Calvin's context for his commentaries on the Minor Prophets in chapter two of his *Establishing the Remnant Church in France*. See also Harms, *In God's Custody*, 19–44 and the articles by Peter Wilcox, "Evangelisation in the Thought and Practice of John Calvin," *Anvil* 12/3 (1995): 201–17; "The Lectures of John Calvin and the Nature of His Audience, 1555–1564," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 87 (1996): 136–48; "Calvin as Commentator on the Prophets" in *Calvin and the Bible*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 107–30, and "The Progress of the Kingdom of Christ in Calvin's Exposition of the Prophets," in *Calvinus sincerioris religionis vindex* (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Pub, 1997), 315–22.

34 For examples of condemnation of works righteousness, see CO 42:304, 458; 43:344, 531–34; 44:223, 469–70; Calvin, 1:193–94, 425; 3:260; 4:78–82; 5:173, 583. For insistence that worship cannot be apart from God's Word, see CO 42:278, 284, 469, 476, 478; 43:20–21, 57, 97, 244, 343, 344, 394; 44:13, 47, 109, 385, 386–87, 420–21; Calvin, 1:155, 164, 441, 452, 454; 2:176, 230; 293; 3:87, 257, 260, 343; 4:202, 262, 366; 5:446, 448, 501–502. For Calvin, like Luther, true worship is characterized by faith. For example, Calvin wrote, "We indeed know that God cannot be rightly and from the heart worshipped but in faith" (CO 43:564; Calvin, 4:132). But he also described true worship in terms of prayer, praise, and the shunning of superstition. See, for examples, CO 42:463; 43:232, 245; 44:256–57; Calvin, 1:432; 3:68, 89; 5:229.

35 See especially CO 43:97, 394; 44:13–14, 420–21; Calvin, 2:293, 3:342–43, 4:202–203, 5:501–502.

36 Calvin commented on Zeph 1:6, "For there is nothing omitted in the Law that is needful for the perfect worship of God: but as God requires in the Law a spiritual worship..." (CO 44:13; Calvin, 4:202). See also CO 44:420; Calvin, 5:501. He wrote, "[T]here was also under the Law the spiritual worship of God" (CO 44:421; Calvin, 5:502).

37 See especially Calvin's comments on Hos 6:6–7 (CO 42:330; Calvin, 1:232) and Mic 6:6–8 (CO 43:393; Calvin, 3:342). Calvin viewed most Old Testament ceremonies and sacrifices as annulled by the coming of Christ and the Gospel; however, the unity of the covenant lead him to insist that the intent of these practices was the true spiritual worship of God.

## Key Differences of Prophetic Content, Office, and History

Though Luther and Calvin shared certain significant views about the Old Testament prophet's office, content of biblical prophecy, the Minor Prophets as a set of texts, concern for true worship and attention to the prophets' language, key differences have already become apparent. These differences can be summed up under three main headings: identification of the chief subject matter of the prophecies, description of the prime duty of the prophet, and perception of the prophet's vision of sacred history.

*Chief Subject Matter of Old Testament Prophecy*

There is a striking difference between Luther and Calvin's identification of the primary subject matter of the prophecies of the Minor Prophets. Concisely stated, Luther set forth their principal content as Christ and the Gospel, whereas Calvin comprehended the primary content as Law. Luther wrote in his preface to his lectures on Joel, "All the prophets have one and the same message, for this is their one aim: they are looking toward the coming of Christ or to the coming of the kingdom of Christ. All their prophecies look to this, and we must relate them to nothing else."<sup>38</sup> In consequence, almost every page of Luther's lectures on the Minor Prophets directed the prophecies either to Christ, the preaching of the Gospel, or the inauguration of Christ's kingdom at Christ's first coming. Luther not only interpreted christologically the passages in the Minor Prophets cited by New Testament authors in relation to Christ, but also many, many more.<sup>39</sup> The prophets proclaimed the saving events of Christ's life—his passion, resurrection, and ascension. Thus, according to Luther, "he will revive us" in Hos 6:2 and "the day when I arise" in Zeph 3:8 were prophecies of Christ's resurrection, whereas "he who opens the way" in Mic 2:13 proclaimed Christ's two natures, death, resurrection, and ascension.<sup>40</sup> Even more so, Luther persistently viewed the prophet's message as a proclamation of the Gospel. Indeed, when he asserted that all the prophecies point to Christ and Christ's kingdom, what he had specifically in mind was

38 WA 13:88; LW 18:79.

39 The passages in the Minor Prophets explicitly cited by New Testament authors include: Hos 1:10 and 2:23 (cited in Rom 9:25–26 and 1 Pet 2:10), Hos 11:1 (cited in Matt 2:15), Hos 13:14 (cited in 1 Cor 15:54–55), Joel 2:28–32 (cited in Acts 2:17–21 and Joel 2:32 cited in Rom 10:13), Amos 5:25–26 (cited in Acts 7:42–43), Amos 9:11–12 (cited in Acts 15:16–17), Mic 5:2 (cited in Matt 2:6), Hab 1:5 (cited in Acts 13:41), Hagg 2:21 (cited in Heb 12:26), Zech 9:9 (cited in Matt 21:5), Zech 13:7 (cited in Matt 26:31 and Mk 14:27), and Mal 3:1 (cited in Matt 11:10).

40 WA 13:27, 313–14; LW 18:31, 229. Other relevant examples include Luther's view that Mic 4:7 teaches Christ's divinity (WA 13:320; LW 18:241) and Zech 14:3 prophesies Christ's ascension (WA 23:656; LW 20:338).

that they prepared the way for the first advent of Christ and the Gospel in apostolic times.<sup>41</sup>

Calvin, in contrast, viewed the prophets as primarily interpreting and applying the Law in order to call the people back to right keeping of it. As he stated in his explanation of Mal 4:3 (“*Remember the Law of Moses*”):

It must yet be observed that the prophetic office was not separated from the Law, for all the prophecies that followed the Law were, as it were, its appendages so that they included nothing new, but were given that the people might be more fully kept in their obedience to the Law. Hence, as the prophets were interpreters of Moses, it is no wonder that their doctrine was subjected or, as they commonly say, subordinated to the Law. The object of the prophet was to make the Jews attentive to that doctrine that had been delivered to them from above by Moses and the prophets, so as not to depart from it even in the least degree.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, he made similar statements about the prophets as interpreters of the Law in his earlier comments on I Corinthians 14 (1546) and his preface to Isaiah (1551). Calvin contended that the only difference between Moses and the prophets was the additional work prophets provided in accommodating the truths and teachings of the Law to their own particular circumstances and time.<sup>43</sup> Yet, it should be clarified that identifying the chief subject of the prophets as Law was not separate for Calvin from the assertion that the prophets also set forth Christ and Christ’s kingdom, for he had always insisted that the substance of the old and new covenants was one and the same.<sup>44</sup> The difference from Luther is the way in which Calvin maintained the intrinsic value of Law itself—an affirmation already seen in his arguments about how legal and ceremonial rites had spiritual worship as their intent. Thus, in his preface to Hosea, he wrote,

But with regard to the Prophets, this is true of them all ... that they are interpreters of the Law. And this is the sum of the Law, that God designs to rule by his own authority the people he has adopted. But the Law has two parts: a promise of salvation and

41 For example, Luther applied all of Micah 5 to Christ’s first coming and the first proclamation of the Gospel (WA 13:324–30; LW 18:247–56) and viewed all of Zephaniah prophecies as concerning the first coming of Christ and the Gospel (WA 13:480, 503–509; LW 18:319, 355–64). Likewise, the key teachings of Joel, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zechariah are the gospel teachings of faith, particularly justification by faith and not by works (WA 13:100, 243, 244, 246, 372, 373, 431, 434; 19:364; 23:485, 487, 507, 609, 632. LW 18:96, 282, 284; 19:5–6, 8, 11, 119, 123–24, 166; 20:156, 157, 164, 282, 310).

42 CO 44:493–94; Calvin, 5:624–25.

43 See CO 36:19–20. In his comments on I Cor 14:20, he wrote, “For the prophets did not have a ministry that was unconnected to Law, but were in fact interpreters of the Law, and all their teaching is something like a supplement to it” (CO 49:525; Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans by John W. Fraser [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1960], 296). See also CO 44:23, 92; Calvin, 4:219, 337.

44 Institutes 2.10.1.

eternal life and a rule for a godly and holy living. To these is added a third part: that men not responding to their call are to be restored to the fear of God by threats and reproofs. The prophets do further teach what the Law has commanded respecting the true and pure worship of God ... in short, they instruct the people in a holy and godly life and then offer them the favor of the Lord. And as there is no hope of reconciliation with God except through a Mediator, they ever set forth the Messiah, whom the Lord had long ago promised.<sup>45</sup>

For Calvin, the Law already contained the promise of Christ and salvation, an effective ethical code, and a vision of true worship. The prophet served as an enforcer of the Law—first, through interpretation by accommodating it to different times and circumstances and, secondly, through threats and reproofs when the people strayed.

### *Primary Duty of the Prophet*

This difference in the identification of the prime subject of Old Testament prophecies directly relates to each of Luther and Calvin's differing conceptions of the chief function of the biblical prophetic office. For Luther, the Old Testament prophet was first and foremost a *preacher*—indeed, a preacher of the Gospel. For Calvin, the prophet was first and foremost a *teacher*—a teacher of Law—for he was an *interpreter* of the Law who instructed the people so that they may apply it to their immediate context. The distinct language of the prophet as preacher was just as widespread in Luther's lectures as the portrayal of the prophet as teacher in Calvin's lectures. Luther repeatedly called the prophet a preacher, depicted him as preaching, and referred to his proclamations as "sermons."<sup>46</sup> He often took brief detours from his comments on the text in order to expound on the power of preaching.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the view of the prophet as a preacher is thoroughly consistent with what Luther named as the prime subject of Old Testament prophecy: Christ and the Gospel; for Luther the Gospel was always something preached or proclaimed.<sup>48</sup>

45 Calvin, preface to Hosea (CO 42:198; Calvin, 1:36). A very similar statement can be found at the very beginning of Calvin's preface to Isaiah (CO 36:19).

46 For example, Luther wrote, "You see, these books of the prophets are nothing else than sermons" (WA 13:179; LW 18:157). Yet, it should be noted that Luther also on a few occasions describes the prophet as a teacher. See WA 13:160, 315, 372; 19:245; LW 18:129, 232, 282; 19:97. Hence, this distinction between Luther and Calvin is more one of terminology and should not be overstated.

47 See especially WA 13:686, 242, 253; 19:186–87; LW 18:401–402; 19:4, 24, 37.

48 There are numerous examples. Luther wrote about Jonah: "In the Hebrew tongue 'Jonah' means 'dove.' In the New Testament the dove is a symbol for the Holy Spirit ... Thus Jonah with his name is a prototype of the Holy Spirit and his office, namely, of the Gospel" (WA 19:245; LW 19:97). On Micah, Luther commented, "[T]he prophet is speaking about a spiritual gathering that takes place when the Gospel has spread throughout the world ... In this passage, then, he



Alternatively, Calvin constantly portrayed the prophet's activities as forms of teaching and instruction. More specifically, he often depicted the prophet's "ordinary" office as one of teaching God's people, but also saw that when the need arose, God sometimes called the prophet to additional duties beyond instruction.<sup>49</sup> For examples, in the cases of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, though Calvin still insisted upon their ordinary office as teachers, he added that only these three "were divinely inspired to proclaim the future condition of the people"—thus adding to their office of teaching an aspect of foretelling.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps this understanding of the ordinary office of the prophet as one of teaching—which entailed specifically the duties of interpretation and application of Scripture, to which may sometimes be added the act of foretelling—helps to explain a curiosity some scholars have raised about Calvin's own prophetic self-awareness. Max Engammare describes the ambiguous character of Calvin's prophetic self-awareness in this way: "sometimes Calvin considered his vocation as being based on an extraordinary prophetic ministry, sometimes simply as a pastoral and teaching ministry."<sup>51</sup> I would add, though, that this is exactly how Calvin already understood the biblical prophets! He viewed their ordinary office as one of teaching to which sometimes was added a duty of foretelling as the particular circumstance demanded. In other words, Calvin had always viewed the

[Micah] is speaking about the ministry of the Word [Gospel], just as all the prophets do in similar passages" (WA 13:312–13; LW 18:228).

49 The depiction of the prophet "teaching" can be found on nearly every page. It suffices to show that Calvin introduced the prime office of each of the Minor Prophets (often in his preface to each book) as an office of teaching: see his comments on Hos 1:1, preface to Joel, preface to Amos, Obad 1, preface to Jonah, Jon 1:1, Mic 1:2, preface to Nahum, preface to Habakkuk, Hab 1:2–3, preface to Zephaniah, preface to Haggai, and Zech 1:1–3 (CO 42:199, 515; 43:1, 178, 201, 202, 284, 435, 493, 494; 44:1, 79, 126, 127; Calvin, 1:37, 2:xv, 147, 422; 3:xvii–xviii, 19–20, 155, 413; 4:xiii, 16, 181, 315; 5:16, 17). Notably, Calvin did not emphasize Malachi's office as much as an office of teaching. Calvin understood Malachi as foretelling the first advent of Christ; hence, the aspect of foretelling is more at the forefront of Malachi's prophetic duties than it is in Calvin's understanding of the rest of the Minor Prophets.

50 See Calvin's preface to Haggai (CO 44:79; Calvin, 4:315–16) about Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi's tasks as witnesses and foretelling. Calvin wrote that these three witnesses confirm the predictions of Daniel. For his continuing conception of these prophets (especially Haggai and Zechariah) primarily as teachers, see CO 44:93–94, 112–16, 118, 169, 249, 256, 285–86, 294, 303, 315, 319, 323, 328, 367, 373, 374, 375, 378, 432, 449, 462, 494, 498; Calvin, 4:340–41, 371–75, 381; 5:84, 217, 228, 280, 293, 308, 330, 335, 342, 352, 415, 427, 428, 430, 434, 520, 547, 570, 625, 631.

51 Max Engammare, "Calvin: A Prophet without a Prophecy," *Church History* 67/4 (1998): 646. Jon Balserak answers this curiosity by arguing that for Calvin some duties of the prophet continue and some duties cease (*Establishing*, 73). I think this is correct, but Balserak stresses that some duties of the OT prophet—such as foretelling—no longer apply for Calvin to present day. Here I highlight that actually Calvin had frequently described the duty of foretelling as something extraordinary and additional to even the biblical prophet's regular duties of teaching/interpreting.

primary duty of a prophet as one of *interpretation and application of God's Word*, especially the Law.

If the biblical prophet's primary duty was one of interpreting and applying God's Law, then it is not at all surprising to find that the vast majority of Calvin's commentary on the Minor Prophets consisted of explicating these exact lessons in which the prophet accommodated God's Law for a particular time and place. Yet, Calvin not only wanted to impart to his readers the teachings of the prophet, but he equally aimed to convey their continuing significance for the church across time and, specifically, the church of Calvin's day. Thus, throughout his lectures Calvin turned to what the prophet "teaches us." Indeed, Calvin insisted (Hagg 1:2–4), "We now see that the prophet not only spoke to [people] of his age, but was also destined through God's wonderful purpose to be a preacher to us so that his doctrine sounds at this day in our ears and reproves our torpor and ungrateful indifference."<sup>52</sup> In his comments on Zechariah, as well, he maintained that what the prophet taught did not merely apply to the prophet's specific setting but should apply to the whole church extended over time: "We now then see that this prophecy was not only useful in the age of Zechariah, but that it has been so in all ages, and that it ought not to be confined to the ancient people, but extended to the whole body of the church."<sup>53</sup> This very language of "extension" is a vital element that distinguishes Calvin's understanding of the prophet's vision of history from Luther's own distinctive understanding.

### *Prophet's Vision of Sacred History*

If Calvin argued for the ways in which the teachings of the Minor Prophets extended across all time to teach the church both before and after the first coming of Christ, Luther's emphasis went in another direction. Calvin held a

52 CO 44:86; Calvin, 4:326. Though Calvin overwhelmingly described the prophet's office as teacher, there are occasions, not surprisingly, when he also described it as preacher, such as we find here.

53 CO 44:151; Calvin, 5:56. Calvin made numerous statements like this throughout his lectures on the Minor Prophets. For example, on Mic 1:1 he wrote, "For when we understand that Micah condemned this or that vice, as we may also learn from the other prophets and from sacred history, we are able to apply more easily to ourselves what he said, inasmuch as we can view our own life as it were in a mirror" (CO 43:281; Calvin, 3:151). And on Mic 5:5, "It must at the same time be observed that this prophecy is not to be confined to that short time, for the prophet speaks generally of the preservation of the church before as well as after the coming of Christ" (CO 43:373; Calvin, 3:308). And Zech 14:21, "Whenever then the prophets speak of perfection under the reign of Christ, we ought not to confine what they say to one day or to a short time, but we ought to include the whole time from the beginning to the end" (CO 44:390; Calvin, 5:454–55). Additional examples are cited in footnote 61. To complicate matters, Melancthon appears to agree at least in part with this view that the history of the prophets extends to the church over time, for he writes in his summary of Haggai's argument, "in part of this history nevertheless every time of the church may be contemplated" (CR 13:984).

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Karl Barth's argument continues to be representative of a generally accepted modern view that Calvinism and Lutheranism are completely separate, opposing movements and theologies. And yet, in many ways the movements built on the teaching of Luther and Calvin developed in relationship and resonance with one another. Despite this fact, very few scholars have explicitly considered the relationship between Calvin and Luther. Through the articles of this volume we begin to see the possibility of a rapprochement between Calvin and Luther as sources, though not as historical figures.

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