

# THE FOUNDATION OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

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# THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

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## THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

THE REASON for the title of this book on inerrancy, *The Foundation of Biblical Authority*, is plain: The Bible's being the Word of God is the *only* foundation for full *biblical authority*.<sup>1</sup> If the Bible is not the Word of God, it has no divine authority. We realize that some who disagree with inerrancy are claiming inspiration for parts of the Bible, the so-called salvation parts. Very well, but then they cannot title their position *biblical authority* but only *partial biblical authority*. To add insult to injury to God's Word, they cannot tell precisely what parts of the Bible are inspired. They say "salvation parts," but they do not tell us where to find these or how to separate them from the uninspired, errant, nonsalvation parts.

Many modern biblical scholars contend that there are different salvation schemes in the Bible.<sup>2</sup> Thus, partial biblical authority, however sincerely advocated, becomes the road to the destruction of even partial biblical authority. Advocates of this position are worse off than those who look for a needle in a haystack, because a needle in a haystack can be found!

Furthermore, some evangelical scholars not only favor partial biblical authority today but believe that the historic Christian church believed it. Our attempt in this essay will be to show that the main historic path has been *total biblical authority*. It is significant that the current fourth edition of *The New Columbia Ency-*

*clopedia*<sup>3</sup> recognizes this. While this most massive and comprehensive one-volume encyclopedia in the world possesses a great deal of religious information, it is essentially secular in viewpoint and quite objective. Its matter-of-fact statement is therefore all the more impressive:

The traditional Christian view of the Bible is that it was *all* written under the guidance of God and that it is, therefore, *all true*, literally or under the veil of allegory. *In recent times*, however, the view of many Protestants has been influenced by the pronouncements of critics (see Higher Criticism). This has produced a counter-reaction in the form of Fundamentalism, whose chief emphasis has been on the inerrancy of the Bible (*italics added*).<sup>4</sup>

The traditional Christian view is that the Bible is "all true." What "Fundamentalism" has reacted to is deviation from the historic norm.

Laymen especially are puzzled that experts differ about this matter of the church's historic position on inerrancy. Why do men who have studied the subject thoroughly come so often to differing and even conflicting conclusions, and how can lay people understand the matter if the scholars maintain exactly opposite interpretations of the very same data?

This is not so difficult to answer as it may appear. The trouble is very rarely in the sources of information. It is usually in the deductions that are drawn from the sources. Some scholars of massive learning are not so skilled in drawing conclusions. Some laymen who know nothing of the subject matter, except what the experts tell them, can easily see that certain conclusions drawn by the experts do not follow from the data presented by the experts. Thus, they may be benefited by the scholar's learning and not be harmed by his *non sequiturs*.

There are five very common *non sequiturs* (things that do not follow) in the field we are about to survey. If the reader will master them, he will, we believe, avoid a great deal of misunderstanding.

1. The phenomenal *non sequitur*
2. The accommodation *non sequitur*
3. The emphasis *non sequitur*
4. The critical *non sequitur*
5. The docetist *non sequitur*

The *phenomenal non sequitur*: the Bible's representing things as they *appear* (phenomena) has occasioned the logical leap that it contains error, because that is not the way things *are*. Obviously,

this does not follow. If the Bible taught that things appeared one way and they did not appear that way, that would be an error. Or, if the Bible taught that things were one way and they were not that way, that would also be an error. But, for the Bible to teach that things appear one way when they actually are another way is not error. A simple illustration is assuming that the Bible is in error when it refers to a "sunrise" (which is how things appear) because that is not the way things are (the sun does not "rise").<sup>5</sup>

The *accommodation non sequitur*: the Bible's representing God as accommodating himself to human language has occasioned the logical leap that his Word contains error, because accommodation to human language involves accommodation to human error. Obviously, this is also not right. It does not follow that because God accommodates himself to human language he must accommodate himself to human error. An example is the supposition that the Bible's representing God as "repenting" (which is how it represents the matter to us) is an error because of God's unchangeableness (which is how it is).<sup>6</sup>

The *emphasis non sequitur*: the Bible's emphasizing certain things has occasioned the logical leap that it contains error, because it must be indifferent to other unemphasized things. But it does not follow that because the Bible stresses one thing, it errs in the things it does not stress. For example, it does not follow from the Bible's stress on salvation that it may err in mere historical details.<sup>7</sup>

The *critical non sequitur*: the fact that theologians perform the work of textual critics has occasioned the logical leap that they believe the Bible contains error. But it does not follow that because a scholar examines a text to see whether it belongs to the Bible he therefore believes the Bible can err. For example, questioning whether the doxology to the Lord's Prayer is in the original text of the Bible does not imply that the Bible itself can be in error.<sup>8</sup>

The *docetic non sequitur*: the Bible's representing itself as the Word of God written by men has occasioned the logical leap that it is therefore errant. Obviously this too does not follow. It does not follow that since God inspired men, he would be incapable of keeping them free of human error in writing. For example, it does not follow from the Bible's saying that God used Paul in the writing of epistles that God could not keep those epistles free from human error.<sup>9</sup>

Equipped with this logical Geiger counter to detect hidden mines and booby traps, let us tread our way carefully, though hastily, through the path of history in an attempt to ascertain "the church's doctrine of biblical inspiration."<sup>10</sup>

### THE EARLY CHURCH

As we come to the teaching of the early church on inspiration, a word about the philosophical background of this period is in order. The two greatest philosophers of Greek antiquity were Plato and Aristotle. But Plato had far greater influence than Aristotle on the early church ever since the days of Justin Martyr, the converted Platonist philosopher. Although Aristotle gave the stronger argument for creation and freedom, he was ignored apparently because of the detachedness of his "First Mover" deity and the fatalism of his providence. Plato, on the other hand, was more mystical and disposed toward revelation, and his philosophical idealism was warmer.

The fundamental difference between Plato and Aristotle was not so much epistemological (pertaining to the way of knowing), however, as metaphysical (pertaining to what is known). Both believed in the apprehension of sensory data by the mind. But Plato believed that the "universals" or "ideas" thus apprehended exist independently, whereas Aristotle taught that they exist only in regard to or in connection with the thing apprehended. Augustine, in whom the Platonic element reached its ecclesiastical peak,<sup>11</sup> and Aquinas, in whom Aristotelianism did, entertained their mentors' differences about the universals but did not differ essentially on the way of knowing. Neither was fideistic in the sense of being unrational, irrational, or antirational. Aquinas believed an act of faith was necessary to appropriate revealed truth, and Augustine believed that faith in God and Scripture had to be rationally "worthy of belief."

The apostolic fathers and the apologists who span the second century clearly taught the Bible's own doctrine about the Bible, namely, inerrancy. W. Colkins has well summarized with full documentation that stance of the apostolic fathers, who lived during the first half of the second century—that is, immediately following the period of the apostles themselves:

These fathers bear direct testimony to three of St. Paul's Epistles and indicate his inspiration. A few passages of the New Testament are distinctly quoted either as the language of the Lord, the Apos-

bles, or of "Scripture." . . . There are many expressions apparently taken from the New Testament; also allusions and references too inexact to be called quotations, which singly appear insignificant but occurring on every page are weighty arguments.<sup>12</sup>

Thus the apostolic father Clement of Rome, who is as explicit as any other of these fathers, writes of the Scriptures that they are "sayings of the Holy Spirit" and sayings "through the Holy Spirit," citing such Bible remarks as "the Holy Spirit says."<sup>13</sup> It has been said that Papias tended to depreciate the written Word in favor of oral tradition,<sup>14</sup> but this was only because he was collecting oral tradition and not because he did not respect and reverence the written Word.

The apologists of the second half of the second century and later are even more explicit than the apostolic fathers. Some of their language suggests "mechanical" inspiration, though apparently they did not believe that doctrine. We find Justin Martyr calling God the "plectrum" and the biblical writers the "lyre."<sup>15</sup> Athenagoras uses the simile of the flute.<sup>16</sup> Theophilus speaks of Moses writing the law but checks himself, saying, "Rather, the Word of God through him."<sup>17</sup> Tatian writes to the same effect.<sup>18</sup> But it is to be remembered, as Miltiades pointed out, that it was not necessary for prophets to be in a state of ecstasy.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the apologists may not have meant to teach mechanical inspiration, but there can be no mistaking that they held to divine, inerrant inspiration.

The apostolic fathers and the apologists were Eastern fathers, but in the newly developing Western church the same doctrine about the Bible was being promulgated. Irenaeus used the phrase "the Holy Spirit says"<sup>20</sup> as did Cyprian.<sup>21</sup> Tertullian was the most theologically articulate of all, saying not only that every writing of Scripture was useful (as against Marcion, who was trying to exclude the Old Testament and restrict the New Testament canon to Pauline Epistles) but also that the Scriptures were the "words," "letters," and very "voice of God."<sup>22</sup>

The most erudite scholar of the early church was Origen. For him, inspiration extended even to the iota of Scripture and the letters.<sup>23</sup> Scripture contained no faults, being "Spirit-inspired." He added that this doctrine of infallibility was taught in all the churches.<sup>24</sup>

In *Biblical Authority* Jack Rogers acknowledges that for Origen "the Bible was harmonious throughout and 'supernaturally per-

fect in every particular.” But, he continues, “at the same time, Origen was very conscious of the human character of the holy writings [note *non sequitur* no. 5]. He knew that the New Testament was not written in the best Greek. But to him, that was unimportant because the revelation did not consist in the words but in the things revealed”<sup>25</sup> (note *non sequitur* no. 3). We have noted above that Origen insisted that the revelation did consist in words, even in letters. God simply used the best words inerrantly to communicate his message; he even used bad Greek if that was the Greek his audience understood. In this same section Rogers misunderstands Origen’s use of “accommodation.” When Origen represents God as revealing himself “like a schoolmaster talking ‘little language’ to his children,” he is not for a moment suggesting that language is unimportant (*non sequitur* no. 2). Just the opposite. Language is so important that God condescends to “baby talk” in order to be understood verbally. The significance of divine accommodation is misunderstood by Rogers not only in Origen but also in Chrysostom (d. 407),<sup>26</sup> who, incidentally, was also a strong advocate of verbal inspiration, frequently calling the mouth of the prophet the “mouth of God.”<sup>27</sup> We note that Vawter believed that Origen did not regard the Bible as the work of men but of God<sup>28</sup> and that he tried to resist the dictation doctrine.<sup>29</sup>

For lack of space I will not spell out the similar doctrines of Ambrose, Jerome,<sup>30</sup> and a host of other teachers of the early church, nor will I deny that there was rare dissent among some early fathers in regard to inerrancy.

Speaking generally, the early church held to the infallible inerrancy of Scripture with a tenacity extending possibly even to mechanical inspiration in some cases. Rudelbach says that at no point in this period was there greater agreement than concerning inspiration.<sup>31</sup> Bromiley believes that although these early fathers did not teach mechanical inspiration, they did open the way to it by conceiving of inspiration as extending to detailed phrases and by using the term *dictation*.<sup>32</sup> Vawter, however, remarks that “among the early Fathers at least Justin and Athenagoras seemed to have shared a definitely mantic concept of prophecy. Only once in his writings does Justin advert to the personality of an individual prophet.”<sup>33</sup>

The same author lists Justin later among those who taught “mechanical dictation,” adding, “These were also undoubtedly the views of Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria and Ambrose, of

Athenagoras and Tertullian.”<sup>34</sup> It is easy to see that wherever a true dictation theory appears, it carries inerrancy with it. We can (and almost always do) have inerrancy without dictation but never dictation without inerrancy.

#### AUGUSTINE

Augustine is probably the most important Christian theologian since Paul. His stance toward the Bible was one of his most important theological positions. Consequently a correct understanding of his view is especially important historically.

Augustine's words "I believe in order to understand" have been quoted by Rogers, as well as others, to suggest the purest fideism. I do not think this is a correct interpretation of his meaning. To clarify matters, let us spell out the Augustinian way to knowledge. First, Augustine began with the understanding and not with faith. John E. Smith, whom Rogers cites, acknowledges this: "There are two citations in Augustine's works which speak of the primacy of reason. In these Augustine was presupposing man's capacity for thought."<sup>35</sup> Second, Augustine did not abandon this approach when he came to God. Smith thinks otherwise: "But there are no passages in Augustine's writing where he puts reason before faith as a method of knowing God."<sup>36</sup>

Here we must pause. If Smith's statement means that reason did not precede faith as a method of knowing the existence of God (which is what it suggests), it is palpably false. There is no meaning in saying that Augustine believed in a God of whose existence he had no knowledge, and, of course, Augustine never said such a thing. If it does not mean this, Smith must qualify his statement that Augustine never puts reason before faith as a method of knowing God. But suppose Smith's statement means that reason did not precede faith as a method of knowing in the sense only of experiencing God or savingly knowing God. Smith does not qualify it thus; but even if he did, the statement would still be incorrect. For, according to Augustine, one must first have some knowledge of God if this knowledge is ever to become saving or experiential knowledge. One may have knowledge without faith, but he cannot have faith without knowledge. He cannot experience as God something or someone of which he knows nothing. If Smith's statement may be understood to mean merely that knowledge does not necessarily lead to faith and saving knowledge, it is true. But in this case the interpretation is impre-

cise, confused, and almost certainly misleading in the context.

But the statement is true in this sense, which is also our third point: Augustine did not abandon the reason/faith approach even as the method of knowing God savingly, though the sequence depended on special divine grace bestowing faith in the context of understanding. This applies especially to the knowing of God in his Word.<sup>37</sup>

Fourth, Augustine's path to saving knowledge is not circular but cyclical. He does not believe in order to understand and in the same sense understand in order to believe. That would be circular and vicious, going nowhere. Rather, first, Augustine understands God, the Word of God, and the reason both are to be believed; second, the gift of faith is bestowed according to the sovereignty of divine grace; and, third, with that faith he understands or experiences savingly ("I believe that I may understand").

Possibly the best way to illustrate Augustine's approach is to listen to him explaining it to a layman. Augustine's *Enchiridion* was his closest approach to a tiny *Summa*. It was a handbook for a layman who had requested it. Here is how the great saint begins:

These [Christian doctrines] are to be defended by reason, which must have its starting-point either in the bodily sense or in the intuitions of the mind. And what we have neither had experience of through our bodily senses, nor have been able to reach through [our] intellect, must undoubtedly be believed on the testimony of those witnesses by whom the Scriptures, *justly called divine*, were written; and who by divine assistance were enabled, either *through [their] bodily sense or intellectual perception*, to see or to foresee the things in question [italics added].<sup>38</sup>

The italics call attention to the fact that Augustine did not accept the Scriptures without the senses and reason, though they originally did not come through *his* senses and *his* reason, not having been revealed to *him* as they were to the writers of Scripture.<sup>39</sup>

By whatever means Augustine comes to the understanding that the Bible is the Word of God, his inerrancy stance is immediate and unwavering. He writes that "no word and no syllable is superfluous" in Scripture. He confesses, "I have learned to pay them [the canonical books] such honor and respect as to believe most firmly that not one of those authors has erred in writing anything at all."<sup>40</sup> The "hands of the Scripture authors wrote what was dictated by the head," he insisted. "No discordancy of any kind was permitted to exist" in Augustine's Bible. As Seeberg

writes, "The highest normative and only infallible authority is, for Augustine, the Holy Scriptures."<sup>41</sup>

Admittedly, Augustine himself on occasion makes remarks that, seen out of the context of Augustinian thought, suggest indifference to biblical inerrancy. For example, Polman often fixes on statements such as the following: though the biblical "authors knew the truth about the shape of the heavens, the Spirit of God who spoke by them did not intend to teach men these things in no way profitable for salvation."<sup>42</sup> But we note that in this and other such statements Augustine did not say that the Bible actually erred in any scientific utterance. On the contrary, the biblical authors "knew the truth about the shape of the heavens." All that is maintained by Augustine is what all inerrancy advocates recognize; namely, that the primary purpose of God's Word is not to reveal "how the heavens go but how to go to heaven" (as one writer put it). However, insofar as the Bible does tell us how the heavens go, it, being God's Word, cannot and does not err. Such information is incidental to a greater purpose; but we are not saying, neither is Augustine, that such information is either erroneous or absent from the inspired Word. Augustine never fell into *non sequitur* no. 3.

Rogers's acknowledgment of Augustine's inerrancy doctrine is marred by the following remark:

Variant readings were not an ultimate problem for Augustine because the truth of Scripture resided ultimately in the thought of the biblical writers and not in their individual words. Augustine commented: "In any man's words the thing we ought narrowly to regard is only the writer's thought which was meant to be expressed, and to which the words ought to be subservient."<sup>43</sup>

Here we have an error supported by a *non sequitur*. The error is in Rogers's statement that Augustine was not concerned about variant readings because it was the thought and not the words that mattered. The truth is that Augustine did not admit variant readings in the sense of discrepant ones, as his famous remark shows: "*Variae sed non contrariae; diversae sed non adversae* [Variations but not contradictions; diversities but not contrarities]." In other words, variations were not contradictions that required being overcome by the thought mastering the words. The *non sequitur* is in using the quotation of Augustine as proof that the thought and not the words matter (*non sequitur* no. 3). All that is said is that the words are "subservient." The quotation shows

that the thought is the aim of the words and that the words are instrumental to the thought, which presumably could not be reached without them. For Augustine, revealed thoughts without words are impossible and words without revealed thoughts are useless. One is the means and the other the end, but neither is dispensable. What Augustine has joined together (inerrant words and inerrant thoughts) Rogers ought not separate.

So Augustine's inerrancy statements, passed over in silence in *Biblical Authority*, are utterly untouched by anything that anyone has attempted to say against them. The great teacher of the universal church stands as the great teacher of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture.

### THE MIDDLE AGES

So far as we know, there is no question that the period of the Middle Ages, especially of the greater scholastics, held firmly to the church's inerrancy doctrine. For Pope Leo the Great, the Scriptures were the "words of the Holy Spirit." Gregory the Great, sometimes called the vulgarizer of Augustine, clearly adhered to this doctrine of an inerrant Scripture:

Mor. praef. I. 1, 2: Let it be faithfully believed that the Holy Spirit is the author of the book. He, therefore, wrote these things who dictated the things to be written. . . . The Scriptures are the words of the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup>

Bonaventura argued that the Bible established truth and held to the formal principle of the Reformation: *Sola Scriptura*. The nominalists were no different on this doctrine. Abelard, for all his heresies, never questioned canonical Scripture. William of Ockham surely gave a dress rehearsal for Luther's historic deliverance at Worms when he wrote that we are not to believe "what is neither contained in the Bible nor can be inferred by necessary and manifest consequence."<sup>45</sup> Likewise, Wycliffe called the Bible the Word of God *explicite* and *implicite*.<sup>46</sup>

The only significant difference of opinion concerning the doctrine of Scripture in the Middle Ages is in the *approach* to inerrancy. It is sometimes supposed that a fideism in Augustine was supplanted by a rationalism in Aquinas. But we have already shown that any fideism in Augustine is mythical. It remains only to be shown that any rationalism in Aquinas is equally mythical.

The medieval synthesis or harmonization of reason and faith did not attempt to show that natural reason and supernatural

revelation teach the same thing but only that they are not incompatible. True philosophy and true theology do not contradict each other. No crucifixion of the intellect is necessary in order to believe. Aquinas, for example, taught that saving Christian doctrines were learned only from revelation in the Bible. Reason alone can prove that there is a God who can reveal. It can also refute arguments to the contrary as well as show that there is nothing irrational in revelation and that there are reasons for believing revelation (such as miracles and the testimony of the church). These points are also found in Augustine and the early church. (Later nominalism, to be sure, did lose confidence in these arguments without giving up inerrancy as taught by the church. Indeed, it believed in inerrancy because it was taught by the church.)

#### THE REFORMATION

Nominalism brings us chronologically and logically to Luther and the Reformation. It is possible that had there been no nominalist Ockham, Luther as Reformer would not have emerged. For not only did the Reformer call William of Ockham his "Liebster Meister" and show the effects of Ockham's ethical and eucharistic thinking, but, most important of all, it was the nominalist's separation of reason and faith that enabled Luther to break the bonds of the approved scholastic system of salvation that had held him.

It seems that exegesis brought about Luther's awakening (*Turmerlebnis*), sometime before 1513. He had studied under nominalists at Erfurt and Wittenberg, but it was the study of the Bible—especially Isaiah 28:21; Ezekiel 33:11; and Romans 1:17—that produced the evangelical insight. Others had acquired evangelical insights and yet had not gone on to reformation. Why did Luther respond as he did? His response appears to be traceable to his almost simultaneous break with orthodox Scholasticism. On Christmas Day, 1514, He preached his last speculative, scholastic sermon. His sermons on the Decalogue, beginning in 1516 and continuing to February 24, 1517, were directed against Scholasticism. In July he preached his first sermon against the Scholastic doctrine of indulgences. On September 14 of the same eventful year (1517) occurred his first disputation, in which he made the shocking statement that instead of Aristotle being necessary for theology, one could only be a

theologian when free of Aristotle.<sup>47</sup> So, a month and a half before the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses, which began the Reformation, the Reformer himself had been born of evangelical insight plus a break with the Scholastic synthesis (thanks to Ockham), which otherwise would have constrained him to renounce that insight.

While we grant—in fact, insist—that Luther and the Reformation were launched with a nonrational, fideistic push, they soon sailed under the traditional reason/faith synthesis. In this respect, the German Reformation (having a bad beginning followed by a good course) is not unlike the English Reformation, which began with Henry VIII's lust but soon went on under its true colors.

In spite of Luther's 1517 denunciation of Aristotle and some subsequent denunciations in the same vein, the Reformer's basic position clearly came to be a harmonization of faith and reason rather than a disharmony. First, concerning Aristotle himself, Luther acknowledged the Greek's value for politics, rhetoric, and the like. Second, we have noticed that Luther's real objection to Aristotle the philosopher was his *guilt by association* with the Scholastic system of grace to which Luther was intransigently opposed. Third, Luther's chief lieutenant, Philipp Melanchthon, used theistic proofs in his *Loci Communes* from the first edition (1521). It is inconceivable that Melanchthon could or would have done this without Luther's tacit approval at least. Fourth and most important is Luther's own profound rationality even where he appears to have exhibited what Ritschl has called an "*irrationalistische Weltanschauung*" (an irrational philosophy or world view).<sup>48</sup>

Rogers observes that Luther said, "For Isaiah vii makes reason subject to faith, when it says: 'Except ye believe, ye shall not have understanding or reason.' It does not say, 'Except you have reason ye shall not believe,'" and "in spiritual matters, human reasoning certainly is not in order."<sup>49</sup> But the latter part of this quotation of Luther explains the former. Once we know that the Bible is the Word of God, then in the "spiritual matters" of which it speaks "human reasoning certainly is not in order." Luther's thought is the same cyclical pattern that we have seen in Augustine and not the vicious circles attributed to him. He does not believe the Bible to be the Word of God without evidence and then accept the evidence because he already believes the Bible. Rather, he first finds reasons for faith in the Bible as the Word of God and

then, believing the Bible to be the Word of God, he (reasonably enough) will trust it and not reason thereafter, as seen at Worms.

Again, we say that whatever disagreement there may be concerning Luther's approach to the Bible this, in any case, does not change his view of the Bible's inerrancy. Bodamer has cited hundreds of indubitable utterances of Luther to that effect.<sup>50</sup>

If repetition could establish a position, Luther's would never have been questioned. Why, then, does Brunner, like many others, deny it?<sup>51</sup> Once again, virtually the only reason Luther's inerrancy doctrine is ever questioned is that one *non sequitur* or another is used. Kooiman's favorite is the docetic *non sequitur*, no. 5. He *assumes* that Luther's regarding the Bible as vital precludes verbal inspiration, which is *supposed to be* static.<sup>52</sup> Bromiley's suggestion that Luther departed from tradition because he appreciated the human in the writers is the same *non sequitur* (no. 5).<sup>53</sup> The most commonly advanced argument, too constant to need citation, that Luther denied the canonicity of James and some other parts of the Bible and therefore did not believe in inerrancy is the critical *non sequitur*, no. 4.

More things could be said about Luther's view of an inerrant Scripture, but many of these will appear in our fuller discussion of Calvin's views. With a quotation from Karl Barth we will let the matter rest:

In the Reformation doctrine of inspiration the following points must be decisive.

I. The Reformers took over unquestioningly and unreservedly the statement on the inspiration, and indeed the verbal inspiration, of the Bible, as it is explicitly and implicitly contained in those Pauline passages which we have taken as our basis, even including the formula that God is the author of the Bible, and occasionally making use of the idea of a dictation through the Biblical writers. How could it be otherwise? Not with less but with greater and more radical seriousness they wanted to proclaim the subjection of the church to the Bible as the Word of God and its authority as such. . . . Luther is not inconsistent when we hear him thundering polemically at the end of his life: "Therefore, we either believe roundly and wholly and utterly, or we believe nothing: the Holy Ghost doth not let Himself be severed or parted, that He should let one part be taught or believed truly and the other part falsely. . . . For it is the fashion of all heretics that they begin first with a single article, but they must then all be denied and altogether, like a ring which is of no further value when it has a break or cut, or a bell

which when it is cracked in one place will not ring any more and is quite useless" (*Kurzes Bekenntnis vom heiligen Sakrament* 1544 W. A. 54, 158, 28). Therefore Calvin is not guilty of any disloyalty to the Reformation tendency when he says of Holy Scripture that its authority is recognised only when it . . . is realised that *autorem eius esse Deum*. In Calvin's sermon on 2 Tim. 3:16 f. (C. R. 54, 238 f.) God is constantly described as the *autheur* of Holy Scripture and in his commentary on the same passage we seem to hear a perfect echo of the voice of the Early Church. . . . In spite of the use of these concepts neither a mantico-mechanical nor a docetic conception of biblical inspiration is in the actual sphere of Calvin's thinking.<sup>54</sup>

### CALVIN

Brunner did not see the inerrancy doctrine in Luther but saw it at least in Calvin.

Calvin is already moving away from Luther towards the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration. His *doctrine* of the Bible is entirely the traditional, formally authoritative view. The writings of the Apostles "*pro dei oraculis habenda sunt* [are oracles which have been received from God]" (*Institutio*, IV, 8, 9). Therefore we must accept "*quidquid in sacris scripturis traditum est sine exceptione* [whatever is delivered in the Scripture without exception]" (I, 18, 4). The belief "*auctorem eius (sc: scripturae) esse deum* [God is the author of all Scripture] precedes all doctrine (I, 7, 4). That again is the old view."<sup>55</sup>

While Calvin's traditional verbal inspiration view is generally recognized, the way he is supposed to ground that authority runs something like this:

1. The Holy Spirit's testimony in the soul proves the Bible to be the inspired Word of God.
2. The elect soul accepts the Bible on that basis alone.
3. Nevertheless, there are objective evidences that prove nothing apart from the Holy Spirit. When he proves the Bible by this "testimony," the evidence can be considered confirmatory.<sup>56</sup>

The way this argument is constructed adds nothing to Calvin's fame, but his own line of thought makes sense. First of all, Calvin never conceived of the Holy Spirit as proving inspiration but rather *persuading* of it. His favorite term was *acquiesce*. The Holy Spirit leads the minds of the elect to "acquiesce" in the inspiration

of the Bible, the proof of which is in and connected with the Bible data. Calvin was aware that the Holy Spirit does not testify to something of which the person has no idea and for which he has no evidence. He assumed with common sense that men first know the Bible and its claims to inspiration. However, the unregenerate heart, being hostile, needs to be changed by the divine Spirit. The testimony and evidence of the Bible's inspiration is not un compelling in itself but is stubbornly resisted because of the wickedness of men. The Holy Spirit's role is not to change the evidence (from unsatisfactory to satisfactory) but to change the attitudes of men from resistance to truth to submission to it.

Reason has to precede faith in the sense that the mind has to know what the Bible claims to be. The idea that faith can exist where there is nothing on which it terminates is absurd. There must always be some reason for faith; but so long as the heart will not admit it or acquiesce in it, faith does not follow. In such cases men are inexcusable.<sup>57</sup> The problem is not in the *evidence* but in the *disposition*, and that is what the Holy Spirit deals with. Calvin does not teach that the Spirit *is* the evidence for the inspiration of the Bible. All that he does is lead people to *believe* the evidence.

Calvin's saying that the Holy Spirit's presence is intuited as one intuits the taste of sweetness is not meant as a substitute for argument. The Holy Spirit causes the elect to taste the Bible as the Word of God and "know" (in the sense of experience) that it is divine. When that happens, all stubborn opposition to the rational evidence of the Word disappears. The opposition was artificial to begin with (men "would not" rather than "could not" believe), and this encounter with the Spirit is the existential end of the syllogism sinners had stubbornly been trying to deny. They, like the devil, knew the Bible was the Word of God, but they would not admit it and therefore did not "savingly know" it. Now all that is changed, not because the Holy Spirit has by-passed argument but rather because he has removed the roadblock to it.

An evidence of the insincerity, as well as the noncogency, of contemporary interpretations of Calvin concerns his *indicia* of biblical inspiration. Chapter VIII, Book One of the *Institutes*, reads: "So Far as Human Reason Goes, Sufficiently Firm Proofs Are at Hand to Establish the Credibility of Scripture."<sup>58</sup> The contents of the chapter carry out that label reprinting the classic arguments—past and present—for inspiration. For example, on fulfilled prophecy we read as the title of section 8:

“God has confirmed the prophetic words.”<sup>59</sup>

In addition to fulfilled prophecy, all the other stock-in-trade-proofs are unembarrassedly present in Calvin. The insincerity of many modern interpreters comes in here. So far as we know, not one of the neo-Calvinists believes any of these *indicia*. Calvin believed them all, ardently. Acting as if they did agree with Calvin’s approach, the neo-Calvinists actually depart from it entirely. Wrongly thinking that Calvin’s “confirmations” are nonarguments resting for their validity on the testimony of the Holy Spirit, they confidently agree with their own misconception. Thus, those who slay the prophets academically continue to call them “father.” They would not be found dead with those arguments (even as *confirmations*) for which Calvin would have died.

The following citation from Rogers is a good illustration of the way Calvin’s modern friends depart from the Reformer while seeming to follow him. “According to Calvin, ‘human testimonies,’ which are meant to *confirm* Scripture’s authority, ‘will not be vain if they follow that chief and highest testimony,’ as secondary aids to our feebleness. . . . ‘Those who wish to prove to infidels that Scripture is the Word of God are acting foolishly for only by faith can this be known.’”<sup>60</sup> These testimonies of men, of which Calvin writes, do confirm the Holy Spirit’s testimony; but, how, unless they prove? *If they do not prove, they do not confirm*. If they do prove, then there *is* evidence apart from the Holy Spirit. If there is no evidence apart from the Spirit’s testimony, how do these *indicia* confirm? Calvin must, therefore, believe that they do prove, as Rogers *apparently* does not so believe.

But, we ask, if Calvin believes that the testimonies or arguments of men prove the Bible to be the Word of God, why does he say in the following statement that “those who wish to prove to infidels that Scripture is the Word of God are acting foolishly for only by faith can this be known”?

He says this because he means by “prove,” not “demonstrate,” but “persuade.” According to Calvin, these *indicia* demonstrate but they do not and cannot prove (in the sense of persuade) because wicked men suffer not so much from stupidity as from stubbornness. What therefore is needed is a new heart or “faith,” which is the gift of God. For an apologist to wish to “prove” to (persuade) infidels (those without faith and having no disposition to believe) that Scripture is the Word of God is to act “foolishly” indeed. For many modern interpreters of Calvin the proof of

inspiration cannot be known apart from the Holy Spirit because for them there is no proof of it. By contrast, Calvin presented arguments that any intelligent man could easily know, though he never could "savingly know" or believe apart from the working of God's Spirit.

It is simply not true that Calvin "rejected the rationalistic Scholasticism . . . which demanded proofs prior to faith in Scripture."<sup>61</sup> As we have seen, Calvin did have proofs for Scripture just as the Scholastics did—indeed, the same ones derived through the Scholastics. The "faith" that the Holy Spirit wrought was in these proofs or *indicia*, such as prophecy. For Calvin the Holy Spirit did not work in a vacuum but in the context of Scripture where these proofs were spread out. To be sure, Calvin does not express himself in the Q.E.D. fashion (as in mathematical proofs) of the Scholastics, but his reasoning is the same. Aquinas believed in the testimony of the Spirit, and Calvin believed in the *indicia* of Scripture. Rogers seems to see only their difference in form and not their sameness in substance.

Most modern interpreters of Calvin are the very "spiritualistic sectarians" of whom he complained in his own day—those who claimed revelation from the Spirit apart from the Word. Calvin's Spirit led to the Scripture with its *indicia*; the "spirit" of the modern Niesels, Brunners, and Rogerses is apart from Calvin's Scripture with its proofs of its own inspiration.

Calvin's handling of certain New Testament citations of the Old Testament poses a real problem with reference to Calvin's inerrancy doctrine. In this area Calvin troubled even John Murray.<sup>62</sup> Sufficient to remember here is that Calvin believed in the inerrant inspiration of the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. Consequently, he could easily grant that the Holy Spirit could substitute another word than the original, one that could better express his purpose in the new context. Uninspired men would have no such liberty, though they might *argue* that a new word expresses the meaning for the new context better than the old word that was inerrant. Unless the original word was inerrant, we uninspired interpreters would not be able to fix the original meaning with certainty and consequently could not estimate the most suitable term for explaining it to a new generation. To illustrate, Greenwich Mean Time must be fixed and "inerrant" if we are to express and evaluate our time in a way most suitable for our situation. To illustrate historically, we believe

that at the end of the fourth century *homoiousios* ("of like nature") meant essentially the same thing as *homoousios* ("of same nature") at the beginning of the fourth century in the Christological controversies. We are *probably* right, but we *may* be wrong. But, if the Holy Spirit said this he would, of course, be infallibly correct.

As for Calvin's view of inerrancy in relation to matters of science, the issue is much clearer. He maintains that the biblical writers simply wrote in popular style, and popular style does not need to be and indeed cannot be harmonized with science. Popular style is one thing; technical style is another. In an illustration from Calvin, to which Rogers calls our attention, Moses called the moon one of two great lights when in fact it is much smaller than Saturn, as was known even in Calvin's day. There is no problem of harmonization however. As Calvin says, Moses is talking about things as they *appear* to the naked eye; the astronomer, about things as they *are* in the telescope (cf. *non sequitur* no. 1). If the astronomer said that Saturn *appeared* to be bigger than the moon, he would be in error. If Moses had said that the moon *is* larger than Saturn, he would have been in error. But Moses is not in error; and Calvin is not implying error in Moses, though Rogers suggests that Calvin was acknowledging scientific error in Moses and was indifferent to it.<sup>63</sup>

Adding it up, we must say that nothing that modern opponents of inerrancy have presented, cited, deduced, or inferred in any way whatsoever shows that Calvin held any other view than the absolute inerrancy of Holy Scripture. Brunner<sup>64</sup> and Dowey<sup>65</sup> find verbal inspiration in Calvin. Bromiley even finds dictation.<sup>66</sup> Kenneth Kantzer's doctoral thesis may be the most thorough demonstration of Calvin's teaching on inerrancy,<sup>67</sup> and John Murray<sup>68</sup> and J.I. Packer<sup>69</sup> are with him, though they find problems.

#### POST-REFORMATION SCHOLASTICISM

A.A. Hodge has written somewhere that the seventeenth century with its Scholasticism was the golden age of Protestantism.<sup>70</sup> What Hodge felt to be a natural development and fruition of the Reformation, many today consider a distortion and rigidifying. They see a difference of kind rather than degree, a degeneration rather than shift of emphasis.<sup>71</sup> The difference amounts, however, simply to the Scholastics being more academic, pedantic, and methodical. In a word, the Scholastics were more scholastic.

Therefore, to say of the Lutheran Scholastic, John Gerhard,

that his "doctrine of Scripture . . . was not an article of faith, but the *principium* (foundation) of other articles of faith" and that he therein differed from his mentor, Luther,<sup>72</sup> is unjustified. We have shown that Luther had some reason for faith in the Bible as God's Word, as also did Calvin. Once the Bible was recognized as the Word of God, it, of course, became the *principium* for all truth that it revealed. What else? Even those who hold to partial inspiration believe that the inspired part (if they could identify it) is the Word of God and is to be believed.

Rogers says of the great Reformed Scholastic, Francis Turretin: "Because reasonable proofs must precede faith, Turretin felt it necessary to harmonize every apparent inconsistency in the biblical text. He refused to admit that the sacred writers could slip in memory or err in the smallest matters."<sup>73</sup> Rogers seems to think that Turretin first harmonized every "apparent inconsistency" before he could have faith in the Bible as the Word of God. But he cites no evidence of this, and we are certain that he can find none. Why, then, does he think this? Apparently because Turretin really did refuse to admit any biblical errors "in the smallest matters." If this is the line of reasoning, it is an example of further *non sequiturs*:

1. Turretin admitted no errors in the Bible.
2. Inconsistencies would involve error.
3. Therefore, Turretin:
  - a. would admit no inconsistency in the Bible,
  - b. would harmonize all apparent inconsistencies, and
  - c. would not believe the Bible was the Word of God until he had completed the harmonizations.

It is 3b and 3c that are the *non sequiturs* Rogers apparently does not notice. It does not follow (and it did not follow for Turretin) that because a person believes there are no errors or inconsistencies in the Bible he can harmonize all apparent ones. It is enough that he can show that apparent inconsistencies are not incapable of harmonization. Obviously, if a person does not have to harmonize every apparent inconsistency even *after* believing the Bible to be the Word of God, he does not have to do so *before* believing it.

The jibe of Dill Allison that although Turretin "claimed to be expounding Reformed theology, he never quoted Calvin"<sup>74</sup> is mind-boggling to anyone who knows Turretin's constant allusion to and saturation with John Calvin, whom he admired almost to the point of idolatry.

## THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Westminster Confession of Faith is Presbyterianism's most influential creed. Chapter I, "Of the Holy Scripture," is its most influential and noble chapter. Inerrancy is its indubitable teaching, although the word itself is not used but only equivalents.<sup>75</sup>

The most extensive and scholarly study ever made of this Confession is undoubtedly Jack Rogers's massive, erudite, able, and influential study, *Scripture and the Westminster Confession*.<sup>76</sup> Only his persistent misunderstanding of the faith/reason and total/partial inspiration themes vitiates its value. Because of that volume's significance, Rogers's comments on Westminster in *Biblical Authority* are especially important.

Rogers begins with the fideistic interpretation of the Confession characteristic of his major work:

Philosophically, the Westminster divines remained in the Augustinian tradition of faith leading to understanding. Samuel Rutherford stated the position: "The believer is the most reasonable man in the world, he who doth all by faith, doth all by the light of sound reason."<sup>77</sup>

Here Rogers cites one of the Westminster divines least disposed to his own thesis, quoting a statement from Rutherford that refutes rather than supports it. If the reader ponders the above quotation, he can see that it boomerangs against the one who cited it. It is meant to show that the Scots' divine, Rutherford, operated on the faith-before-reason principle, but it reveals the opposite. Rutherford calls the believer "reasonable." In other words, there are reasons for faith, for to act by faith is to act reasonably: "he who doth all by faith, doth all by the light of sound reason." Gillespie, another of the "eleven" primary drafters of the Westminster Confession, could not have said it better. This is a utilization and not a crucifixion of reason. There are reasons for faith. That is no crucifixion of the intellect that extols reasonable faith. Rogers continues:

The "works of creation and providence" reinforce in persons that knowledge which has been suppressed and because of which a person is inexcusable for his sin. Thus there is no "natural theology" in the Thomistic fashion, asserting that persons can know God by reason based on sense experience prior to God's revelation.<sup>78</sup>

Here the point of "reinforce" is missed, just as "confirmation"

was in the Calvin discussion. How can creation and providence "reinforce" the innate knowledge of God unless they too reveal God? And what is this but "natural theology," whether exactly the same as Aquinas's or not?

Leaving natural theology and turning to biblical revelation, we read: "The authority of Scripture in section iv was not made dependent on the testimony of any person or church, but on God, the author of Scripture."<sup>79</sup> True, but what Protestant or Roman Catholic Scholastic ever said that the authority of Scripture was "dependent on the testimony of any person or church"? Everyone recognizes that the authority of the Bible rests only on its being God's Word. The testimony of the church or any other proofs are cited only to try to prove that the Bible is the Word of God. If it is the Word of God, its authority is intrinsic. The debate is finished. No "Aristotelian Scholasticism" would try to demonstrate by external evidence the "Bible's authority." All it would try to demonstrate is the Bible's inspiration; and if it succeeded in that, the authority of the Bible would be established *ipso facto*.

Of course, Reynolds, whom Rogers cites, would say—be he Platonist, Aristotelian, Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Jew—that faith is assent "grounded upon the authority of authenticalness of a Narrator . . ." if that Narrator is believed to be God. Men recognize that in their natural state. The point is only that they do not "see" it spiritually. Reynolds explained this very well in his essay on "The Sinfulness of Sin": "A man, in divine truths, [may] be spiritually ignorant, even where in some respect he may be said to know. For the Scriptures pronounce men ignorant of those things which they see and know."<sup>80</sup> Reynolds is here arguing with the Socinians who deny "spiritual" knowledge altogether in biblical matters. He would now have to argue with Rogers, who denies "natural" knowledge altogether in the same matters.

We continue:

Section v climaxed the development of the first half of the chapter with the statement that, while many arguments for the truth and authority of Holy Scripture can be adduced, only the witness of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart can persuade that person that Scripture is the Word of God.<sup>81</sup>

This is the statement by which Rogers refutes Rogers on his most fundamental thesis, namely, that faith precedes reason in the historic doctrine of the church and that of Westminster. True to Westminster, he writes, "While many arguments for the truth

and authority of Holy Scripture can be adduced, only the witness of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart can persuade." That is, there are arguments of reason that precede faith, though they do not "persuade." This is the view of Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Turretin, Edwards, and Princeton, but it is not Rogers's faith-before-rationality. The rational is *first*; then, *if the Spirit wills*, comes saving knowledge.

Rogers notes that the last five sections of the Confession delineate the "saving content of Scripture," "the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life." Then follows this *non sequitur* (no. 3): "Scripture was not an encyclopedia of answers to every sort of question for the divines."<sup>82</sup> The *non sequitur* (because the Bible is concerned primarily with salvation it is not concerned with other details) is meant to avoid the inevitable inerrancy doctrine. The "saving content" is supposed to be one thing, the saving *context* another thing. But they are inseparably woven together in Scripture! No Westminster divine questioned this, and Jack Rogers does not logically deny it. So it does not follow from the fact that the Bible reveals the counsel of God for our faith and life that it does not include answers to incidental questions.

Rogers returns to Rutherford, saying that according to Rutherford, Scripture was not to "communicate information on science. He listed areas in which Scripture is *not* our rule, e.g., 'not in things of Art and Science, as to speak Latine, to demonstrate conclusions of Astronomie.'<sup>83</sup> True, for Rutherford (as for all other Inerrantists) the Bible is not a textbook of Latin grammar or astronomy, but Rutherford never granted any error of the Bible in science or said that any textbook on science could correctly maintain that Scripture ever erred. Rogers continues with a statement from Rutherford that illustrates *our* point excellently:

Samuel Rutherford, in a tract against the Roman Catholics, asked: "How do we know that Scripture is the Word of God?" If ever there was a place where one might expect a divine to use the Roman Catholic's own style of rational arguments as later Scholastic Protestants did, it was here. Rutherford instead appealed to the Spirit of Christ speaking in Scripture: "Sheep are docile creatures, Ioh 10.27. *My sheep heare my voyce, I know them and they follow me . . . so the instinct of Grace knoweth the voyce of the Beloved amongst many voyces, Cant. 2.8, and this discerning power is in the Subject.*"<sup>84</sup>

When the question is raised, "How do we know that Scripture is the Word of God?" the word *know* is clearly used in the sense of "savingly know." This is evident from Rutherford's answer, which shows that the believer knows Christ's voice savingly by an "instinct of Grace." No *mere* rational knowledge is meant, and therefore no mere rational arguments that Rutherford shared with the Roman Catholics are given. He is not speaking of a knowledge that is "abundantly evidenced" by the many arguments but of a persuasion that comes only from the Holy Spirit. If ever there was a place one might expect a divine to use the Roman Catholic's style of mere rational arguments, it was *not* here.

In conclusion, we read:

For the Westminster divines the final judge in controversies of religions was not just the bare word of Scripture, interpreted by human logic, but the Spirit of Christ leading us in Scripture to its central saving witness to him.<sup>85</sup>

For the Westminster divines the final judge in controversies was the bare Word of God interpreted by human logic, but the Holy Spirit surely assisted the devout interpreter and spoke in the Word he had inspired. Nevertheless, the divines never appealed to something the Spirit was supposedly saying apart from sound exegesis of his Word. They never attacked an exegesis as not coming from the Spirit but as not coming from the text. As Rogers has noted, these men were not mystics. They did not appeal to any mystical Word but only to the written Word. And they applied their exegesis to *all* questions of religion, such as church government, and not merely to "its central saving witness" to Christ.

In a word, Westminster is saying, What God has joined together—Word and Spirit—let no man put asunder. It is the Spirit who enables the saint savingly to understand the Word, and it is the Word that enables him to understand that it is the Spirit who is enabling him.

#### AMERICAN THEOLOGY

Before coming to the inerrancy position of old Princeton, we may note that Princeton had no monopoly on this view. Inerrancy was essentially the American position before as well as after old Princeton. We will take but one example prior to the Princeton development—that of America's most distinguished theologian, Jonathan Edwards (d. 1758).

Surprise is sometimes expressed that the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter I, "Of the Holy Scripture," does not mention directly the argument for inspiration from miracles. We say "directly" because the phrase "incomparable excellencies that do abundantly evidence the Bible to be the Word of God" amounts to an argument from miracles, for how do these things show the Bible to be the Word of *God* except that they affirm God as the miraculous author behind the men he inspired? Nevertheless, miracles are not mentioned explicitly, and that does surprise some.<sup>86</sup> It is interesting, therefore, to find that Edwards, who does expressly make much of the argument from miraculous attestation,<sup>87</sup> subordinates it nonetheless to the "internal" evidence.

In his unpublished sermon on Exodus 9:12-16,<sup>88</sup> Edwards preached that "God gives men good evidence of the truth of his word." This evidence is internal ("evident stamp") especially, but external also. In fact, "there is as much in the gospel to show that it is no work of men, as there is in the sun in the firmament."<sup>89</sup>

This internal evidence appears to include many matters. Edwards approaches the Bible in the context of human need, arguing as follows: First, it is evident that all men have offended God; second, they are sure from providence that God is friendly and placable; third, God is not willing to be reconciled without being willing to reveal terms; fourth, if willing, he must have revealed terms; and, fifth, if the Bible does not have this revelation, the revelation does not exist.<sup>90</sup> After all, there are only three groups of mankind: 1) those who receive the Bible; 2) the Muslims (who derive from it); and 3) the heathen, whose gods are idols and who are judged by the light of nature and philosophy.<sup>91</sup> What insights the heathen do have come from tradition.<sup>92</sup>

Perhaps nowhere has Edwards stated his view of the internal perfections of Scripture better than in the early *Miscellany* 338:

The Scriptures are evidence of their own divine authority as a human being is evident by the motions, behaviour and speech of a body of a human form and contexture, or that the body is animated by a rational mind. For we know no otherwise than by the consistency, harmony and concurrence of the train of actions and sounds, and their agreement to all that we can suppose to be a rational mind. . . . So there is that wondrous universal harmony and consent and concurrence in the aim and drift, such as universal appearance of a wonderful, glorious design, such stamps everywhere of exalted and divine wisdom, majesty, and holiness in

matter, manner, contexture and aim, that the evidence is the same that the Scriptures are the word and work of a divine mind; to one that is thoroughly acquainted with them, as 'tis that the words and actions of an understanding man are from a rational mind, to one that is of a long time been his familiar acquaintance.

An infant, he continues, does not understand that this "rational mind" is behind a man because it does not understand the symptoms. "So 'tis with men that are so little acquainted with the Scriptures, as infants with the actions of human bodies. [They] cannot see any evidence of a divine mind as the origin of it, because they have not comprehension enough to apprehend the harmony, wisdom, etc."<sup>93</sup> Putting the whole matter succinctly, Edwards says that the Bible shines bright with the amiable simplicity of truth.

As for his argument from miracles as attestation of the biblical revelation, we will confine ourselves to just one miracle: the Jews. "The Jewish nation have, from their very beginning been a remarkable standing evidence of the truth of revealed religion."<sup>94</sup> An earlier *Miscellany* had shown proof that the Jewish religion was divine because of Jewish pride, which could never have accounted for their exalted religion but would rather have worked against it.<sup>95</sup>

That Scripture was inerrant for Jonathan Edwards no one who has ever read his works, especially his sermons, can doubt. "All Scripture says to us is certainly true." He adds, "There you hear Christ speaking."<sup>96</sup>

Liberals find this baffling in Edwards but indisputably his opinion:

George Gordon has written, "It is not edifying to see Edwards, in the full movement of speculation, suddenly pause, begin a new section of his essay, and lug into his argument proof texts from every corner of the Bible to cover the incompleteness of his rational procedure." Peter Gay has very recently written that Edwards was in a biblical "cage." . . . Perry Miller, more than any other student of the Enlightenment, has admired the intellectuality of Jonathan Edwards. Miller sensed that in many ways Edward was not only abreast of our times but ahead of them; nevertheless, he felt Edwards was reactionary in some respects even to his own age.<sup>97</sup>

Still more recently John E. Smith has written:

The central problem is this: Edwards, on the one hand, accepted totally the tradition established by the Reformers with respect to

the absolute primacy and authority of the Bible, and he could approach the biblical writings with that conviction of their inerrancy and literal truth which one usually associates with Protestant fundamentalism.<sup>98</sup>

### PRINCETON THEOLOGY

After an interesting survey of the development of Princeton theology from Archibald Alexander to B.B. Warfield in which Rogers sees it interpreting Westminster in terms of Turretin, incorporating the Aristotelian Common Sense philosophy, and increasingly rigidifying its own position to the point of the inerrancy of the autographa (all of this highly debatable—and worthy of debate if we had space), Rogers observes, “Since the original texts were not available, Warfield seemed to have an unassailable apologetic stance.”<sup>99</sup>

First of all, since no evangelical scholar ever defended an infallible translation, where can the written Word of God be located but in the original texts or autographs? This was always assumed. Warfield was no innovator. It is true that some believed the text was transmitted “pure,” but in that case we would *have* the autographa. There is no question in any case but that the autographs alone were the written Word of God. Warfield would be amused to be given credit for discovering the obvious.

Second, Warfield believed that we virtually did have the autographa in the form of a highly reliable text.<sup>100</sup> He did not consider himself, therefore, “unassailable.” One modern teacher refers to the appeal to autographa as “weasel words,” an accusation that surely is as unfair as it is scurrilous. Did the Westminster divines suppose that the Word of God located anywhere other than in the autographa? Where is the “rigidifying”?

But to continue:

Influenced by this principle [the reliability of sense perception], Hodge showed no trace of the theory of accommodation held by Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Calvin, to explain that we do not know God as he is but only his saving mercy adapted to our understanding. For Hodge: “We are certain, therefore, that our ideas of God, founded on the testimony of his Word, correspond to what He really is, and constitute true knowledge.”<sup>101</sup>

We have already shown that Rogers’ interpretation of accommodation in the above-named fathers is misleading and erroneous (*non sequitur* no. 2). Hodge is not really differing from the fathers.

After enumerating a dozen Bible verses teaching the immutability of God, Hodge remarks about the phenomenological character of God's repentance: "Those passages of Scripture in which God is said to repent, are to be interpreted on the same principle as those in which He is said to ride upon the wings of the wind, or walk through the earth."<sup>102</sup> God is accommodating himself by using phenomenological language. Hodge also taught the incomprehensibility of God as clearly as Calvin or any other father of the church.<sup>103</sup>

#### A CONTINUING REFORMED TRADITION

Mention is made by Rogers of James Orr, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, and G.C. Berkouwer as respected evangelicals who either did not postulate inerrancy or made a fideistic approach to the Bible in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will not challenge this. Many other names could be added, and other centuries as well, but the names of Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, the Westminster divines, Edwards, and the Princetonians, along with the general tradition of the church from the beginning, must be enrolled under the banner of inerrancy.

Inerrancy has almost always been maintained along with biblical criticism. Criticism was never rejected by Hodge, Warfield, Lindsell, or any other scholarly inerrancy advocate of whom we have ever heard. These men and others have tried and found wanting many of the claims of many of the biblical critics, but that they rejected "biblical criticism" as such is unsupported by evidence. Warfield was noted as a New Testament critic as was his famous successor, J.G. Machen. A.T. Robertson was champion extraordinary of the historico-grammatical method. When charges are made to the contrary, it is usually because the *science* of biblical criticism is being confused with the *negativism* of some biblical critics.

Turning now to Berkouwer's concept of biblical errancy, we read:

Berkouwer commented that when error in the sense of incorrectness is used on the same level as error in the biblical sense of sin and deception we are quite far removed from the serious manner in which error is dealt with in Scripture.<sup>104</sup>

Here Berkouwer seems to allow that the Bible may contain errors in the sense of "incorrectness" since these errors are not on a

“level” with such errors as “sin and deception.” This can only mean that if the Bible is the Word of God, then God can be incorrect, can err, can make mistakes, though he cannot deceive. This does more than “damage reverence for Scripture.” This damages reverence for God.

We realize that these are serious charges—but they are not unwarranted. However, they do not imply that those guilty are deliberately so. We believe they are not and that if they ever see validity in our charge, they will, as the earnest Christians they are, eschew their error in charging God in his Word with error.

Loretz in *Das Ende der Inspirations Theologie* entitles chapter 20 “*Die Wahrheit der Bibel—das theologische Pseudoproblem der absoluten Irrtumslosigkeit der Heilige Schrift*” (The Truth of the Bible—The Theological Pseudo Problem of the Absolute Inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures). He calls inerrancy a pseudoproblem and thus disposes of it as a nonissue. Why is it a false problem or nonproblem? Because the Bible is Semitic, and the concept of inerrancy is Greek: the Bible is affectional, inerrancy is rational; the Bible is nonlogical, inerrancy is logical. It is a case of apples and oranges, according to Loretz. Inerrancy simply asks the wrong questions and gets irrelevant answers. This is Rogers’s theme with different names: *Semitic* for Platonic-Augustinian-Reformation-Berkouwer; *Greek* for Aristotelian-Thomistic-Scholastic-Warfield. But, of course, the Jews could think and the Greeks could feel, and the only thing “pseudo” in this whole matter is calling inerrancy a “pseudoproblem.”

### CONCLUSION

We come now to the bottom line. What does the history of the church show to be her doctrine concerning Holy Scripture? The only inerrant answer I can perceive is inerrancy. That is not to say that every teacher in the history of the church has confirmed or expressly stated the doctrine, but it does maintain that the evidence shows that the overwhelming general consensus of the church and the teaching of her greatest theologians in all branches of her communion has been inerrancy.

Virtually the only reason this has ever been questioned as a historical datum is not in the teachings of the fathers but in the wrong deductions that are sometimes drawn from them, as we pointed out at the beginning of this essay and have illustrated throughout—the persistent *non sequitur*.

Rogers's conclusions after his survey are quite different:

First, it is historically irresponsible to claim that for two thousand years Christians have believed that the authority of the Bible entails a modern concept of inerrancy in scientific and historical details.<sup>105</sup>

Except for the inappropriate word *modern*, the above statement would be correct if the word "not" were inserted between "have" and "believed." There is nothing especially modern in the concept "without error." Rogers apparently believes that associating the concept with scientific matters began in the seventeenth century. But whatever new ideas about science may have appeared then, the concept of accuracy in scientific and historical detail was not among them. Therefore, for Rogers to say that the statement that for two thousand years Christians have believed in the inerrancy of all Scripture is "irresponsible" is irresponsible. It is not Lindsell, cited in the footnote, but Rogers who is irresponsible. Not only have Christians believed this, but most official Christian declarations of the last two millennia have affirmed it. Certainly nothing was ever officially declared to the contrary by an orthodox church.

To make his thesis appear more palatable, Rogers resorts to caricature again, suggesting that the inerrancy view entailed the notion of "some kind of direct, unmediated speech of God, like the Koran or The Book of Mormon."<sup>106</sup> The charge is worse than that of mechanical inspiration, which is the usual erroneous charge urged at this point against inerrancy. Rogers has inerrancy advocates teaching *no* human participation—not even mechanical.

The second conclusion of Rogers is of special interest to the present writer:

It is equally irresponsible to claim that the old Princeton theology of Alexander, Hodge, and Warfield is the only legitimate evangelical, or Reformed, theological tradition in America.<sup>107</sup>

When I first read this statement I agreed with it heartily (and I still do). But I did not at first reading see the footnote that accused me of making that "irresponsible" claim. When someone called the note to my attention, my respect for Rogers is such that I said perhaps I had been guilty by some slip of the pen or unconscious inference. I knew only that I have never believed or intended to teach that the old Princeton position (which is indeed my own)

was the “only *legitimate* evangelical, or Reformed, theological tradition in America.”

Then I reread my article in *The Evangelicals*<sup>108</sup> to see if I had (unintentionally and mistakenly) given such an impression. I am still reading these pages to find what Rogers had in mind. Could this be another *non sequitur*? Because I teach that the Old Princeton position of inerrancy is the only *sound* tradition, do I therefore teach that it is the only “legitimate” one? I have never contended that any view of Scripture other than inerrancy has been and is illegitimate in my own Reformed denomination or any other evangelical or Reformed denomination unless it so stipulates. None to my knowledge does, with the possible exception of some of the evangelical Lutheran bodies.

Rogers’s third conclusion is the most frightening of all, for it would perpetuate the same sins against the future history of the church that have been committed against the past:

It is no doubt possible to define the meaning of biblical inerrancy according to the Bible’s saving purpose and taking [*sic*] into account the human forms through which God condescended to reveal himself. Inerrancy thus defined could be heartily affirmed by those in the Augustinian tradition. However, the word *inerrancy* has been so identified with the Aristotelian notions of accuracy imposed on it by the old Princeton theology that to redefine it in American culture would be a major task.<sup>109</sup>

Being interpreted, this paragraph means that it would be possible, though difficult, to define inerrancy in a new sense to mean errancy in the old sense. This is the extension of an olive branch that turns into a snake when picked up. Let inerrancy continue to mean “without error.” Plato would not have any more difficulty understanding that than Aristotle.

If Rogers and many with him do not believe the Bible is without error, let them continue plainly to say so and argue their case. But may God deliver us from evangelicals who follow the liberal practice of “flying at a low level of visibility.” Evangelicals are already beginning to speak of errant inerrancy. But let this position not be confused with the historic consensus of inerrancy meaning “without error,” PERIOD.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The title of the volume edited by Jack Rogers (Waco: Word, 1977).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Markus Barth, *Conversations with the Bible* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

<sup>3</sup>William H. Harris and Judith S. Levey, eds., *The New Columbia Encyclopedia* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1975).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>5</sup>A.H. Strong asks, "Would it be preferable, in the O.T., if we should read: 'When the revolution of the earth upon its axis caused the rays of the solar luminary to impinge horizontally upon the retina, Isaac went out to meditate' (Gen. 24:63)?" (*Systematic Theology* [Philadelphia: Griffith and Rowland, 1907], 1:223). The great inerrantist Martin Luther was himself committing this *non sequitur* when he condemned Copernicus's heliocentrism.

<sup>6</sup>Arthur Lindsay, "The Principle of Accommodation," an unpublished Pittsburgh Theological Seminary paper (1975), gives a sound current discussion and critique of this *non sequitur*.

<sup>7</sup>George MacDonald carried this *non sequitur* to its logical conclusion when he wrote, "It is Jesus who is the revelation of God, not the Bible." Cited by William B. Glover in *Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Independent, 1954), p. 82.

<sup>8</sup>Emil Brunner illustrates this *non sequitur* when discussing John Calvin in *Revelation and Reason: The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1946), p. 275.

<sup>9</sup>This has been a persistent *non sequitur* in neoorthodoxy generally, and Karl Barth has specialized in it (cf. *Church Dogmatics*, vol. I, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, second half-volume, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956], pp. 523ff.). Klaas Runia has astutely criticized Barth in *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) in an *ad hominem* manner by observing that Barth himself believed that Jesus Christ was true man, without his humanity preventing his sinlessness. Burtchaell has well remarked that God can do what man cannot do: control men without destroying their humanity. "The wrangle over predestination and free will still runs on, for example, because disputants cannot see that God can do what no man can: control the activity of persons without infringing upon their freedom" (*Catholic Theories of Biblical Inspiration Since 1810* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969], p. 290).

<sup>10</sup>The history of the doctrine of inspiration has been repeatedly and thoroughly researched. In addition to extensive studies in encyclopedias and histories of doctrine, innumerable monographs have appeared on the subject in general as well as on details such as "alleged discrepancies" (cf. John Haley, *An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* [Nashville: Goodpasture, 1951]) and individual theologians (cf. A.D.R. Polman, *The Word of God According to St. Augustine* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961]). It is sufficient here to note a few of the more important general historical works. Classical nineteenth-century studies include: William Lee, *The Inspiration of Holy Scripture* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1858); George T. Ladd, *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture: A Critical, Historical and Dogmatic Inquiry*, 2 vols. (New York: Scribner, 1883). More recently there are William Sanday, *Inspiration: Eight Lectures on the Early History and Origin of the Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration* (London: Longmans, 1903); G.D. Barry, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Holy Scripture: A Study of the Literature of the First Five Centuries* (New York: Macmillan, 1919); Daniel J. Theron, *Evidence of Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958); Johannes Beumer, *Die Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift* (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna: Herder, 1968); Bruce Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster; London: Hutchinson, 1972); Robert M. Grant, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*, rev. ed. (New York, London: Macmillan, 1972); Daniel Loretz, *Das Ende der Inspirations Theologie: Chancen eines Neubeginns*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1974).

Just before this volume went to the printer a copy of Stephen T. Davis, *The Debate about the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) came into my hands. Though not a historical study, it is a most acute analysis of the contemporary debate. While attacking inerrancy and defending a so-called infallibilist position, it is one of the most judicious, balanced, fair critiques I have ever read. Davis avoids virtually all *non sequiturs*, argues to the point, honors motives, recognizes differences, all the while unambiguously affirming orthodox doctrines himself. He admirably embodies the concept of a "worthy opponent." Nevertheless, I believe his argument against inerrancy and for "infallibilism" fails utterly. His attack is unsuccessful because he admits that he cannot prove that "errors" actually do exist in the Bible (cf. chapter 5, p. 14ff.), and this leaves him with only one feeble argument; namely, that the Bible does not explicitly use the word *inerrant* in its self-description. But if it calls itself God's Word many times, thus indicating the inspiration not only of the writers but of the writings as well, what can a divine Word be but an inerrant Word? The mountain is laboring and not even bringing forth a mouse. Davis's own infallibilist position self-destructs, for he admits that his Bible may even err on any crucial doctrine (though he hopes not and thinks it will not), and he admits that ultimate reliance for truth is on his own mind, Scripture notwithstanding (p. 70). Over two hundred years ago, Jonathan Edwards demolished this very argument found in the Deist Matthew Tindal's *Christianity As Old As Creation* (*Miscellany* 1340 in H. Townsend, *The Philosophy of Jonathan Edwards* [Eugene: University of Oregon Press, 1955]) so thoroughly that I doubt that, if Davis had read that critique, his *Debate about the Bible* would ever have been written.

<sup>11</sup>But Augustine was familiar with Aristotle's logic, which he clearly followed (cf. D. D. Runes, ed. *The Dictionary of Philosophy* [New York: Philosophical Library, 1942], p. 23).

<sup>12</sup>McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (New York: Harper, 1892), 1:315ff.

<sup>13</sup>Clement I, chap. 8, 16, 45.

<sup>14</sup>N. Stonehouse, *The Infallible Word: A Symposium* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Guardian, 1946), pp. 127, 128.

<sup>15</sup>*Apologetic* I, chap XXXVI.

<sup>16</sup>*Plea for Christians*, IX.

<sup>17</sup>*Autolycus* II, X. Cf. also III, XII. Prophets and gospel writers are said to be "inspired by one Spirit of God."

<sup>18</sup>*Admonition to the Greeks*, XIII.

<sup>19</sup>Eusebius, *Church History*, V, 17.

<sup>20</sup>*Against the Heresies*, III, 16, 2.

<sup>21</sup>*De Opere et Eleemosynis*, chap. 9.

<sup>22</sup>*Apologetic* 18, 20.

<sup>23</sup>*Homily* on Numbers 27:1.

<sup>24</sup>On Matthew 15:14.

<sup>25</sup>Jack B. Rogers, "The Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," *Biblical Authority*, p. 19.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>27</sup>Cf. the preface to Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Gospel According to St. John*. He writes, "Seeing then it is no longer the fisherman the son of Zebedee, but He who knoweth 'the deep things of God' (1 Cor. ii. 10), the Holy Spirit I mean, that striketh this lyre, let us hearken accordingly. For he will say nothing to us as a man, but what he saith, he will say from the depths of the Spirit . . ." (*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. XIV, p. 2).

<sup>28</sup>Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration*, p. 27.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38. Athanasius also may be cited as affirming that inspiration extended to everything in Scripture: "These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these" (*A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. IV, p. 552).

<sup>30</sup>Jerome writes of the Scriptures that they were written "at the inspiration or urging or

even dictation of the Holy Spirit; they were even written and published by him" (Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, pp. 3650ff.).

<sup>31</sup>Ladd, *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, vol. 2, p. 154.

<sup>32</sup>Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration" in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), pp. 207-8.

<sup>33</sup>Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration*, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup>John E. Smith, *The Analogy of Experience* (New York: Harper, 1973), p. 8. Cited in *Biblical Authority*, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. We do not mean to imply that if Augustine had begun by assuming the inspiration of Scripture, this would have affected his inerrancy stance. All present-day presuppositionalists with whom I am familiar do begin by assuming inspiration and most vigorously defend inerrancy. Cornelius Van Til is an outstanding example. Cf. Greg Bahnsen's "Inductivism, Inerrancy, and Presuppositionalism," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 20, no. 4 (December 1977), pp. 289-305.

<sup>37</sup>This is the emphasis of Augustine's anti-Pelagian works. Grace as necessary to faith is central.

<sup>38</sup>Augustine, *The Enchiridion*, ed. with Introduction by Henry Paolucci (Chicago: Regnery, 1961), p. 4. The following statement, therefore, seems quite gratuitous: "When applied to theology, the Platonic method assumed that faith preceded and provided a frame-work to make possible right reasoning."

<sup>39</sup>For those who would explore this theme further we recommend B.B. Warfield, *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1930).

<sup>40</sup>*Epistle* 82, I, 3.

<sup>41</sup>Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-book of the History of Doctrines*, trans. Charles E. Hay (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966), vol. 1, p. 358, note 1. He cites: *The Doctrines of Christianity*, II, 8; *Epistle* 82, I, 3; *On the Unity of the Church*, 3.5; 13.33; 11.28; *On Baptism*, II, 3, 4; *The City of God*, XI, 3; and *The Enchiridion*, I, 4. C. T. Costello (*St. Augustine's Doctrine of the Inspiration and Canonicity of Scripture* [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1930], pp. 30, 31) also argues that Augustine believed in inerrancy.

<sup>42</sup>Cited from Polman, *Word of God*, pp. 59, 60.

<sup>43</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," p. 21.

<sup>44</sup>Seeberg, *Textbook*, vol. 2, p. 18, note 5.

<sup>45</sup>For a discussion of the *Sola Scriptura* principle, see the essay by R.C. Sproul in this volume—chapter 4: "*Sola Scriptura*: Crucial to Evangelicalism."

<sup>46</sup>*Dialogues*, 411.

<sup>47</sup>"*Error est dicere: sine Aristotele non fit theologus; immo theologus non fit, nisi id fiat sine Aristotele.*"

<sup>48</sup>What is said of the ultimate Luther is still more evident of the other great Reformers. No one questions this concerning Ulrich Zwingli, the most humanistic of all. We believe that scholars would never have doubted it in John Calvin either, were it not for erroneous deductions from his doctrine of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. The Genevan maintains that there is no true or saving knowledge of God except for those enlightened by the Word and Spirit (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960], book I, chap. 7). All knowledge apart from that, however true, is vain. But it is a sad error to attribute to Calvin a denial of any and all knowledge of God apart from the testimony of the Spirit. Men "know" God by the seed of religion in each, by the creation and government of the world, and so forth (*ibid.*, book I, chap. 1, 4). Calvin follows the traditional path even to citing classic Cicero.

<sup>49</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," p. 24.

<sup>50</sup>W. Bodamer, "Luthers Stellung zur Lehre von der Verbalinspiration," *Theologische Quartalsschrift*, 1936, pp. 240ff.

<sup>51</sup>Brunner, *Revelation and Reason*, pp. 275-76.

<sup>52</sup>Willem Jan Kooiman, *Luther and the Bible*, trans. John Schmidt (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961), *passim*.

<sup>53</sup>Bromiley, "Church Doctrine of Inspiration."

<sup>54</sup>Barth, *Doctrine of the Word of God*, part 2, p. 520.

<sup>55</sup>Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950), p. 111. He also admits that Calvin, as Luther, thought that scholars could compute on the basis of biblical genealogies (*Revelation and Reason*, p. 278, note 13).

<sup>56</sup>This kind of thinking leads Grant to remark that "by his acceptance of the primacy of faith in exegesis Calvin opened the way for subjectivism even while he tried to exclude it" (*Short History of Interpretation*, p. 134), and even Brunner thought Calvin was too subjective (*Revelation and Reason*, p. 269). Admittedly, Calvin's phraseology at times suggests subjectivity.

<sup>57</sup>Compare Romans 1:20 where unregenerate men "know" God but do not have faith or worship him. They hold the truth in unrighteousness. Paul says they are "without excuse."

<sup>58</sup>Calvin, *Institutes*, vol. 1, p. 81.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>60</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," p. 27.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>John Murray, *Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960), p. 12.

<sup>63</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," pp. 28-29. Cf. Charles W. Shields, *The Trial of Servetus by the Senate of Geneva: A Review of the Official Records and Contemporary Writings* (Philadelphia: MacCalla, 1893), p. 17; C. T. Ohner, *Michael Servetus: His Life and Teachings* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1910), p. 49; C. Manzoni, *Umanesimo ad Eresia: M. Serveto* (Napoli: Guida Editori, 1974), p. 30.

<sup>64</sup>Cf. above, note 56.

<sup>65</sup>Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), p. 100.

<sup>66</sup>Bromiley, "Church Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 210.

<sup>67</sup>This makes Kantzer's assertion of Calvin's inerrancy position in *Inspiration and Interpretation*, ed. John F. Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 137, all the more impressive.

<sup>68</sup>John Murray, *Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1960).

<sup>69</sup>James I. Packer, "Calvin's View of Scripture" in *God's Inerrant Word*, ed. J. W. Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974).

<sup>70</sup>To see the thoroughness of Reformed Scholasticism's development of the inerrancy doctrine, cf. Heinrich Heppie, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: Allen and Unwin, 1950), pp. 12-47. Robert Preus's *Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the 17th-Century Lutheran Dogmaticians* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1955) does the same for Lutheran Scholasticism. Seventeenth-century Roman Catholic Scholasticism was also active in this area (cf. Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration*, p. 66, citing Suarez).

<sup>71</sup>This is a common evaluation by neoorthodox theologians such as Barth and Brunner, who see themselves as truer to the Reformation than its immediate successors. But R. M. Grant also unfortunately remarks that "the later Reformation did not follow Luther, however, and it came to insist on traditional principles of Verbal Inspiration and infallibility which had been alien to him" (*Short History*, p. 135). As we have seen, Luther also contended that the words of canonical Scripture were the inerrant words of God, as his successors confirmed. Bromiley, revealing his fideism, takes a middle path, recognizing that the Scholastics represented only a shift of emphasis but feeling that with them "non-biblical rationalism threatens" ("Church Doctrine of Inspiration," p. 213).

<sup>72</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," p. 30.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 31. When I read the Allison statement I leafed through a few pages of the middle of an English translation of Turretin's systematic theology I used with students and found at casual glancing a half dozen citations of Calvin, more than half of which were quotations. Furthermore, the statement that the *Helvetic Consensus* of Heidegger and Turretin "announced that textual criticism of the Old Testament would 'bring the foundation of our faith and its inviolable authority into perilous hazard'" (*ibid.*) is

distressing. Any reader unfamiliar with the *Consensus* would suppose from this statement that it was opposed to biblical criticism as such. If anyone will read the two relevant paragraphs in *Creeks of the Churches*, ed. John Leith (New York: Doubleday, 1963), pp. 310-11, he will see that the concern of the *Consensus* was with mere conjectural emendation by the critics "sometimes from their own reason alone" of the "Hebrew original." One does not have to agree with the critical opinion of *Consensus* to recognize its genuine concern lest the word of man be substituted for the Word of God. I believe in textual criticism myself, but I know textual critics who amend the text at the drop of their critical hat, including sometimes the text of the New Testament, which has no vowel-point problem. I oppose such subjective textual criticism and am therefore (like the *Consensus*) sometimes thought, unfairly, to be opposed to valid textual criticism.

<sup>75</sup>Cf. also chap. XIV: "By this faith a Christian believeth to be true *whatsoever* is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God Himself speaketh therein."

<sup>76</sup>Jack B. Rogers, *Scripture and the Westminster Confession* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967).

<sup>77</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," p. 33.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup>B. Riveley, ed., *The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Edward Reynolds*, 6 vols. (London: Holdsworth, 1826), 1:103.

<sup>81</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," pp. 33-34.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34. Note the caricature of the inerrantists' view by making it represent the Bible as an "encyclopedia of answers to every sort of question." Caricature usually reveals the threadbare character of one's own case in that it requires a distorted view of the opposition to survive.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup>Cf. E.D. Morris, *Theology of the Westminster Symbols* (Columbus: Champlin 1900).

<sup>87</sup>Dozens of his *Miscellanies* refer to this subject directly and indirectly.

<sup>88</sup>Cited with the kind permission of the Beinecke Library and Rare Book Room, Yale University.

<sup>89</sup>Sermon on Ephesians 3:10 in *The Works of President Edwards* (New York: Carvill, 1830), 7:66ff.

<sup>90</sup>Unpublished sermon outline on 2 Timothy 3:16, points 6 and 7.

<sup>91</sup>Unpublished sermon on Luke 1:77-79.

<sup>92</sup>Jonathan Edwards, *Miscellany* 1337. Cf. 1338.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup>Edwards, *Miscellany* 1290-91.

<sup>95</sup>Edwards, *Miscellany* 811.

<sup>96</sup>Outline sermon on 2 Timothy 3:16 in Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *Selections from the Unpublished Writings of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne, 1865).

<sup>97</sup>John H. Gerstner, "An Outline of the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 133 (July-Sept. 1976): 195.

<sup>98</sup>*Review of Metaphysics* 30 (Dec. 1976): 306.

<sup>99</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine and Biblical Inspiration," p. 39.

<sup>100</sup>Cf. John H. Gerstner, "Warfield's Case for Biblical Inerrancy" in *God's Inerrant Word*, pp. 136-37.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>102</sup>Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1873), 1:391.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 337-38.

<sup>104</sup>*Biblical Authority*, p. 44.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup>*The Evangelicals*, ed. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975), pp. 21-37.

<sup>109</sup>Rogers, "Church Doctrine and Biblical Inspiration," p. 45. But Clark Pinnock is trying, according to Rogers (cf. footnote).