

## PREFACE

This book is the result of some years of study begun when I was asked to prepare two separate papers for the *Scottish Church Theology Society*, one on Calvin's doctrine of Scripture and the other on his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In the course of study it became clear that these doctrines can be properly understood only when each is viewed in close connection with the other and in the context of Calvin's whole conception of the nature of Biblical revelation as given through word and sign. Account had also to be taken of Calvin's Christology and his teaching on the nature of our union with Christ, since these latter doctrines are also decisive in the formation of his thought on everything that relates to the Word and Sacrament. All these considerations have determined the scope of this work.

Since Calvin is above all a Biblical scholar, his thought can very profitably be studied by reference to his *Commentaries*, where it is often given most interesting and varied expression. Therefore it has been the aim of this work to show how the particular doctrines under review arise for Calvin out of his exposition of the Bible, and though the *Institutes*, *Tracts* and *Sermons* have not been neglected, the main source from which quotations have been taken has been his *Commentaries*.

No attempt has been made to trace in detail the historical development of Calvin's thought in the midst of the various sacramental controversies in which he was involved. These controversies, though they coloured and moulded his thought to some extent, and determined the theological language he was bound to use, served only to drive him back to the Bible for confirmation and inspiration. It is hoped, therefore, that this book will be of value not only to those who wish to study Calvin's sacramental doctrines, but also to those whose main interest is Bible study. Accordingly, references have been given in the footnotes not only to the volume and page of the *Corpus Reformatorum*, but also, where possible, to the Biblical passages which gave rise to Calvin's comments.

The form of outline and the theological expressions used in this book are suggested by Calvin's own language and thought. No one can study his writings without discovering that much of