

# Gold without Dross: An Assessment of the Debt to John Chrysostom in John Calvin's Oratory

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## Declaration

The research presented in this thesis is my original work and it has not been submitted for a higher degree in any other institution. In addition, I certify that all information, sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Some of the material in this thesis has already been published or accepted for publication: chapters 1, 2 and 4 include material created and submitted for publication in an earlier form, all in the course of candidacy (see Acknowledgement for details.)



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Διὰ τὸν Χριστόν...

ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς  
σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοι  
Col 2:3;

and for Ngaire...

*beata marita, beata vita.*



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## **Abstract**

*Overview.* The author argues that an assessment of the influence of John Chrysostom on the oratory of John Calvin is needed. After acknowledging methodological difficulties, he carries out a comparative study of aspects of their orations. He also reads Calvin's personal annotations to Calvin's own volumes of Chrysostom's 'complete works'. From this study the author concludes that there is credible evidence that Calvin's method in preaching was influenced by Chrysostom.

*Detail.* In the introduction it is observed that recent scholarship on Calvin's formation as a preacher has commonly misinterpreted the 1981 publication by Ganoczy and Müller of the marginalia to Calvin's personal volumes of Chrysostom. It is argued that in consequence of this misreading, Calvin's debt to Chrysostom has not been properly assessed, and the importance and difficulties of doing so are reviewed. With methodological problems acknowledged, the author makes a comparative study of various aspects of the two preachers' orations, to see if credible evidence of influence can be discerned.

In the first major part to the project, the author offers a comparison of the two preachers' debt to classical rhetoric (chapter 2), the structure and genre of their orations (chapter 3) and the key theological principles (chapter 4) that would have shaped these two 'pastor theologians' in their considered preaching method. The author offers a number of conclusions about each of these, and also suggests that Calvin would likely have seen Chrysostom as an appealing preaching mentor.

In the second major part, the author studies the two preachers' engagement of emotion for persuasion: their attitude to emotion (chapter 5), their ambitions for emotion (chapter 6) and the closer emotional detail (chapter 7) of their orations. The author concludes that there are profound resonances between their approaches, and in the more superficial aspects of their orations, striking similarities. He suggests that there is credible evidence of influence upon Calvin's preaching.

The study concludes with a new interpretation of the marginalia and the suggestion that it is credible that Calvin's method in preaching was influenced by Chrysostom and that Calvin continued to engage with Chrysostom's homilies over a lengthy period.





## Abbreviations

<i>Battles</i>	John T. McNeill (ed.) Calvin, John. <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> , Ford Lewis Battles trans; <i>Library of Christian Classics</i> Volumes XX-XXI, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959.
<i>Beat.</i>	Calvin, John. <i>Sermons on the Beatitudes: Five Sermons from the Gospel Harmony, Delivered in Geneva in 1560</i> . Trans. Robert White, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2006.
<i>Chev.</i>	Claude Chevallon (ed.) <i>Divi Ioannis Chrysostomi Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani Opera</i> Volumes I-V, Paris: Chevallon, 1536.
<i>CR</i>	Guilielmus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz and Eduardus Reuss (eds) <i>Corpus Reformatorum. Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia</i> . Volumes XXIX-LXXXVII, Brunsvigae: Schwetschke, 1863-1900.
<i>FF</i>	Frederick Field (ed) <i>Tou en hagiois patros hēmōn Iōannou Archiepiskopou Kōnstantinoupoleōs tou Chrysostomou Hermēneia eis pasas tas tou hagiou Paulou epistolas</i> . by John Chrysostom, Saint; Frederick Field; Oxford: University Press, 1845-1861 Vols I-VII.
<i>Handschriftliche</i>	Alexandre Ganoczy and Klaus Müller. <i>Calvins handschriftliche Annotationen zu Chrysostomus</i> . Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1981.
<i>Institutio</i>	<i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> , 1536-1559
<i>Lausberg</i>	Heinrich Lausberg, <i>Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study</i> . Eds David E. Orton, and R. Dean Anderson; Trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen and David E. Orton; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1998.
<i>Nairn</i>	J. Arbuthnot Nairn (ed). <i>De Sacerdotio of St John Chrysostom</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906.
<i>NPNF</i>	Philip Schaff (ed.) <i>A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church</i> . Volumes IX-XIV, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1889-1989.
<i>PG</i>	J. P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologia Graeca Cursus Completus</i> Volumes XLVIII-LXIII, Paris: Migne, 1857-66.
<i>Praefatio</i>	‘ <i>Praefatio in Chrysostomi Homilias</i> ,’ <i>CR</i> 37, 831-838.
<i>Preface</i>	Ian Hazlett, ‘Calvin's Latin Preface to His Proposed French Edition of Chrysostom's Homilies: Translation and Commentary.’ <i>Humanism and Reform</i> , Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991, 129-150.

SC	<i>'Sermones 11 et 12',</i> Premier Volume, contenant 58 Sermones fait sur les 9. primers chapitres de la 1 Epistre de Saint Paul Aux Corinthiens, <i>Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Geneve</i> Ms fr. 26; Folios 84A-99B.
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## Acknowledgements

My personal adventure in the lively thought and warm pastoral ministry of John Calvin began in my four years of study at Moore Theological College, Sydney. During my three undergraduate years, and a postgraduate year, I was required by my wise teachers to read the whole of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. I confess to understanding only a small part of what I read. Nevertheless, the experience was a rich one. It left me with affection and respect for this passionate French theologian who has so profoundly impacted the Anglican and Presbyterian churches that have been my faith-homes in adult Christian life.

More recently, teaching systematic and pastoral theology at the Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney, I enjoyed similar lessons from Calvin alongside fellow teachers, and students. My understanding grew significantly in those wonderful years, and even since then, Calvin has earned a deepening affection and respect. But I admit in most of this, Calvin's pastoral sermons remained largely unknown to me. In contrast to a rich appreciation of my thought world embedded in the *Institutes*, my Christian tradition has had a superficial engagement with Calvin's preaching.

Similarly my Christian tradition has little appreciation for the preaching and thought of John Chrysostom. Though Calvin regarded Chrysostom highly, most Sydney Anglicans and Presbyterians do not know him at all. For the most part, tastings of Chrysostom are accidental. Even when that happens, because they have not acquired the taste for him, these Protestant diners are left underwhelmed and unsettled.

It should not surprise that my twin goals in the present project are to 'do something about this'. I hope that these wonderful Greek and French pastors are both better known and appreciated as preachers. If I succeed in broadening this understanding among my peers I believe the world will be the richer for it.

If I achieve this I will owe a great debt to many people. At this point I can only mention a few. First I want to thank Drs Peter Jensen and John McClean (at the beginning and midway through my Calvin journey): two 'pastoral' theologians whose respect for and understanding of pastor Calvin have most fortified my own.

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I owe a debt to some wonderful linguists: Dr Robert White who pointed me to resources for translating Calvin's sermons, and Pastor Ovidiu Oprea who checked on my rendering of a few passages of Romanian. But of course with all of these translations I take full responsibility for the final results.

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<sup>1</sup> Chapters 1, 2 and 4 contain material respectively from Peter Moore, "Gold without Dross: Assessing the Debt of John Calvin to the Preaching of John Chrysostom," *Reformed Theological Review* 68, no. 2 (2009); "Plain Talk with a Gilt Edge: An Exploration of the Relation between 'Plain' Biblical Exposition and Persuasion in Chrysostom and Calvin," *Westminster Theological Journal* 73, no. 1 (2011); Peter Charles Moore, "Chrysostom's Concept of Γνώμη: How 'Chosen Life's Orientation' Undergirds Chrysostom's Strategy in Preaching," in *Studia Patristica. Vol. LIV - Cappadocian Writers, the Second Half of the Fourth Century (Greek Writers)*, *Studia Patristica: Papers Presented at the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2011* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013).

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