

Did Turretin Depart from Calvin's View on the Concept of Error in the Scriptures?

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It is often claimed that the doctrine of biblical inerrancy has its earliest roots in the work of the seventeenth century theologian Francis Turretin and that his view of Scripture significantly departed from that of John Calvin. The view was memorably propounded by Jack Rogers and Donald McKim some thirty years ago and has resurfaced again more recently.¹ This article seeks to assess the validity of such claims. In the first part, we will identify the central arguments of those who claim that there is a fundamental discontinuity between the views of Calvin and Turretin on the authority of Scripture. In the second we will assess these arguments against the relevant primary sources.

I. The case for a fundamental discontinuity between Calvin and Turretin

Seventeenth century Protestant orthodoxy (of which Turretin was an important part) was vilified by theologians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Critics described it as 'rigid' or 'dead' and spoke of its appropriation of 'dry' or 'arid' scholasticism.² According to these commentators, it constituted a profound divergence from the humanistically-oriented approach of the sixteenth-century Reformers. In the words of Brian Armstrong, 'The strongly biblically and experientially based theology of Calvin and Luther had, it is fair to say, been overcome by the metaphysics and deductive logic of a restored Aristotelianism.'³ This matrix for understanding the relationship between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was applied to the development of the doctrine of Scripture as well. Rogers and McKim write, 'A doctrine of Scripture that made the Bible a formal principle rather than a living witness had been gradually developed. Turretin further solidified this shift of emphasis from the content to the form of Scripture as the source of its authority.'⁴ This portrayal of a shift from the content to the form of Scripture really lies at the heart of what many consider to be the fundamental discontinuity between Calvin and Turretin, to which we now turn.

1. John Calvin

Those who maintain that Calvin would not, and could not, have affirmed the verbal inerrancy of Scripture note that his focus was invariably upon Scripture's content, its doctrine and saving function, rather than upon its form. John McNeill, the editor of a recent translation of Calvin's Institutes, comments, 'It is not said [by Calvin] that the Scripture is verbally dictated; the point is simply that its teaching (*doctrina*) is not of men but of God.'⁵ In a similar vein, J.K.S. Reid writes, 'God is the author, not of Holy Scripture, but of the "doctrine" contained and transmitted by Holy Scripture.'⁶ Similarly Doumergue writes, 'it is not the words that are important, it is the doctrine, the spiritual doctrine, the substance.'⁷ The influence of neorthodox presuppositions is readily apparent in these remarks but the argument rests upon a number of more specific grounds relating to Calvin's teaching.

(i) Accommodation

Firstly, Calvin subscribed to the concept of accommodation.⁸ God's infinite and spiritual being is beyond man's comprehension and therefore, in order to communicate with us, it was necessary for God to accommodate himself to our finite and limited understandings. Calvin wrote, 'For who even of slight intelligence does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is wont in a measure to "lisp" in speaking to us? Thus such forms of speaking do not so much express clearly what God is like as accommodate the knowledge of him to our slight capacity.'⁹ Critics have seized

upon Calvin's language of accommodation and argued that it is irreconcilable with verbal inerrancy.¹⁰

(ii) Scripture as a 'mirror'

In discussing the relationship between faith and God's Word, Calvin wrote that the Word is like a mirror 'in which faith may contemplate God.'¹¹ In his discussion of Calvin's use of this simile (which he describes as a metaphor), Reid argues, '[A] mirror makes something visible, but the representation is not the thing in itself. Applying this to the case in hand, the Bible conveys the Word of God, but for this very reason is not identical with that word.'¹²

(iii) The authors of Scripture as 'scribe', 'amanuensis', 'secretary'

Reid further argues (in reliance upon Doumergue) that the 'metaphorical use' of 'mirror' helps us to understand Calvin's ascription of the terms 'scribe', 'amanuensis', and 'secretary' to the authors of Scripture: '[T]hey are not formulas scientific and theological, in the sense in which the seventeenth century theology took them. Calvin himself says that "Scripture itself is an instrument by which the Lord dispenses to the faithful the illumination of His Spirit". But Scripture is not identified with the Lord himself.'¹³

McNeill proceeds on a slightly different tack here. He points to the context of Calvin's description of the apostolic writers as 'sure and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit,'¹⁴ and insists that it 'speaks explicitly of doctrine and not of words.' McNeill continues, this time discussing Calvin's comments on 2 Timothy 3:16: 'Calvin, like the rest of us, is familiar with a use of the word "dictate" in a context in which it has reference to ideas, not to the form of words in which they are expressed.'¹⁵ So Calvin's use of these labels is either inexact or unrelated to the form of words given.

(iv) Progressive revelation

Calvin recognised five respects in which the New Testament differed from the Old, and maintained that there was a distinction between the Gospel revealed in the New Testament and the Word that preceded it.¹⁶ In his understanding, the language and forms of Scripture have varied as God has accommodated himself to men's varied and changeable capacities.¹⁷ McNeill relies upon Calvin's acknowledgment of progressive revelation to suggest two conclusions which undermine verbal inerrancy. Firstly, he claims that Calvin held to a canon within a canon noting that, in the *Institutes*, Calvin cited the New Testament 3,998 times and the Old Testament only 2,351 times.¹⁸ Secondly, he postulates that Calvin's approach to progressive revelation laid the foundation for later accommodation theories of inspiration such as Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*.¹⁹

(v) The role of the Holy Spirit in confirming the authority of Scripture

Calvin clearly taught that it is the Holy Spirit alone who can convince believers that the Scriptures come from God.²⁰ Proofs and reason are useful in confirming Scripture's authority but those who build their case on such proofs are doing things backwards because 'the testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason.'²¹ Calvin concluded, 'those whom the Holy Spirit inwardly taught truly rest upon Scripture, and that Scripture indeed is self-authenticated; hence, it is not right to subject it to proof and reasoning.'²²

In discussing Calvin's teaching on the role of the Spirit, Rogers and McKim argue that Calvin adopted a Platonic-Augustinian theological method which privileged faith over understanding.²³ As we shall see, the authors present this as a significant divergence from Turretin, but do not fully develop what significance this might have for the doctrine of inerrancy.²⁴ Reid goes further, insisting that, since the Word will only produce conviction when the Spirit is active, it is impossible to identify the Spirit with the Word and as a result 'it is impossible to impose upon Calvin a doctrine of verbal infallibility and inerrancy.'²⁵ This is a very blunt statement and there is little by way of substantiation. The closest

Reid comes is his claim that the refutation of verbal inerrancy ‘rests... on Calvin’s expressed view that there is no identity of Spirit and Word, and on his statement that the Word must be supplemented by the operation of the Spirit before becoming effective for faith and salvation.’²⁶ Prust follows Reid at this point and claims that Calvin could not have held to verbal inspiration and maintained a cleavage between Word and Spirit unless he was prepared to claim that God imparts in his revelation something other than himself.²⁷ Since God does indeed impart himself, Calvin did not hold to verbal inspiration, Prust insists.

(vi) Errors

It is often claimed that Calvin could not have subscribed to verbal inerrancy because he acknowledged a number of errors in the Scriptures. Such errors fall into three main categories: misquotations, technical inaccuracies and scientific errors.

Firstly, critics of inerrancy identify a number of passages in Calvin’s commentaries where they claim that Calvin attributed to the apostolic author a *misquotation* of Scripture.²⁸ In his commentary on Romans 3:4, Calvin addressed Paul’s use of the passive voice, *krinesthai* to translate Psalm 51:4 and wrote, ‘we know that, in quoting Scripture, the apostles often used freer language than the original, since they were content if what they quoted applied to their subject, and therefore, they were not over-careful in their use of words.’²⁹ Rogers and McKim claim that Calvin here attributes a misquotation of Psalm 51:4 to Paul.³⁰ Along similar lines, McNeill writes, ‘[Calvin] is obviously a little disconcerted by St Paul’s choice of a defective rendering. But his frank acknowledgment that the apostolic writers were concerned with matter, not words and that theirs was not a *religio verborum*, is quite characteristic.’³¹

Critics also note Calvin’s comments on the quotation of Psalm 40:6 in Hebrews 10:5. Rogers and McKim write:

[I]n Calvin’s commentary on Hebrews 10:6, he affirmed that the saving purpose of the biblical message is adequately communicated through an imperfect form of words: ‘They (the apostles) were not overscrupulous in quoting words provided that they did not misuse Scripture for their convenience. We must always look at the purpose for which quotations are made... but as far as the words are concerned, as in other things which are not relevant to the present purpose, they allow themselves some indulgence.’³²

Rogers and McKim further note Calvin’s comments on the use of Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:7, claiming that Calvin believed the author of Hebrews to be using Psalm 8 in a different sense to the one that David intended.³³ They also point to Calvin’s response to those who question Paul’s application of the words, ‘Say not in thy hearts, Who shall ascend?’ (Deuteronomy 30:12), to the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 10:6):

If it is alleged that this interpretation is too forced and subtle, we should understand that the object of the Apostle was not to explain this passage exactly, but only to apply it to his treatment of the subject at hand. He does not, therefore, repeat what Moses had said syllable by syllable, but employs a gloss, by which he adapts the testimony of Moses more closely to his own purpose.³⁴

From these four examples, Rogers and McKim conclude that ‘Calvin understood Paul to be a preacher of the Good News of Christ, not an historian or linguist concerned with transmitting a past document with minute accuracy.’³⁵

The second category of alleged errors concerns *technical inaccuracies*. Three instances are particularly important. Firstly, Rogers and McKim claim that, in his commentary on Acts 7:16, Calvin attributed a 'manifest error' to Luke.³⁶ Secondly, they note Calvin's comments on Matthew 27:9: 'How the name of Jeremiah crept in I cannot confess to know, nor do I make much of it; obviously Jeremiah's name is put in error for Zechariah (13:7) (sic). Nothing of this sort is said of Jeremiah, or anything like it.'³⁷ Thirdly, the authors refer to 1 Corinthians 10:8 where Paul mentions 23,000 being killed instead of 24,000 (Numbers 25:9), and suggest that Calvin's explanation for this difference is found in the concept of accommodation. Rogers and McKim conclude: 'For Calvin, technical errors in the Bible that were the result of human slips of memory, limited knowledge or the use of texts for different purposes than the original were all part of the normal human means of communication. They did not call into question the divine character of Scripture's message.'³⁸

The third category is that of *scientific errors*. Rogers and McKim quote Calvin's comments on Genesis 1:14-16 and suggest that he did not believe Moses 'knew any more or thought any differently about the natural order than other people of his time and culture.'³⁹ The authors imply that Calvin thought Moses had made an error in describing the sun and the moon as the two great lights since it was clear by Calvin's day that Saturn was significantly larger. This error was acceptable for Calvin, Rogers and McKim suggest, because Moses had accommodated his language to his audience's perspective.⁴⁰

On the basis of these aspects of Calvin's teaching, it has been argued that Calvin did not and could not have affirmed verbal inerrancy. The position portrays Calvin as a humanist theologian, influenced by Platonic-Augustinian emphases, who focused upon the content of Scripture rather than its form. Error was not a problem for Calvin; indeed it was inevitable because of the accommodated nature of biblical revelation. Nevertheless, Scripture's authority remained unaffected because its authority lay in the Spirit's confirmation of its central saving message which was untouched by textual defects.

2. Francis Turretin

The writings of Turretin are often assumed to represent the high-water mark of seventeenth-century scholastic Protestantism. In an influential work on the period, Brian Armstrong posited four tendencies that he believed were associated with Protestant scholasticism: (1) it systematises religious truth on the basis of deductive ratiocination from given assumptions and principles; (2) it places reason on an equal footing with faith, thus jettisoning some of the authority of revelation; (3) it maintains that Scripture is a unified and rationally comprehensible account and that it can be used as a measure of orthodoxy; (4) it is interested in metaphysical matters and in abstract, speculative thought.⁴¹ Armstrong concludes that '[t]he distinctive scholastic Protestant position is made to rest on speculative formulation of the will of God.' This, Armstrong suggests, is a profound divergence from Calvin's approach which exhibited none of the four tendencies noted above.⁴²

Rogers and McKim present a similar picture.⁴³ They trace the roots of Protestant scholasticism back to Philip Melancthon for the Lutherans, and Theodore Beza for the Reformed, claiming that it rejected the Augustinian method of faith leading to understanding and adopted a Thomistic approach of privileging reason over faith.⁴⁴ In the authors' view, the Neoplatonic presuppositions of the Reformers were abandoned in favour of the Aristotelian principles of medieval scholasticism. This in turn led to the introduction of biblical infallibility, emphasising literary form over saving function, and the abandonment of the concept of accommodation.⁴⁵ According to Rogers and McKim, all of these features are to be found in Turretin's doctrine of Scripture. They raise a number of specific points.

(i) Focus on form over content and saving function

Firstly, the authors assert that seventeenth-century orthodoxy developed a doctrine of Scripture which turned the Bible into a 'formal principle' rather than 'a living witness'.⁴⁶ Turretin further solidified this shift from the content of Scripture onto its form, divorcing the text of the Bible from both the attention of scholarship and application to everyday life. Rogers and McKim recognise the polemical background against which Turretin wrote, noting that he faced new challenges from the Socinians, Counter-Reformation Roman Catholics and Anabaptists. In seeking to respond to these attacks, the authors suggest that Turretin fell back on the philosophy of Aristotle and the theological framework of Aquinas, producing a theology that emphasised precision and scientific statement.⁴⁷ In short, Turretin shifted the emphasis from the saving message of Scripture onto the textually inerrant form of the Bible.

(ii) Proof-texting

Rogers and McKim further claim that Turretin resorted to proof-texting, noting that he used twenty nine proof-texts in dealing with just one question on the perfection of Scripture. They suggest that a similar number of proof-texts was used to support each of the other twenty one questions concerning the doctrine of Scripture. As to Turretin's use of these texts, the authors argue that he was making the texts serve his proof rather than allowing his proof to emerge from the text.⁴⁸ They cite his use of Matthew 28:18-20 and Psalm 19:7 as examples.

(iii) Rejection of Calvin's doctrine

Rogers and McKim note that Turretin cited 175 different authorities in his discussion of Scripture including most of the Church Fathers, his Roman Catholic opponents and a number of his contemporaries. Calvin, however, is not cited once, and the authors conclude that Turretin must have realised that he was diverging from Calvin.⁴⁹

(iv) Rejection of the Spirit's role in confirming the authority of Scripture

In their discussion of the authority of Scripture, Rogers and McKim claim that Turretin departed from Calvin in not relying upon the internal witness of the Holy Spirit to persuade readers of the authority of Scripture. Instead he predicated the authority of the Bible on its inerrant form. As such, the function of the Spirit was restricted to the inspiration of Scripture and Turretin 'based the Scripture's function of communicating salvation and guidance in the Christian life on its form of verbal accuracy'.⁵⁰

(v) Elevating reason above faith

Rogers and McKim argue that Turretin adopted an Aristotelian-Thomistic methodology in elevating reason above faith.⁵¹ Support for this is evinced from the fact that Turretin gave primacy to the marks of Scripture.⁵² This was in stark contrast to Calvin who insisted that 'they were never anything more than "secondary aids to our feebleness" to give comfort to those who had already believed through the witness of the Spirit'.⁵³

(vi) The rejection of the concept of accommodation

Armstrong claims that he has not found a single example of the idea of accommodation in seventeenth-century orthodox writers.⁵⁴ In respect of Turretin, Rogers and McKim agree declaring that the concept of accommodation is 'entirely absent' from Turretin. While Calvin had 'viewed the language and thought forms of the biblical writers as human products that God had graciously condescended to use', Turretin 'treated the language and thought forms of the Bible as supernatural entities dictated directly by God'.⁵⁵

(vii) The inspiration of vowel points

Finally, Rogers and McKim criticise Turretin for his insistence upon the divine character of the vowel points in the Masoretic text of the Old Testament,⁵⁶ and the role that he played in promoting provisions to this effect in the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* (1675).⁵⁷ They imply that the position demonstrates the intellectual absurdities that proponents of inerrancy are forced into.

Rogers and McKim conclude that Reformed scholasticism reached its 'full flowering' in the theology of Turretin. He embraced the Thomistic pattern of theology and made Scripture the formal principle upon which he built a scientific, systematic theology. In so doing, Turretin rejected Calvin's emphasis upon the saving purpose of Scripture, his understanding of the Spirit's role in confirming the authority of Scripture and his concept of accommodation. In its place, Turretin constructed the edifice of inerrancy, replacing the vibrancy of Calvin's view with an approach that reified form, gave priority to reason over faith and treated Scripture as 'a compendium of propositions from which logical deductions could be drawn.'⁵⁸

II. A critique of the disjunctive reconstruction of Calvin and Turretin's doctrines

We are now well placed to critically examine the claim that there exists a radical disjunction between Calvin's view of Scripture and that of Turretin. Firstly, we will consider the claim that Calvin held to a view that was incompatible with the verbal inerrancy of Scripture and secondly we will consider whether the popular portrayal of Turretin's doctrine is accurate.

1. Would Calvin have affirmed the verbal inerrancy of Scripture?

It is of course anachronistic to postulate about whether Calvin would have affirmed the doctrine of inerrancy. In the sixteenth century, there was such a consensus concerning the authority of Scripture that inerrancy was not a doctrine that needed to be explicitly affirmed.⁵⁹ With this noted, it is however reasonable to ask whether the doctrine of Scripture expounded by Calvin was compatible with later articulations of the doctrine.⁶⁰

As even those who deny inerrancy in Calvin would affirm, Calvin made a number of statements which appear at first glance unequivocally to affirm inerrancy.⁶¹ In his commentary on 2 Tim 3:16, Calvin wrote:

This is a principle which distinguishes our religion from all others, that we know that God hath spoken to us, and are fully convinced that the prophets did not speak at their own suggestion, but that, being organs of the Holy Spirit, they only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare. Whoever then wishes to profit in the Scriptures let him, first of all, lay down this as a settled point, that the Law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men, but *dictated by the Holy Spirit*.⁶²

In his commentary on 2 Pet 1:21, Calvin wrote that the prophets 'were *moved*, not because they were out of their minds... but because they dared nothing by themselves but only in obedience to the guidance of the Spirit who held sway over their lips as in His own temple.'⁶³ Of Moses, Calvin said, 'he wrote his five books not only under the guidance of the Spirit of God, but as God Himself had suggested them, speaking to him out of His own mouth.'⁶⁴ Of Daniel, he 'did not speak from his own discretion but whatever he uttered was dictated by the Holy Spirit.'⁶⁵ And of the evangelists, Calvin claimed, 'It gave more certainty and light to God's truth when it was established that His witnesses did not tell a pre-arranged tale, but each of them, without respect to the other, wrote

simply and freely what the Spirit dictated.⁶⁶ Calvin's classic statement on the Word of God as Scripture is found in his *Institutes*:

Let this be a form principle: No other word is to be held as the Word of God, and given place as such in the church, than what is contained first in the Law and the Prophets, then in the writing of the apostles... [The apostles] were to expound the ancient Scripture and to show that what is taught there had been fulfilled in Christ. Yet they were not to do this except from the Lord, that is, with Christ's Spirit as precursor in a certain measure dictating the words... [They] were sure and genuine scribes of the Holy Spirit [*certi et authentici Spiritus sancti amanuenses*], and their writings are therefore to be considered oracles of God; but the sole office of others is to teach what is provided and sealed in the Holy Scriptures.⁶⁷

In light of these comments, the claim that Calvin affirmed only the spiritual doctrine of Scripture and not Scripture itself looks very strange indeed. Neither the distinction between content and form,⁶⁸ nor the non-correspondence theory of truth upon which it depends are apparent in Calvin.⁶⁹ Calvin certainly considered the saving purpose of Scripture to be central but as Wayne Grudem has warned it is important not to mistake the major purpose of Scripture for the entire purpose.⁷⁰ Moreover, as John Murray has observed, it would be 'mystifyingly strange' for Calvin to affirm that the writers of Scripture 'only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare', that they 'dared nothing by themselves', that they 'did not speak from [their] own discretion but whatever [they] uttered was dictated by the Holy Spirit' and that 'the Spirit who held sway over their lips as in His own temple,' if his conception of inspiration only applied to the doctrine and not to the words of Scripture. The central thesis of those who would claim that Calvin denied inerrancy is far from proven. The next step is to re-examine the specific aspects of Calvin's teaching that are thought to support the denial of inerrancy.

Firstly, concerning Calvin's concept of accommodation, the view that it implies an errant Scripture rests upon the adage that 'to err is human'. But it is apparent that this line of reasoning is flawed as soon as Rogers and McKim attempt to set it within a more general concept of incarnational revelation.⁷¹ The authors compare human error in the Bible with the condescension of the Son in the incarnation. But there are two major problems with this analogy. Firstly, even if we were to accept the model as legitimate, it does not follow that there are errors in Scripture. Just as Jesus was truly human yet free from sin, so can Scripture be truly human and yet free from error.⁷² Secondly, as G. K. Beale has shown, the analogy does not work, since in Christ's incarnation there is one person with two natures while in Scripture there are two persons (the divine and human authors) with one nature (the Scriptural text).⁷³ Moreover, the view that biblical inerrancy is incompatible with accommodation is built upon the belief that the latter was jettisoned when the former was introduced. But as we shall see in our discussion of Turretin, this was manifestly not the case.

Reid's 'mirror' objection lacks any persuasive force. Calvin used the mirror in a simile which means that its equivalency is only partial. Indeed, later in the *Institutes* Calvin uses the mirror to describe the manner in which God revealed himself to the patriarchs through his Son.⁷⁴ Moreover, in the passage that Reid cites, the mirror is used to describe the relationship between God's Word (which Calvin identifies with Scripture) and God, not God's Word and Scripture as Reid implies. In his epistemology, Calvin distinguished between the apprehension of God (true but non-exhaustive knowledge) which is possible for humans and the comprehension of God (exhaustive knowledge) which is not.⁷⁵ In light of this distinction, the analogy of a mirror in describing the manner in which the Word reveals God appears to be very apt.

When Reid seeks to use his position on the 'mirror' passage to argue that the terms 'scribe', 'amanuensis', and 'secretary' are inexact, he is trying to have it both ways since he has only just argued for a direct equivalence between the 'mirror' and Scripture. In any event, the vague assertion that the terms are 'not formulas scientific and theological' will not do; Reid must explain what Calvin meant by the terms and how this affects the accuracy of the written record. McNeill's objections are rather more penetrating on this point but he is working on the assumption that once it can be demonstrated that Calvin did not hold to a mechanical dictation theory, then it can be concluded that Calvin did not affirm biblical inerrancy.⁷⁶ In fact, as B.B. Warfield and others have shown, 'what Calvin has in mind, is, not to insist that the mode of inspiration was dictation, but that the result of inspiration is as if it were by dictation, viz., the production of a pure word of God free from all human admixtures.'⁷⁷ In other words, 'dictation describes the effects of inspiration rather than its mode.'⁷⁸ McNeill's resort to the unproven distinction between doctrine and words is not enough.

The objection based upon Calvin's acknowledgment of progressive revelation can be dealt with fairly briefly. There is no substance to McNeill's claim that Calvin held to a canon within a canon.⁷⁹ Given Calvin's remarks on the greater clarity of the Gospel compared with the Word that preceded it, it is unsurprising that Calvin references the New Testament many more times than the Old. McNeill's trajectory criticism is also unfair. The fact that a teaching or approach to Scripture may give rise to a heresy does not mean that the teaching itself is heretical. Moreover, as McNeill himself acknowledges, Calvin explicitly rejected the view that more explicit revelation was yet to come.⁸⁰

As we observed, Reid and Prust provide little substantiation for their claim that Calvin's distinction between Word and Spirit leads to the denial of inerrancy. Prust acknowledges that, Word and Spirit are inseparable for Calvin – in Christological terminology they are 'distinct but not separate'. In light of this, we must be very careful not to push either their conjunction or distinction too far. Moreover, McNeill and Prust are mistaken in seeking to present Calvin's discussion of Word and Spirit as if it bears upon the external and abstract authority of Scripture. Calvin is quite clear that Scripture is 'self-authenticating'⁸¹ in this sense, it 'exhibits fully as clear evidence of its own truth as white and black things do of their colour, or sweet and bitter things do of their taste.'⁸² It is only at the level of authentication in the life of the believer – the personal confirmation of Scripture's authority – that the Spirit's role becomes crucial.⁸³ As Gerrish comments, 'the authority of Scripture, although it is really something *intrinsic*, is only *recognised* for what it is when the Holy Spirit illuminates the mind.'⁸⁴

Proceeding to Calvin's alleged acknowledgment of errors in Scripture, it is important to note Reid's observation that 'it seems almost endlessly possible to explain, or explain away, even on the literalist interpretation, the familiar discrepancies of the text'.⁸⁵ Thus, even an avowed opponent of inerrancy recognises the limits to this objection. Nevertheless, in view of the weight placed upon it by Rogers and McKim, it is necessary to make a few brief comments.⁸⁶

Firstly, concerning the claim that Calvin attributed '*misquotations*' to the apostles, it is clear that Calvin considered the apostles' paraphrastic quotations to bring out 'the true sense and application' of the passages quoted.⁸⁷ This is evident when we consider Calvin's comments in sections not quoted by Rogers and McKim.⁸⁸ Firstly, on the quotation of Psalm 51:4 in Romans 3:4, a few lines before the extract quoted, Calvin wrote: 'Paul has quoted this passage of David in its true and proper sense.'⁸⁹ Secondly, on the quotation of Psalm 40:6 in Hebrews 10:5, Calvin wrote, 'We must always have a regard to the end for which [the apostles] quote passages, for they are very careful as to the main object, so as not to turn Scripture to another meaning.'⁹⁰ Thirdly, on Hebrews 2:7, Calvin wrote, 'The meaning of David is this... This meaning the Apostle did not intend to overthrow, nor to turn to something else.'⁹¹ Finally, concerning the use of Deuteronomy 30:12 in Romans 10:6, Calvin wrote: 'If, therefore, we take these statements of Paul as having been made by way of amplification

or as a gloss, we shall not be able to say that he has done violence or distorted the words of Moses.⁹²

Secondly, concerning the alleged *technical inaccuracies*, Rogers and McKim are wrong to say that Calvin attributed the ‘manifest error’ in Acts 7:16 to Luke. Calvin made no such attribution of blame. In fact, as Woodbridge observes, “‘it is manifest that’ is the language of an observation, not an attribution,⁹³ and in analogous places where Calvin speaks about the need for ‘amendment’, he is describing errors in transcription.⁹⁴ The same explanation accounts for Calvin’s comments on Matthew 27:9 where the name of Jeremiah is said to have ‘crept in’. As Murray notes, this is the very language that Calvin uses when he is describing a transcription error.⁹⁵ The claim that Calvin considered Paul’s numerical ‘error’ in 1 Corinthians 10:8 to be explicable as an example of accommodation is also difficult to reconcile with the lengths that Calvin went to in order to explain the apparent discrepancy with Numbers 25:9. Calvin wrote, ‘[I]t is easy to reconcile their statements. For it is not unheard of, when there is no intention of making an exact count of individuals to give an approximate number... Moses gives the upper limit, Paul the lower, and there is really no discrepancy.’⁹⁶

Thirdly, Rogers and McKim’s claim that Calvin attributed an error to Moses in his description of the sun and the moon as the two great lights does not stand up to scrutiny. Calvin insisted that Moses was using phenomenological language; he spoke ‘in popular style what all ordinary men without training and education perceive with their ordinary senses.’⁹⁷ According to Calvin, Moses did not wish to discourage scientific study but ‘since he had been appointed a guide of unlearned men rather than on the learned, he could not fulfil his duty except by coming down to their level.’ As to Rogers and McKim’s claim that Moses’ error was tied to his concept of accommodation, the dangers of such an approach are apparent when Calvin continues, ‘when the Spirit of God opens a common school for all, it is not strange that he chooses to teach especially what can be understood by all.’⁹⁸ As Woodbridge observes, we cannot charge Moses with making an error here unless we are also willing to accuse the Holy Spirit of the same fault in the interests of accommodation.⁹⁹

The claim that Calvin held to a view of Scripture which was incompatible with verbal inerrancy has been shown to be manifestly unsound. As Dowey remarks: ‘To Calvin the theologian an error in Scripture is unthinkable... If he betrays his position at all, it is in apparently assuming *a priori* that no errors can be allowed to reflect upon the inerrancy of the original documents.’¹⁰⁰

2. Is the popular portrayal of Turretin’s doctrine accurate?

Over the past three decades, the view that Protestant orthodoxy significantly departed from the theology of the Reformers has been convincingly challenged. It has been shown that there were traces of scholasticism in the work of Calvin,¹⁰¹ and that the shift that took place in the seventeenth century was really one of *form* rather than *content*.¹⁰² Muller comments: ‘Orthodoxy intended, in its systematization of the doctrines of the Reformation, to maintain the substance while altering the form – and, in instances of issues either not fully discussed or not discussed at all by the Reformers, to add new material in substantial agreement with the teaching both of the Reformers and of the Reformed confessions.’¹⁰³ In other words, ‘scholasticism is a scientific method of research and teaching, and does as such not have a doctrinal content.’¹⁰⁴ Muller criticises twentieth-century assessments of orthodoxy for their failure to appreciate the variety of formulations of orthodoxy and their imposition of neorthodox presuppositions on older dogmatics.¹⁰⁵ He, along with others, is critical of the tendency to apply ‘Aristotelianism’ with a broad brush to orthodoxy and to claim that the ‘scholastics must therefore be rationalists.’¹⁰⁶ The underlying problem, Muller insists, is that such critiques of the Protestant orthodox view ‘tell us more about the theology of their authors than they

do about the history of Protestant doctrine.’ They commit the fallacy of identifying a “Golden Age” of Protestant theology that not only offers historical precedent for their own theology but that also is somehow recoverable in the present.¹⁰⁷

The difference between the formulations of the doctrine of Scripture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is explicable by reference to the different contexts in which they wrote and the different literary genres that they adopted. Turretin sought to provide a fully-developed theological system and thus focused upon the objective authority of Scripture. That is not to say, however, that the Reformers rejected the long-established tradition of the objective authority of Scripture, nor is it to suggest that the orthodox departed from the Reformers’ insight into the subjective power of the Word.¹⁰⁸ The formal innovations of the seventeenth century, such as the inclusion of a specific *locus* on Scripture in systematic theologies, were a response to the new challenges that orthodoxy faced.¹⁰⁹ Since these challenges were predominantly formal,¹¹⁰ Protestant orthodoxy responded on those terms, while continuing to stress ‘the importance of the saving message of the Gospel.’¹¹¹

Rogers and McKim’s claim that the Christocentric approach of Calvin was lost and replaced by a scientific system is unsustainable.¹¹² In his *Prolegomena* (which Rogers and McKim apparently did not have access to),¹¹³ Turretin insisted that theology is unlike *intelligentia* or *scientia* and much closer to *sapientia* (wisdom).¹¹⁴ He explicitly denied that theology is simply speculative (theoretical) insisting that it is ‘partly theoretical, partly practical, as that which at the same time connects the theory of the true with the practice of the good. Yet it is more practical than theoretical.’¹¹⁵ For Turretin, theology was theoretical because it concerns ‘God as supernaturally revealed in his word’ but it was also practical because ‘he is revealed as an object both to be known and to be worshipped.’¹¹⁶ Theology could not be wholly theoretical, for Turretin, because ‘happiness embraces not only an apprehension of the highest good by vision (which is in the intellect), but also an enjoyment of it by love (which is an act of the will).’¹¹⁷ The parody of Turretin’s theology as ‘arid scholasticism’ is shown for the distortion that it is. Moreover, Turretin did not reject the saving focus of Calvin’s theology in favour of Aristotelian scholasticism. Rather, he insisted that the object of theology is not ‘to be considered exclusively under the relation of deity (according to the opinion of Thomas Aquinas and many Scholastics after him, for in this manner of the knowledge of him *could not be saving* but deadly to sinners), but as he is our God (i.e. *covenanted in Christ* as he has revealed himself to us in his word not only as the object of knowledge, but also of *worship*).’¹¹⁸

Moving on to the argument that Turretin over-used and abused proof-texts, it is important to note that twenty nine proof texts is by no means excessive in an answer that spans nine pages and thirty six paragraphs. Rogers and McKim’s claim that a similar number of citations were used to support each of the other twenty one questions is manifestly false (the authors apparently had no access to the primary source to verify this),¹¹⁹ and absurd (given the variation in length and content of the questions). As we have already noted, Turretin was responding to his opponents on their own terms which explains his use of proof-texts. Moreover, on the whole, he was sensitive to the redemptive-historical, linguistic, and theological contexts of the texts.¹²⁰ While it is true that Turretin’s use of Matthew 28:18-20 and Psalm 19:7 might be considered to be a little strained, Calvin too was prone to use texts to serve his proofs at times, as indeed are most theologians.¹²¹

The claim that Turretin’s departure from Calvin is evidenced by his failure to cite him in his *locus* on Scripture is spurious. As Rogers and McKim recognise, Turretin focused upon the Church Fathers in order to demonstrate the historical pedigree of his doctrine. He also cited many of his contemporaries, both opponents and allies, so that he could engage with the real questions and disputations of his day. The fact that Turretin did not cite Calvin proves nothing. Moreover, it appears that Turretin did indeed cite Calvin (although not by name) in his discussion of Matthew

27:9. He noted that ‘some are of the opinion that the name Jeremiah has *crept* into the text from the ignorance of transcribers’;¹²² the very same language that Calvin used in his commentary on the verse.¹²³

Rogers and McKim wrongly conclude that Turretin predicated the authority of Scripture on its inerrancy. In fact, Turretin did precisely the opposite: ‘The authority of the Scriptures depends on their origin. Just because they are from God, they must be authentic and divine,¹²⁴ and, ‘when the divinity of the Scriptures is proved (as in the preceding question), its infallibility necessarily follows.’¹²⁵ So the infallibility of Scripture is predicated on its authority and divine origin, not the other way round. Rogers and McKim are also wrong to claim that Turretin relegated the function of the Spirit to the inerrant transmission of information. Turretin was clear that the Spirit expressed himself both externally in Scripture and internally through his ‘testimony impressed upon the conscience and speaking in the heart.’¹²⁶ Turretin continued, ‘the same Spirit who acts objectively in the word by presenting the truth, operates efficiently in the heart by also impressing that truth upon our minds.’¹²⁷ For Turretin, Word and Spirit were distinct and yet inseparable just as they were in Calvin’s thinking. Turretin wrote: ‘We prove the Scriptures by the Spirit as the efficient cause by which we believe. But we prove the Spirit from the Scriptures as the object and argument on account of which we believe.’¹²⁸

The argument that Turretin elevated reason above faith is linked to the previous point in that the key piece of evidence presented by Rogers and McKim is Turretin’s reliance upon the marks of Scripture. In fact, contrary to this assertion, Turretin insisted that ‘the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is absolutely necessary to the inward persuasion of the divinity of Scripture.’¹²⁹ The difference between Turretin and Calvin on the importance of the marks is often overstated.¹³⁰ Both considered the marks to be relevant as shown by the fact that both provided a list of the marks. Indeed, Calvin’s list, spanning twelve pages and thirteen paragraphs is almost as long as Turretin’s, spanning seven pages and twenty two paragraphs.¹³¹ Moreover, both agreed that the marks could not, of themselves, convince the reader of the divinity of Scripture. The only difference between the theologians lay in the relative importance that they assigned to the marks.¹³²

The more general claim that Turretin elevated reason above faith is also false. Throughout his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* the Scriptural and theological arguments precede the rational. As Muller observes, Turretin did this ‘in order to show that reason serves the theological point.’ His system was ‘rational but not rationalist; reason does not compete with Scripture for the title *principium cognoscendi*.’¹³³ For Turretin, reason ‘always judges according to Scripture as the first and infallible standard’ and reason is never permitted to pass judgment on the incomprehensible mysteries of God such as ‘the Trinity, incarnation and predestination.’¹³⁴

The popular view that the concept of accommodation was lost in seventeenth-century orthodoxy is also fallacious. In his Prolegomena, Turretin distinguished between archetypal theology (‘infinite and uncreated, which is God’s essential knowledge of himself’) and ectypal theology (‘finite and created, which is the image and ectype of the infinite and archetypal’).¹³⁵ In elucidating how that distinction related to Scripture, Turretin wrote: ‘When God understands he understands himself infinitely. But when he speaks, he speaks not to himself, but to us (i.e., in *accommodation* to our capacity which is finite and cannot take in many senses).’¹³⁶ This language of accommodation clearly echoes that of Calvin.¹³⁷ Turretin also affirmed the idea of progressive revelation just as Calvin did before him. Some things are taught ‘far clearer in the New than in the Old Testament’ Turretin wrote, and this is because ‘revelation increased according to the different ages of the church.’ This increase was ‘not as to the substance of the things to be believed, which has always been the same, but as to the clearer manifestation and application of them.’¹³⁸ Turretin was loyal to Calvin on both the concept of

accommodation and the system of progressive revelation but, just like Calvin, Turretin insisted that this left the reliability and perfection of Scripture unaffected.¹³⁹

Finally, concerning Rogers and McKim's claim that Turretin's teaching on the vowel points represented a departure from the position of the Reformers and demonstrated the absurdity of his own position, the authors appear to have misunderstood the historical context of the vowel point debate. As Muller has shown, Turretin and his contemporaries had good grounds for their position, at the time, and they were seeking to defend the Reformers' hermeneutic of the analogy of Scripture against the claim that a passage could be amended at the whim of an exegete or text critic.¹⁴⁰ Turretin's position on the inspiration of the vowel points was just one element of his overall defence of the inerrancy of Scripture and the negation of that one element does not affect the defence as a whole.

III. Conclusion

Calvin and Turretin both held to a view of the inspiration and authority of Scripture which affirmed that the Scriptures as originally given were without error in all that they affirmed. The view that Calvin only affirmed the infallibility of the saving content of Scripture rests upon decidedly unpersuasive grounds and conflicts with Calvin's unambiguous statements to the contrary.

Furthermore, the contention that a radical disjunction exists between Calvin's view of Scripture and that of Turretin remains unproven. While a shift in the form of theological discourse unquestionably took place in the seventeenth century, the content of orthodox doctrine remained substantially the same. Far from dispensing with Calvin's doctrine of inspiration, Turretin sought to defend it against the new challenges that it faced in the seventeenth century. While his methodology may be questioned, we should be in no doubt that Turretin intended his doctrine to be an expression of continuity with the doctrine expounded by the Reformers.

¹ Jack Rogers and Donald McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) 174-175. Rogers and McKim's thesis was one of the products of the shift of thinking at Fuller Theological Seminary. The seminary had dropped its commitment to inerrancy in the early 1960s and its president, Daniel Fuller, had publically repudiated inerrancy in 1967: Daniel P. Fuller, 'Warfield's View of Faith and History,' *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* II (Spring 1968): 80-82. See the discussion in: Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 106-121. For a more recent articulation of the view see: Andrew T. B. McGowan, *The Divine Spiration of Scripture* (Leicester: Apollos, 2007) 98.

² See discussion of critics in: Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 25. Exemplars of this approach are Ernst Bizer, Walter Kickel, Brian Armstrong and T. F. Torrance. See discussion in Willem van Asselt and Eef Dekker, 'Introduction,' in *Reformation and Scholasticism: An Ecumenical Enterprise* (ed. Willem van Asselt and Eef Dekker; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 14-24.

³ Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969) 32.

⁴ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 172.

⁵ John T. McNeill, 'The Significance of the Word of God for Calvin,' *CH* 28 (1959): 141. Comments made concerning Calvin's commentary on 2 Timothy 3:16.

⁶ J. K. S. Reid, *The Authority of Scripture* (London: Methusen & Co Ltd, 1957) 43.

⁷ Doumergue, *Jean Calvin: Les hommes et les choses de son temps* (7 vols.; Lausanne: 1899-1928), IV 78. Cited in T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries* (London: SCM, 1971) 57.

⁸ For a helpful discussion of accommodation in Calvin, see Randall C. Zachman, 'Calvin as Analogical Theologian,' *SJT* 51 (1998): 162-187.

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- ⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeil; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; 2 vols.; 1559; repr., Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960) 1.13.1.
- ¹⁰ Rogers and McKim write: 'Given Calvin's understanding of the accommodated nature of God's communication in Scripture, it is not surprising that Calvin was unconcerned with normal, human inaccuracies in minor matters' (*Authority and Interpretation*, 109). See also Armstrong, *Calvinism*, 36.
- ¹¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.2.6.
- ¹² Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 38. See also Richard C. Prust, 'Was Calvin a Biblical Literalist,' *SJT* 20 (1967): 314.
- ¹³ Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 38.
- ¹⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.8.9.
- ¹⁵ McNeill, 'Word of God,' 141-142.
- ¹⁶ Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.11.10. The five differences are: 1. Stress on earthly benefits which, however, were to lead to heavenly concerns; 2. Truth in the Old Testament conveyed by images and ceremonies typifying Christ; 3. The Old Testament is literal; the New, spiritual; 4. Bondage of the Old Testament and freedom of the New; 5. The Old Testament has reference to one nation, the New to all nations (Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.11.1-12 (list provided by the editor, John McNeill)).
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.11.13. See also Zachman, 'Analogical Theologian,' 174-175.
- ¹⁸ McNeill, 'Word of God,' 135.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.
- ²⁰ Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.7.1.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 1.7.4.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 1.7.5.
- ²³ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 106.
- ²⁴ See also McNeill, 'Word of God,' 133-134.
- ²⁵ Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 47.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.
- ²⁷ Prust, 'Biblical Literalist,' 315
- ²⁸ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 109-110; McNeill, 'Word of God,' 143-144. As John Woodbridge notes, Rogers and McKim's list of problem passages bears a striking resemblance to McNeill's (*Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers / McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) 58).
- ²⁹ John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians* (ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; trans. R. MacKenzie; Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1960) 61.
- ³⁰ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 109.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*; McNeill, 'Word of God,' 143.
- ³² Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 109. The passage that Rogers and McKim are discussing is actually Calvin's commentary on Hebrews 10:5. See also McNeill, 'Word of God,' 143-144.
- ³³ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 109-110.
- ³⁴ Calvin, *Romans and Thessalonians*, 225.
- ³⁵ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 110. See also Darlene K. Flaming, 'Calvin as commentator on the Synoptic Gospels,' in *Calvin and the Bible* (ed. Donald McKim; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 147, 154.
- ³⁶ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 110. See also McNeill, 'Word of God,' 143.

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- ³⁷ John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels, Vol III: James and Jude* (ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; trans. A. W. Morrison; Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1972) 177. The reference should be to Zechariah 11:13 (itself a copyist's error in the Torrance edition!).
- ³⁸ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 110-111.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Armstrong, *Calvinism*, 32.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 32-33.
- ⁴³ See also Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 61-63.
- ⁴⁴ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 148. See also Armstrong, *Calvinism*, 38, 129-131.
- ⁴⁵ See also Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 78-102.
- ⁴⁶ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 172. Along similar lines, Reid argues that orthodoxy 'lost the living reality with which Luther and Calvin had invested Scripture, so that in their hands Scripture became an external authority legalistically conceived, and adherence to Scripture rigid Biblicism' (*Authority of Scripture*, 77). Reid cites Emil Brunner who claimed that 'The age of Orthodoxy appears like a frozen waterfall – mighty shapes of movement, but no movement.'
- ⁴⁷ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 173.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 174-175.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.
- ⁵¹ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 176-177. See also Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 92-96.
- ⁵² Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (3 vols.; Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1997) 2.4.6-27.
- ⁵³ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 177. Citing Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.8.13.
- ⁵⁴ Armstrong, *Calvinism*, 173.
- ⁵⁵ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 177.
- ⁵⁶ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2.11.13. See Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 87-92.
- ⁵⁷ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 180-181, 183-184.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.
- ⁵⁹ As J.I. Packer notes, 'the reason why Calvin never argued this point is not because it was not important to him, but that it was not denied' ('Calvin's View of Scripture,' in *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture* (ed. John Warwick Montgomery; Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship Inc., 1974) 98).
- ⁶⁰ For a contemporary articulation see the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), the Lausanne Covenant (1974), and the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Theological Society.
- ⁶¹ See Prust, 'Biblical Literalist,' 313-314; Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 36-38.
- ⁶² John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (trans. William Pringle; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1856) 219 (emphasis added).
- ⁶³ John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter* (ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; trans. William B. Johnston; Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1996), 344.

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- ⁶⁴ John Calvin, *Calvin's Bible Commentaries: Harmony of the Law* (trans. John King; 3 vols.; Forgotten Books, 1847), III: 353.
- ⁶⁵ John Calvin, *Daniel* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1852), 79.
- ⁶⁶ John Calvin, *A Harmony of the Gospels Vol I* (ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; trans. A. W. Morrison; Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1972), 82.
- ⁶⁷ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.8.8-9. McNeill, the editor of this version, adds a note denying that Calvin affirms inerrancy here (p. 1157).
- ⁶⁸ John Murray writes: '[Calvin] affirms most explicitly that the Scripture is from God, that it has come to us from the very mouth of God, and that in believing the Scripture we feel the firmest conviction that we hold an invincible truth. To insinuate that this conviction has respect simply to the heavenly doctrine, as distinct from Scripture as the depository is to interject a distinction of which there is no suggestion in the relevant passages' (*Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty* (Phillipsburg, Pa: P & R Publishing, 1960) 21).
- ⁶⁹ The Bible certainly sets out a correspondence theory of truth (John 8:44; Acts 24:8). See further Norman L. Geisler, 'The Concept of Truth in the Inerrancy Debate,' *ERT* 5 (1981): 192-196; Roger Nicole, 'The Biblical Concept or Truth,' in *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; 1983; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 293-296.
- ⁷⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1994) 94.
- ⁷¹ Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 99. Incarnational models of inspiration have been popular across a broad spectrum of evangelical theology over the past two centuries: Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (ed. John Bolt; trans. John Vriend; 4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), Vol 1: 380-382; Clark H. Pinnock and Barry L. Callen, *The Scripture Principle* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 111-132; Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998) 304-305; Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 23-165.
- ⁷² This argument has been advanced by numerous scholars: Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1948) 162-163; J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1958) 83; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol 1: 397-399.
- ⁷³ G. K. Beale, 'Myth, History, and Inspiration' (review of Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*), *JETS* 49 (June 2006): 299.
- ⁷⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.8.5.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.2.14.
- ⁷⁶ Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*, 58.
- ⁷⁷ Benjamin B. Warfield, 'Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God,' in *Calvin and Calvinism* (ed. Benjamin B. Warfield; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931) 63. Cited by Edward A. Dowey Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (1952; repr., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994) 101; B.A. Gerrish, 'Biblical Authority and the Continental Reformation,' *SJT* 10 (1957): 355, fn 2.
- ⁷⁸ Warfield, 'Knowledge of God,' in Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism*, 64.
- ⁷⁹ See the refutation of the view in Gerrish, 'Biblical Authority', 353.
- ⁸⁰ Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.8.7. See McNeill, 'Word of God', 137.
- ⁸¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.7.5.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 1.7.2.
- ⁸³ See Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1978), 223-226; Packer, 'Calvin's View of Scripture' in Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word*, 109.
- ⁸⁴ Gerrish, 'Biblical Authority', 355 (emphasis in original).
- ⁸⁵ Reid, *Authority of Scripture*, 40. See also Parker, *Calvin's NT Commentaries*, 68.

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- ⁸⁶ Fuller treatments are provided by: Murray, *Calvin*, 12-31; Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*, 59-67; Robert Godfrey, 'Biblical Authority in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Question of Transition,' in *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; 1983; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 232-233.
- ⁸⁷ Packer, 'Calvin's View of Scripture,' in Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word*, 106.
- ⁸⁸ See Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*, 59-60.
- ⁸⁹ Calvin, *Romans and Thessalonians*, 61.
- ⁹⁰ Calvin, *Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter*, 227-228.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 58-59.
- ⁹² Calvin, *Romans and Thessalonians*, 225.
- ⁹³ Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*, 60.
- ⁹⁴ See Dowey Jr., *Knowledge of God*, 103.
- ⁹⁵ Murray, *Calvin*, 29. See also Roger Nicole, 'John Calvin and Inerrancy,' *JETS* 25 (1982): 430.
- ⁹⁶ John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; trans. John W. Fraser; Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 1960) 209.
- ⁹⁷ John Calvin, *Genesis* (ed. Alister McGrath and James I. Packer; Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2001) 22-23.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.
- ⁹⁹ Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*, 61.
- ¹⁰⁰ Dowey Jr., *Knowledge of God*, 104-105.
- ¹⁰¹ Richard Muller writes: 'Calvin's overtly negative reaction to the 'scholastici' conveys only a small part of his relationship to medieval scholastic theology, its method, themes and distinctions. Alongside the rejection, there is also appropriation, sometimes explicit, but often unacknowledged. There are also parallels in method and intention, notably between Calvin's approach to system and commentary and the approach of Peter Lombard' ('Scholasticism in Calvin: A Question of Relation and Disjunction,' in *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (ed. Richard A. Muller; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 57).
- ¹⁰² Asselt and Dekker, 'Introduction,' in Asselt and Dekker, *Reformation and Scholasticism*, 39; Muller, *After Calvin*, 27-33; Timothy Ward, *Word and Supplement: Speech Acts, Biblical Texts and the Sufficiency of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 62; Muller, *After Calvin*, 139.
- ¹⁰³ Richard A. Muller, *Holy Scripture: The Cognitive Foundation of Theology* (vol. 2 of *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*; 2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) 96-97.
- ¹⁰⁴ Asselt and Dekker, 'Introduction,' in Asselt and Dekker, *Reformation and Scholasticism*, 39.
- ¹⁰⁵ Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 98. Muller points out that Brunner and Reid's negative assessments of orthodoxy's doctrine of revelation depends almost exclusively on 'the fact that Protestant orthodoxy did not and, of course, historically could not reflect the neorthodox interpretation of the Reformation and/or the neorthodox view of revelation as 'event'.'
- ¹⁰⁶ Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 100; Asselt and Dekker, 'Introduction,' in Asselt and Dekker, *Reformation and Scholasticism*, 39. The claim that English Puritanism went a different way to their continental contemporaries due to the influences of Ramism is also flawed, see: W. Robert Godfrey, 'Biblical Authority in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Question of Transition,' in *Scripture and Truth* (ed. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; 1983; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 235-236.
- ¹⁰⁷ Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 100-101.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹⁰⁹ Although Rogers and McKim note this, they do not give it due weight in appreciating the changes of form in which the doctrine of Scripture is presented.

¹¹⁰ Godfrey notes that the Socinians were ‘insisting on a determinative role for reason and the Roman Catholics [were] pressing the refined arguments of Robert Bellarmine and others for an authoritative church’ (‘Biblical Authority,’ in Carson and Woodbridge, *Scripture and Truth*, 237).

¹¹¹ Godfrey, ‘Biblical Authority,’ in Carson and Woodbridge, *Scripture and Truth*, 237.

¹¹² Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 162, 173. It may be a more apt description of some of Turretin’s contemporaries, e.g. Gosbertus Voetius, see Muller, *After Calvin*, 240, fn 21.

¹¹³ The authors wholly relied upon Leon Allison’s selective translation of Turretin’s Institutes, see Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation*, 196, fn 170. For a damning critique of Rogers and McKim’s methodology at this point see Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*, 116-117.

¹¹⁴ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 1.6.1-8. Turretin maintains that theology is not *sapientia* strictly speaking because *sapientia* is ‘the intelligence of principles known per se and the knowledge of conclusions’ (*Elenctic Theology*, 1.6.5). See discussion in Muller, *After Calvin*, 139-140; Willem van Asselt, ‘The Fundamental Meaning of Theology: Archetypal and Ectypal Theology in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Thought,’ *WTJ* 64 (2002): 326.

¹¹⁵ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 1.7.2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.7.7.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.7.13.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.5.4 (emphasis added).

¹¹⁹ Only nine texts are used in the third question.

¹²⁰ About the interpretation of Scripture, Turretin writes: ‘To ascertain the true sense of the Scriptures, interpretation is needed... there is need of an inspection of the sources, the knowledge of languages, the distinction between proper and figurative words, attention to the scope and circumstances, collation of passages, connection of what precedes and follows, removal of prejudices and conformity of the interpretation to the analogy of faith’ (*Elenctic Theology*, 2.19.18).

¹²¹ For example, Calvin’s use of Ephesians 5:32 to support his understanding of the mysterious nature of the sacraments (*The Epistles of the Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians* (ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; trans. T.H.L. Parker; Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries 11; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1965) 208-210).

¹²² Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2.5.28 (emphasis added).

¹²³ Calvin, *Harmony of the Gospels III*, 177.

¹²⁴ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2.4.1.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.5.1.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.6.13.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.6.14.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.6.24. See also Godfrey, ‘Biblical Authority,’ in Carson and Woodbridge, *Scripture and Truth*, 238-239; Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 181, 281.

¹²⁹ Francis Turretin, ‘Disputatio theologica de Scripturae Sacrae auctoritate, adversus pontificos,’ in *Opera* (ed. Francis Turretin; 4 vols.; Edinburgh: Lowe, 1847), vol. 4, 237. Cited in Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 128. These words virtually echo Calvin’s claim that ‘the Word will not find acceptance in men’s hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit’ (*Institutes*, 1.7.4).

¹³⁰ Even Robert Godfrey overstates these differences and inexplicitly adopts the parody of Turretin and Protestant orthodoxy in his conclusion to ‘Beyond the Sphere of our Judgment’: Calvin and the Confirmation of Scripture,’ *WTJ* 58 (1996): 29-39.

¹³¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.8.1-13; Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2.4.6-27.

¹³² It is certainly doubtful that Calvin would have agreed with Turretin that 'the marks which God has impressed upon the Scriptures... furnish indubitable proof of divinity' (*Elenctic Theology*, 2.4.6). The difference is accounted for on the basis of the differing challenges that the two theologians faced.

¹³³ Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 179. Muller further writes that '[The] description of the biblical Word as fundamental and authentic echoes the scholastic identification of Scripture as *principium theologiae* – and, contrary to the claims of modern writers like Rogers, it is precisely the traditional, Aristotelian understanding of the nature of a first principle that bars any and all attempts to offer rational and empirical demonstration of the authority of Scripture and will, ultimately, render all evidences dependent on the testimony of the Spirit for their personal validation and acceptance' (*PRRD vol. 2*, 264).

¹³⁴ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 1.9.12 and 1.9.9. See fuller discussion in Muller, *After Calvin*, 143.

¹³⁵ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 1.2.6. See Richard A. Muller, *Prolegomena to Theology* (vol. 1 of *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*; 2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) 225-238. Junius earlier adopted a similar distinction in *De vera theologica* (1594), see Asselt, 'Archetypal and Ectypal Theology', 328. Muller suggests that the distinction is similar to Scotus' division of *theologia in se* and *theologia nostra* but the Reformed distinction emphasises the soteriological necessity of revelation (*PRRD vol. 1*, 223-225).

¹³⁶ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2.19.8 (emphasis added).

¹³⁷ Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 305.

¹³⁸ Turretin, *Elenctic Theology*, 2.8.4, 2.16.5.

¹³⁹ Martin I. Klauber, 'Francis Turretin on Biblical Accommodation: Loyal Calvinist or Reformed Scholastic,' *WTJ* 55 (1993): 73-86.

¹⁴⁰ Muller, *PRRD vol. 2*, 412. See also Muller, *After Calvin*, 146-155.