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The analogy of the macrocosm and the microcosm in the thought of John Calvin

John Osman

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IN THE THOUGHT
OF
JOHN CALVIN

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
The University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Philosophy

by
John Osman, A.B., B.D., Th.M.
May, 1943
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PREFACE.

This thesis is offered as an original investigation into the thought of John Calvin. It maintains that the doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm furnished Calvin's mind with his metaphysics. It contends that the doctrine is the architectonic principle upon which Calvin built his system of thought. Josef Bohacek, a Viennese philosopher of law, sensed the use of the macrocosm and microcosm doctrine in Calvin's treatment of the Church and State. He is the only one, so far as I know, to whom I can refer as an authority to substantiate this thesis. The thesis otherwise rests upon the evidence which I have gathered in my study of Calvin. There are several reasons for the failure of scholars to write upon this particular subject. One is that Calvin's admirers have refused consistently to deal with his metaphysical background and have distorted his writings to fit our modern versions of Calvinism. The real mind of Calvin they have kept hidden because they do not wish to acknowledge its medieval nature. Another reason is the general lack of information concerning the macrocosm and microcosm. Relatively few scholars understand this doctrine which furnished the motif for the thought of Plato, Plotinus, the medievals, and the Renaissance.

In the process of the development of this thesis, visits have been made to the following libraries: University of Richmond, Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, T. C. Williams Law School, University of Virginia, University of North Carolina, Duke University, The Library of
Congress, Catholic University, St. John's College, Princeton University, Princeton Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary in New York, New York Public Library, and Columbia University. I should like to acknowledge here the kindnesses and courtesies extended me by the staffs of these libraries.

The quotations from Calvin which are found in this study are largely from the English versions of the works found in the volumes of the Calvin Translation Society. Quotations from the Institutes are from the translation by Henry Beveridge in this series, with an occasional translation from the Latin by the writer.

John Oman
Richmond, Virginia
May, 1943
"Say first, of God above or Man below
What can we reason but from what we know? Of man what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer? Thro' worlds unnumbered tho' the God be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own. He who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples every star,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are;
But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
The strong connexions, nice dependancies,
Gradations first, has thy pervading soul.
Look'd thro', or can a part contain the whole?
Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee?"

CHAPTER I.

THE ANALOGY OF THE MACROCOSM AND THE MICROCOSM.

1. The Introduction.

Man is a microcosm. The idea has fascinated the mind of man since the very beginning of philosophy. It has persisted down to the present day. The ancients implied that man is a microcosm (a little world), the reflection and epitome of the macrocosm (the great world). Man is a satellite of the macrocosm. His orbit of activity is controlled by the influences of the larger world. The theory became more imposing in the early centuries of the Christian era among the philosophers of Alexandria. It dominated the thought of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Science, philosophy, and theology were all approached through the use of the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm. Faust, brooding among his books; Hamlet pondering the mysteries on the battlements of Elsinore; Jean Fernel watching the marching stars and planets move across the heavens – are all well drawn portraits of the medieval man as his little world swung in its determined orbit under the macrocosm.

The universal use of this analogy in the sixteenth century is a striking phenomenon in the history of thought. There is not a single thinker who escaped the influence of the theory. It can be said that the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm controls the thought forms
of the period.¹ The classical portrayal of the intellectual temper of
this century is the first monologue in Goethe's Faust.² It is not by
accident then that we find traces of the theory in the thought of John
Calvin (1509-1564). The architectonic principles of Calvin's system of
thought are derived from the analogy of the macrocosm and the microcosm.
The influence of the analogy is found in Calvin's statements on the
nature of man, in his development of the relation of man to the universe,
in his arrangement of the chain of being, in his theory of epistemology,
and in his formulations of church and state polity. Indeed, an under-
standing of the use of the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm is
fundamental to an understanding of John Calvin, for it gave him the
master plan upon which he drew up the forms of his thought. To recog-
nize these architectonic principles and understand them as the analogy
of the macrocosm and microcosm gives a key to the mind of Calvin that
we have long needed. It gives a philosophical explanation for the grand
strategy of his system of thought and clarifies many of the obscure
points that have made Calvinism unacceptable to many people. The use
of this analogy reveals Calvin as a medieval. He lived in a Ptolemaic
universe, and his conception of man's nature was taken from Galen. The
faces in his intellectual background are those of Plato and Aristotle,

¹ Windelband, Wilhelm, A History of Philosophy. New York, The Mac-
millan Co., 1931. See section on macrocosm and microcosm, p.
366-377.
² The first monologue of Goethe's Faust should be read as an intro-
duction to the mind of John Calvin.
of Cicero and Seneca, of Paul and Flotimus and Augustine, of Bernard of Clairvaux and Nicholas of Cusa. These are the men that furnished him with materials for his scheme of thought. He had no place in his mind for the ideas of Nicholas Copernicus in his De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium and Andreas Vesalius in his Fabrica Humana Corporis. Both of these revolutionary books were published in 1543 at the time Calvin was in the prime of his intellectual life, but they did not reach his imagination although they were surely read by him.

The purpose of this study is to trace through the writings of John Calvin the influence of the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm upon his system of thought. The study will show how Calvin applied the theory of his conceptions of the structure and functions of man, of society (the state), of the church, of the universe, and of God. There are three steps necessary in such a study: First, to be certain that we understand clearly the meaning of the analogy and the terms used; Second, that we see how it was mediated to Calvin; Third, that we trace the evidence of its influence in Calvin's thought. The first step requires the investigation of the history and use of the term, the second demands attention to the medieval nature of the education Calvin received, and the third expects the use of the analogy by Calvin to be brought out and the consequences made apparent.

2. The Materials Available for Such a Study.

Materials for background study are scarce. There is one good monograph by George F. Coner (Theories of Macrocosmos and Microcosmos in
It has inadequacies that are immediately obvious. Leonardo da Vinci
is not mentioned, and as the author sought to record anyone's mentioning
the idea, the omission of John Calvin is unfortunate. Conger, however,
worked in several German studies of the subject, one being the only
separate monograph on the study of the macrocosm and microcosm apart
from that of Conger. There is no extended study of the subject even in
Europe.

The only other materials are chapters and sections, but frequent-
ly only a paragraph or a line, that is to be hunted out here and there.
The best of these is in W. Windelband (History of Philosophy, New York,
and Microcosm'). I. Bryde in The Jewish Encyclopaedia, volume VIII,
p. 544 (1904) reviews the theory in Jewish philosophy. Theodore Spencer
has several excellent chapters (Shakespeare and the Nature of Man, New
York, The Macmillan Co., 1942, chapters 1 and 3). One of the finest
studies is to be found in Charles S. Sherrington's book (Man on His
Nature, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1942, chapters 1 and 3) which has
several good illustrations. These chapters are built upon material from
the notebooks of Jean Fernel, a great French doctor and contemporary of
the day of John Calvin. Moses Haimonides in The Guide for the Perplexed,
(London, George Routledge and Son, Ltd., 1936, p. 113-119) has a re-
markable passage that is the original source for some of the medieval
thinkers on the subject. G. G. Coulton, the medievalists, gives the
theory only a few paragraphs (Medieval Panorama, New York, The Macmillan
Vinci (Leonardo the Anatomist, Baltimore, Md., The Williams and Watkins
Co., 1930, p. 96-97) is important; and The Notebooks of Leonardo da
Vinci themselves contain references that show the theory in this great
mind. F. O. Matthiessen points out the microcosm in R. W. Emerson
108). There are references to the microcosm in H. De Wulf (History of
Medieval Philosophy, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1933), and in E. Under-
hill (Mysticism, London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1924, p. 191-192). Particu-
larly significant are the references to the macrocosm and microcosm in
and in C. Singer (History of Science, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1941)
which bear on the influence of the theory in science. Histories of
philosophy by H. Zeller, A. Weber, F. Ueborweg have helpful references,
particularly the latter in his Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie
(Berlin, H. S. Nittler & Sohn, 1934, 5 volumes). The great work of
Otto Gierke (Political Theories of the Middle Ages, Cambridge, Cambridge
University Press, 1900) is a study of the macrocosm and microcosm in
relation to the social organism. It is the basis of all scholarly re-
marks on the analogy as it was used in polity. Josef Bohatač's work
(Calvins Lehre Von Staat und Kirche, Breslau, M. & H. Marcuse, 1937) is
suggestive in understanding Calvin's theory of the Church-State organism.
Investigations into the field have been very fragmentary.

The real materials are in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Philo, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, Galen, Plotinus, Origen, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nyssen, Ambrose, Lactantius, the Hermetic Writings, Augustine, Boethius, Macrobius, Pseudo-Dionysius, John of Damascus, Maimonides, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa, and Leonardo da Vinci. This study has required an intimacy with the works of these men and the searching out of the influence of the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm upon their thought. Their works are available in the Loeb Classical Library and in the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers series and in various other available editions. The study of John Calvin has been conducted in the Opera Omnia (Amsterdam, Ioannis Jacobi Schipperi, 1671, 9 volumes), in Opera Sal cree, edidit Petrus Barth (Munich, Chr. Kaiser, 1926, 5 volumes), and in Opera Omnia, Ioannis Calvini (Corpus Reformatorum, 24 volumes) and in English (Works of Calvin, Calvin Translation Society, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Printing Co. 55 volumes). The reading of C. Marlowe's The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus, and Goethe's Faust has proven of real value in interpreting the mind of the sixteenth century.

3. The Theory of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm.

All philosophy and theology is a discussion of the relations of man and the universe. The analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm provided a particularly useful scheme of such discussions. It fascinated the minds of men from the Greeks until today. According to this
theory portions of the world, which may vary tremendously in size, exhibit similarities in structure and function. One portion imitates another on a different scale. The most prominent analogy in the theory is that man is a microcosm, or little world, who reflects or epitomizes the macrocosm, or great world—that is, the universe. There is a great elasticity in the use of the analogy. It may apply to the smallest particle of the universe (the atom) or it may be applied to the Church or to the State. For the simple reason that man is the most important unit in his own thought, the idea of man as a microcosm has received the most attention, but the other analogies have had their importance in the history of thought. It is easy to think of the subject as if it applied only to man and the universe, while neglecting the atoms and monads, the State, and even God, which have been important elements of the theory at different times.

The use of the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm has had a long and varied history. It runs all the way from the uncertain parallelisms and analogies of the earlier classical philosophers through the detailed parallelism of the medieval Jewish, Arabian, and Christian thinkers—through the great metaphysical systems of Descartes and Spinoza—through the expanding physics of Bruno and Leibniz—through the epistemological achievements of Kant—and down to the metaphysics of men like Josiah Royce and Henri Bergson.

The terms are from the Greek μακρός κόσμος (great world) and the earlier used μικρός κόσμος (little world). The first
appearance of the term μικρός κόσμος is in Aristotle.¹ In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance some of the writers used the Latin equivalents of the words, but most of those commenting upon "the little world" (including Calvin) wrote the term in the Greek μικρόκοσμον. Many of the early Greeks merely imply and do not state the theory in these specific terms. This is true of later writers, too, and in seeking the use of this doctrine it is necessary to recognize when thinking is being done in the atmosphere of these terms, even though they are not named.² For almost two thousand years men lived and thought and wrote in an intellectual climate determined by the doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm. It was taken so much for granted that the writers did not state the doctrine each time. Much that they wrote assumed that the reader thought in the same world. It is similar in the case of our modern writers who state their ideas against an accepted background of thought. No astronomer today takes the time to point out that the earth moves around the sun as a presupposition to all his reasoning. He knows that most people accept that as a fact. Therefore, in the study of the theory of the macrocosm and microcosm in the thought of John Calvin, it is well to remember that he makes statements which presuppose the general acceptance of the analogy in men's minds. This is true in studying the history

¹ Aristotle, Physica, VIII, 2, 263 b.
² The use of the Latin word ‘speculum’ (mirror) in medieval metaphysics is an important clue in understanding the analogy of the microcosm. Calvin makes liberal use of this term which was introduced into the mind of the Middle Ages by Macrobius in his interpretation of the neo-Platonic arrangement of being.
of the idea. Many writers never use the term macrocosm and microcosm, and yet their whole system of thought is predicated upon this analogy.

Some of the applications of the theory are very detailed biological parallelisms, as in the case of the Jewish and Arabian writers, John of Damascus, Moses Maimonides, Nicholas of Cusa, and Leonardo da Vinci all drew elaborate and extreme anatomical and functional parallels between the universe and man. Plato and Plotinus were not so particular and set up more general comparisons. The analogy may be structural in its nature with the emphasis on the comparison in organization or arrangement. It may be functional with the approach emphasizing the parallels in organisms. Most of the time it is both, as Plato brings out in The Republic. It is true that some of the statements of the doctrine seem to point only to a structural parallelism, but for the most part the macrocosm and microcosm were looked upon as living beings whose parts functioned in a similar manner. This is seen very well in Maimonides, in Nicholas of Cusa, and in Leonardo. While Calvin does not pursue the detailed biological similarity as far as some, he does state a structural analogy and understands a functional analogy to exist between the universe, man, Church, and State. The doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm was not just a useful descriptive parallelism, but as Coulton writes:

"It represented the world as a living being; Man and the Universe are constructed on the same lines; and, in consequence, we must interpret the human frame by extra-human analogies."  

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The processes and functions of the universe and man are analogous, for they are both living organisms. And when this thought was in turn applied to the Church (Body of Christ) and the State we have a series of images or reflections of one great structural and functional pattern. By the use of this analogy, the key to the secrets of life and its relations to the universe and God was obtained. Medieval thought made very liberal use of the doctrine of analogy.

4. The Macrocosm.

The whole universe, then, which was made for man, found in man its reflection and its epitome. The human microcosm and the macrocosm of the spheres reflected each other. Man was a "mirror." Between the two was arranged a pattern of cause and effect. The little world swung in a predestined orbit through life. Man, the Microcosm, was the puppet of the macrocosm. This fitted into Calvin's deterministic system of rigid laws of nature. The macrocosm of vast circuits with its movements within movements was fashioned like a man's body. Inward it faced man, the microcosm, the prototype of creation, and the mirror of the universe itself. The theory of the macrocosm and microcosm was built upon the structure of the complex Ptolemaic world (Figure 1). The universe as Ptolemy and Aristotle described it and as Calvin understood it was an enormous sphere. In the center of it was the terrestrial world of the four elements - earth, water, air and fire, and the various mixtures of them in the forms of stones, metals, plants, animals and men. Earth, the lowest of the elements, formed a fixed globe in the center
of the whole universe; water came next, then air, and above was fire. This was the terrestrial world, the habitation of man. Outside this terrestrial part there was the celestial world which consisted of nine concentric spheres out beyond the element of fire. They were the spheres of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the fixed Stars, and the crystalline sphere. These spheres were bodies with definite edges along their circumferences, and they moved at different speeds as they were revolved from east to west by the force of the Primum Mobile which was on the outer rim of the universe. Outside the First Mover is a third realm, the Erythraean heavens, eternal and infinite, and the abode of God. This is a distinctly Christian addition to the structure.

The whole universe is a vast living being. Aristotle understood it as a great organism. The fact that it had being and that its motion was indicative that this being had a soul was as far as Aristotle needed to go. He stopped at the Primum Mobile. It was the medievals who added a spirit realm to the body and soul of the universe and got the macrocosm, which in their imagination was fashioned like a huge body with both structural and functional parallels to the human body. The structure was arranged like this:

- Erythraean realm = Spirit
- Celestial spheres = Soul
- Terrestrial world = Body

The relations of these parts and their place in the processes of the organism paralleled those in man. This is the macrocosm (great world).
Figure 1. The Ptolemaic Universe (after Aristotle)

(The Macrocosm)
5. The Microcosm (Man)

Man is a microcosm (little world) for very good reasons. He occupies a crucial position in the chain of being. He is the link between the material and spiritual — between animals and angels — between the terrestrial world and the celestial world. In the order of creation, that is the great chain of being, man is a bridge between the world of the senses and the world of the intellect and spirit. (Figure 2). Man has all the attributes of the terrestrial world of the elements, the being, the stones, the vegetable soul, and the animal soul. He is superior to animals because he has a rational soul and can know universal truths. He is yet inferior to angels because he can gain such knowledge only by abstracting it from images presented to his reason by his senses. The angels do not need the senses to apprehend the truth. The original man was celestial in his understanding, but his senses have been corrupted by the Fall. He can know now only terrestrial things. Knowledge of celestial truths must be restored to him by God. Man then is a microcosm. He is a body composed of the four elements, with being, growth, motion, the senses, and a soul that is influenced by terrestrial things and yet able to look up to celestial things. Above all else his soul has the capacity to receive the spirit of God in whose image it was made. Man's reason which is closest to the senses makes him terrestrial. His understanding which causes him to look up to things of the pure intellect is corrupted. Man is a little world, then, whose structure and functions are analogous to the universe:

<table>
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<th>Spirit</th>
<th>Emyroon</th>
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<td>Soul</td>
<td>Celestial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Terrestrial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE ORDER OF CREATION

1. God - pure spirit
2. Angels - pure intelligence
3. Man (rational soul) - reason
4. Animals (animal soul) - senses
5. Plants (vegetable soul) - growth
6. Stones (no soul) - being

Eupyrean
Celestial

Terrestrial (Four elements)

Figure 2. The Great Chain of Being (the Microcosm)
The Stoics had taught that the world soul is to the world as the individual soul is to the body. They had added that the rational part of the world soul was to be identified with the rational part of the individual soul (τὸ ὑγικὸν μαρμονίκον). Plotinus had spoken of a world spirit (νοῦς) different from the world soul (ψυχὴ). The Christian tradition from Augustine had called the world spirit the Spirit of God. All had recognized the body (σώμα). In man’s nature is to be found the four elements (body), soul, and spirit, that is, all the parts of the cosmos. An analogy is possible, for man is a “mirror” or microcosm of all that there is— even God.

This parallelism in structure and in the relations within the structure influenced the epistemology of the microcosm. Man is earth, water, air, and fire, and so can understand the material world. Man is rational soul, and, therefore, able to understand intellectual forms and ideas (the terrestrial knowledge of Calvin). Man is spirit, a spark of the divine is infused into his nature which enables him to become conscious of God whose image he is (the celestial knowledge of Calvin). While the spirit has been lost, it is restored where men have the true wisdom of God and of themselves. The epistemology of the analogy permits man, the microcosm, a knowledge of Being only so far as he is the macrocosm or contains within himself the principles of all that IS. The idea that like is known only by like is as old as
Empedocles; Plato holds it in the Timaeus; Plotinus taught it; the doctrine of signatures was based on it; and Calvin's epistemology is taken from it. Man as a microcosm, the "mirror" of all things, is a new key to Calvin.

The order of creation is itself a microcosm. The terrestrial, celestial, and Empyrean hierarchy is reflected in the great chain of being. (See Figure 2). The stones, plants, animals, and man belong to the terrestrial order. Man as a microcosm is in both the terrestrial and celestial orders and holds the possibility of gaining the Empyrean realm. Angels are in the celestial world, and above all is the Empyrean heaven. The whole creation is a microcosm. It is well to note here that in some instances the universe (macrocosm) itself is considered as a microcosm, the reflection or image of the greater macrocosm (God). Beginning with the great whole there is a whole-part relationship from the greatest macrocosm through a hierarchial series of microcosmic mirrors until man is reached. Each microcosm is a complete unity in itself, the reflection of the greater whole in the complete part. The universal whole is one organism, animated by one soul, fashioned by one mind and the same principles that appear in the structure of the whole will appear once more in the structure of its every part. Every

1 Aristotle, De Anima, 1:2:404 b.
2 Plato, Timaeus, 35,37.
3 See Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book V, 26, and Book VIII.
order of being has its assigned place in the whole (Figure 2), and every particular being, in so far as it is a whole, is an image, a reflection of the greater whole. The universe, the chain of being, man, and State can all be called a microcosm or "mirror mundus" in which the macrocosmus is mirrored. 

6. The Microcosm (Society)

What is true of the individual is true of every human community and of human society in general. John Calvin in his theory of human societies accepted the divinely created organization of the macrocosm (mirrored in the universe and man) as a prototype of the principles which govern the construction of human communities. The social microcosm, too, was composed of body, soul, and spirit, and was a living organism. The divine element was the magistrate, or sovereign, or governing part. The soul of the organism was its polity, and the body, the classes of people. This classification was variable and offered the possibility of wide interpretation. In one sense, the church was the soul of the State, but this relation involved the concept of polity. Polity or law (the soul of the State) was of three parts, and these were interacting like the levels of the soul. There was the Law of Nature (jus naturale) which was largely identified with Divine Law (jus divinum). The Law of Nature was something that belonged to the reason. The Divine Law was celestial in nature and revealed by God to man in a

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1 Gierke, Otto, Political Theories of the Middle Ages. Cambridge, University Press, 1922, p. 8.
supernatural way. The Law of Nations (jus gentium) was the sum of the
law which flowed from the jus naturale after the corruption of the rea-
son by the Fall of man. The Positive Law (jus civile) is a set of human
rules which have no force of their own but arise out of the soul experi-
ence. The State, then, presents a portrait analogous to man and to the
universe.

Empyrean     - Magistrate, Sovereign, Governing Part.
(Spirit)

Celestial     - Law of Nature (Divine Law) - Understanding
(Soul)
               Law of Nations   - Reason
               Civil Law         - Senses

Terrestrial   - Classes of People
(Body)

In this arrangement the Law of Nature or Divine Law is the highest reach
of the soul of the State. The Law of Nations is a product of the reason
and Civil Law is, like the senses, very closely connected with the
terrestrial level. This parallel between the State and man was not only
structural but functional as well. It is a parallel that applies as well
to parts of the State, or communities within the larger community.

7. Conclusions.

This chapter has introduced us to the general principles that
are underneath the use of the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm.
It has shown how the whole chain of being, from the universe, to the
order of creation, to the State, and to the individual are mirrors re-
fecting the whole. Every part is seen as a unity reflecting the unity
of the whole. There is a continuity of being reflected from the whole to the part. This idea of continuity pictured as a series of mirrors (mirrocosms) which reflect the structure and functions of a great organism is the architectonic principle of medieval thought. The continuity in the whole to the part relationship is described by the figure SYNDECOCHE. This is a term that is often used by John Calvin. This is an introduction to the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm. At this point it will be well to review its history in the developing thought of the West up to the time of Calvin.
"Vast chain of being! which from God began;
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, who no eye can see,
No gloss can reach; from infinite to thee;
From thee to nothing. - On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might be ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step, broken, the great scale's destroy'd;
From Nature's chain whatever link you like,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
And if each system in gradation roll,
Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall."

CHAPTER II.

THE HISTORY OF THE MACROCOSM AND MICRO COSM IDEA.


The theory of the macrocosm and microcosm made its appearance early in Greek thought. Some scholars think that Thales taught such an idea, but their evidence is not convincing. The first satisfactory instance where the similarity in the structure and function of man and the universe is found is in the thought of Anaximenes:

"Just as our soul which is air hold us together, so it is breath and air that encompass the whole world." \(^1\)

Pythagoras was the first philosopher to refer to the world by the term ἄρχοντα and to have the forms of the microcosm theory in his system. \(^2\)

Heraclitus had all the necessary elements and needed only to fit them together to have had a theory. So many interpreters have seen the evidence that Heraclitus was surely conscious that the principles were there. \(^3\)

The same thing is true of Empedocles. He never states the theory in so many terms, but the evidence that he believed in the analogy is very good. \(^4\) There is a scattered thought here and there in the writings of

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1 Stobaeus, Eclogae, 2:10:13.


4 Ibid., p. 4-5.
Hippocrates that shows the idea was not completely foreign to the teaching of early Greek medicine. There is indication that in the atomic theory of Democritus the microcosmic theory is implied. Xenophon says that Socrates used the analogy at least once.\(^1\) The sum of the matter is that in the pre-Platonic period the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm is vague. There is much indication that the principles of such a theory formed the architectonic background of thought. But the analogy was not worked out with any detail. It is apparent, however, that early in Greek philosophy the idea began to appear as a guiding principle for metaphysical and scientific speculation. The genesis of the idea is obscured by the passing of time. That it is a principle which the first philosophers found useful can be seen, and this application of the principle was soon felt in a profound way when the great thinkers appeared.

2. Plato and Aristotle.

Plato introduces the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm in definite terms. In his system of political, ethical, and cosmological thought he employs the theory in several ways. The Republic is the great classic in which the State is presented as the individual written large. It is the familiar comparison between the tripartite ideal state and tripartite individual soul. Plato teaches that justice in a man's life consists of a harmonious relationship between the elements of the hier-

\(^1\) Xenophon, Memorabilia, 1:4.
archy of reason, will and appetites. In a State justice is attained when the ruling, military, and producing classes function in the right relationship. Plato's political analogy reached out into the relation of these larger and lesser wholes with other wholes of the same category.

"And as state is to state in virtue and happiness, so is man in relation to man." Plato dealt wisely with the theory. He saw that the parallelism is not merely structural but also functional; he was not so much interested in establishing an anatomical comparison in The Republic as in describing psychological processes.

It is the comparison of the individual and State in The Republic that is most familiar, but it was the Timaeus which had the great influence in the development of medieval thought. The Timaeus is really the source for the theory of the microcosm and macrocosm. It lends itself very easily to such an interpretation in such passages as this:

"... When he was framing the universe, he put intelligence in soul, and soul in body ... wherefore we may say that the world became a living creature truly endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God."

The original of the universe is a perfect animal which comprehends in the whole all its parts just as its copy (the universe) is an animal

2 Ibid., 9:576.
3 Plato, Timaeus, 30.
which contains all the visible parts. This visible universe is composed of a world soul, and a world body of the four elements joined together into a living creature. The world soul is divided into three parts, which in turn create a theory of epistemology. There are four species of being within the world body: the fixed stars and planets, birds, sea and land animals. These correspond to the species in the species in the ideal animal of which they are a copy. Man is made of both mortal and immortal "stuff" so that the universe may be truly universal. The Timaeus has other passages which bear a relation to the microcosmos theory. Plato emphasizes the analogy of the souls of men and the universe particularly in regard to the harmony of the three parts.

The use of the theory by Plato in The Republic and the Timaeus had an invaluabale influence on later thought. The Timaeus, in particular, colored the thinking of Western minds so much that it has been said that philosophical tradition consists in a series of footnotes to Plato. He

1 Ibid., 31.  
2 Ibid., 35.  
3 Ibid., 33.  
4 Ibid., 37.  
5 Ibid., 38.  
6 Ibid., 35.  
7 Ibid., 35, 37.  
8 Ibid., 40.  
9 Ibid., 41. Cf. Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:34.  
10 Plato, Timaeus, 43, 45, 46; particularly, 69-71 f. to 87.  
used the analogy all through his books. In the Phaedrus he speaks of the mortal and immortal creatures who have parallel souls and bodies.¹ In another place he talks of the harmony in the body and the universe.² In the Statesman there are two important passages where the universe is described as a living creature.³ And the imitation of this creature by man is emphasised.⁴ In The Laws there is a passage in which the analogy between the soul of the body and the soul of the universe is developed in detail.⁵ In the Philolaus is the conversation between Socrates and Protarchus in which Socrates points out the analogy between the bodies of men and the universe, and from this argues for our having souls and minds.⁶ It is clearly seen that the frame upon which Plato erected his great systems of cosmology, ethics, epistemology, psychology, and politics is the theory of the microcosm and macrocosm. The details were later to be sharpened by Philo and Plotinus.

The use of the structures and functions of the analogy is not so prominent in the philosophy of Aristotle as it is in Plato. But there was certainly something of the theory in the background of his mind, and he did his thinking in its shadows which often enough fell across

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¹ Plato, Phaedrus, 247.
² Plato, Symposium, 187-188.
³ Plato, Statesman, 269-270.
⁴ Ibid., 274.
⁵ Plato, The Laws, 10:896-898.
⁶ Plato, Philolaus, 29, 30, 31.
the pages of his writings. Aristotle, like Plato, compared the State
to the individual organism. He conceived of the universe as a living
organism or animal, and his De Coelo is almost as pregnant with the
parallelism as the Timaeus. It is in Aristotle's writings that the
term 'macrocosm' first appears. In a discussion of the theory of motion
in the \textit{Physics}, he writes:

"Now if this can happen to a living thing, why should
not the same be true also of the universe as a whole?
For it it can happen in a little world it can happen
also in the great, (ἐκ γὰρ ἐκ μικροῦ κόσμου γίνεται,
καὶ ἐν μεγάλω πάντως ἐν τῳ κόσμῳ,
καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν ὑπαρκόντι).
If it can happen in
the world, also it can happen in the infinite..."\textsuperscript{3}

This is a series of microcosms moving from a living thing in the uni-
verse to the universe itself and on beyond to the Being of everything.
It is the only use of the actual term of the analogy in Aristotle. He
never went deeply into the theory, but it is implied in much of his
philosophy. Later scholars read much into him that was never there.
But that they should sense the presence of this analogy in the Aris-
totelian system is justified from the evidence. Windelband says that
the Stoics adapted the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm from

\textsuperscript{1} Aristotle, \textit{Politics}, 1:5:1254 a; 3:4:1277 a; 4:4:1290 b; 5:3:1303 b;
Nicomachean Ethics, 7:10:1153 a; 9:8:1168 b.

\textsuperscript{2} Aristotle, \textit{De Coelo}, 2:8:290 a,b; 2:12:292 a, b.

\textsuperscript{3} Aristotle, \textit{Physics}, 8:3:262 b.
Aristotle. The medieval philosophers found the theory in other of Aristotle's works. The idea is in Aristotle, but not to the extent that it was present in Plato. The constant criticism to which Aristotle subjects the Timaeus indicates the fundamental disagreement with the structure on which Plato built. Aristotle did not work with the great architectonic principles that hold up the Platonic system, and yet his teaching that the universe is a living organism became very influential in the later development of the microcosmic theory. Those who came after Aristotle followed the implications of his writings far beyond justifiable bounds, and the analogy which Plato had stated and Aristotle suggested took new and more involved forms in the Stoics.

3. Cicero and Seneca.

The analogy of the macrocosm and the microcosm was popular with the Stoics. The great names in Stoic philosophy, Zeno, Chrysippus, Appollodorus, Posidonius, and Cleanthus, taught the world to be an animate and rational being. The human body and universe had the ruling part of the individual and world soul. The Stoics were

2 Some of these are: Historia Animalium, 8:1:588 b; De Generations Animalium, 2:1:731 b; Metaphysica, 1:6:988 a; De Anima, 3:8:451 a.
3 Congar, G. F., op. cit., p. 11-16.
4 Windelband, W., op. cit., p. 187.
5 See the opening pages of John Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia for the wide range of Stoic literature which Calvin knew intimately.
pantheistic,¹ and there is some difficulty in delineating the doctrine of the microcosm in some of the earlier thinkers. The patterns are surely to be found in the early Stoicism of Cleanthes and Aratus.² The analogy became clearer in the works of Cicero whom Calvin admired above all others of the classical writers. Cicero used the analogy in his system of ethics and religion, teaching that the microcosm lived in imitation of the macrocosm. Cicero described Chrysippus as having held that man was placed here:

"... To contemplate and imitate the world; in no wise perfect, he is a kind of particle of the perfect."³

A prayer of Zeno suggested to Cicero a further comparison:

"... The universe displays all impulses of will and all corresponding actions, just like ourselves when we are stirred through the mind and the senses."⁴

The microcosmic theory was the foundation of Stoic ethics — that is, the submission to nature (macrocosm). The ethical system of Calvin is Stoic in its conception. Cicero in the Dream of Scipio argues for the divinity of the individual soul, which controls the body, just as God is the ruler of the world.⁵ Macrobius later used this passage as

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¹ Cicero, De Natura Deorum, 1:14:36; 1:14:37.
³ Cicero, De Natura Deorum, 2:14-37.
⁴ Ibid., 2:22:58.
⁵ Cicero, De Republica, 6:8:2.
the basis of the famous remark which became one of the loci classici of medieval thought:

"... Physici mundum magnum hominem et hominem brevem mundum esse dixerunt."¹

Through Macrobius Cicero was mediated to the medieval mind in a neo-Platonic form.

Seneca puts the doctrine even more clearly than does Cicero. He writes:

"The whole art of nature is imitation ... . The place which God has in the world, the soul has in man; that which in the former is matter, is in us body."²

In another place Seneca remarks that nature has organized earth somewhat after the pattern of our bodies.³ He draws the parallelism in some detail comparing veins in the body to streams of water, and arteries to air passages,⁴ The various fluids of the body he likens to geological substances,⁵ and injuries to the body are analogous to earthquakes.⁶ Seneca looked upon the universe and man as unfolding organisms, both holding their eternal destiny within the embryo.⁷ The macrocosm and

¹ Macrobius, Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis, 3:12:11. Cf. John Calvin in Institutes, 1:5:3, where using the term microcosm this passage of Macrobius is cited as a reference.
² Seneca, Epistle LXXV, 24.
³ Seneca, Questiones Naturales, 3:15:2.
⁴ Ibid., 3:15:3, 5 and 6:14:2.
⁵ Ibid., 3:15:4.
⁷ Ibid., 3:29:2.
microcosm are both deterministic systems. Seneca is a foremost exponent of the theory of the parallelism, and Seneca next to Cicero was Calvin's most beloved authority among the ancients. It was Seneca that Calvin chose for his first scholarly venture.  

4. Philo Judaeus.

The relation of Philo to the development of the theory of the microcosm is pivotal in its nature. Philo worked out a synthesis of Greek and Hebraic thought which became the generating force of a Jewish philosophy that reached its brilliant peak in Moses Maimonides. The very intricate and detailed theories of the macrocosm and microcosm arose in this Jewish background. The doctrine was used by Philo in explaining how man is created in the image of God. Philo teaches that as God is to the universe, so the soul is to man. The image of God applies to the soul and not to the body. Philo had a large task in working this Hebrew idea in the Greek mind, and there are many references where the analogy is used. Philo makes a statement very much like the one of Macrobius which suggests a specific microcosmic theory:

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βραγχυμεν κοσμου τον ανθρωπον μεγαν
δε ἀνθρωπον φασαν τον κοσμου ειναι
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1 Joannis Calvini, Commentarii in I. Anaci Senecae, Libros Duos ad Neronem Caecarem, Do Clementia, published in 1532, while Calvin was a student at the College de France.
3 Philo, Qvis Rerum Divinarum Haeres Sit, 29-31; 146-156.
There are many other specific instances of the doctrine in Philonic literature. He called the world the largest man, and described man as made like a little world in the great world. Man is every kind of animal at the same time. Philo set up a doctrine of sympathy between parts of the universe, and saw a correspondence in man and heaven of the influence of the number seven. Man is a little heaven, and a little world. Philo even used the theory in his allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures. After Philo, the analogy of the man and the universe was no longer only implicit in the history of thought - the parallelism between the macrocosm and microcosm is clearly stated. And not this alone, but what was more important, the theory was worked into the synthesis of Greek and Hebrew thought which began to spread over the Latin West. This Greek philosophical doctrine was shown by Philo to be in complete harmony with the Hebraic religious heritage.

As a part of the great intellectual tradition of Alexandria, this synthesis of the microcosmic theory was incorporated into later Western thought.

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2 Philo, De Providentia, 1:41.
5 Philo, De Mundi Opificio, 35-43; 104-128.
6 Ibid., 27:82.
5. Galen and Manilius.

Galen was influenced by both the Peripatetics and the Stoics. He has a passage in one of his works where he states that men of old time, who were proficient in the study of nature, said that a living being was a kind of a little world.¹ According to Galen, everything which exists and displays activity in the human body is formed by an Intelligent Being on an intelligible plan, so that the organ in structure and function is the result of that plan. The Creator in his wisdom selected the best means of attaining his ends, and it is evidence of his power that he created everything according to design, and in this way fulfilled his will. Galen taught that to know man you must know God's will. Galen's influence imposed a thousand years of darkness on science. Men became interested in the will and purpose of God as they were reflected in the microcosm, rather than in natural phenomena.² His teachings added to the growing literature describing the parallels between man and the universe.

Manilius, a classical Latin writer of the first century, has the microcosmic idea in the poem Astronomica which is a work dealing with astrology. Manilius saw design and "heavenly" reason in the structure

¹ Galen, De Usu Partium, 3:10:241. Cf. John Calvin, Institutes, 1:5:3 in relation to Calvin's statement that the ancients rightly called man a microcosm (Institutes, 1:5:3)
and function of the universe. He describes man as having a world in himself which is the image of God.  

6. Plotinus.

The name of Plotinus is the most important one in the developing theory after that of Plato. The comparison of man and the universe is made again and again by Plotinus. The two are similar living beings. The philosophy of Plotinus implies certain resemblances in the various stages of the emanations of the world process. There are a whole series of parallelisms in the chain of being which reflect each other like mirrors. The cosmos is an image of itself. The universe is a single living being. We can learn of one part of a living being from another, and Plotinus compares the parts of our body to the parts of the universe. The parts of the universe are to be regarded as wholes. The life of man and the universe is similar, and the order in man is but a reflection of the order in the universe. Sometimes in man and the universe the parts oppose each other and disorder is introduced into the unity of being.

2  Plotinus, Enneads, 2.3:17 (Stephen Mackenna's text)
3  Ibid., 4:4:35.
4  Ibid., 2:3:7.
5  Ibid., 4:4:35.
7  Ibid., 4:4:35.
8  Ibid., 4:4:32.
The analogy between the universe and man is not only physiological, but it is also psychological. The world soul controls the Absolute as the individual soul controls man,\(^1\) although the two souls differ in some respects.\(^2\) They are divided into higher and lower parts.\(^3\) The three principles of Plotinus, the One, the Intelligence, and the Soul, have three corresponding principles in man,\(^4\) thus our soul has divinity in it. One part of the soul remains in the divine sphere (spirit), another descends into the sphere of matter, and the third part remains in an intermediate state.\(^5\) The parts of man and the parts of the universe are similar.\(^6\) The soul-less parts of the Absolute are merely instruments responding to a deterministic influence.\(^7\) The Absolute is an all complete life.\(^8\) The divine Intelligence shapes living beings into many small universes:

"Τὰ γὰρ ὅλου μεγάλου τιμᾶς κόσμους."\(^9\)

Plotinus developed the epistemological theory that Empedocles and Plato had found in the microcosmic analogy:

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1. Ibid., 2:3:13. Cf., 3:1:2; 4:3:7; 3:1:8; and 3:5:3.
2. Ibid., 2:9:7.
4. Ibid., 5:1:10.
5. Ibid., 2:9:3.
6. Ibid., 2:3:15.
7. Ibid., cit.
"... The Soul is many things, is all, is the
Above and the Beneath to the totality of life;
and each of us is an Intellectual Kosmos, linked
to this world by what is lowest in us, but by what
is highest, to the Divine Intellect: by all that is
intellective we are permanently in that higher realm,
but at the fringes of the Intellectual we are fettered
to the lower ..."1

Plato had this idea in both the Timaeus and Philebus. But not only
an epistemology is found in Plotinus, there is also an ethics. The
image of the world soul is latent in the individual soul and the in-
dividual soul achieves life as it moves toward the perfecting of this
image.1

The parallelism between living things and the earth was emphasized
by Plotinus to a very remarkable degree. The earth is a living being,3
which has a soul.4 The earth has functional organs, not the same as
man's, but the earth can see, hear, smell, touch, and taste, and has
the sense perceptions of a man.5 It can even hear prayers.6 The parts
of the universe are sympathetic, just as the parts of any living being.7
This doctrine of sympathy in the parts led Plotinus to extreme ideas

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1 Ibid., 3:4:3. See also 4:4:24.
2 Ibid., 3:1:2.
3 Ibid., 4:4:22.
5 Loc. cit.
6 Loc. cit.
Commentary on Genesis, 6:7; Commentary on Jeremiah, 7:20, and
elsewhere.
on divination,₁ and astrology.² Plotinus stated:

"Analogy will make every part a sign."³

The doctrine of signatures was largely inspired by this idea. Distorted and magnified out of all proportions, these teachings of Plotinus were carried to extremes by the later exponents of mysticism and astrology.

7. The Neo-Platonists.

The truly important principles of the philosophy of Plotinus were put into systematic form by the school of neo-Platonists which grew out of his teaching. Plato lived anew in Plotinus, although in reality Plotinus offers a philosophy that is entirely different from Platonism. Plotinus should be ranked alongside Plato and Aristotle as the founder of a third philosophy. The followers of Plotinus mediated the idea of the macrocosm and microcosm to the medieval mind. Porphyry, Iamblichus, Chalcidius, and Proclus carried on the Plotinian analogy with some changes.⁴ The influence of Plotinus began to push its way deep into the Latin mind as the principles of neo-Platonism became more and more the accepted explanation of man and the universe. Singer writes:

"This view of the universe gave a framework for the neo-Platonic conception that the structure of the universe foreshadowed that of man. Thus arose the

₂ Ibid., 4:3:12.
₃ Ibid., 2:3:5.
"doctrines of the intimate relation of macrocosm
(great world) and microcosm (little world, that,
is, man)."1

This doctrine of the macrocosm became the central dogma of medieval
science and is basic for the understanding of the medieval mind.2

"The thought of the Latins in their Dark Age ... was
neo-Platonic, with the Timaeus as the textbook and
the theory of the macrocosm and microcosm as key."3

The names of Hermes Trismegistos, Macrobius, and Boethius are
not only the most important in mediating the philosophy of Plotinus
and the doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm to the Middle Ages,
they are also important influences in the shaping of Calvin's mind.
The microcosmic theory is to be found in several places in Hermes
Trismegistos, and its origin is credited to him by some.4 Hermes is
the somewhat doubtful figure to whom so many of the writings called
'Hermetic' are attributed. He is described in many ways but was
accepted by the medievals and the Renaissance as an Alexandrian neo-
Platonicist of the third century. He is the inspiration of much mystical
speculation,5 and the first words of the Emerald Table are considered
to belong to Hermes by some:

1 Singer, Charles, op. cit., p. 37.
2 Ibid., p. 127.
3 Ibid., p. 150-151.
5 Underhill, Evelyn, Mysticism. London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1914,
p. 191-192.
"quod superius cicit quod inferius." 1

His great work, *Eumceion*, has the theory in it, 2 for Hermes taught that man is a microcosm. 3

Macrobius, in the early fifth century, under the guise of a commentary on a work of Cicero, gave a Latin abridgement of much of the doctrine of Plotinus. In one famous passage he states the essence of neo-Platonism so well that it became one of the chief channels by which the doctrine of Plotinus reached the medieval thinkers. Macrobius uses the metaphors of the chain and the series of mirrors - which were to be favored figures of the philosophers even to our own time.

Macrobius sums up the essence of the metaphysics of Plotinus thus:

"Since, from the Supreme God Mind arises, and from Mind, Soul, and since this in turn creates all subsequent things and fills them all with life, and since this single radiance illumines all, and is reflected in each, as a single face might be reflected in many mirrors placed in a series; and since all things follow in continuous succession, degenerating in sequence to the very bottom of the series, the attentive observer will discover a connection of parts, from the Supreme God down to the last dregs of things, mutually linked together and without a break. And this is Homer's golden chain, which God, he says, bade hang down from heaven to earth." 4

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1 Ibid., p. 191. (Its bearing on the microcosmic theory is obvious)
2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:5 and 1:8:3, refers to Hermes Trismegistes and this work.
3 Congar, G. P., op. cit., p. 25.
4 Macrobius, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, 1:14:15. Cf. John Calvin, Institutes, 1:5:3 in reference to the use of the word microcosm. Also see Institutes, 1:5:1 and 1:5:3 for use of the term "mirror."
The other famous passage of Macrobius in which he refers to man as a little world has already been mentioned in the section on Cicero.\(^1\)

Macrobius was, perhaps, the chief interpreter of Plotinus to the Latin mind, but Boethius is a name that ranks almost as high in the story of the transition from the patristic and classical worlds to the medieval period.

Boethius reflects a neo-Platonic and Stoic influence in his various works, the best known of which is *The Consolations of Philosophy*. *The Consolations* has the macrocosmic theory in it. Boethius was one of the most popular and influential writers of the Middle Ages and enjoyed great prestige in the Renaissance mind. He was a favorite with statesmen and poets, as well as with philosophers and theologians.\(^2\)

The theory of the macrocosm and microcosm implied in his works came into touch with an extremely large group of people. Calvin refers to one of Boethius' Commentaries in mentioning the microcosm.\(^3\)

Neo-Platonic not only found expression in the works of such diverse mystics and philosophers as Hermes Trismegistus, Macrobius, and Boethius; it found a ready reception among the Fathers of the Christian Church and at the hands of Jewish and Arabian philosophers and

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1. Ibid., 3:12:11.
2. See article by William Turner in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, 1913, v. 11, p. 610-611.
theologians. The doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm was not only a corollary of neo-Platonism, it became the motif of the philosophy. It was the master plan, and with it in their hands men could fit together the mysterious and perplexing pieces of the universe around them. The scientists, the philosophers, the theologians - the Greeks, the Latins, the Jews, the Mohammedans - all grasped at this analogy of macrocosm and microcosm as the divine design of the universe and its parts.


The Fathers of the Christian Church found the theory acceptable and were not hesitant about using it in their systems of theology. Clement of Alexandria, as might be expected, was the first to refer to the comparison. He describes man:

"... Man, who, composed of body and soul is a little universe."¹

Origen, the nightiest of the Greek Fathers and a neo-Platonist, understood man as a microcosm with the two parts of the soul from the higher and lower created worlds.² Gregory of Nazianzen called man a second world, for the image of God is a microcosmic analogy to the universe.³ Gregory of Nyssa held the theory in greater detail.⁴ He writes:

¹ Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Heathen, ch. 1.
³ Gregory of Nazianzen, Oration, 65:7.
⁴ Harnack, A., op. cit., p. 277.
"Man is a little world composed of the same elements with the universe."  

He cautions, however, against making it a matter for boasting. Gregory argued from the microcosm to the existence of a soul as we infer from the phenomena of the world to the reality of God's existence:

"It has been said by wise men that man is a little world in himself and contains all the elements which go to complete the universe. If this view is a true one and so it seems ..."  

Against these great Fathers the voices of two lesser leaders of the early Church are raised in protest. Arnobius derided those who claim to be a microcosm framed after the fashion of the whole universe, and Hippolytus is against the idea that

"Man is the universe."  

The third of the great Cappadocians, Basil, in his Hexameron, treats the heavenly bodies as living. He pictures man as both celestial and terrestrial in his nature. Ambrose, imitating the Hexameron of Basil, goes beyond this and adds that the world is framed like a man's body with the head like the sky, and the eyes like the sun and the moon.

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3 Arnobius, Against the Heathen, 2:25.
4 Hippolytus, Refutation of all Heresies, 8:5.
5 Basil, Hexameron, 6:10, 11 and 7:1.
A fourth century Christian liturgy of Alexandria calls man the KOSMOPOLEITUS containing the KOSMU KOSMON. 1

The writings of John of Damascus are the most interesting and important among the Greek Fathers in stating the microcosmic theory. He described man as a mixture of the being of spiritual and material worlds. Man is:

"A sort of second microcosm within the great world." 2 He is midway between heaven and earth, between the celestial and terrestrial realms, and because of this man has communion with inanimate things, with animate unreasoning creatures, and with rational creatures. The bond between man and inanimate things is the body and its composition out of the four elements. The bond between man and plants in addition to the four elements consists of powers of nutrition, growth, and reproduction. Man's connection with unreasoning animals is by appetites, that is, anger, desire, sense, and impulsive movement. There are five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Impulsive movements consist of change from place to place, movements of body as a whole, voice, and breathing. Lastly, man's reason unites him to incorporeal and intelligent natures. John's conclusion is:

"And so man is a microcosm." 3

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2 John of Damascus, The Orthodox Faith, 2:12.
3 Loc. cit.
It is easy to understand how these theologians who were influenced so largely by neo-Platonism readily accepted the micro-
cosmic theory. It fitted in so nicely with the cosmic conception
of the Logos which they held. Harnack points out how Christ was a
microcosm, and the body assumed by the Logos came to share the uni-
versal meaning of the Logos.

9. Lactantius.

One of the most widely read writers in the schools of Calvin's
day was Lactantius, famed for the Cicaronian purity of his Latin.
Calvin alludes to him often, and always with approbation. Lactantius
drew largely from the writings of Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Ovid, and
Hermes Trismegistes. There was much Stoicism in his writings. Lac-
tantius had a doctrine of the microcosm. He comments on the fact that
man looks upward and says that this is the derivation of the word:
ν αυτοριστήριον (from ανα , τραπεζικόν , ἡ ψήφος , to turn the face upwards). Lactantius makes so much of the shape of man which allows him to look
upward, always quoting from Ovid, that it is no wonder Calvin repeats

1 The Incarnation of the Logos in the person of Jesus Christ is so
pre-eminently a microcosm that attention is called to this per-
fct celestial-terrestrial figure. The Son was the mirror of
God, and man is the image (imitation) of Christ.
4 Lactantius, Divine Institutes, 3:11.
5 Ovid, Metamorphosis, Book I.
the argument in his own *Divine Institutes*. The form of man's body is an important mark of the image of God to Lactantius. He says that our use of the element of fire is a mark of our celestial nature, while terrestrial animals use the lower element of water.

Lactantius states his doctrine of the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm in a long passage of which we can look at significant extracts:

"For having made the body, He breathed into it a soul from the vital source of his own Spirit, which is everlasting, that it might bear the similitude of the world itself, which is composed of soul and body, that is, of heaven and earth; since the soul by which we live has its origin out of heaven from God, the body out of the earth, of the dust ...."4

He approves the doctrine of Empedocles, restated by Trismegistos, that our bodies are composed of the four elements.5

"For the nature of earth is contained in the flesh, that of water in the blood, that of air in the breath, that of fire in the vital heat."6

This is the earthly life, but man also has a heavenly life of the soul.7

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1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:15:3.
2 Lactantius, Divine Institutes, 2:2; 2:10; 3:10; 7:5 and in The Formation of Man, Chapter VIII.
3 Lactantius, Divine Institutes, 2:10.
5 Loc. cit.
6 Loc. cit.
7 Ibid., 7:5.
He is related to the beasts, but he also can know God. In his

treatise, The Formation of Man, Lactantius draws significant parallels
between the structure and functions of man with the universe. The

face of a man resembles a relief map – the eyelashes are a 'fence' to
the eyes, the eyebrows are 'sumits', that is, 'mounds' which protect
the eyes; the nose is a 'ridge', the cheeks rise like 'hills', the

nose also has 'caverns' while there is a 'valley' on the upper lip
below the middle of the nostrils. Lactantius explored the whole

human body with such comparisons to the universe. In time, Calvin
drew into touch with the analogy here, for Lactantius is an important
source of Calvin's thought.

1 Lactantius, The Formation of Man, Chapter X.
"All are but parts of one stupendous Whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That changed thro' all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in th' ethereal frame,
Wars in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns;
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all!"
CHAPTER IX
THE HISTORY OF THE IDEA.
(Continued)

1. Augustine.

The doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm shaped by the Stoics and neo-Platonists was mediated into Western theology by Augustine. One able scholar writes:

"It was through Augustine that certain neo-Platonic doctrines, notably that of macrocosm and microcosm, passed to the Latin West." 1

The doctrine is later to show itself in the thought of the men who were dominated by the great Carthaginian. Men as diverse as Dante, Thomas Aquinas, Nicholas of Cusa, and John Calvin found the theory of the microcosm a common heritage from the mind of Augustine. Augustine was acquainted with the Stoics, but his doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm came from the master, Plotinus. Augustine shows an acquaintance with each of the six Enneads, and he quotes Plotinus by name five times. 2 The influence of Plotinus on Augustine has been stated in these words:

"To understand St. Augustine we must be familiar with the language and ideas of Plotinus from whom he borrowed not only scattered thoughts, but the best part of his doctrine on the Soul, on Providence, on the Transcendence...

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1 Singer, Charles, op. cit., p. 125.
"of God, on Evil as the negation of good, and on Freedom; and his theory of time and eternity."\(^1\)

Dean Inge shows how throughout his career Augustine was a most enthusiastic admirer of Plotinus, and how he considered neo-Platonism very close to Christianity.\(^2\) Augustine himself writes in his *Contra Academicos*:

"The utterance of Plato, the most pure and bright in all philosophy, scattering the clouds of error, has alone forthmost of all in Plotinus, the Platonistic philosopher who has been deemed so like his master that one might think them contemporaries, if the length of time between them did not compel us to say that in Plotinus Plato lived again."\(^3\)

Augustine is referring to the philosophy of Plotinus when he uses the name 'Platonists',\(^4\) and he comments:

"No philosophers come nearer to us than the Platonists."\(^5\)

By Platonists, he means neo-Platonists.\(^6\) Augustine describes how meeting with neo-Platonists was a landmark in his life.\(^7\) The books of the Platonists which assisted in Augustine's conversion probably included some of the *Enneads* of Plotinus.\(^8\) Erabant suggests that we

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4. For example: Augustine, *Confessions*, 7:19; 7:10 and 7:17; see also, Augustine in *De Beata Vita*.
5. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 8:16.
should read "Plotinus" for "Platonists" in a study of Augustine.

Just as Thomas Aquinas claimed Aristotle for the Christian Church, Augustine claimed Plotinus. The tone of the Enneads is not personal, but it is more subjective than most of the writings of that time. Augustine found there a sympathetic philosophy that gave him the architectonic principles for his theology. The metaphysics of Plotinus were readily adaptable to the Christian revelation. Augustine recognized his indebtedness to the neo-Platonists and mentions it in his writings. He was confused once about the physical substance of things, but the Platonists helped him to understand the immaterial nature of reality and the significance of Romans 1:19-20. They showed him that God is really to be found in the image of the human soul, and it was by searching his own soul that Augustine found him. It was the Platonists who inspired Augustine's desire to grasp the Truth not only by faith, but also by reason; for their philosophy is entirely true, revealing the Intelligible world. The locus classicus of

2 Augustine, Confessions, 7:1.
3 Augustine, De Civitate Dei, 8:6, 8.
4 Augustine, Confessions, 7:10.
5 Augustine, De Trinitate, 14:14.
6 Augustine, Contra Academicos, 3:20.
7 Ibid., 3:19.
Augustine's neo-Platonism is in the famous conversation of Augustine with his mother at Cateria. It is a description of a mystical meditation or neo-Platonic theurgy.

The use of the parallelism between the macrocosm and microcosm reveals itself in many ways in Augustine. He has the famous analogy between the seven periods of Biblical history and the ages of man. This comparison is not quite satisfactory, as even Augustine realizes. The ability to know self and love self in the mind shows it to be an image of the Trinity. The Trinity is revealed to us in all the created works, and traces of the whole Trinity appear in the creatures. This revelation of the Trinity in the things of the creation is connected with Ephesians 1:20 in Augustine's mind. The Trinity is reflected in the three divisions of philosophy.

Augustine described the soul as a microcosm of the Trinity. The soul is composed of the trinity of intellect, will, and memory. This image of the Trinity is reflected in one life, one mind, one substance.

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1 Augustine, Confessions, 9:10. Cf. Plotinus, Enneads, 4:8:1; 5:3:1, 2; and 5:3:9.
2 Augustine, De Genesi contra Manichaeos, 1:23; 35-41; Retractations, 1:26. See also, De Vera Religione, 36:48 and De Quantitate Anima, 33:70-74.
3 Augustine, De Civitate Dei, 11:26 and De Trinitate, 9:3, 4, 5 and 12.
4 Augustine De Civitate Dei, 11:24.
5 Augustine, De Trinitate, 6:10:13.
6 Loc. cit.
7 Augustine, De Civitate Dei, 11:25.
that is, one soul. There is an inner and outer trinity in man that complement each other. The one is spiritual — the other is sensual; one is close to the animal — the other looks toward the angels. There is a lower replica of the higher image of God. The soul will change as it leaves behind the material things and comes into knowledge of the intelligible and superno things, as the inner man triumphs over the outer man. The image of God is found in that part of the soul which contemplates eternal things — the rational part of the soul. It is the image of God because it can know God. The Augustinian theory of knowledge is built upon the Empedocean, Platonic, and Plotinian doctrine that like can know like. The spiritual part of the soul


"There is no solidity in Augustine's speculation, that the soul is a mirror of the Trinity, inasmuch as it comprehends within itself intellect, will and memory." Calvin's use of 'speculum' here is equal to the term 'microcosm.'


receives the illumination of the light of God. It is not an objective revelation but presupposes this capacity for spiritual cognition to be within the trinity of the soul. The microcosmic Trinity can know the macrocosmic Trinity of which it is a reflection. Memory, understanding, and will alone are not man. Man is made of soul and body. These are the parts of the soul, however, and the soul is the most important part of man. It is in the soul alone that man is the image of God, for it is here only that the Trinity is found. The soul is a microcosm in which is mirrored God. 1 Seeing the trinity in the soul is like seeing through a glass darkly. 2 We should be able to see through the glass the God whose image it is. 3

Augustine describes the cosmic Christ as a man—the Head and body of the Church. 4 This is the macrocosm. He points out the continuity of the Head and the members of the Body, 5 which is felt in suffering. 6 Augustine conceived the macrocosm as a great being:

"Christ and the Church are both one Person, one perfect man in the form of his own fulness." 7

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2 Ibid., 15:9:16.
3 Ibid., 15:23:44 and 15:24:44.
4 Augustine, Commentary on the Gospel of John, 28:1; Commentary on Psalm 90 (Latin), 91 (English); Psalm 143 (Latin), 144 (English); and Psalm 76:4 (Latin), 76:4 (English).
5 Augustine, Commentary on Psalm 54:3 (Latin), 55:3 (English)
6 Ibid., Psalm 61:4 (Latin), 61:3 (English)
7 Ibid., Psalm 91:2 (Latin), 92:2 (English)
There is a further analogy between man (microcosm) and the macrocosm, for Augustine says the soul is to man's body as the Spirit of Christ is to the Church. Augustine regarded the Heaven of heavens (Heavenly realm) as an intellectual creature but not God. But the soul lives, and moves, and is in God. Augustine, and Calvin was like him in this respect, wished to show that all things are from God, that they are in God, but he emphasizes that the things are not God, nor do they help make up God. God is above all things - outside all things. Augustine did not escape pantheism, and neither did Calvin by the reiteration that God is outside all things when they continued to put all things within Him.

Augustine was the true teacher of the Middle Ages, and his doctrines are the philosophy of the Christian Church. In the Summa Theologica of Thomas Aquinas, on the one hand, and in The Institutes of John Calvin on the other, Augustine's thought has become the foundation of the theology of the Church. The principles of St. Augustine's system of thought are neo-Platonic and based upon the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm. John Calvin took his theology bodily from Augustine's works. He reverenced the Carthaginian as if he were revelation itself.

1 Augustine, Commentary on the Gospel of John, 19:12; 26:13.
2 Augustine, Confessions, 12:12 and 12:19.
3 Augustine, De Trinitate, 14:15:13; Sermo 151:2 and 151:4.
4 Cf. John Calvin, Institutes, 1:1:1 and 1:5:3.
5 Augustine, De Trinitate, 14:15:13; Sermo 151:2 and 151:4.
Calvin refers to Augustine on almost every page of his writings, and
if this master furnished him the theology of Calvinism there was also
worked into the system the architectonic plan of Augustine, the macro-
ocosmic-microcosmic analogy. Calvin does not once refer to Plotinus in
all the pages of his works, but in the shadows of Calvin's theology —
back of Augustine, stands Plotinus. In taking so much from Augustine,
Calvin also took his key to the mysteries of man and the universe.

2. The Medievals (Christian)

The medieval mind integrated its thought systems around the
frame of this macrocosmic-microcosmic parallelism. Man as a micro-
cosm is the center around which develops physics, ethics, and psychology.
Living midway between pure bodies and pure spirits, he is a microcosmus
which reflects all the perfections scattered through reality. 1 In this
light the famous opening sentence of Calvin's Institutes becomes intelli-
gible. 2 We can understand when Calvin calls man a microcosm and remarks
that it is unnecessary to go farther than ourselves to find God, 3 who
is found a hundred times in our body and soul. 4 John Calvin had a
medieval mind. It is the heritage which had been stored in the great

1 See De Wulf, M., History of Medieval Philosophy. London, Longmans,
2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:1:1.
3 Ibid., 1:5:13.
universities for him, and with it he went out with a system of thought which retained all essential features of the medieval mind.

The analogy is a natural element of almost every medieval. It is found in the system of Pseudo-Dionysius who has a detailed parallel between man and the cosmos.⁠¹ John Scotus Eriugena found a parallelism⁠² and in it an implication for his theory of knowledge.⁠³ Dionysius and Scotus Eriugena were both mystics in the neo-Platonic tradition, and the epistemological ideas latent in the theory were very attractive to them. Eriugena introduced the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius into Latin thought. The Venerable Bede drew an analogy between the four elements and the four humours of the body and saw a cosmic correspondence with the macrocosm.⁠⁴ Influenced by the teaching of Augustine in De Trinitate, the schoolman Anselm believed that because the soul has memory and can love itself, it is an image of the Trinity.⁠⁵ In the medieval mind the Trinity has a cosmic significance that identifies it with the idea of the macrocosm. The universe is a sacramental symbol (the visible body) of the great body of God.⁠⁶ The macrocosm as an Organism, or animate body, was

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3. Ibid., 4:10.
4. Bede, De Temporum Ratione, XXXV.
5. Anselm, Monologium, LXVII.
readily acceptable to the patristic and medieval Christian writers who found it delineated clearly in the revelation written by Paul of Tarsus. Calvin interpreted Paul in the same way. These medieval Christians found that philosophy and the revelation were in agreement upon the key to understanding the mysteries of the universe.

Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of them all, who brought about a synthesis of philosophy and theology, puts man between the angels and animals, reaching up to the former at the summit of his intellectual powers, and down to the latter in his body. He goes into details concerning the four elements describing how the inferior elements of earth and water predominate over fire and air, and how man has a rational soul. It is in this sense that man is a microcosm, a whole universe in little, for in him everything else in the world is some way represented. Because he is composed of all things, Thomas says man

"... is called a little world."

There are three names that are important in the history of the analogy which must serve to show how it formed the frame for the whole of medieval thought. They are chosen not because they are unusual, but because they are representative of the macrocosm-microcosm theory as it is reflected in

2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 13:4-5 and on 1 Corinthians, 13:12-31.
the general intellectual climate. Bernard of Tours wrote an allegorical poem which he called "De mundi universitate libri duo sive Megas-
cosmus et Microcosmus." Its metaphysical concepts are neo-Platonic,
Pythagorean and Christian, all arranged around the analogy of man and
the universe.

1 Most fascinating is St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1180) who depicted her theory of the microcosm in a series of marvelous mini-
atures. She worked the ideas of Galen, Ptolemy, and the whole world of
medieval science into her art. Bernard of Tours, St. Hildegard, and
Dante gave the theory artistic and poetic form, as opposed to the meta-
physical expressions in Anselm and Aquinas. Alongside them is John of
Salisbury who in his famous Polycraticus compared the organization of the
State with the human organism, a microcosmic theory developed by Dante
and Nicholas of Cusa.

3. The Medievals (Jewish)

The medieval Jewish philosophers were more naïve than the Christian;
they went into extreme and detailed comparisons. Their theories are

2 Ibid., p. 314.
3 Singer, Charles, Studies in the History and Method of Science. Oxford,
   Oxford University Press, 1917, v. 1. ('The Scientific Views and
   Visions of St. Hildegard' reproduces the miniatures).
important, for they had an influence on the Latin mind and reached an
important place in the Renaissance period. Avicennan (Ibn Gabirol) was
interested in the metaphysical rather than the physical similarities be-
tween the universe and man. Like Augustine and Calvin he declared that
if a man wished to know all things he must first know himself. ¹ Man is
a microcosm, as he is an image of the universe, or macrocosm. His body
is a resume of the corporeal world, made of cosmic matter and corporal
matter (the terrestrial and the celestial). It is the locus of the
vegetative, sensible, and rational souls, and this intellectual soul can
rise to the knowledge of the Infinite. ² Thus, there is an analogy between
the little world of man and the structure of the universe. ³ The individual
soul is arranged like the cosmic soul. ⁴

The microcosmic theory was an important part of the philosophical
outlook of Moses Maimonides. Maimonides was read widely among the schoolmen
who took over many ideas from his excellent restatement of Aristotle.
He was read, probably not without profit, by John Calvin. Maimonides
traces the parallelism between the human body and the universe in great
detail. Following after his master, Aristotle, Maimonides pictured the
entire globe as one individual Being which is endowed with life, motion,
and a soul. ⁵ His comparison of the macrocosm and microcosm can be seen

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¹ Avicennan, Fons Vitae, 1:3. Cf. John Calvin, Institutes, 1:111 and
1:5:3,4 and Augustine, Confessions, 1:1:2.
² De Wulf, H., op. cit., v. 1, p. 238-239.
³ Avicennan, Fons Vitae, 1:7; 3:2:10; 4:15; 2:34.
⁴ Ibid., 3:58.
and Sons, Ltd., 1936, p. 115.
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<th>MACROCOSM</th>
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<td>Water (The Four Elements)</td>
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<td>Fire</td>
<td>2. Soul - Vegetative</td>
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<td>1. Body - The Four Elements</td>
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<td>2. Soul - Vegetative</td>
<td>3. Spirit (God)</td>
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<td>Motion (Sensible)</td>
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It is the rational intellect which makes man the microcosm, Maimonides thought, and he pointed out that the ass and horse are not microcosms. But man would not yet be a microcosm without the spirit of God in him. Maimonides, therefore, writes:

"It is on account of this force that man is called microcosm."  

It is the intellecutive and spiritual elements which are in him that really make man a reflection of the macrocosm which has them. Man is an analogue of God. The rational analogy with the universe = terrestrial knowledge, and the spiritual analogy with God = celestial knowledge. The carefully drawn parallelism between the macrocosm and the microcosm is one of the best known passages in Maimonides.

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1 Arranged from the description found in Maimonides, Moses, The Guide for the Perplexed, part 1:73, where he has an elaborate chapter entitled "The Parallel between the Universe and Man."

2 Maimonides, Moses, op. cit., p. 117.

3 Ibid., p. 118.

The other Jewish influence of particular importance is that strange work, the Kabbala. The microcosm idea is rampant in it, and in all the Kabbalists. It was through the Kabbala that the analogy made its way into the humanistic revival of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.¹ The Florentine Academy and indeed most of the Renaissance thought was colored by the teachings of the Kabbala, and among them is the doctrine of analogy.

4. The Medievals (Arabian)

Arabian philosophy was not Arabian except in name. It was a system of Greek thought taken from Aristotle, Galen, Ptolemy, and Plotinus. The neo-Platonic elements in it were wrongly attributed to Plato, and by a quirk of fate the Arabians used false texts of Aristotle that made him seem neo-Platonic.² Neo-Platonism and the necessity to synthesize their teachings with the Koran led the Arabians to pantheism and mysticism in their systems of philosophy. Parallelsisms in the chain of Being are implied in the theory of emanations which they took from the Neoplatons. Alfarabi has the germ of most of the ideas that are met with later in his system of thought.³ It is in Avicenna, philosopher, theologian, and physician, that we find a metaphysics which includes an ontology, cosmology, and psychology that are clearly derived from the theory of the macrocosm

¹ Conger, S. P., op. cit., p. 45-56.
and microcosm.\textsuperscript{1} His mysticism indicates that his epistemology, too, is drawn from the analogy. Al-Ghazālī was a theologian who, like Calvin, was not warm to speculative philosophy. His teachings tended to a mysticism, an Islamic tendency which found historic expression in Sufism. The mysticism of the Arabians was inspired by the strain of neo-Platonic thought in their tradition, and parallels the Jewish and Christian experience. And in the background of the epistemology of Arabian mysticism is the same conception of man as an analogue of the universe — the highest experience of which is the union of his spirit with the Spirit. Averroes was the greatest of the Islamic philosophers. In his metaphysical system he arranged men as one of the Intelligences, the last of the series of Beings, and implies a certain microcosmic nature.\textsuperscript{2} Man's ability for a mystical union with the Universal Intellect is made possible by his soul's possessing the universal essence.\textsuperscript{3} The philosophy of Averroes is very much like that of all those who drew their metaphysics from a neo-Platonic source. Somewhere in the master plan the continuity of being is developed through a series of inter-related unitics.

The doctrine is implied rather than stated specifically in the works of Avicenna and Averroes. It becomes really imposing in another phase of Arabian thought. A group of Islamic scholars prepared an Encyclopaedia

\textsuperscript{1} De Wulf, H., op. cit., v. I, p. 223-224.
\textsuperscript{2} De Wulf, H., op. cit., p. 323-326.
\textsuperscript{3} Loc. cit.
about the year 1000 in which the macrocosmic-microcosmic analogy plays
the part of a motif of a symphony. The grand plan of the Encyclopaedia
traces the generation of the world from unity in the macrocosmos to
multiplicity in the microcosm and its restoration from this multiplicit-
city to unity.\textsuperscript{1} The parallelism of man and the universe is developed in
extravagant detail, revealing the extreme hold that the theory had ob-
tained on the Arabian mind. The Encyclopaedia is good evidence for the
prevalence of the idea in the general thought of the times contemporary
with Avicenna and only a century before Averroes. The presence of the
microcosmic theory in the metaphysics of the Arabians was understood by
a people who moved in that climate of thought with established presuppo-
sitions. When Arabian thought swept up through Spain into the great
universities of Europe, the doctrine was a confirmation of an already
accepted metaphysical principle.

5. The Renaissance.

The microcosmic theory was a good metaphysical symbol with which
to explain man and his relations to the universe. Great schemes of
epistemology, ontology, cosmology, theology, and psychology could be
very neatly constructed on its cosmic framework. It was a grand ex-
planation of how we can know and how far we can know. It explained the
origin, the nature, and set the limits of human knowledge. It dealt

\textsuperscript{1} Conger, C. P., op. cit., p. 46-51.
the nature of beings and being, the problem of the One and the Many. It showed how those beings were related to each other, and related to form the Whole. It analyzed the soul of man and set him in his proper place in the universe. And all of this was related to God as the All in All. The analogy was a perfect pattern for integrating all the thought of man into a neat and ordered system. Science, philosophy, and theology could be synthesized with such an explanation as the key to the meaning of things. The use of such an analogy was acceptable to all as not only a way to explain the universe, but as being of the very nature of reality.  

The transition from the medieval period to the Renaissance is not sharply defined. Some of the old ideas have persisted down to our own day. For several centuries the processes of thought were in such flux that distinctly medieval ideas prevailed well into the seventeenth century. The cosmological structure of Milton's Paradise Lost illustrates how the Ptolemaic universe was acceptable as the eminently satisfactory theological view of the world. Milton was not unaware of the Copernican hypothesis as references to it in the poem show, but he rejected it as a framework for a systematic presentation of his theology. The seeds of the modern world which had begun their generation a century before began to push through the dark ground in the sixteenth century. It was a long time until they were to flower. The real intellectual revolution

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1 See Gilson, E., op. cit., the great chapter on the use of analogy (Ch. 5) in medieval thought.
of the sixteenth century came in its latter decades - after the works of Bruno, Galileo, Ramus, and Descartes jarred the static medieval mind. John Calvin missed this flowering of his century. He passed from the scene before the century burst forth in all its flaming glory. Calvin entered a medieval world (1500), and when he died (1564) it was yet medieval. The climate of the Middle Ages controlled the growth of his thinking and halted it on the very rim of the medieval sphere. Few men have had the limits of their mind so definitely circumscribed by the times in which they lived.

The strange thing is that the medieval doctrine that man is a microcosm fitted in with the importance which the humanists of the Renaissance gave to the place of man. John Calvin, the humanist, was as exposed to the microcosmic idea as John Calvin, the medieval. Ueberweg names Calvin along with Le Favre, Bouille, Ramus, and Bodin as the great French humanists. He calls attention to the neo-Platonic influence at work in French humanism, and the prevalence of the doctrine of the microcosm.\(^1\) The analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm became the dominant motif of the Renaissance mind, as Windelband describes in a striking way.\(^2\) The emphasis was on man. For him to play his role he must know himself and the universe in which he lived and moved. Man must understand the macrocosm and microcosm - the universal order of

which he is a part - the chain in which he is the vital link. The Renaissance writers were fond of pointing out the unique place of man in the chain of being, that is, his microcosmic role. His body was related to the terrestrial world, but man is the only animal who stands erect, and was, therefore, formed to look at the celestial world. Calvin includes this as a mark of the image of God in man, quoting from Ovid in making the remark. The idea was derived from Plato, but it is found in Cicero, in Macrobius, and in Lactantius, all of whom are the particular favorites of Calvin. Basil in the Homil.eron writes:

"Cattle are terrestrial and bent towards the earth. Man, a celestial growth, rises superior to them as much by the soul of his bodily conformation as by the dignity of his soul. What is the form of quadrupeds? Their head is bent towards the earth, and looks toward their belly, and only pursues their belly's good. Thy head, 0 man! is turned towards heaven; thy eyes look up."

Basil's reference is to a passage in Aristotle. The whole section deals with the microcosmic nature of man. Calvin as a man of the Renaissance was as intimately involved in the macrocosm-microcosm theory as Calvin, the man of the Middle Ages.

1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:15:3.
2 Ovid, Metamorphosis, lib: 1:76-88.
3 Plato, Timaeus, 90 A.
4 Cicero, De Natura Doorum, 2:56:140.
5 Macrobius, Commentary on Somnium Scipionis, 1:14.
6 Lactantius, Divine Institutes, book II.
7 Basil, The Homilaeron, homily 9:3.
There were new applications of the microcosmic view. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were full of it. Nicholas of Cusa applied the doctrine in theology, politics, and politics; Pico della Mirandola in the Kabbalistic arts; the Florentine Academy in its revival of Plato; Leonardo da Vinci in anatomy; Paracelsus in medicine; Bruno, Liebniz, and Campanella in metaphysics; Boehme in mysticism; and a little later Hobbes used it in his \textit{Leviathan}. John Calvin lived and thought as a microcosmic link in the golden chain of the macrocosm.

6. Nicholas of Cusa.

The philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa is capable of many interpretations. He represents the divided frame of mind that is characteristic of an age of transition. His writings are colored by the medieval influences in which they were created, and yet Nicholas belongs in the line of those unfolding the new learning of the Renaissance. Jacques Le Fevre, the French thinker who influenced Calvin, edited the works of the Cusan and made them known in France along with those of the \textit{Pseudo-Dionysius}. Through Le Fevre and Bouille the thought of Nicholas of Cusa became very influential in the humanist movement in France. Nicholas was a member of the Brethren of the Common Life, and in this connection it is important to remember that Calvin spent five years at the Collège de Montaigne, which was a College of the Brethren. Erasmus, who was educated by the

\begin{itemize}
\item De Wulf, H., \textit{op. cit.}, v. II, p. 249.
\item Ueharweg, F., \textit{op. cit.}, v. III, p. 153-162.
\end{itemize}
Brethren, had also gone to Montaigu. The influence of Nicholas of Cusa in the College de Montaigu during Calvin's long stay there is an established fact. Calvin does not refer to Nicholas of Cusa, just as he does not refer to Plotinus, and yet he surely knew their writings well and felt their influence.

Nicholas' system of thought was built on a neo-Platonic metaphysics. He held that God is the greatest (absolute maximum) and at the same time the smallest (contracted maximum). The smallest is a unity, just as the Absolute, but it is also a part of the Whole. The universe is a contracted maximum and mirrors the Absolute (God). Man is a further contraction of the maximum and mirrors the universe. He can be called a microcosm. Every individual thing, however, even the least, is a mirror of the universe. God can at the same time be the greatest and the least. Every individual things, then, and not merely man, becomes a "mirror" of the world substance. Nicholas used the metaphor of the speculum (mirror) to describe the reflection of the maximum as it was contracted down to the smallest "particula." Calvin is extravagant in

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1 See Uberweg, F., op. cit., v. III, p. 71-89; Windelband, W., op. cit., p. 345-347; and De Wulf, H., op. cit., v. II, p. 245-250 for excellent statements of his philosophy — all of which brings out the fact that its architectonic principle is the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm.

2 Nicholas of Cusa, De Docta Ignorantia, 3:13.

3 Windelband, W., op. cit., p. 347.

4 Nicholas of Cusa, De Docta Ignorantia, 3:14.

5 Windelband, W., op. cit., p. 370.

Compare the Cusan's use of mirror with Calvin's in The Institutes, 1:5:12 and 1:5:13 and elsewhere in Calvin's writings.
using the term mirror in the same manner. It is a common neo-Platonic motif, but Calvin's use parallels Nicholas' in so many instances that an influence is suggested. Nicholas of Cusa, then, presents the idea of the Absolute (God) reflected in a series of mirrors through the universe and man down to the atomic structures. His theory of knowledge, too, was developed from the theory that since our soul has the idea of everything in it, it may thus know everything.

The polity of Nicholas was based on the same analogy, and his polity came to have an important place in the developing political thought of the Renaissance. The polity of the Middle Ages was built on the doctrine that mankind in its totality is an Organism, a mystical Body of which Christ is the Head. The idea was taken from the works of Paul, and it dominated all spheres of thought. This conception was in the mind of Nicholas of Cusa when he drew his magnificent portrait of organised mankind. For him the Church is the mystical Body of Christ. Its Spirit is God, its Soul is the priesthood, and the Members are the Body. He extended the parallel to the State, and both the Church and State were comparable to the human body. The relations can be expressed thus:

1 Scharke, Otto, op. cit., p. 22.
2 Ibid., p. 25.
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|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Man** | **Church** | **State** |
| **Spirit** | Christ (Head) | Christ (Head) |
| Soul | Priesthood | Rulers | Kings |
| Rational | Papacy (rational) | (Soul) (rational) |
| Sensible | Patriarchs | Dukes |
| Vegetative | Archbishops | Counts |
| | Bishops | Lords |
| | Priests | (sensible) |
| | (sensible) | |
| **Body** | Members | People | |

This hierarchical analogy as a whole was extended from the Universal Church and Universal Empire to every Particular Church and every Particular State. Indeed, every permanent human group is a microcosm of the absolute maximum (Church).\(^1\) Gierke shows how Nicholas of Cusa went to the extreme in comparing the microcosm and macrocosm, using all the medical knowledge of his time in elaborating the parallelism.\(^2\) The unity of mankind Nicholas preserved by having Christ as the common head of the Church and State. The spiritual order (Church) existed alongside the temporal order (State) whether in the universal or particular. Each order is merely a side of the great Organism of Mankind.\(^3\) In its larger and macrocosmic relation, the Church is to the State as the soul is to the body.

1. Arranged from the material in Gierke, Otto, op. cit., p. 23, 34, 47, 54, 55, and 132.
3. Ibid., p. 22, 23.
and Christ is the head of both. This is what Calvin teaches, and it largely represents his theory of the relation of the Church to the State. Each order must work in harmony and permeate each other throughout the whole and in every part. The Soul, while it is a unity in the Church, and in the State, still operates in every member part. Calvin’s system of polity accomplished this by elimination of the Priesthood as the soul of the State and introducing law (divine, natural and civil) as the Soul. The polity of Calvin, like that of the Cusan, is determined by the doctrine of the microcosm. Nicholas of Cusa, standing at a pivotal point in the development of thought, holds a seminal position among the thinkers whose writings were known to Calvin. Since Plotinus, no outstanding philosopher had used the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm as did Nicholas.

7. Contemporary Thought.

The philosophy of the Renaissance was permeated with the doctrine of the microcosm. It pervaded the sixteenth century like some medieval perfume affecting the mind and senses of the thinkers. At the Florentine Academy where Marsilio Ficino had translated the works of Plato and Plotinus and of Hermes Trismegistos; in the neo-Platonian and neo-

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2 See Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:20:14,15,16.
Pythagoreanism of Pico della Mirandola; in Jacques Le Fevre, the editor of Nicholas of Cusa's works; and in Bouille, the great French humanist, the parallelism in the structure and functions of the human body was compared with the State, with the universe, and with the Absolute God Himself. Leonardo da Vinci, the great scientist of the time, influenced by Nicholas of Cusa, had the idea that man is a microcosm, similar in all his essential members to the macrocosm. He worked out an elaborate structure analysis of the anatomy of man and the universe.\(^1\) The Notebooks of Leonardo have many references to the parallelism.\(^2\) The French scientist, Jean Fernel, who was the greatest physician of the century, was an exact contemporary of Calvin. He attended the University of Paris at the same time and at the College de Ste. Barbe received the same education in philosophy that Calvin did at the College de Montaigu. Sir Charles Sherrington has two chapters in his recent Gifford lectures which are devoted to bringing out the material in Fernel's notebooks.\(^3\) The Notebooks give a remarkable picture of the theory of the microcosm at work in the mind of this scientist. The physiology of the greatest doctor of Calvin's time is built around man as a microcosm in the universe (macrocosm).


\(^3\) Sherrington, Sir Charles, Man on His Nature. New York, The Macmillan Co., 1941 (Chs. 1 and 2)
There are three things that stand out in the contemporary situation in studying the doctrine of the microcosm in Calvin. First, is its widespread popularity among the great French thinkers of the time, several of whom were known personally to Calvin, and the others certainly came within the sphere of his activities. Much of the intellectual activity was centered around Paris, in the circles in which Calvin moved. The French mind was peculiarly receptive of the idea of the microcosm. Then, the fact that the doctrine which had been so useful to the medievals was in turn taken up and became the Weltanschauung of the Renaissance. The microcosm and macrocosm became even more imposing poles for the metaphysical pictures which the philosophy of the Renaissance painted to explain the mystery of man and the universe. The great names of the age, Nicholas of Cusa, Picino, Leonardo, Fernel, Bruno, and Leibniz are all associated with the doctrine. The complete way in which it pervades all areas of thought in the new learning just as it had in the Middle Ages is remarkable testimony to the fascination of this analogy in men's minds. The many ways in which the peregrine path of Calvin, the scholar, led him into touch with the doctrine become so apparent that it is a wonder that no one before has seen how the key to Calvin's mind is in understanding the architectonic principles implicit in the microcosm-macrocosm metaphysics.
"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is Man.  
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,  
A being darkly wise and rudely great;  
With too much knowledge for the Sceptic side,  
With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,  
He hangs between, in doubt to act or rest;  
In doubt to deem himself a God or Beast;  
Born but to die, and reason nothing but to err;  
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,  
Whether he thinks too little or too much;  
Chaos of thought and passion all confused;  
Still by himself abused or disabused;  
Created half to rise, and half to fall;  
Great lord of all things, yet a slave to all;  
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled;  
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE MEDIATION TO JOHN CALVIN.

1. A Son of France.

The doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm is a mark of the times of John Calvin. It stood in the shadows of the sixteenth century mind. It gave the framework for the Renaissance intellect even as it had been the skeletal structure upon which the medievals had built their systems of thought. In the history of the thought of the sixteenth century, there is no more important figure than was John Calvin. He is the foil to Rabelais, another Frenchman, as the two symbols of the century. As a Frenchman, Calvin came into peculiar touch with the metaphysics of the macrocosm. One of his spiritual heroes was Jacques Le Fevre, the disciple of Nicholas of Cusa. It is Le Fevre whom Calvin resembles more than anyone else. Dousergue calls it a mark of God's providence that Le Fevre prolonged his life to more than a century that he might be able to give Calvin his blessing in person. 1 The theory of the macrocosm found a ready reception among the French thinkers in science, philosophy and theology. John Calvin was a Frenchman, and a Picard. Born at Noyon in 1509, Calvin, like Pierre della Ramée, was a true son of Picardy. In his desire for logical completeness and unity, in his

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clarity of expression, in his power of concentration, and freedom from sentimentalism, Calvin was a typical Frenchman. The doctrine of the microcosm gave him the architectonic scheme of such thinking.

The way in which John Calvin was prepared to receive the heritage of his time was remarkable. As a mere youth, he fell in with the best Latin teacher of the age, Mathurin Cordier, when he enrolled at the College de la Marche. At Orleans he met the best master of Greek that the times could boast, in Héloïse Wolmar. It was for Calvin that the mysticism of the Middle Ages had been preserved in the ancient College de Montaigu. For him, too, Francis I established the Royal College de France, that Calvin might be trained among the leaders of the humanistic Renaissance. His paths crossed those of Rabelais and Loyola, and he sat at the feet of the two most distinguished jurists of the time, L'Estoile at Orleans, and Alciati at Bourges. John Calvin is all at once a scholar of the Sorbonne, a protege of Le Fevre, a disciple of Alciati, a man of the Middle Ages, and a man of the Renaissance. And wherever he turned the shadows of the macrocosm fell in purple images across his mind.

3. The Medieval School.

John Calvin encountered the Latin and Medieval mind in the schools he attended. They were medieval schools in every sense and reflected the stages of learning which the Middle Ages had undotted. As a student progressed, he went through the various experiences of the
medieval mind. The stages of this process are reflected in the Trivium of medieval studies - grammar, rhetoric, logic and later philosophy was added. Calvin's schooling was designed on those phases of the development of the medieval mind. He studied Latin grammar at the College des Cappettes, a private school in Noyon, and the College de la Marche under Cordier. His rhetoric and logic came at the College de Montaigu, and it was here that he was also introduced to metaphysics. Calvin went on to Orleans and Bourges and the College de France for his later study. It was at Bourges and the College de France that he had his humanistic training. The Universities of Paris and Orleans were definitely scholastic. In his pilgrimage as a scholar, Calvin moved in the midst of the varied intellectual atmosphere of his century, and as a mirror he reflects the age. Everyone of his experiences left an impression on his mind, for by the time that he was twenty-five years old John Calvin had ended his peregrinations in the university halls. All the schools had given something to the remarkable young man. Some more than the others, to be sure, but they all had left their mark upon him, as his later life revealed. The preparatory College des Cappettes and the College de la Marche gave him a beautiful Latin style that is strangely reminiscent of Cicero. The mystical College de Montaigu shaped the metaphysical structure of his mind, and it was here that he came into intimate touch with the doctrine of the macrocosm.

3. The College de Montaigu.

The College de Montaigu was one of the oldest and most distinguished
of the colleges of the University of Paris.\textsuperscript{1} The great figures of Erasmus, Rabelais, and Loyola graced its honored and ancient halls. The head of the school in Calvin's first years was Neel Beda, a strong champion of medieval scholarship and theology.\textsuperscript{2} But to know the temper of the College de Montaigu, it is necessary to know something of John Standonck and the Brethren of the Common Life. It is in the influence of the Brethren that the traditions of the College lay. It is these that influenced Calvin as well as Loyola. The program of life instituted at Montaigu about 1483 by Standonck was that of Gerhard Groote and the Brethren of the Common Life.\textsuperscript{3} The pious life of the Brethren was practiced in the dormitory next to the College.\textsuperscript{4} Standonck ran into difficulties and was exiled in 1499 by Louis XII,\textsuperscript{5} but in 1500 he was back, and by 1503 he had built the College into a thriving institution with over two hundred students.\textsuperscript{6} Standonck died in 1504, but he had fixed the forms of life of Montaigu in the mystical traditions of the Brethren of the Common Life. In the library, as was the custom of the Brethren,

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\textsuperscript{3} Walker, W., John Calvin. New York, G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1906, p. 36-37.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., p. 243-244.

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 245 f.

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., p. 248.
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there was a fine collection of good books.\(^1\) The influence of this
library including the *Imitation of Christ* can be seen in Calvin as well
in Loyola.\(^2\) The movement of the Brethren of the Common Life centered
in Montaigne reached into

"... The Wisdom of the ancients, the essence of
Christ's teachings, the mystic religion of the
Fathers and the saints of medieval Europe, as
well as the learning of the Italian humanists."\(^3\)

Calvin formed some of his material for the *Institutes* at Montaigne,\(^4\) and
he is a spiritual descendent of Gerhart Groote.\(^5\) The outlook of the
Brethren was a mystical neo-Platonism and among their most used books
were *The Confessions* of Augustine, the works of one of the Brethren,
Nicholas of Cusa, the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux, and *The Imitation
of Christ* by Gerhart Groote.

Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus were the theologians approved
by the University. Calvin was introduced to scholastic theology by a
brilliant Spaniard named Pobletius, whom Francis I had brought to Paris.\(^6\)

\(^{1}\) Ibid., p. 244.
See "Education in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," Cambridge


\(^{3}\) hyma, Albert, op. cit., p. 7.

\(^{4}\) Ibid., p. 283-294.

\(^{5}\) Ibid., ch. VII.

\(^{6}\) Reyburn, H. Y., John Calvin. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1914,
p. 10.
The Spaniard had an important influence on Calvin, and he is credited with inspiring him in the study of the classical writers, Seneca, Virgil, and Cicero. There was a Spanish influence in Montaigu, largely of a mystical nature, which explains Loyola's choice of Montaigu for his study. The role which mysticism and the mystical writers played at this college where Calvin spent almost five years had an important part in the development of his mind. The many works of Aristotle, the writings of Boethius, and the Almagest of Ptolemy were among the books of the trivium and quadrivium. The College de Montaigu was famous for its learned disputations in philosophy which surely appealed to the keen Picard. In tracing the influence of the microcosmic theory in Calvin's thought the years spent at Montaigu stand out as extremely significant ones. It was here in intellectual temper created by the Brethren of the Common Life that Calvin was exposed to neo-Platonism as it is expressed in Augustine and Nicholas of Cusa. In the whole medieval course of study which Calvin followed, the analogy of the microcosm and macrocosm was constantly encountered. The shape of Calvin's mind was beaten out in the halls of Montaigu and all the peregrinations of later years did not change the great principles which he gained there. The learning


3 Walker, W., op. cit., p. 38.
which Calvin acquired at the College de Montaigne was not only medieval in its contents, it was medieval in its metaphysics. From Cicero, Seneca, Augustine, Boethius, Aquinas, and Nicholas of Cusa, Calvin obtained the master plan which he later built into his Institutes and Commentaries.

4. The Roman Law.

John Calvin suddenly abandoned philosophy and theology for law after five years at the University of Paris. He moved to the University of Orleans, the greatest law university of France. Its faculty was headed by Pierre l'Estoile, the leading jurist of France. Orleans was medieval in law study, and here Calvin received a scholastic training. He remained at the University of Orleans more than a year, and then went to the University of Bourges where the great Italian humanist, Andrea Alciati was teaching. Calvin returned to Orleans in the latter part of 1533 and remained until the Spring of 1533. He received the doctorate of laws at this time. The nile of medieval scholasticism still enveloped the towers of Orleans, and Calvin found the doctrine of microcosm implied in Institutes, the Pandects, and the Novels as he searched through

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4 See Walker, W., op. cit., p. 47 and Broen, Q., op. cit., p. 41.
5 Walker, W., op. cit., p. 63.
6 Beza, T., op. cit., p. xxii.
the tedious glossa of Accursinus and the commentaries of Bartolus. The
Stoic philosophy had entered deep into the Roman Law.

The University of Bourges was the center of the new intellectual
activity which had just swept out of Italy. The surge of the human
spirit called humanism reached into the study of law. No century had
been entirely without knowledge of Cicero, Seneca, Ovid, Virgil, Horace,
and Manilius. The mark of the humanist was his interest in classical
literature. He studied it in the original sources, collected and pub-
lished old manuscripts, and sought to reproduce the spirit as well as
the form of classical learning. The key words were "back to sources."
France was very receptive to the new learning, and Francis I brought
men like Leonardo da Vinci, Benvenuto Cellini, and Andrea Alciati, the
foremost legal philosopher of the age, over the Alps. It was Andrea
Alciati in whom Calvin was interested; so he migrated to Bourges with
the other able young jurists of France. Alciati expounded the pure
Roman Law, and under him Bourges became a famous law school. 2 A great
humanist, 2 he adorned his lectures with many classical references and
he was a remarkable teacher who gathered men like Calvin, Beza, Connen,
and Wolmar to hear him. He is important in this study as the inspiration
of Calvin's interest in humanistic learning. Alciati was interested in
all branches of learning. He followed the new discoveries of ancient

2 Phillipson, Coleman, Great Jurists of the World. Boston, Little,
writings, literary and technical, even medical treatises. He had a
wide knowledge of Roman literature, both the classical and Renaissance,
and was especially fond of Cicero. In addition to his pure Latin style,
he had an excellent knowledge of Greek. 1 Aciati taught that true
jurisprudence embraces other learning and is the foundation of all. Thus,
he connected the corpus juris with the entire intellectual heritage of
the age. 2 Such a teacher inculcated in John Calvin the desire for more
knowledge and now the Licentiate in Arts from the College de Montaigne
and the Licentiate in Law from the University of Bourges turned his
steps once again toward the towers of the University of Paris.

The Royal College (now the College de France) was founded by Francis
I to introduce into his realm humanistic learning. Calvin went there in
order to become a greater jurist. There were lectures in Greek, Hebrew,
and mathematics by great scholars. 3 Calvin attended them all, living in
the College Fartet which was opposite his old College de Montaigne. 4 The
teachers were all men with European reputations and here John Calvin
really flowered into his greatness. It was while he was a student at
the Royal College, on April 4, 1532, that his Commentary on Seneca's
De Clematia was published. Calvin spent less than a year at Paris and
then returned to Orleans where he took his doctorate in law. He had

1 Ibid., p. 79.
2 Ibid., p. 82.
3 Breen, op. cit., p. 62-63.
4 Walker, op. cit., p. 54-55.
been touched, however, by the humanistic movement. The atmosphere of Paris at this time was full of the teachings of the Florentine Academy and the Kabbalists. Hebrew was taught at the Royal College not to further Bible study, but to help decipher the signs of the Kabbala. The neo-Platonic Weltanschauung had burst among the French. The months at the Royal College in the midst of this flaming philosophy of the Renaissance was marked in red on Calvin’s mind. The fundamental doctrine of this philosophy (Weltanschauung) of the Renaissance is the old analogy between the macrocosm and microcosm, which found in man’s nature the sum of all the cosmic nature. Windelband says:

"We see this doctrine reviving in the most varied forms during the Renaissance; it controls entirely the theory of knowledge at this period; and moreover the neo-Platonic triple division is almost universally authoritative in connection with it, furnishing a scheme for a metaphysical anthropology. One can know only what one himself is; ... as body man can know the corporeal world ... as an intellectual being he can know the intellectual world ... as a divine spark he is also able to become conscious of the divine nature whose image he is."1

The doctrine of the macrocosm-microcosm was even more a part of the makeup of Calvin, the humanist, than it was of Calvin, the medieval. The shadows of the macrocosm fell across the pilgrim’s path as Calvin, the scholar, moved from Paris to Orleans, from Orleans to Bourges, and back to Paris again.

1 Windelband, W., op. cit., p. 369-370.
5. The Literary Sources.

The erudition which Calvin displays in his writings is remarkable. All the learning of the past was his province. He is at home in classical Latin and Greek literature, in the theology of the patristic period and the medieval schoolmen, and in the ancient philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. And he was an authority on the Scriptures. In an examination of his literary sources, it is at once obvious that John Calvin was intimately acquainted with all the writings of the men whose names are significant in the history of the macrocosm and microcosm idea. The written sources of John Calvin’s thought system are the same sources that we found to show the development of the doctrine of the microcosm. Almost everything that Calvin read contained suggestions of the idea. The science he knew came from Ptolemy, the philosophy was from Plato and Aristotle, his theology was from Augustine, and his classical heroes were Cicero and Seneca.

The richness of literary references in the works of John Calvin is such that when any one of his writings is opened to any place, it will at once be apparent. The purpose of the writer here is to show in a short discussion how Calvin was familiar with the literary sources of the macrocosm doctrine. It is important to state that by Calvin’s time practically all the important writings of the past were available in France and Switzerland. There is no work of first rank that had not been translated into the Latin by this time, and Calvin had at his command
a treasury of the world's literature. His journeys as a scholar had taken him into the greatest collections of books, and as the years passed the cities of Switzerland became the centers of the book publishing industry. This heritage of man's mind was available to Calvin in a form and facility it had not been a generation before him.

Plato's writings he knew well and considered him the most religious of the philosophers. Calvin refers to Plato and quotes from him many times. The Timaeus, the Republic, and the Laws are the most popular of Plato's writings with Calvin. They play an important role in his theology. The most remarkable indebtedness to Plato is found in Calvin's Catechism of the Church of Geneva. Plato's _summum bonum of life_ is paralleled in terms of Christian theology:

**Master:** What is the chief end of human life?
**Scholar:** To know God by whom men were created.
**Master:** What reason have you for saying so?
**Scholar:** Because he created us and placed us in this world to be glorified in us. And it is indeed right that our life, of which himself is the beginning, should be devoted to his glory.

**Master:** What is the highest good of man?
**Scholar:** The very same thing.
**Master:** Why do you hold that to be the highest good?
**Scholar:** Because without it our condition is worse that that of the brutes.

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2 Calvin, John. Institutes, 1:5:12.

3 Plato says that in the full performance of the virtuous life, which is a duty, individual man and communities of men will find the truest blessedness, and the highest and only real happiness.
Mastor: Hence, then, we clearly see that nothing worse can happen to a man that not to live to God. 1

Scholar: It is so. 1

Not only the content of the catechism, but the form, is modeled after the Socratic dialogue, and it shows the influence of Plato on Calvin. Scattered throughout the Institutes and Commentaries are allusions to Plato that reveal the deep interest which he held for Calvin. 2 The Platonic Weltanschauung was essentially that which Calvin adopted by way of Augustine, and Calvin became a Platonic realist in his metaphysics.

Calvin describes Aristotle as the greatest of the philosophers, 3 who excelled all the rest in acuteness and erudition. The works of Aristotle were the foundation for philosophy at the Academy in Geneva. 4 But despite his admiration for the Stoicirite, Calvin does not quote him as often as Plato. He levels more criticism at Aristotle than at Plato. Apparently, his scholastic training had given him an appreciation of Aristotle, but his heart followed Plato. Calvin knew all the works of

2 See Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:3:3, 1:6:5, 1:5:11 as examples of the way in which he used Plato.
3 Calvin, John, Dedicatorial Epistle to the Commentary on Genesis, op. cit., p. xlix.
4 Breen, C., op. cit., p. 156.
Aristotle and refers to most of them over the course of his writings. It was from Aristotle that Calvin took most of his scientific data.

Cicero was Calvin's real hero. It appears that Calvin admired him above all others, and that he was very familiar with the many writings of Cicero. Cicero was one of the popular figures in the humanist revival, but Calvin had even before accepted him as the stylist in Latin. Cicero's influence can be seen at once upon opening the first book of the Institutes. Calvin refers to De Natura Deorum nine times[^1] and to De Legibus[^2] once in the first ten chapters. In his Commentary on Seneca, Calvin brings in thirty-three of Cicero's orations, treatises, and letters. This same emphasis on Cicero is continued throughout Calvin's writings and reveals the influence that such a work as De Natura Deorum, which contains the microcosmic idea, had on Calvin's mind.

Seneca stands next to Cicero, and it was Seneca whom Calvin chose for his own first literary criticism. Calvin used Seneca often in his quotations. For instance, there are four different references in one section of the Institutes[^3]. Calvin's Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia reveals the classical legal philosopher, as he makes running comments on the text of the Essay. In his commentary, Calvin cites fifty-six

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[^1]: Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:3:1,2,3; 1:5:5, 11 (2), 12 (3).
[^3]: Ibid., 1:5:12.
Latin and twenty-two Greek classical writers. He quotes seven of the Church Fathers, and Augustine is quoted fifteen times. He refers to Erasmus, Bude, Valla, and his old teacher, Alciati. The Bible is mentioned only three times. We are interested in the Commentary, for it reveals Calvin's inclination toward Stoic philosophy. The Stoic psychology and Stoic ethics are derived from the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm. It is also the foundation of Calvin's psychology and ethics. One of the best of Calvin's students recognized this fact and described Calvinism as Stoicism baptized into Christianity.1 The Seneca Commentary is an introduction to the mind of Calvin, revealing the encyclopaedic range of his learning.2 In Cicero and Seneca, Calvin found the analogy of man and the universe used.

The Stoic nature of the passage in Acts 17:27-28 had a fascination for Calvin. In his comments on this passage, he uses the term 'microcosm' to describe man.3 Calvin understood Paul to have taken the quotation from the Phainomena of Aratus.4 The opening lines of the Institutes are in part determined by the implications of the idea that

4 The Phainomena of Aratus (b. 315 B.C.) described the positions of the chief stars and constellations, and discusses other astronomical phenomena. The poem was translated in Latin by Cicero and influenced Lucretius.
we are the offspring of a God in whom we live and move and have our 
being.\textsuperscript{1} Then Acts 17:27-28 form a motif that runs through Calvin's 
thought for chapters,\textsuperscript{2} and throughout his writings, there are refer-
ences to this quotation from the Stoic poet. The macrocosmic signifi-
cance of the words which Paul of Tarsus had quoted with approval was 
accepted by Calvin, and they become a Scriptural help for the doctrine 
of the microcosm. Calvin accepted the Pauline passage as one of the 
important keys to the mystery of man's relation of God, and he saw 
there Paul's approval of what is a Stoic idea.

Calvin makes references to Philo, but Plotinus he does not men-
tion at all. However, it is Augustine that mediated Plotinus to Cal-
vin, and Augustine is the source of Calvin's theology. The name of 
Augustine appears on almost every page of Calvin. In the \textit{Institutes} 
alone, Calvin mentions more than a hundred of Augustine's works, and 
he quotes from them countless times. \textit{De Trinitate}, \textit{De Civitate Dei}, 
and \textit{De Doctrina Christiani} are the most popular. \textit{De Trinitate}, one 
of the most Plotinian of Augustine's writings, was one of Calvin's 
favorites. The complete indebtedness of John Calvin to Augustine is 
such that the architectonic nature of the system of Calvin is identi-
cal with Augustine.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Calvin, \textit{John, Institutes}, 1:1:1.
\item \textsuperscript{2} \textit{Ibid.}, 1:5:3 (2); 1:5:5; 1:5:9; 1:5:14.
\end{itemize}
We are tracing the history of the macrocosm, and in looking over Calvin's literary sources, we are particularly interested in seeing whether he knew the sources which contain the idea. In previous sections, we explored the idea in the history of thought. We find that Calvin was well informed about these works. He knew Calen and De Vau Fortun; 1 he used the De Astronomica of Manilius; 2 and he liked the Poimandre of Horace Trismegistes. 3 This is evident when we turn the pages of the Institutes. Many more references could be cited to show how Calvin knew these works. He found Boethius and Macrobius the source of the idea of the microcosm. 4 The works of Plutarch he knew well, 5 and the Thebaid of Statius was important in his thinking. 6 Xenophon's Socrates he mentions, 7 and Ovid's Metamorphoses is quoted in his writing on man. 8 The Iliad and Georabies of Virgil, 9 and the De Natura Rerum of Lucretius are in his mind. 10 One of the most important writers is Lactantius whose Divine Institutes Calvin used extensively. 11

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1 Ibid., 1:6:12.
2 Ibid., 1:5:5.
3 Loc. cit. and 1:8:3.
4 Ibid., 1:5:3.
5 Ibid., 1:3:3, 1:5:11, 1:8:3.
6 Ibid., 1:4:4.
7 Ibid., 1:5:13.
8 Ibid., 1:15:3.
9 Ibid., 1:5:5.
10 Loc. cit.
11 Ibid., 1:3:1 and 1:5:12.
literature of the microcosm was a very part of Calvin's mind.

Among the Fathers of the Church, Calvin's favorites were Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil, and Ambrose. He knew and quoted from them all—Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Chrysostom, Irenaeus, Jerome, Tertullian, Pope Gregory, and John Damascene. Calvin refers to Moses Maimonides, and the Arabians he knew well. His favorite from the medieval period is Bernard of Clairvaux, and he mentions over twenty of the mystical Bernard's treatises, sermons and epistles in the *Institutes* alone. The influence of Bernard in the thought of Calvin is large. The neo-Platonism and its mystical epistemology which Calvin found in him had its genesis in the analogy of man and the macrocosm. There is much mysticism in Calvin, derived in part by the mediation of the favored Bernard of Clairvaux, who is used more than any other source besides Augustine. Calvin does not mention Nicholas of Cusa, but he shows that he knows him, and that is true of those who are his contemporaries. While he moved among the outstanding thinkers of his generation, Calvin does not bring their names into his works.

In summary, when we take an old Latin edition of Calvin's works and follow it through, using the marginal apparatus where Calvin wrote out his reference notes, we are overwhelmed with the mass of literary sources to which he brings attention. His modern translators have not carried over the marginal notes, and for this reason any English translation is inadequate to give a true appreciation of Calvin's range of knowledge. A survey of the works quoted bring the
names of the Timaeus and The Republic of Plato, the Metaphysics and De Anima of Aristotle, the De Natura Deorum of Cicero, and Naturales Questiones of Seneca, De Trinitate and De Civitate Dei of Augustine, the Somniu Scipionis of Macrobius, and so on and on. The striking thing which is brought to mind is the great amount of this literature which appears as the source material for a history of the macrocosm and microcosm in human thought. In the schools which he attended, and in the literature which he studied, John Calvin was constantly confronted with the theory. It is understandable why we find in the thought system which he set up the doctrine of the microcosm playing the major role.
"Look round our world; behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.
See plastic Nature working to this end,
The single atoms each to other tend,
Attract, attracted to, the next in place,
Form'd and impell'd its neighbor to embrace.
See matter next, with various life endued,
Press to one centre still, the general good.
See dying vegetable life sustain,
See life dissolving vegetable again.
All forms that perish other forms supply
(By turn we catch the vital breath, and die),
Like bubbles on the sea of Matter borne,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.
Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
One all-extending, all-preserving, soul.
Connects each being, greatest with the least;
Man beast in aid of man, and man of beast.
All serv'd, all serving; nothing stands alone;
The chain holds on, and where it ends unknown."

CHAPTER V.

THE ANALOGY IN THE THOUGHT OF JOHN CALVIN.

1. The Speculum.

The architectonic scheme which Calvin used in building his system of thought is the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm. The universe is a macrocosm, and man is a microcosm. The theory undergirds what Calvin has to say about man's relation to the cosmos—his description of the chain of being—his explanation of the nature of man—his epistemology—and his polity. Calvin ordered the universe, man, State and Church on the doctrine of this analogy. He did not work out elaborate parallels between man and the universe, and the body politic. He did not insist on minute functional parallels between the various organs, although he hints at such. His comparisons are largely structural, with the implication of a functional relation. Calvin's series of parallelisms, like the others, were based upon the analogy seen in the hierarchical order in nature, State, and man. These had been systematically established in this way by the great Architect. The sixteenth century writers, and Calvin among them, liked to describe God as an Architect who had planned out the orders of the universe in a very symmetrical way. It is so well worked out, and the arrangement so precisely ordered in a

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1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:13:24 and 1:14:11.
Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:14 and 3:4.
hierarchical series that a lesser part reflects the whole, and the
whole a part. Calvin describes such an order by the figure SYNECDOCHE. 1 It is a term which he uses often through his writings. He probably took the term from Quintilian, whose works he knew well. The idea of the synecdoche is found in De Institutione Oratoria. 2 It simply means that in Calvin's mind every particular being, in so far as it is a whole, is a diminished copy of the world (universal whole); it is a microcosm (minor mundus) in which the macrocosm is mirrored. 3 Calvin, like Nicholas of Cusa, extended this analogy down to the smallest particle (atom) of the universe. 4

The part was a mirror of the whole. The microcosm was a mirror of the macrocosm. The Speculum of Augustine and the Speculum of Vincent of Beausoleil were presented as mirrors (parts) that reflected a greater or whole. It is a metaphor which Calvin found very useful. In his writings it occurs in significant regularity. It furnishes the dominant motif for his great system of thought. Calvin describes the world as a mirror, man as a mirror, 5 providence as a mirror, 6 the creatures as

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1 See Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:26 and 4:26; Commentary on Psalms, 33:6; Commentary on Romans, 3:25; Commentary on I Corinthians, 1:2 and 13:13 for examples.
2 Quintilianii, De Institutione Oratoria, 8:6.
3 Gierke, O., op. cit., p. 7-8.
4 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:1.
5 Ibid., 1:5:1. Calvin, John, Argument to the Commentary on Genesis, p. 62; Commentary on Romans, 1:20; Commentary on Hebrews, 11:3.
6 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:3.
7 Ibid., 1:5:11.
Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 8:1 (Particularly interesting)
mirrors, the two works of nature and providence as a mirror. The books of the Pentateuch are a mirror, even the part (Song of Moses) is itself a mirror. Man is a mirror of divine glory. Christ in a mirror. And Calvin says Adam could recognise himself in his part (Eve) as in a mirror. This is the logical conclusion of the figure synecdoche, which says the part reflects the whole. The image of the macrocosm is reflected in a series of mirrors that extend from the universe to the smallest particle. Calvin was thinking in the metaphor of the mirrors when he wrote the passage in Institutes 1.15.1, for he makes a reference to Macrobius in 1.15.3. The classical passages in which Calvin describes the world as a mirror, or representation of invisible things deserve particular attention. In the comments on these verses Calvin suggests that the world is a mirror and that the invisible God is made visible in this mirror. The world then is in a real

1 Calvin, John, Commentary on 1 Corinthians, 13:12.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 1:20.
3 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:6:1.
5 Ibid., 1:18:1.
6 Ibid., 1:15:4.
7 Calvin, John, Commentary on Colossians, 1:16.
9 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 2:21.
10 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:1.
12 Calvin, John, Commentary on Hebrews, 1:13.
13 Calvin, John, Commentary on 1 Corinthians, 13:13.
14 Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 1:20.
sense a microcosm, a part of the universal whole (All) of God. The universe is sacramental - the speculum of God.

2. The Macrocosm (Universe)

Calvin understood God to be a Being who metamorphoses himself into a universe - a sacramental universe. 1 The universe is the visible expression of an invisible reality. 2 Calvin's spiritual world (heaven), like Plato's World of Ideas, is a de-temporalized replica of this world. 3 Calvin's material universe is a complete replica of the Word, as Plato's universe is a replica of the World of Ideas, and Plotinus' the replica of Intelligence. 4 This is the idea which Plato expounds in the Timaeus. Calvin took a cosmic conception of the Logos which found a parallel in the Intelligence of the Timaeus and the Enuma. Christ is the Wisdom (Sapientia) emanating from the Fountain (God). 5 Christ is the Urgrund of the universe. The world is a mirror in which we can see God, and "the eternal Word of God is the lively and express image of Himself."

1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 4:14:18 and 4:17:8.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 1:20; Commentary on Hebrews, 11:3; and Commentary on I Corinthians, 13:13.
3 Calvin, John, Institutes, 3:25:7,8.
5 Calvin, John, Commentary on Hebrews 1:3 and 11:3; Commentary on John, 1:3-5.
and the world was made by the Word of God. 1 The universe is a solidification of the Word (the macrocosm) and the mirror of Christ.

"For Christ is that image in which God presents to our view, not only his heart, but also his hands and feet. I give the name of his heart to that secret love with which he embraces us in Christ; by his hands and feet I understand those works of his (universe) which are displayed before our eyes." 2

Christ is the substance or foundation of all things. 3 The universe is the robe he wore to hide his essence, and yet make himself visible to men. 4

Calvin's universe was Ptolemaic in its structure:

"We indeed are not ignorant, that the circuit of the heavens is finite, and that the earth, like a little globe, is placed in the center." 5

The earth is "suspended in the midst of air, and is supported only by pillars of water" and yet it is fixed in this one place. 6 The universe in the series of spheres pictured by the Almagest, 7 and these revolve around us. 8 The earth is in the center of the universe, not because it is the heaviest element, as the philosophers reasoned, but because it

1 Calvin, John, Argument to the Commentary on Genesis, p. 62-63.
2 Ibid., p. 64.
3 Calvin, John, Commentary on Colossians, 1:15.
4 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 104:1-4.
5 Calvin, John, Argument to the Commentary on Genesis, p. 61.
6 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 104:15.
7 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 93:1 and 148:3.
8 Calvin, John, Commentary on the Four Last Books of Moses, Deuteronomy, 4:19.
pleased God to put it there. The sun moved around the earth. Calvin describes the Prime Mobile in the circumference of the spheres imparting motion to the whole machine of the universe. The moon is a fiery body because it is in the element of fire. There is the medieval arrangement of the spheres, of the planets and the fixed stars. Calvin accepted the ancient idea of the four elements and their arrangement in spheres of earth, water, air and fire. These four elements are Calvin's material (terrestrial) world. They are his conception of matter, unstable and continually passing into one another. Water ought to cover the earth, for it is a lighter element. The elements form circular spheres. Men is composed of these four elements. Calvin's macrocosm was the neatly arranged Ptolemaic system of spheres.

1 Calvin, John, Commentary on Jeremiah, 10:12-13.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 10:14-6; 104:12-20; Commentary on Jeremiah, 10:12-13.
3 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 5:17; Commentary on Psalms, 19:14-6.
4 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:15.
5 Calvin, John, Commentary on Ezekiel, 1:16; Commentary on the Four Last Books of Moses, Deuteronomy, 4:19.
6 Calvin, John, Commentary on the Psalms, 104:9; Commentary on Jeremiah, 6:12.
7 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:20; Commentary on Jeremiah, 10:12-13.
8 Calvin, John, Commentary on Jeremiah, 5:22; Commentary on Genesis, 11:9 and 7:11-12.
9 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:9; Commentary on Psalms, 104:9; Commentary on Jeremiah, 5:22.
10 Calvin, John, Institutes, 3:25:17.
The macrocosm is a being possessing Motion and Life. The universe is a thinking and moving organism. This idea is common to Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus. It is found in Augustine who called the heavens an intellectual creature. Calvin's use of Acts 17:27-28 is very significant here. His comments reveal that Calvin attached particular importance to the phrase "in whom we live and move and have our being." Life is much more than the motion which brute animals have, and the being which inanimate objects have. This is why Calvin can call man a microcosm. Man has the being, the motion and he also has the life.

Like Maimonides, Calvin saw that a horse was not a real microcosm. Life is the thing which makes man a microcosm of the macrocosm. This life is more than motion, it has a rational element in it. Life is understanding, the intellectual principle in man and the macrocosm. Life is the reason (rational soul) which lifts men above the brute animals. When Calvin writes his immortal opening sentence of the Institutes, there is more to the words than appears at first glance:

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2 Augustine, Confessions, 12:3 and 12:9.
4 Calvin, John, Commentary on Acts, 17:28.
5 Loc. cit.
6 Calvin, John, Commentary on John, 1:4,5.
7 Loc. cit.
"Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."  

Then Calvin says that no man can survey himself without turning his thoughts to God:

"... In whom he lives and moves ... (and) our very being is nothing else but subsistence in God alone."  

The analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm is what determines our wisdom. We begin to see that in Calvin's mind the noblest parallel between the two is the rational faculty (τὸ ἴσως ὁμοιαζόντα). The life of the microcosm and macrocosm is something more than being. It is an intellectual thing, like the Ideas of Plato and Intelligence of Plotinus. It comes from the Word (Wisdom) of God, mediated by the Spirit. Calvin's macrocosm is an Absolute of ideas, and life is the understanding of these ideas. Vitiated by the Fall, the life of man is not such as to enable him to see God in pure ideas like the angels. This life must be restored to him before he can know God. This is done by the illumination of the Spirit, as in Augustine's epistemology. The macrocosm is intellectual in its nature, for it is of the nature of the Logos. The idea of motion was associated with the soul, and some believed that the planets and even the stars were alive and possessed a soul. Calvin was

1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:1:1.
2 Loc. cit.
3 Ibid., 1:15:6; Commentary on Romans, 13:4.
4 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 36:9.
uncertain about this, but in his canticle on the sun he treats the sun as if it were a living creature.\(^1\) Calvin's view of the universe as the macrocosm and man as the microcosm kept him from freeing himself from some of the prevalent ideas of astrology. So the sun, moon and stars were for signs to Calvin, and they had a very definite influence and purpose for the life of man.\(^2\) Some things may be learned from the stars.\(^3\) He describes astrology as the alphabet of theology.\(^4\) Calvin was uncertain about astrology, but he was so much a child of his time he could not escape some of its theories. Particularly, does his belief in the influence of the stars on men show how the doctrine of the continuity of being affected him. One of the interesting statements of the influence of the macrocosm on the microcosm which Calvin makes is:

"The Pleiades (which are also called the seven stars) are, we know, mild; for when they rise, they moderate the rigour of the cold, and also bring with them the vernal rain. But Orion is a fiercer star, and ever excites grievous and turbulent commotions both at its rising and setting."\(^5\)

\(^1\) Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:16:2.  
\(^2\) Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:14,15,16.  
\(^3\) Calvin, John, Commentary on Isaiah, 19:12.  
\(^4\) Calvin, John, Commentary on Jeremiah, 10:1-2.  
\(^5\) Calvin, John, Commentary on Amos, 5:8.
3. The Microcosm (Chain of Being)

The universe is an organism. Out of this Platonic and neo-Platonic idea, which is strangely rooted in Moses's idea of Being,1 some Calvin's doctrine of the Chain of Being, the idea of the hierarchy of beings which is a continuity of being in all creation. Calvin writes:

"It is absolutely certain, that both irrational and inanimate creatures are comprehended. All, then, which is affirmed is, that every part of the universe, from the highest pinnacle of heaven to the very centre of the earth, each in its own way proclaims the glory (being) of the Creator."2

The universe is a great life, a microcosm spanning an immense distance and each link of the chain having its own place. Calvin's chain of being had its links from the metals and plants and animals to man and angels. The links (parts) are in turn the microcosm. These parts are each linked together at a common point, in order that the universe may be one, perfect, continuous being. Calvin expounds the interrelations of the elements.3 He makes much of the fact that God used earth from which to create man in order that he "might better combine the separate parts of the world with the universe itself."4 Man's possession of the

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1 Calvin, John, Commentary on the Four Last Books of Moses, Exodus, 3114.
2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 31518; see also 312512 and Commentary on Romans, 3119-22.
3 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:30.
rational soul unites him with the angels. There is a continuity of being from the lowest terrestrial element (earth) to the highest celestial being (angels). Eve was made from Adam's rib that there might be a continued link in the chain of being. Calvin had a celestial realm in his order of nature. These are the angels which he arranged in a hierarchy, despite his protesting the subtleties of Dionysius. Angels are real beings possessing a spiritual essence. Christ is the chief Angel. Calvin states that there is a rational relationship between man and angels. The value of a thing in the chain of being depends on its place in the hierarchy. Calvin writes that since God's goodness

... Extends itself to even the cattle and lower animals of every kind, it can not for a moment be supposed that we, who hold a higher rank in the scale of being than the brute creation, should be wholly deprived of it.

The lower the elements the less their value until flesh, which is composed of the four elements, is evil itself. The lowest elements of the Ptolemaic hierarchy were the dregs of the universe to which man is related.

1 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 8:15-6.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 3:21.
3 See Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:14:3-22 for the great section on angelology, and Commentary on Hebrews, 11:5-8.
4 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:14:4, 5.
5 Ibid., 1:14:9.
6 Ibid., and 1:13:10.
7 Calvin, John, Commentary on Colossians, 1:16-17.
8 Calvin, John, Commentary on Colossians, 1:20.
9 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 89:47.
The whole organism (chain of being) from the mute and insensible inanimate objects to the sun and the moon and the stars responds to the will of God. The order of nature (Calvin's term) is a being which has motion (soul) and life (spirit). It is a vast animal more than it is a machine. Calvin shows a strange likeness to the Simagus and Enoch in his explanation of the order of nature. He remarks that Plato knew that all things have their being and life from God. But the world has degenerated and fallen away from "its first original" in the same way Plotinus' world fell. The first original was the world of the pure ideas of the Logos (Word). The Fall metamorphosed the spiritual world into a material universe of time and space. The disobedience of the law of God by one link in the chain of being threw the entire works out of order. Time, space, and the earth are the precipitates of the Fall. That Calvin considered the order of nature to be a vast organism interrelated in a functional as well as structural manner is clearly evident.

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1 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 103:21; 147:19.
2 Ibid., 8:1 and 104:15.
3 Ibid., 104:20.
4 Loc. cit.
5 Ibid., 104:35.
6 Calvin, John, Institutes, 3:25; 2, 7, 8.
He writes:

"... The whole order of nature was subverted by the sin of man."¹¹

It ruined the nature of man (original sin)² who is descended from Adam; it affected the four elements,³ the brute animals,⁴ even the birds and fishes.⁵ The Fall of Adam left a mark on the sun, moon, stars, animals, the earth, and the whole universe.⁶ The order of the spheres was affected by it.⁷

"Man perverted the whole order of nature in heaven and earth ... by his revolt. The curse has extended above and below, over all the regions of the world."⁸

Thus, the Fall of mankind, one link in the cosmic chain, is "imprinted on the heavens, and on the earth, and on all creatures."⁹ The order of nature is a whole which has a continuity of being whose functional activities are interdependent. The Fall of man impaired the rational function of the whole order.¹⁰ The cosmic nature of the Fall and the

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¹ Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 3:19.
² Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 5:13.
³ Calvin, John, Commentary on Jeremiah, 7:20; Commentary on Genesis, 3:19.
⁴ Calvin, John, Commentary on Hosea, 2:18; Commentary on Jeremiah, 13:4; Commentary on Genesis, 6:7.
⁵ Calvin, John, Commentary on Hosea, 4:3.
⁶ Calvin, John, Commentary on Zephaniah, 1:9-3.
⁷ Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 102:23-27.
⁹ Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 8:21.
injured functions of the Being of nature are strikingly brought out
in Calvin's comments on Romans where he says:

"There is no element and no part of the world which,
being touched, as it were, with a sense of its
misery, does not intensely hope for a resurrection."1

The restoration of the world to its "first original" perfection will
include the beasts, the plants, and the metals, as well as man and the
stars.2 The Logos world is to be renewed in its pure intellectual
nature. The whole creation is presented as one in its feelings and
hopes.3 This is the microcosm of the order of Nature. It is a mirror
of the macrocosm of the universe, and as a part of this greater whole
it exhibits a parallelism with it. The relation can be seen in this
comparison which we can now set up from the materials examined:

Universe (Macrocosm)
Spiritual Fountain
(Spirit = Christ = Logos)4

Order of Nature (Microcosm)
Christ = Chief Angel = Logos

LIFE

Primus Mobiel

Celestial
(Soul)

- Fixed Stars

- Spheres

Motion

Fire

Terrestrial
(Body)

- Air

- Water

Earth

BRING

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1 Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 8:12.
2 Ibid., 8:12.
4 Calvin in the Institutes (1:13:7,8,14,15) and in the Commentary on
The great universal Whole of Calvin is the Absolute (God) whose three primary qualities are: Life, Motion, and Being. They can be seen in the parallelism of the Spirit, Soul and Body, in both the universe and the order of nature.

4. The Microcosm (Man)

Man is a microcosm. Calvin used the specific term 'microcosm' four times. He describes man as a 'microcosm' in the Institutes, the Commentary on Acts, the Commentary on Genesis, and the Commentary on Psalms. Each time he writes it in the Greek (μικρόκόσμος).

In each instance, Calvin remarks that the philosophers have rightly called man a μικρόκόσμος (a world in miniature). In the Institutes, he cites Ncrobius in Scipionis 2:13 and Boethius' Commentary on Aristotle's Historia Animalium 1:17 as some of these philosophers. In the same connection Calvin refers to Oden's De Vita Partiva and to Paul's quotation from Aratus in Acts 17:27, and he describes man as "a mirror" of the Creator's works.

(continued from previous page) Acts (17:28) indicates how he put the Empyrean realm (abode of God) outside the spheres of the Ptolemaic universe, on beyond the Primum Mobile. God is the Fountain of the life, motion, and being of the universe:

"Diffused over all space, sustaining, invigorating, and quickening all things, both in heaven and earth."


1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:3.
Calvin, John, Commentary on Acts, 17:27; Commentary on Genesis, 1:23; Commentary on Psalms, 1:39:6.

2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:13.

3 Ibid., 1:5:2:3.
This passage of the *Institutes* pulses with the movement of the microcosm within the macrocosm. In the Acts, Calvin takes the Pauline passage quoted from Aratus as the locus of his thoughts. The significant "in whom we live and move and have our being" furnishes the frame for the analogy of man to the universe. In the Genesis Commentary, Calvin goes more deeply into his idea of man as the microcosm and refers to the works of Augustine which develop this idea. He cites *De Trinitate*, Libri 10 and 14, and *De Civitate Dei*, Liber 11, which are full of Augustine's analogy of man and the macrocosm. Calvin agrees with Augustine that to a certain extent man is a microcosm (mirror) of the Trinity. Finally, in the Psalms there is a very important passage where Calvin describes man as:

"... A little world in himself ... apparent in the structure of the human body, and the excellent endowments of the human soul."6

He also used the term "mirror" to describe man, which is the same thing as using the term microcosm. The analogy of the microcosm (man) with

1 Loc. cit.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Acts, 17:37-38.
3 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:26.
4 Loc. cit.
5 Loc. cit.
6 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 139:6.
7 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:3; 1:15:4; Commentary on Romans, 1:20; and Commentary on I Corinthians, 13:13.
the macrocosm is clearly brought out in the opening sentences of the Institutes:

"Our wisdom, in so far as it is true and solid wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God (macrocosm) and of ourselves (microcosm). But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes, and gives birth to the other. For in the first place, no man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves, ... and has his being."2

The analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm is the architectonic principle which Calvin states in his opening sentences. The relation between the microcosm and macrocosm is the thought in the opening of the great chapter on Man in the Institutes,3 and in his commentary on the Psalmist's question, "What is man?" Calvin is thinking in the same pattern.4

There are three estates of man to be considered in Calvin's anthropology. There is the original creation (Adam), then fallen man (natural man), and then renewed man (spiritual man). For the purpose of this study, we are not concerned with these changes in psychology. Our remarks are based on the nature of the original man (Adam) and the Spiritual

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1 The words (macrocosm) and (microcosm) are inserted by the writer.
2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:1:1 (opening lines)
3 Ibid., 1:15:1 (opening lines)
4 Calvin, John, Commentary on Psalms, 8:2-6.
Man. The psychologies of the original man and the restored man are essentially the same and represent the nature of man as a true microcosm. In a very real sense, fallen man (natural man) is not a true microcosm. He is not an animal, for he possesses the rational soul. He is not a world in the miniature, for he lacks spirit. The microcosm (man) is described as possessing a terrestrial body of flesh and blood and bones, ¹ composed of the four elements. ² He also is a soul and a spirit. ³ Calvin, like Augustine, has the tendency to consider man to be largely the soul and to dismiss the body. ⁴ However, the body of the four elements is important in the microcosmic parallel as this passage shows:

"For though the divine glory is displayed in man's outward appearance, it cannot be doubted that the proper seat of the image is the soul. I deny not, indeed, that external shape, in so far as it distinguishes and separates us from the lower animals, brings us nearer to God; nor will I oppose any who may choose to include under the image of God that

While the mute creation downward bend
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes,
Beholds his own hereditary skies. ¹

(Ovid, Meta, Lib. 1)." ⁵

This use of the microcosmic idea Calvin found in Plato, Aristotle, Ovid, Cicero, Macrobius, Lactantius, and Basil. Calvin suggests that the

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¹ Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:15:3. Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 7:34.
³ Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:15:3.
⁵ Ibid., 1:15:3.
⁶ Cf. ante, p. 53.
Image Dei extends to the structure of the body:

"... The image of God extends to everything in which the nature of man surpasses that of all other species of animals ..."1

Following after Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, Calvin described the soul and its functions in detail,3 using the names and works of these philosophers in his references. To avoid the fine distinctions involved, Calvin finally describes the soul as possessing intellect (ἡ νοημονική) and will.3 Sometimes he calls the intellect 'spirit' and the will 'soul' as in an interesting philosophical passage in First Thessalonians.4 The Spirit Calvin describes as:

"... Not the mind or understanding, but a celestial gift ... sometimes called Spirit of God, and sometimes Spirit of Christ ... . By the word Spirit (we) are not to understand the soul, but the Spirit of renewal; and Paul calls the Spirit life ... (for) the soul is so far from being life that it does not of itself live, (while) one spark of the Spirit is the seed of life."5

Man is a microcosm, then, because he has the Spirit (life) as well as the Soul (motion) and Body (being). It is the presence of all three qualities in man that makes him a mirror of the macrocosm.6 Maimonides had brought

1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:15:3.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 1:25.
3 Ibid., 1:15:7,8; 3:3:3, 12-16.
4 Calvin, John, Commentary on 1 Thessalonians, 5:23.
5 Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 7:9-10.
this out in his great excursus on the parallel between man and the
universe. ¹ God is the life of the soul just as the soul is the life
of the body. ² This is the Stoic world soul. It is also the teaching
of Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the significant influences upon Calvin.

There are three kinds of subsistence in God, says Calvin – being,
motion and life.

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being." ³

The life is more important than motion, and motion than being. Life
with its rational element belongs to man, motion is held in common with
the animals, and being belongs to inanimate objects as well. ⁴ Life,
motion, and being correspond to Spirit, Soul, and Body in man according
to the parallel set up by Calvin. ⁵ Man was created in these three
stages also:

"Three gradations ... are to be noted in the creation
of man; that his dead body was formed out of the dust
of the earth; that it was endowed with a soul, whence
it should receive vital motion; and that on this soul
God engraved his own image, to which immortality is
annexed." ⁶

¹ Cf. ante, p. 58-57.
² Calvin, John, Psychopannychia, op. cit., p. 441.
⁴ Calvin, John, Commentary on Acts, 17:28.
⁵ Loc. cit.; Commentary on Ephesians, 4:18; Commentary on Psalms, 35:9;
Commentary on Genesis, 2:7; Commentary on Acts, 17:27-28; Institutes,
⁶ Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 2:7.
Calvin includes the body and soul under the term terrestrial, and the life of the spirit under the term celestial in one place, but this seems to be applicable to the lower senses of the soul. For the most part, Calvin delineates the three parts of man very clearly. The body of the four elements is terrestrial, the soul is celestial, and the Spirit is the Epyrenean (God). The three natures are also described as flesh (being), animal (motion), and Spiritual (life). The fleshly (earthly) life came first, and then the animal life, in which man still savors of the earth, from which his body was made, and on which he lives. Man is tainted because he is made from earth, the lowest element. But there is a difference between man and the animals. The souls of animals are from the earth, but the souls of men are from the word of God which gives them life. The distinction between man and the animals is stated by Calvin in this manner:

"Man has a living soul by which he knows and understands; they have a living soul which gives their body sense and motion. Seeing, then, that the soul of a man possesses reason, intellect, and will - qualities which are not annexed to the body ... Paul was not ashamed to adopt the expression of a heathen poet, and call us offspring of God. (Acts 17:28)."

1. Loc. cit.
2. Calvin, John, Commentary on I Corinthians, 15:49-50.
4. Calvin, John, Commentary on I Corinthians, 15:47.
5. Loc. cit.
It is the rational element in the living soul that makes men different from the beast.

A study of the comparisons in the chart (p. 112) shows how in Calvin's system the Order of Being is a macrocosm of the Universe, and how in turn Man is a microcosm of the Order of Being. In B. Man can be seen as the link between the celestial and terrestrial realms, while in C. he is shown in the large as a microcosm not only of the Order of Nature but also of the Macrocosm A. A. is the whole of which B. and C. are parts (mirrors), arranged in descending order. The parts are complete in themselves (microcosms), that is, mirrors reflecting the whole. All are in turn arranged in the great pattern of Life, Motion, Being, which Calvin considered as qualities of the greater Macrocosm, the Absolute (God).

What is this Life, Motion, and Being? Calvin's divine metaphysics was rooted in Exodus 3:14 like the other medievals:

"We must first know, that all things in heaven and earth derive at his will their essence, or subsistence from One, who only truly is."  

The emphasis is on the ground of Being in God in such passages as these:


2. The meaning of the term 'Life' was discussed in part earlier in this thesis. Cf. ante, p. 96-97.

ANALOGY OF MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM IN CALVIN.

A. Macrocasm (universe)  B. Microcosm (Order of Being)  C. Microcosm (Man)

LIFE  Spiritual Fountain  Christ (Chief Angel)  Spirit (Christ)
(Spirit)  (Christ)

MOTION  Celestial  Primum Mobile  Angelic Hierarchy
(Soul)  (Soul)  Fixed Stars  Spheres

BEING  Terrestrial  Fire  Air  Body  Water  Earth
(Body)  (Body)  (Terrestrial)

Soul  (Celestial)  Animal  (Will)  (Soul)

Intellect-

ual (Soul)

THE COMPARISON OF UNIVERSE, ORDER OF BEING, AND MAN.
"Whatever has its origin from what is foreign to itself, is not eternal, and consequently is not God. All things have their origin from one Being; he alone, therefore, is God."1

"He is assuredly God who gives existence to all, and from whom all things flow, as from the supreme resource; but there is only One, from whom all things flow, and hence, there is but one God."2

We subsist in this Being (God), and it was by him that we were once created.3 Nothing is more proper to God than "to be."4 God is the first and supreme Being who can say, "I AM THAT I AM," and all else exists because of him:

"... This one and only Being of God absorbs all imaginable essences ..."5

Calvin believed in the primacy of God as the ground of all things, the Absolute Being.6 What Calvin means by Being is clarified in this statement:

"The expression 'not to be', is equivalent to being estranged from God. For if he is the only being who truly is, those truly are not in Him; because they are perpetually cast down and discarded from his presence ... Thus (to explain in one word) 'Not to be' is not to be visibly existing ..."7

1 Calvin, John, Commentary on I Corinthians, 8:16.
2 Loc. cit.
3 Loc. cit.; Institutes, 2:8:13,15,35.
4 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:13:23.
6 Calvin, John, Commentary on I Corinthians, 8:16.
7 Calvin, John, Psychopannychia, op. cit., p. 486-487.
We see now why Calvin writes that we live and move and have our very subsistence (being) in God alone. 1

Calvin ventured a number of comments on motion. Motion did not come from chance. 2 The providence of God is founded in his motion. 3 Providence actually is motion. 4 Motion is act, the activity of that which IS; therefore, the act of God. Motion is from God, 5 whose very virtue consists in motion and action. 6 Calvin describes the Primum Mobile:

"... The primum mobile rolls all the celestial spheres along with it ..." 7

But God is the one who keeps the primum mobile moving. Calvin accepted Aristotle's idea of the Primum Mobile in the circumference of the spheres imparting motion to them, 8 but the motion began without the limit of the spheres, in God. Important as it is, the idea of motion is second to the idea of life in Calvin:

"... The life of a man is more excellent than motion, and motion doth excel essence (more existence), Paul putteth that in the highest place which was chiefest, that he might go down by steps unto essence or being, thus, we have not only no life but in God, but not so

1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:1:1.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Ezekiel, 1:4; Institutes, 1:16:5.
3 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:15:1.
5 Calvin, John, Commentary on Ezekiel, 1:19.
6 Ibid., 1:24.
7 Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 3:17.
8 Calvin, John, Commentary on the Four Last Books of Moses, Deuteronomy, 4:19. Cf. Aristotle, Physica, 8:6,10; Metaphysics, 12:7; and De Caelo, 1:9.
"such as moving; yea, no being, which is inferior to both. I say that life hath the preeminence in men,

because they have not only sense and motion as brute beasts have, but they have reason and understanding.

... So in John, when mention is made of the creation of all things, it is added apart not without cause,

that life was the light of men."1

God is the 'fons vitae'2 and this is the 'urgrund' of all things. God is an Absolute, a fountain, a rational ground, a world of ideas, best expressed by the term Logos.

"For though the Father is the beginning of life, yet the eternal Word himself is strictly life. There are ... three degrees of life. In the first rank is the living Father, who is the source, but remote and hidden. Next follows the Son, who is exhibited to us as an open fountain, and by whom life flows to us. The third is, the life we draw from him."3

There are three kinds of life which we draw from him:

"The first is animal life, which consists only of motion and the bodily senses, and which we have in common with the brutes; the second is human life, which we have as children of Adam; and the third is that supranatural life, which believers alone obtain. And all of them are from God, so that each of them may be called the life of God."4

These three kinds of life are called the animal, human, and vital life.5

These qualities of Life, Motion, and Being flow from the macrocosm and through to the microcosm. Being is common to all existing things.

2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:15:2; Commentary on John, 5:26; and Commentary on Psalms, 30:9.
3 Calvin, John, Commentary on John, 6:57.
4 Calvin, John, Commentary on Ephesians, 4:18.
5 Loc. cit.
motion is higher up the scale of being, and life, with its rational element, makes its appearance higher still. In the classical passage of First Corinthians, Calvin describes man's composition in this manner:

Fleshly body of the Four Elements.
Animal body quickened by the (animal) soul.
Spiritual Body quickened by the Spirit.1

The qualities of Life, Motion, and Being parallel this hierarchy in man:

Fleshly Body = Being,
Animal Body = Motion,
Spiritual Body = Life (Reason).

The structure of the microcosm (man) is the same in Plotinus as it is in Calvin's system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microcosm (Man)</th>
<th>Calvin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirit (νοῦς)</td>
<td>Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul (ψυχὴ)</td>
<td>Soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body (ἄγαμος)</td>
<td>Body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Man as a microcosm contains within himself the structure of the macrocosm. He belongs to both the terrestrial and celestial realms, and has the capacity to attain to the spiritual world of pure idea. The epistemology of Plotinus was derived from the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm. This is the theory of knowledge which Augustine held. Like is known by like; body by body; mind by mind; and spirit by spirit. Man is a mirrored reflection of all things. Calvin's theory of knowledge (epistemology) is built upon the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm.

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1 Calvin, John, Commentary on I Corinthians, 15:44-46.
5. The Microcosm (Epistemology)

The theory of knowledge in Calvin's system of thought is one of the great problems of religious epistemology. Fortunately, we do not have to explore the whole range of Calvin's works to see the epistemological position which use of the macrocosm-microcosm analogy established. In the Institutes 2:2:13-25, he discusses terrestrial and celestial knowledge in the light of the parallelism between the macrocosm and microcosm. He writes:

"... We have one kind of intelligence of terrestrial things, and another of celestial things. By terrestrial things, I mean those which relate not to God and his kingdom ... but have some connection with the present life, and are in a manner confined within its boundaries. By heavenly things, I mean the pure knowledge of God, the method of true righteousness and the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom."¹

Terrestrial knowledge includes matters of polity, and economics, all mechanical arts, and the liberal arts. Celestial knowledge includes the knowledge of God and of his will, and the meaning of framing life in accordance with them.² Man as a "social animal,"³ understands the principles of law,⁴ and uses the manual and liberal arts.⁵ Terrestrial knowledge is confined to the knowledge of and use of terrestrial things. The

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¹ Calvin, John, Institutes, 2:2:13.
² Loc. cit.
³ Loc. cit. See also, Calvin, John, Commentary on Genesis, 2:18 and Calvin, John, Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, op. cit., liber 1:13.
⁴ Calvin, John, Institutes, 2:2:15.
⁵ Ibid., 2:2:14.
lawgivers, the philosophers, the rhetoricians, the logicians, the
doctors, the mathematicians, the poets, even, testify to the knowledge
of earthly things which is left to human nature.¹

"... Men whom the Scriptures term carnal, are so
acute and clear sighted in the investigation of
inferior things, their example should teach us
how many gifts belong to human nature."²

Natural Law, philosophy, rhetoric, logic, mathematics, and medicine
are terrestrial. Even the ungodly have knowledge in physics, dialectics,
mathematics, and other similar sciences.³ Calvin refers to these fields
of knowledge as "elements of this world."⁴ Terrestrial knowledge is a
mark of our human nature:

"One of the essential properties of our nature is
reason, which distinguishes us from the lower
animals, just as those by means of sense are dis-
tinguished from inanimate objects."⁵

Since we belong to the earthly realm, there is a certain field of knowl-
dge open to us.

Celestial knowledge consists of the knowledge of God, the knowl-
dge of salvation, and ethical conduct in accord with Divine Law. The
philosophers never gained this celestial realm.⁶

¹ Ibid., 2:2:15.
² Loc. cit.
⁴ Ibid., 2:3:16.
⁵ Ibid., 2:3:17.
⁶ Ibid., 2:3:18.
"Their discernment was not such as to direct them to the truth, far less to enable them to attain it, but resembled that of the bewildered traveller, who sees the flash of lightning gleam far and wide for a moment, and then vanish into the darkness of the night, before he can advance a single step."1

Calvin says human reason (terrestrial knowledge) makes not the least approach to the great truth of what God is in himself, and his relations to us.2 But there is a small flame, or rather spark, of the divine in us, although not enough to comprehend God.3

"... The flesh has no capacity for such sublime wisdom as to apprehend God, and the things of God, unless illumined by His Spirit."4

Calvin differs from Thomas Aquinas on the role of the senses in cognition. Celestial wisdom is gained only insofar as the Spirit opens our mind to it.

"When the Spirit, with a wondrous and special energy, forms the ear to hear, and the mind to understand."5

There is no ability in man to understand celestial things until he has the Spirit within him. It is something more than reason:

"... The testimony of the spirit is superior to reason."6

The mysteries of God are made known to us only when we are illuminated by the Spirit.7 This theory of knowledge, like Augustine's,8 is built upon

1 Loc. cit.
2 Loc. cit.
3 Ibid., 2:2:19.
4 Loc. cit.
5 Ibid., 2:1:20.
6 Ibid., 1:7:4.
7 Ibid., 2:1:20, 31.
8 Cf. ante, p. 49-50.
the neo-Platonic doctrine that like can only be known by like. Man is a rational soul and therefore able to understand intellectual forms and ideas. This is the terrestrial knowledge of Calvin. Man has a spark of the divine infused into his soul which is illuminated by the Spirit, and he can become conscious of God. This is the celestial knowledge of Calvin. But man can only know God when the Spirit illuminates his soul. Spirit knows Spirit.\(^1\) The animal man moved by the soul (anima) knows only terrestrial things, but the spiritual man illuminated by the Spirit knows celestial things.\(^2\) No man can enter the kingdom of God except those whose minds have been renewed by the enlightening of the Spirit.\(^3\) Salvation is the eternal contemplation of the glory of God. Man's final destiny is to be an intellectual form and with the angels, themselves pure intellects, live in the spiritual Absolute of the Logos.\(^4\)

The microcosm (man) and Calvin's theory of knowledge appear in this parallelism:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microcosm (man)</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirit = Spark of the divine</td>
<td>Celestial knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul (Intellectual)</td>
<td>(Spirit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body (Four Elements)</td>
<td>Terrestrial knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Sensible and Intellectual)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. Ibid., 2:14.
Man must have the Spirit illuminate him before he is truly the mirror reflecting the macrocosm. Man knows only so far as he is the universal Whole, containing within himself the principles of all that is. This doctrine of the analogy by the macrocosm and microcosm led to a mysticism in Calvin, just as it had in the whole neo-Platonic tradition before him. This illumination by the Spirit is a mystical thing:

"For the soul, when illuminated by him, receives as it were a new eye, enabling it to contemplate heavenly mysteries, by the splendour of which it was previously dazzled."1

We are concerned here to point out that it is upon the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm that Calvin's epistemology was built. The necessity for the microcosm to have the structure of the macrocosm led to the doctrine of the Spirit in Calvin. Man had lost all but a spark of the divine light. But it was enough to receive the Spirit, which made him a true microcosm and lifted him to the celestial contemplation of God.

6. The Microcosm (State)

Aristotle called man a political animal.2 Seneca called him a "social animal."3 Thomas Aquinas expressed the thought for the thirteenth century by describing man as "a social and political animal."4

1 Ibid., 3:13:34.
2 Aristotle, Politics, 1:2.
3 Seneca, De Clementia, 1:5.
4 Thomas Aquinas, De Reginina Principium, 1:1.
Calvin mentions both, but says that man is by nature a social animal. Mankind is one community; a single, universal community founded and governed by God himself. Society is one great organism. The comparison of mankind at large, and every smaller group to an animate body was a universal practice in Calvin's day. The governing part was pictured as the head, or heart, or soul. Gierke writes:

"Every particular Being, in so far as it is a Whole, is a diminished copy of the World; it is a Microcosm in which the Macrocosm is mirrored." This applies equally to men, communities, and society in general. The city-state of Geneva was a microcosm; France was a microcosm. Such a microcosm is an organism. Calvin found a parallel to the body of man in the body of the State. Calvin was greater as a legislator than as a theologian. His polity is more perfect than his theology. Geneva, small, free, homogeneous, and patriotic had a community life strangely like the city-state of Greece and Rome. The writings of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca were applicable to the Genevan social organism, and Calvin set up his order of civil polity on the frame of the macrocosm. Calvin describes the order of civil government as follows:

1 Calvin, John, Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia, op. cit., 1:13.
2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 2:3:13 and Commentary on Genesis, 2:16.
3 Gierke, O., op. cit., p. 22.
4 Ibid., op. cit., p. 23.
6 Ibid., p. 9.
The Magistrate = ruler and guardian of the laws.
The Laws = according to which he governs.
The People = governed by the laws, and obey the magistrate.

The magistrates have a commission from God, and are invested with a divine authority. They are even called "gods." The magistrate's position is the most sacred, and the most honorable of all positions in mortal life. Their office is the throne of the living God. It makes no difference whether we live in a kingdom or in a free state, our duty is to obey the magistrate. This duty extends to the waging of war. It also involves the raising of taxes. The magistrate is the Head of the body politic, and is the divine representative of the Spiritual head (Christ). Whatever his acts they are not of man, but of God.

Calvin was a philosopher of law. The years of schooling at Orleans and Bourges gave his mind a legal bent which marked his thought. Calvin describes the laws of the state in these words:

"... Next in importance to the magistrates is laws, the strongest sinews of government; or, as Cicero calls them after Plato, the soul, without which, the office of magistrate can not exist; just as, on the other hand,

1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 4:20:3.
3 Calvin, John, Institutes, 4:20:14.
8 Ibid., 4:20:19.
"laws, have no vigour without the magistrate. Hence, nothing could be said more truly than that the law is a mute magistrate, the magistrate a living law."¹

This description of the magistrate as a living law takes on particular significance when it is recalled that the magistrate is of a divine nature. Lactantius, one of Calvin's favorites, described Christ (the chief magistrate) as the living law.² Socrates had described polity as the soul of the city (ocrates ὡς πολιτείας ἐστιν),³ the reference to Plato is probably from the Laws, Book VII. Aristotle had said that polity is the life of the State.⁴ In this development of his idea of law, Calvin shows the influence of Plato, Cicero, Seneca, and Lactantius. Stoic and Roman philosophy identified the law of nature with the law of God (Decalogue). This prevailed among the Church Fathers, the medievals, and was a commonplace in Calvin's day. That the Decalogue and the natural moral law had the same content was an opinion shared by all the Reformers. Melancthon is an outstanding instance.⁵ Calvin identified the Decalogue (Moral Law of God) with the Natural Law.⁶ The Laws of the Civil and Church Orders are the same!⁷ Calvin, like Lactantius,

¹ Ibid., 4:30:14.
² Lactantius, Divine Institutes, 4:17.
⁴ Aristotle, Politics, 4:11.
⁷ Ibid., 4:20:16.
identified the Logos (Christ) with the Law (Decalogue).

"The law in all its parts had a reference to Christ; and no one can understand it who does not approach it in this light." 1

Interestingly enough, Calvin had just referred to Lactantius a few paragraphs previously, who described Christ as the living law. 2 Calvin continually refers to Christ as Wisdom (Sapientia, spelled with a capital S). 3 Wisdom is represented by Sirach as incarnated in the Torah, and taking up her abode with Israel. 4 Baruch identifies Wisdom with Divine Law. 5 The relation between Wisdom, the Torah, and the Logos was developed in full by Philo. 6 This Wisdom (Law) of the Hebrews was very similar to the Natural Law (Reason) of the Stoics. The affinity of this Hebrew idea for the Stoic ideal of the wise man is suggested in the Book of Proverbs. It is a parallel which did not escape Calvin's attention, as the many proof-texts of the Institutes which come from Proverbs bear testimony. 7 It was the identification of the Wisdom (Logos) with the Torah (Law) that interested Calvin as a philosopher of law.

2 Ibid., 10:2.
3 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:13:7; Commentary on Hebrews, 1:2; Commentary on Genesis, 1:3.
4 Book of the Wisdom of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 24:8 f.
5 Book of Baruch, 3:9-4:4.
6 See Rankin, O. S., Israel’s Wisdom Literature. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1936, p. 222-234 in the fine chapter on the "Figure of Wisdom."
7 Calvin, in his Commentary on Psalm 1, shows the influence of this idea clearly.
Lactantius quotes Cicero's definition of Law:

"True law is right reason consonant with nature, diffused among all men, constant, eternal; which summons to duty by its command ..."1

Calvin considered the Laws of the State as a divine expression related to Logos. They were indeed the soul of the State, that which gave the organism life.

The people are the body of the State with certain duties to perform. 2 The first is to recognize the magistrates as the ministers and ambassadors of God. 3 The second is to obey them in complying with edicts, in paying taxes, in undertaking public offices, in helping with common defence, and in executing all orders. 4 No man can resist the magistrate without resisting God. 5 It does not matter what kind of magistrate is concerned:

"If we have respect to the word of God, it will lead us farther, and make us subject not only to the authority of those princes who honestly and faithfully perform their duty toward us, but all princes, whatever they have become ..."6

God in his providence distributes kingdoms and set up kings whom he will. The kings are his representatives, and the only thing for the members of the State to do is to obey the Head. 7

1 Lactantius, Divine Institutes, 6:18.
2 Calvin, John, Institutes, 4:20:17.
3 Ibid., 4:20:22.
5 Ibid., 4:20:25.
6 Loc. cit.
7 Ibid., 4:20:26.
"The divine decree which placed him on the throne of the Kingdom, and admitted him to regal majesty can not lawfully be violated."1

The magistrate is the anointed Head of the State.2 But he must bow to the Lord, who is the King of Kings.3

The structure of Calvin's State then has a parallelism with the body of man. The people (society) are the members, the Laws are the soul, and the magistrate is the Head. The functions of the organism of the State depend on order among the parts. Obedience to the Head by the members will keep the State in a smoothly functioning order, for the Head of the State expresses the Will of God through the Laws. Calvin's State was a very excellent body politic, theocratic in its nature, for the King of Kings was God. The two are compared in this chart.

The State and Man (Calvin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microcosm (State)</th>
<th>Microcosm (Man)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magistrates (Divine)</td>
<td>Spirit (Christ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decalogue (Moral Law)</td>
<td>Intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws (Soul of State)</td>
<td>Soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Law</td>
<td>Animal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Body (People) Body (Four Elements)

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1 Ibid., 41:20:27.
2 Ibid., 41:20:28.
3 Ibid., 41:20:32.
The State is one organism, a being, with body, soul, and spirit. It is a larger whole than the individual (man), but it is yet a microcosm of the universal whole (macrocosm).

7. The Macrocosm (Body of Christ)

The Universal Whole (great macrocosm) is the Body of Christ. Medieval thought proceeded from the idea of a single whole. This Whole, the macrocosm, of which the universe, states, and man are but "mirrors" is Christ. The Whole is one organism, a mystical Body whose Head is Christ. The governing part was sometimes called the Heart or the Soul. Calvin writes:

"For Christ is that image in which God presents to our view, not only his heart, but also his hands and feet." The heart is the spiritual element, the hands and feet are the visible works, the universe, states, and men. Christ is that celestial Body in which all things find completion, the Absolute in which everything lives and moves and has its being. Calvin describes the Body of Christ in anthropomorphic terms. This comparison of the cosmic Body of Christ to an animate manlike Being led to Calvin's conception of the Macrocosm. The Macrocosm was not only of parallel structure, but the functions of

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2. Loc. cit.
4. Calvin, John, Argument to the Commentary on Genesis, op. cit., p. 64.
5. Loc. cit.
the organism were similar. The analogy is very logical. If man is made
in the image of God, then God resembles the image we find in man. The
great Macrocosm is a vast manlike Absolute. The Absolute has an intellectual
nature, it is the "urgrund" of all things. This is its Logos (Wis-
dom) nature. 1

"He (Christ) was begotten by the Father that they (all
things) might be created by him, and that he might be
the substance of foundation of all things." 2

This includes all celestial and terrestrial things. 3 Calvin presents
Christ (Logos) in a role similar to the Divine Intelligence (νοος)
in Plotinus. 4 The Logos is a perfect image of the One, and the archetype
of all existing things. It is both being and thought.

This great intellectual Absolute (Body of Christ) is the Church. 5
It is Christ as a mystical Body, taken from the analogy of the microcosm
and macrocosm. 6 Calvin states:

"He (Paul) now derives a similitude from the human body,
which he also makes use of in Romans 12:4 ... . It is
usual for any society of men, or congregation, to be
called a body, as one city constitutes a body, and so.

1 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:13:7–8; Calvin, John, Commentary on John,
1:1–5; Commentary on Genesis, 1:13; Commentary on Hebrews, 1:13–3;
Commentary on Psalms, 33:16.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Colossians, 1:15.
3 Ibid., 1:16.
4 Ibid., 1:15; Commentary on John, 1:1 and Commentary on Hebrews, 1:12–3.
5 Calvin, John, Commentary on Colossians, 1:13; Institutes, 4:1:12.
6 Bohatec, Josef, op. cit., p. 561–567.
in like manner, one senate, and one people. Manenius Agrippa, too, in ancient times, made use of an apologue, not unlike the doctrine of Paul here. Among Christians, however, the case is very different; for they do not constitute a mere political body, but are the spiritual and mystical body of Christ. ... The meaning is — though the members of the body are various, and have different functions, they are nevertheless, linked together in such a manner that they coalesce in one. 1

Calvin explains in the same connection that the name Christ is used here instead of Church, but that they are to be understood as being the same. 2 He goes into detail to explain how we are ingrafted into the Body of Christ by the Spirit. 3 And then he makes a detailed explanation of how the many members of the body have been arranged to function as one organism. Using the analogy of eyes, and hands, and feet, Calvin likens the members of the Body of Christ to these organs and shows how the function of the Whole depends on the parts. This excursion in First Corinthians gives a very excellent introduction into Calvin's ideas concerning the Macrocosm. 4

Calvin uses the metaphor of the Body again in the Commentary on Colossians. Christ is described as the Head of the body of the Church. The analogy is functional:

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1 Calvin, John, Commentary on I Corinthians, 13:12.
2 Ibid.
3 Loc. cit.
"... As in the human body it (head) serves as a root, from which vital energy is diffused through all the members, so the life of the Church flows out from Christ."¹

He states again in another place:

"The body, it is true, has its nerves, its joints, and ligaments, but all these things derive their vigour solely from the Head, so that the whole binding of them together is from that source."²

There are similar passages in the Ephesian Commentary.³ Calvin states that as Eve was formed out of the substance of Adam, and thus was a part of him, so if we are true members of Christ, we share his substance. And we are united into the one body. The union is so that it is as if we were his very flesh and bones.⁴ The comparison of the human body and the Body of Christ is the subject for an interesting passage in the

Commentary on Romans.⁵ In the Institutes, Calvin describes the Macrocosm:

"By the unity of the Church we must understand an unity into which we feel persuaded that we are truly ingrafted. For unless we are united with all the other members under Christ our Head, no hope of the future inheritance awaits us. Hence, the Church is called Catholic or Universal, for two or three cannot be invented without dividing Christ; and this is impossible. All the elect of God are so joined together in Christ, that they depend on one Head, so they are compacted into one body, being knit together like its different members; made truly one by living together in ... one God and Christ."⁶

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¹ Calvin, John, Commentary on Colossians, 1:18.
² Ibid., 2:19.
³ Calvin, John, Commentary on Ephesians, 1:23-25; note especially, 4:15-16
⁴ Ibid., 5:31.
⁵ Calvin, John, Commentary on Romans, 13:4-5.
⁶ Calvin, John, Institutes, 4:1:2.
This is Calvin's teaching on the Macrocosm (Absolute). He stresses the unity of this Whole, and as the final destiny of all things, a reconciliation in the Whole.

This Macrocosm is the great Whole of which the universe, State, and man are microcosms. The universe is a mirror, and man is a mirror, reflecting the image of the universal Whole (God). It was with the greater Macrocosm (Body of Christ) in his mind that Calvin began his hierarchical analogy. It is in the background of his thinking and furnishes the greater pole for his comparisons. The lesser pole is the microcosm (man). However, it is not easy to determine from which pole Calvin moves in making the analogy. The opening sentences of the Institutes state the dilemma in Calvin's mind when he considered the problem of which comes first. We have placed the greater Macrocosm at the end because it sums up the whole matter, and inasmuch as the macrocosm (universe) is the material Body of Christ, it is well to climax the series with the Macrocosm (Mystical Body of Christ).

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1 Calvin, John, Commentary on I Corinthians, 13:12; 8:6; and Commentary on Ephesians, 1:10.

2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Ephesians, 1:10, 20-23; and Commentary on Colossians, 1:18-30.

3 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:1; Argument to the Commentary on Genesis, op. cit., p. 62; Commentary on Romans, 1:30; Commentary on Hebrews, 11:5; and Commentary on Psalms, 104:1-4.

4 Calvin, John, Institutes, 1:5:3 and 1:13:4.
The Macrocosm (Body of Christ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Macrocosm (Material Body)</th>
<th>The Macrocosm (Mystical Body)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Fountain (Christ)</td>
<td>Read (Christ) (Spirit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primum Mobile</td>
<td>Soul (Christ) (Intellect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celestial Fixed Stars Spheres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Body (Christ) (Members)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrestrial Air (Body) Water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Man's final destiny is to be a pure intellectual form like the angels in the spiritual Absolute (Mystical Body of Christ). The Body is an intellectual organism. The comparison of the disorders in the human body and State with the disorders which can occur in the mystical Body shows the presence of a functional relationship in the latter. Calvin supports his remarks with the reference to a passage in *Livy*. Such a comparison occurring in the works of *Xenophon*, *Cicero*, *Livy*, *Paul of Tarsus*, and in Calvin shows the influence which the analogy of the human body had on human knowledge. Paul, educated in the Stoic University of Tarsus, accepted the idea, and John Calvin accepted Paul. The Macrocosm (Mystical Body) of Christ is conceived as a vast Being.

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1 In the Commentary on II Corinthians, 3:17, Calvin calls Christ the universal soul.
2 Calvin, John, Commentary on Corinthians, 1:12:13, 15.
3 Xenophon, Memorabilia, 2:3:18.
4 Cicero, De Officiis, 3:5:22.
5 Livy, Book 3:32.
6 Corinthians, 1:12:13 f.
"See the sole bliss Heav'n could on all bestow!
Which who but feels can taste, but thinks can know;
Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
The bad must miss, the good untaught will find;
Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks thro' Nature up to Nature's God;
Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
Joins Heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine;
See that no being any bliss can know,
But touches some above and some below;
Learns from this union of the rising whole
The first, last purpose of the human soul;
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end, in love of God and love of Man."

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST THOUGHTS.

The purpose of this study was to show the doctrine of the macrocosm and microcosm in the thought of John Calvin. This has been done by tracing the use of the analogy in Calvin's doctrine of man, in his description of the order of nature, in his cosmology, in his theory of knowledge, in his polity, and in the grand conception of the Body of Christ. The evidence, gathered from his writings, shows that Calvin is clearly thinking against the background of this analogy. This is only natural, as we have seen, for the analogy was used by all of the great thinkers of the medieval and Renaissance times. It was mediated to Calvin through countless ways which our research brought to light. Calvin took this architectonic scheme which the analogy of the macrocosm and microcosm provides upon which to build his thought. The analogy offers a beautifully ordered master plan for an interpretation of man and the universe, and their relations to reality. Calvin used it, and the consequences are that his system of thought has order, logical unity, and direction to it. There is a continuity to the Institutes that flows with a logical consistency that is symmetrical and beautiful. Everything falls into place in the whole. It is only after the skeletal structure of the analogy is known, however, that the symmetry and beauty of the parts are understood. Calvin is unintelligible until in the light of the analogy it is possible to properly relate the parts to the whole.
Once the relations of the macrocosm and microcosm are understood, Calvin can be read and grasped. Many men have written about Calvin and his thoughts, but they interpret him differently. The reason is simply the failure to recognize the master plan which furnishes the framework. The order and symmetry which the analogy gives to Calvin is the chart and compass to his mind.

Calvin does not hide his use of the analogy. It is not only implied in many places, it is stated with clarity and in specific terms. His use was both in structural parallels and in functional comparisons. While Calvin did not go to extremes in working out the parallels, he did, in several instances, notably in the great Macrocosm (Body of Christ), go far in drawing functional likenesses with the human body. His use of the categories of Being, Motion, and Life, which are qualities of the Macrocosm (Body of Christ), show how he regarded the great Macrocosm as an animate Being. The architectonic plan is laid out in the chart (p. 137-138). The series of parallels in Calvin's system, the order, and the symmetry in the arrangement is seen as a Whole. The manner in which the universe is an analogue of the Macrocosm (Body of Christ), and man is an analogue of the universe, and then the State an analogue of man gives a beautiful continuity to his system of thought. They are "mirrors" reflecting this continuity in structure and function. Proceeding from the Whole, each particular Part, in so far as it is a Whole, is a diminished copy of the great Macrocosm, and macrocosm (universe). Each Part is a microcosm (a miniature world) in which the
THE ANALOGY OF THE MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM

IN THE THOUGHT OF JOHN CALVIN.

1. The Macrocosm (Universe)
2. The Microcosm (Order of Nature)
3. The Microcosm (Man)
4. The Microcosm (Epistemology)
5. The Microcosm (State)
6. The Macrocosm (Body of Christ)
The analogy of the macrocosm in microcosm
OF CALVIN'S THOUGHT.

D. MICROCOM
(Epistemology)

E. MICROCOM
(State)

F. MACROCOM
(Mystical Body of Christ)

Magistrates
(Divine)

Head
(Christ)

Celestial
Knowledge
(Spirit)

Decalogue
(Natural Law)

Laws
(Soul)

Soul Intellect
(Christ)

(Natural)

Terrestrial
Knowledge
(Sensible)

Body People
(Terrestrial)

Body Members
(Christ)

IN THE THOUGHT OF JOHN CALVIN.
macrococm is mirrored. All of Calvin's system of thought proceeded from the idea of a simple whole (Body of Christ) in which all things had their being, motion, and life. The continuity of being, motion, and life swings from the great pole of the Macrococm to the lesser pole of man. In between are such beings as the State, which like Geneva, are themselves microcosmic organisms. The importance of this study is clear. Calvin was a neo-Platonist. He lived in the medieval world of Ptolemy. Man is a microcosm. Here is the key to the mind of Calvin. We can begin to unlock the metaphysical mystery which has enshrined his thought. John Calvin, brooding among his books, lived, and moved, and had his being in the shadows of the macrocosm. Calvin's Weltanschauung starts with the idea that the whole is one Organism (Macrococm) animated by one Spirit and moved by one Law, in which, every partial unity (microcosm) presents a mirrored reflection (image) of the universal whole.
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