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### PREPARATORY

1. Please summarise I.viii in as few sentences as possible (preferably one!) *There is in the world sufficient testimony, both internal and external to the Bible itself, to the authenticity and divine inspiration of scripture.*

2. To bring this chapter up-to-date, using the internet (possibly) research what is being said currently about the distinction between 'logos' and 'rhema' and present day prophetic revelation. These may be helpful (for research, not for anything else):

[www.victorylifechurch.org/pdf/logos\\_and\\_rhema\\_outline.pdf](http://www.victorylifechurch.org/pdf/logos_and_rhema_outline.pdf)

[http://www.ehow.com/facts\\_5503576\\_definitions-logos-rhema.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_5503576_definitions-logos-rhema.html)

[http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display\\_word/8704](http://www.elijahlist.com/words/display_word/8704)

<http://www.cwgministries.org/Four-Keys-to-Hearing-Gods-Voice.htm>

<http://www.thevoiceforlove.com/voice-of-god.html>

If you want to find some counter arguments put 'logos rhema' in a search engine such as Google

What is your view – and why?

### EXPLORATORY

1. In this chapter Calvin continues the theme of the Word and the Spirit. He contends with – whom? (93, 1f)

a. *...those who, having forsaken Scripture, imagine some way or other of reaching God,*

Into what category does Calvin place such people? (93, 3)

a. *...not so much gripped by error as carried away with frenzy.*

What do those carried away with frenzy put in place of Scripture? (93, 5)

a. *...the teaching office of the Spirit*

What does forsaking Scripture lead people to do? (93, 5ff)

a. *...despise all reading and laugh at the simplicity of those who, as they express it, still follow the dead and killing letter.*

In Calvin's mind this attitude raises a particular question, which is – what? (93, 7ff)

a. *...I should like to know from them what this spirit is by whose inspiration they are borne up so high that they dare despise the Scriptural doctrine as childish and mean.*

What are the two possible answers to Calvin's question? (93, 10 & 94, 2)

a. *...the Spirit of Christ*

b. *...another spirit*

To claim the Spirit of Christ is behind this forsaking of Scripture is, *utterly ridiculous* (93, 11).

Why? (93, 11ff)

a. *The apostles of Christ and other believers of the primitive church were illumined byu no other Spirit, Yet no one of them thence learned contempt for God's Word; rather each was imbued with greater reverence as their writings most splendidly attest.*

How do the writings of the apostle Paul, *most splendidly attest*, his devotion to scripture? (93, 26ff)

- a. *Paul...urges Timothy, a teacher of singular excellence, to give heed to reading {1 Tim 4:13}.*
- b. *And worth remembering is that praise with which he adorns Scripture, that it is useful for teaching, admonishing, and reproving in order that the servants of God may be made perfect [“ Tim 3:16-17].*

In addition to Paul, what does Isaiah 59:21 teach its readers about the relationship of the church to God's Word? (93, 21ff)

- a. *...he teaches that under the reign of Christ the new church will have this true and complete happiness: to be ruled no less by the voice of God than by the Spirit.*

The Lord Jesus not only promised the Spirit to his disciples but also described the role that he would undertake. *...of what sort did he declare his Spirit would be?* (94, 6ff)

- a. *One that would speak not from himself but would suggest to and instil into their minds what he had handed on through the Word [Jn 16:13].*
- b. *...the Spirit, promised to us, has not the task of inventing new and unheard-of revelations, or of forging a new kind of doctrine, to lead us away from the received doctrine of the gospel, but of sealing our minds with that very doctrine which is commended by the gospel.*

2. This co-operation and agreement between the Spirit of God and God's Word means that there is only one way to gain any benefit from the indwelling of the Spirit. What is that one way? (94, 13ff)

- a. *...we ought zealously to apply ourselves both to read and to hearken to Scripture if indeed we want to receive any gain and benefit from the Spirit of God.*

What statements in 2 Peter 1: 19 corroborate Calvin's teaching on this point?

- a. *...you do well to heed...the prophetic word*
- b. *...the prophetic word...(is) a light that shines in a dark place*
- c. *...the prophetic word...(is) a light that shines...until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*

How do we know if a doctrine or practice comes from the Holy Spirit? (94, 23ff)

- a. *...what authority will the Spirit have among us, unless he be discerned by a most certain mark? And he is very clearly pointed out to us by the voice of the Lord*

What accusation do those who seek the Spirit from themselves rather than from Christ level at others who insist on conformity with Scripture as the sign that a doctrine or practice comes from the Holy Spirit? (94, 28ff)

- a. *...they contend that it is not worthy of the Spirit of God, to whom all things ought to be subject, himself to be subject to Scripture.*

How does Calvin counter this charge? (94, 2ff)

- a. *He first of all acknowledges that if this test of authenticity had originated with men or with angels or with anything else and employed a standard devised by men, angels or anything else, then his opponents' accusation would be true, one would have to regard him as degraded, or if you like reduced to bondage.*

- b. *...but when he is compared with himself, when he is considered in himself, who will on this account say that injustice is done him?*
- c. He does have to demonstrate conformity to scripture before we recognise him (*...he is thus put to a test*) but this is to be tested by the sign that he himself gave us (*a test by which it pleased him to establish his majesty among us*).

Why is this test a necessary safeguard? (94, 40ff)

- a. *...lest under his sign the spirit of Satan should creep in, he would have us recognise him in his own image*

If we insist that the Spirit is free to depart from the Scriptures (*...his own image*, 94, 41) we would be thinking a very perverted thought, which is – what? (95, 3f)

- b. We would, *consider it honourable for him to decline or degenerate from himself*.

3. There is an irony in opposing the Spirit to the Word, particularly if it is alleged by those who do it that we place too much emphasis on *the letter that kills*. The irony is that it is departing from the Word that kills. Why is that? (95, 8ff)

- a. *...commending the law apart from Christ, amounts to, calling the people away from the benefits of the New Testament*.

Why does commending the law apart from Christ call people away from the benefits of the New Testament? (95, 9ff)

- a. *...the New Testament, is that, in which the Lord covenants, to engrave his law in the inward parts of believers, and to write it in their hearts [Jer 31:33]*
- b. *The letter, therefore, is dead, and the law of the Lord slays its readers where it both is cut off from Christ's grace [2 Cor 3:6] and, leaving the heart untouched, sounds in the ears alone*.
- c. *...if through the Spirit it is really branded upon hearts, if it shows forth Christ, it is the word of life [cf Phil 2:16] "converting souls...giving wisdom to little ones," etc [Ps 19:7]*.

What is Paul's meaning when, in 2 Cor 3:8, he calls his preaching, *the ministry of the Spirit* (NKJV)? (95, 21ff)

- a. *...the Holy Spirit so inheres in His truth, which He expresses in Scripture, that only when its proper reverence and dignity are given to the Word does the Holy Spirit show forth his power*.

95, 23ff: It would be easy to misunderstand Calvin's meaning in the passage: *And what has lately been said...his own image, namely, in the Word*. Calvin is not now referring to what has lately been said by those who, *censure us for insisting upon the letter that kills*. He is referring to what he himself wrote in I.vii, 4&5 (see footnote). He is now clarifying exactly what he meant when he said, in those passages, that, *the Word itself is not quite certain for us unless it be confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit*, and showing how that position, *is not out of accord with these things*. *These things*, being the things that have been stated immediately above, in I.ix.3.

How are the Word and the Spirit joined together? (95, 26)

- a. *...by a kind of mutual bond*

How does this mutual bond show itself in practice? (95, 27ff)

- a. *...the perfect religion of the Word may abide in our minds when the Spirit, who causes us to contemplate God's face, shines;*
- b. *...we in turn may embrace the Spirit with no fear of being deceived when we recognise him in his own image, namely, in the Word*

How does the Holy Spirit bring his work in relation to the Word to a fitting climax? (95, 35f)

- a. He completes his work, *by the efficacious confirmation of the Word.*

How did Christ, on the Emmaus road, demonstrate that the age of the Spirit did not mean the abandonment of the Scriptures? (96, 1ff)

- a. *In this manner Christ opened the minds of two of his disciples [Lk 24:27,45], not that they should cast away the Scriptures and become wise of themselves, but that they should know the Scriptures.*

How do Paul's exhortations in 1 Thess 5:19&20 show the same thing? (96, 4ff)

- a. *Paul, while he urges the Thessalonians not to "quench the Spirit", does not loftily catch them up to empty speculations without the Word, but immediately adds that prophecies are not to be despised. By this, no doubt, he intimates that the light of the Spirit is put out as soon as prophecies fall into contempt.*

What does Calvin accuse those who urge Christians to abandon the Word of seizing upon? (96, 12f)

- a. *...whatever they may have conceived of while snoring!*

True believers, in contrast to fanatics, recognise that the Scriptures are – what? (96, 16ff)

- a. *...the instrument by which the Lord dispenses the illumination of his Spirit to believers.*

In this recognition, whose example are true Christians following and whose words are they obeying? (96, 19)

- a. *...the apostles*

### **FOR REFLECTION**

1. Are we ever tempted to become bored with the Bible and seek an encounter with God that is more immediate?
2. To what abuse is Calvin's emphasis in this chapter open? How do we guard against this?
3. What impact has Calvin's teaching in this chapter had on you? What difference might it make in your life?