

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Calvin's Critique of Charismatic Calvinists (Steve Lawson)

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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Strange Fire Conference

I was going to do this by video but I decided to come in person. So...I don't do well flat. No, it's a privilege to be here, I want to thank Dr. John MacArthur and the ministry at Grace To You which has had a significant influence on my life over the years, for the opportunity to be able to minister at this conference.

I think in many ways I have been shaped in how to preach by listening to the radio, listening to Grace to You, and listening to John MacArthur in the formative years of my ministry as a young man coming out of seminary at 10:30 there in Little Rock, Arkansas, listening to Grace to You day after day after day, listening how the Word of God is opened up by Dr. MacArthur, his explanation, cross references, word studies, historical back ground, the implication of the text, the outlining of the passage, the introductions, etc. I am very much a product of Grace to You and I'm so thankful for its extended ministry around the world.

I was searching for a text from which to speak at this conference. I will also speak tomorrow night. And I e-mailed the staff at Grace to You and said, "Give me some help. Give me some direction as to what you think would most hit the target. I've only got two silver bullets to fire at this conference, I don't have any just to fire up into the sky and waste and not hit a target. Well what two silver bullets would you have me fire such that you who have come to this conference would be most helped?"

And for the message for this afternoon, it came back, "Would I speak on Calvin's Critique of the Charismatic Calvinists." Calvin's critique, what would John Calvin have to say about the present-day Calvinist who are open but cautious, or who do fully embrace the Charismatic Movement to one degree or another and yet are Calvinistic?

Those of us who are Reformed in our theology, are enormously grateful for the revival of Reformed Theology that has swept through the body of Christ over these last years. In fact, Time Magazine, a couple of years ago, posted the top ten ideas that are changing the world right now. And high on that list it was shocking to see the New Calvinism that even the world has to acknowledge that there is a resurgence of Calvinistic Reformed theology that is taking place. In fact, Dr. MacArthur has said, "If you're not reformed right now, you are basically irrelevant." I would add to that, "You're wrong." But there has been a ground swell and it has been spread far and wide to this Reformed resurgence to

mainline denominations, to independent churches, to Baptist churches, and there's been a host of gifted teachers who have led this parade. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, J.I. Packer, James Montgomery Boice, R.C. Sproul, John Piper and our host for this conference, John MacArthur has really, these men have been standard bearers in this line of godly men and this generation and we all have been under the influence of these men, if not all of these men. And highly visible ministries have carried this torch of Reformed truth from Grace to You, to Ligonier Ministries, Desiring God, Nine Marks. And then other publishing houses, the Banner of Truth, Crossway, Presbyterian and Reformed, Reformation Heritage, Reformation Trust. And the result has been a phenomenon in our days that has been identified as young, restless and reformed. In fact, there is a book that is entitled *Young Restless and Reformed*, and this generation is now young people in their twenties and in their thirties, they are wide-eyed to a Calvinistic world view and to a Reformed theology proper, and soteriology, and Christology, and pneumatology.

And, however, with this resurgence, there has come a strange merging of two streams into one river. One stream is the flow of historic, biblical Calvinism and the other is an unexpected tributary, that of Calvinistic theology in spiritual experience. And the result is a new high bred, a strange high-bred known as the Charismatic Calvinist that holds strong reformed soteriology in one hand, but Calvinistic experiences and worship styles in the other hands. And this one surging river now has a swift current that has pulled in from far and wide an entire generation of many people who are now Reformed but speaking in tongues, having prophetic utterances, claiming new revelations, having supposedly words of knowledge and miraculous healings. The leader of one popular Reformed ministry, writes, "I start...I start getting prophetic dreams. God is showing me the future. A gift of discernment kind of comes to the fore for me, not all the time, but I can see someone and I just know their story. Upon occasion when I get up to preach, I can see just like a screen in front of me and I see someone get raped, or abused, and then I will track them down and say, 'Look, I've had this vision, let me tell you about it.'" He claims it's all true.

These theological positions of merging Reformed Theology with Charismatic theology have gone virtually ignored and unaddressed within the Reformed community. And we have welcomed these men without fully addressing their position regarding the Holy Spirit. I believe that there is none better to address these Charismatic Calvinists than John Calvin himself.

So what I want to do is I want to first begin with the crisis that Calvin faced because Calvin faced a Charismatic crisis in his own day of people who were claiming to have dreams and visions and speaking new revelations. And then I want to see how Calvin addressed it in his own day from his own commentaries from his institutes but also a treatise that he wrote, the treatise against the Libertines.

So let's begin with the crisis Calvin faced. There's nothing new under the sun, and the crisis that we are facing this day that has already been outlined by Dr. MacArthur is a crisis much like what John

Calvin and the Reformers faced in the sixteenth century. As the leading Reformer, whatever faced the church, confronted John Calvin because John Calvin was the chief Reformer. He had the dominant voice. People looked to Calvin for his addressing issues. And so in his own Geneva ministry, Calvin faced the Charismatic issue with two separate groups. One is the Anabaptists, the other is the Libertines. And I want to talk just for a second about these two groups.

The Anabaptist is a complex, wide, divergence of many different sub-groups. Some of them very good. As some of them would hold to truths just like you and I hold to that the church should be comprised of regenerated believers in Jesus Christ, that there should be a separation between church and state, that baptism is for believers, adult baptism. They got many things right but they got many things wrong as well. And there were elements of the Anabaptist group that began to drift into an inner word and an inner witness of the Holy Spirit, and they began to seek dreams and visions and ecstatic experiences and private revelations, emotional accesses, mystical encounters, prophetic manifestations, physical contortions and miraculous accounts. And John Calvin would have to address this in his own day.

And then there were the Libertines. The Libertines were perhaps under the umbrella, the broad umbrella of the Anabaptists but as their name indicates, the Libertines were antinomians. They abused any Christian liberty, suffice to say for the most part, I would venture to say they were unconverted and did not know the Lord. But they removed all restrictions from what is right and wrong and Calvin called them a sect, or 100 times more dangerous than the Roman Catholic Church itself. They were led by fleshly impulses and new revelations. They believe the Holy Spirit is addressing, or is adding new revelation to the Scripture. And they grew discontent with the Bible itself and with the simplicity of the gospel.

And so because of their setting aside the Scripture, and wanting to follow the inner impulses that they believed was the Holy Spirit, they lived in blatant antinomianism which simply means they were against the law or any commandments of God that would regulate their Christian life. They lived in immorality, to put it bluntly. They lived in open licentiousness. And they withdrew distinctions between good and bad. They were known for their...their vulgarities. They were known for their crassness, for their crudeness, for their earthiness, for their...for their profanity. They gloried in being raw in their so-called Christianity. Some of their leaders among the Libertines dressed in torn robes and wanted a grunge look. I feel like I just stepped on something.

It was kind of a hyper, spiritual, medieval reach back look. They wanted an easy moral path, without having to fight against sin, without having to resist temptation, without having to pursue holiness. And John Calvin was just the man to begin to speak to this particular issue. The other Reformers, they're in Switzerland, began to write to...I almost said MacArthur...to, yeah, well him, too, "Charismatic Chaos, the 1536 edition...no, they began to write to John Calvin and Calvin was just the man.

I know when you're laughing with me and when you're laughing at me, okay? How are we going to have a relationship when you're...all right.

It was Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield who identified Calvin as quote: "The theologian of the Holy Spirit," close quote. For all of our thinking about Calvin of election and predestination and the eternal decree of God and the death of Christ, he is known most as "The Theologian of the Holy Spirit." And Warfield, the great Princetonian scholar said, "It is probably that Calvin's greatest contribution to theological science lies in the rich development in which he was the first to give to the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit."

At the institutes, referring to his *magnum opus*, the institutes of the Christian religion, Warfield writes, "The institutes is just a treatise on the work of God the Holy Spirit and making God scathingly known to sinful man." And so, what may surprise us is the Charismatic crisis and chaos today is nothing new and it was prevalent in abuses and excesses in the sixteenth century, as we will talk about tomorrow night, also in the seventeenth century with the Puritans with what they were confronted with.

So John Calvin was not silent on the abuse of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Many of today's Reformed leaders who are open to Charismatic practices would do well to sit at the feet of Calvin and to be taught by him.

I want to now come to the correction that Calvin issued. Towering over the centuries of church history, John Calvin stands as THE one most eminent figure of monumental importance. He was so strong that Philipp Melancthon called him simply THE theologian, meaning he was THE theologian God gave to the church. He was a theological genius behind the Reformation. Philip Shaff(?) writes, "Calvin was an exegetical genius of the first order. His commentaries are unsurpassed for originality, depth, perspicuity, soundness and permanent value. Calvin was the king of the commentators."

John Murray, former professor and president of Westminster Seminary succinctly stated, "Calvin was the exegete, he was THE exegete of the Reformation and in the first rank of biblical exegetes of all time." Now what would be John Calvin's critique of this new high-bred, the Charismatic Calvinist?

What I want to do is walk through his commentaries with you, and I want to walk through his institutes. And I want to look at his treatise to the Libertines, and the screen is down behind me and it...I came to the realization it would be more helpful to you if I could put some of these quotes visually up before you as I read them. But I want to address these one issue at a time.

I want to begin with the office of Apostle. In Calvin's commentaries on Matthew 10 and verse 1, Calvin very clearly states that the office of Apostle was a temporary office, restricted to the first century. It is not a perpetual or continual office.

Now some of the claims being made today by Calvinistic Charismatics is that they are Apostles and that they continue in an Apostleship and that simply is not true. God gave the Apostles to the church in order that they would be the foundation for the church, that the church would be built upon them, but you only lay the foundation one time in a building project, and that is at the very beginning. And the entire rest of the edifice rests upon that foundation. You don't re-lay the foundation at the second floor and then the third floor, and then the fifth floor, and then put another foundation for the roof. No, it's only laid one time, at the beginning. And Calvin understood that and that was the role of the Apostle. And he understood that God gave the gift of miracles to the Apostles to authenticate them as unique messengers from God who were bringing revelation directly from God and that they had authority over the church by virtue of this revelation that they were bringing. That's why Paul begins his letters, "Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus," so that they will know that what is recorded in this letter has divine apostolic authority over all churches in all places in all times.

So Calvin...thank you for that one clap...(laughter)...no, no, no, no, no. I know when you're just making up, okay? Okay. That was one of my students wanting a better grade.

So Matthew 10, verse 1, John Calvin...I want you to hear this in Calvin's own words. I trust it's being or will be put up, maybe you'll have a word of knowledge here in a moment and all right, I'm going to read it anyway. "The calling of the apostles is here described to us, it is proper to observe, however, that Jesus is not as He...does not speak of perpetual Apostleship but only of temporary preaching." And then he goes on to describe the place of miracles as seals upon the doctrine of the Apostles. So Calvin early on in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, and by the way, he died preaching a harmony of the gospels, was convinced that the Apostle, the office thereof, was restricted to the first century and he will argue, therefore miracles are restricted to the first century as validations of the new message that they are bringing. Now Calvin would address the receiving of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, and verse 38, in his commentaries. He writes, "We do not receive it...referring to the gift of the Spirit...we do not receive it that we may speak with tongues, that we may be prophets, that we may cure the sick, that we may work miracles. Yet it is given us for a better use that we may believe with the heart and a righteousness and that our tongues may be framed unto true confession.

His argument is, we have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit, to speak in tongues, we have been given it that the one tongue we have will confess that Jesus is Lord. (Amen-applause) And so he lays his case. We come to the gift of miracles which he believes is a ceased gift and from the outset of Calvin's public ministry, he believed that the gift of miracles had ceased during the apostolic age. In his *Institutes*, the 1536 edition, and I mention that edition. There were five versions of *Calvin's Institutes* the last being 1559. His 1536 was his first edition and what is interesting is, he has only been a Christian for no more than two years. He is 26 years old and he writes his *Magnum Opus*, he was a giant walking the land.

And as he writes in his first *Institutes*, he writes those miraculous powers and manifest workings which were dispensed by the laying on of hands have ceased. He was a cessationist. And they have rightly lasted only for a time, for it was fitting that the new preaching of the gospel and the new Kingdom of Christ should be illuminated and magnified by unheard of and extraordinary miracles. When the Lord ceased from these, he did not utterly forsake His church, but declared that the magnificence of His Kingdom and the dignity of His Word had been excellently enough disclosed.

So, like a rocket ship being launched off the launching pad, and then it drops the bottom engine and goes through space more effortlessly, he is arguing that the gift of miracles and these extraordinary sign gifts were a part of the rocket launch of the church in the first century. But once it cleared the earth's atmosphere, it dropped that engine and now there's the primacy of the written Word of God and the centrality of the preaching of that written Word. That's at the beginning of Calvin's ministry.

We fast forward to the end to his last version, or edition of the *Institutes* in his prefatory address, which means his preface at the beginning, he wrote five years before his death. He writes, "In demanding miracles of us," referring to Rome, and referring to other aberrant groups, fringe groups, "they act dishonestly, for we're not forging some new gospel, but are retaining that very gospel whose truth all the miracles that Jesus Christ and His disciples ever wrought serve to conform."

Now understand Calvin's thinking on this. These miracles accompanied the unveiling of the *Musterion* that Dr. Sproul spoke of, the unveiling of the mystery of Christ. And once that was made known, there was no further need for miracles to confirm the uniqueness of this revelation. And what Calvin will argue, if you expect me to perform miracles or any of the Reformers to be in the healing ministry or the speaking in tongues ministry, we would have to come up with an entirely new gospel. We would have to have an entirely new revelation from God otherwise there will be no spectacular display because we have the same old message. And that same old message is the power of God unto salvation in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Calvin said, "They allege miracles...in the last sentence...which can disturb a mind otherwise at rest." They are so foolish and ridiculous, so vain and false. He comes in his commentaries to Mark 16 and verse 17, that portion at the end of Mark's gospel that most of us do not believe were a part of the original text of Scripture and Calvin did not have the advantage that we now have, 500 years later, of greater textual criticism, but what is important is what Calvin has to say about the issues that are found in Mark 16 and verse 17 which reads, "These signs will accompany those who have believed they will speak with new tongues."

This is what Calvin says in explaining that. Although Christ does not expressly say whether He intends this gift, referring to miracle working, to be temporary or to remain perpetually in His church, yet it is more probably that miracles were promised only for a time in order to give luster to the gospel

while it is new...while it was new and in a state of obscurity. I think that the true design for which miracles were appointed was that nothing which was necessary for providing the doctrine of the gospel should be wanting at its commencement. Notice his words. They're all talking about at the beginning, at the commencement, only for a while, only for a time. He understood that they were bestowed by the Holy Spirit on the church only at the commencement of the building of the church. At the end of his quote, "Yet those who came after them that they might not follow it to be suppose that they were entirely destitute of miracles were led by foolish aberrance or ambition to forge for themselves miracles which had no reality. Calvin is saying the claims that they are making for miracles have no reality to them whatsoever, that they are just foolishness.

He goes on to say in this same text in Mark 16 and verse 17, "Thus...referring to these who are claiming among the Anabaptists, among the Libertines, that they could perform miracles...thus was the door open for the impostors of Satan." In other words, a door is swung open for all kinds of counterfeit doctrines and counterfeit experiences.

Not only that delusions might be substituted for truth, but that under the pretense of miracles, the simple might be led astray from the true faith. It is silly. That which is advanced by those who object to our doctrine, that it wants the aid of miracles. Calvin just writes it off as silliness. And he would say to those Reformed leaders today who are dabbling in Charismatic experiences and doctrine, he would say to them, "You are opening Pandora's Box for your church and for those who are following your ministry. And so oftentimes a leader will go running up to the edge of a cliff and stop and those who are following will just keep on running over the edge of the cliff to their destruction. And Calvin is sending a sobering warning that the door of Satan's delusions are open as you are distracting people from the truth and they are now being caught up in that which is not authored by the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 14 and verse 3, Calvin gives very specific teaching on this. Acts 14:3 says, "The Lord was granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. In Calvin's commentary, Calvin says, "The Lord gave witness to the gospel in miracles for it shows the true use of miracles." He says that's the true use. It was to bring validation and authentication to the message that was being brought by the apostolic messengers. He says, "Unless they be drawn unto abuse and corruption, God does never suffer them to be separated from His Word."

Now that's a key sentence and he will develop it more fully in just a moment, but here is Calvin's brilliant theological mind at work. Calvin says that the Word of God, the written Word of God, and the Spirit of God can never be separated. What the Holy Spirit is doing in the world, He is always doing it in mutual bond with the written Word of God. You will never have the Holy Spirit over here doing a work independent of the written Word of God. The Holy Spirit...(applause)...the Holy Spirit who is the author of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit who is the teacher of the Word of God is the one who works in perfect partnership with the very word that He Himself has authored. And so Calvin says, "Unless they be drawn unto abuse and corruption, God does never suffer them to be separated from

His Word,” and the “them” refers to the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit in Acts 14. For if miracles were wrought at any time without His Word, first it was very seldom, second, very small fruit.

Benjamin Warfield, just to quote him one other time, says, “It is reasonable to ask miracles...says Calvin...or to find them where there is no new gospel. By as much as the one gospel suffices for all lands and all peoples and all times.”

What Warfield is saying, Calvin understood that what God confirmed in the first century in Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and then in the Gentile world as Dr. Sproul so wonderfully laid out for us, it is sufficient now for all times, all lands, all places and all generations. The gospel does not need to be re...re validated.

Concerning speaking in tongues, Calvin states very clearly that the gift of tongues has ceased in the first century. Writing in his commentary on Acts 10 and verse 44, Calvin writes, “The gift of tongues and other such like things are ceased long ago in the church. But the Spirit of understanding and of regeneration is a force and shall always be a force.”

What he is saying is that the Holy Spirit in the first century gave the gift of tongues, that has long since ceased, but the Holy Spirit is still at work in the world through the new birth. And now Calvin gives his greatest attention to the issue of receiving new revelation, of receiving prophecies. And in Isaiah 30 verse 1 in his commentaries, Calvin writes, “Let it be observed that two things are here connected...the Word and the Spirit of God...in opposition to the fanatics who aim at oracles and hidden revelations—that means private...private revelations without the Word, referring to the written Word.” What Calvin is saying, God has joined together the Spirit and the Word, the fanatics, referring to the Anabaptists and the Libertines, they separate the Spirit and the Word and, in fact, they elevate the Spirit above the Word. In fact, I’ve been in churches where if the pastor gets into the pulpit and says, “Take your Bibles and turn with me to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John,” the people are almost yawning. But if he gets in the pulpit and says, “You know, as I was driving to church today, God spoke to me,” there can’t be enough mole skins open and people want to write it down. And Calvin says no, that is not how God works in His church and in this world, in this hour of redemptive history. And his commentary on Acts 21 verse 9, the same issue of revelations, Calvin says, “By this means—referring to revelatory prophecy...let me make this footnote. Calvin understands prophecy in two levels, as John MacArthur does, that there is foretelling, and there is forth telling. Forth telling would be the gift of preaching, proclaiming what is already been revealed in Scripture, but foretelling is receiving new revelation.

Now Calvin says, “By this means—referring to revelatory prophecy—the Lord meant to beautify the first beginnings of the gospel, when he raised up men and women to foretell things to come. Prophecies had now almost ceased, referring to the end of the Old Testament economy, 400 years before the coming of Christ. Prophecies had now almost ceased many years among the Jews to the

end, they might be more attentive and desirous to hear the new voice of the gospel, it—revelatory prophecy—should last but for a short time. That’s a reference to the first century. Lest the faithful should always wait for some farther thing.

In other words, if you tell people revelation is still being given, they’re going to be discontent with Romans and the gospel of John, they want what is new. And Calvin is saying if it’s new, it’s not true. Calvin goes on to say, “It is revelatory prophecy should last but for a short time lest the faithful should always wait for some farther thing, or lest the curious wits might have occasion given to seek or invent some new thing every now and then, for we know that when that ability and skill was taken away, there was not withstanding many brain-sick fellows who did boast that they were prophets.” Calvin says that’s what they are. They’re just brain sick.

God, by taking away prophecies, he means new revelation, did testify that the end in perfection was present in Christ. That’s a very insightful sentence because what Calvin is arguing is that the fullness of revelation that God has for His church came in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and the disciples whom He sent out to be His Apostles and the fullness of what God wants us to know has now been given to us. And we know have the faith once and for all delivered to the saints.

In Romans 12 and verse 6, as he continues to write on this, prophecy at this day in the Christian church is hardly anything else than the right understanding of Scripture and the peculiar faculty of explaining it. That’s the forth-telling, the gift of preaching, to understand the Scripture and to explain it. Inasmuch as all the ancient prophecies and all the oracles of God have been completed in Christ and in His gospel. He sees Christ, the revelation that came through Christ and His Apostles as the consummation of revelation that God has for His church. And it does not appear that Paul intended here to mention those miraculous graces by which Christ had first rendered illustrious His gospel, but on the contrary, we find that He refers only to ordinary gifts such as were to continual perpetuate. So he’s saying, ordinary spiritual gifts like helps and administration and teaching and mercy and things like that, those will continue throughout the church, the church age. But not these miraculous gifts.

He will say the same in Hebrews 1 verses 1 and 2, “When God speaks at the last times He intimates that there is no longer any reason to expect any new revelation. For it was not a Word in part that Christ brought but the final conclusion.” He is saying, “If you expect new revelation from God, you are saying that what Jesus brought was only a partial message, that there is something lacking in the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what Jesus commanded His Apostles to teach all nations that there were holes in that message that now need to be filled up.” That would be the only conclusion to which you could come. And Calvin says no. There was the full revelation given in His Son who came as the greatest prophet, the greatest expositor who spoke all the words that the Father gave Him to speak and He taught them to His disciples and He commissioned them out and there is nothing else to be said.

When we come to *Calvin's Institutes* under this same subject, in book 1 chapter 9, section 1, Calvin has a section that he calls, "The fanatics wrongly appeal to the Holy Spirit." And Calvin calls them spiritual light weights, those who having forsaken Scripture. And the reason they forsake Scripture is because all they want is for God to tell me what I need to know. They don't want to study, they don't want to dig it out. They don't want to exposit the Word of God and put their mind to it and be diligent to present themselves unto God as a workman who does not be ashamed. They're not willing to put in the heavy lifting. They simply want God to just zap them and give them what needs to be said. Those who have forsaken Scripture imagine some way or other of reaching God ought to be thought of not so much gripped by error as being carried away with frenzy, for of light certain giddy men, referring to the Libertines, and giddy men are just those who do not take God and His Word seriously, have arisen, who have great haughtiness. And the reason they have haughtiness is they will not put themselves under the perfection of the Word of God, they want to be out from under the Word of God so that they can say and do their own thing. Exalting the teaching office of the Spirit, they despise all reading and laugh at the simplicity of those who as they express it still followed the dead in killing letter.

Two sections later in this same part of his institutes, is really the most significant quote that Calvin has on this subject. It's a section entitled, "Word and Spirit belong inseparably together." If you take anything from what Calvin is saying, take this. By a kind of mutual bond, the Lord has joined together the certainty of His Word and of His Spirit so that the perfect religion of the Word may abide in our minds when the Spirit shines and that we in turn may embrace the Spirit with no fear of being deceived, when we recognize Him in His own image, namely in the Word. He is saying that God sent the Spirit to conform...to confirm His Word by miracles and to produce the written Word within us and God has nothing further to say.

In book 2 he says, "This, however, remains certain the perfect doctrine He has brought has made an end to all prophecies," referring to forth-telling a new revelation. All those then who are not content with the gospel, patch it with something extraneous to it, distract from Christ's authority, it is not lawful to go beyond the simplicity of the gospel. He is saying they go beyond the gospel.

There's many other quotes and I think time would be best served for me to come to what I want to say in conclusion. I think the point has been established. I would refer you to his treatise against the Anabaptists, in his treaties against the Libertines in which Calvin has excoriating words and one might ask, "Well, why can't you just leave the Libertines alone? Why do you have to make a publish issue out of this? Why can't you just leave the Anabaptists alone?"

And Calvin said, "Even a dog barks if he sees someone assault his master." (Applause) He said, "How could I be silent if God's truth is assailed? He had to speak out. He had to cast his influence and spread it over the church at large so the spiritual health of the church would be preserved and

protected.

Well I think you understand what Calvin had to say, that his critique of the Charismatic abuses in his day, to summarize, in his own words, is foolish, ridiculous, vain and false. It has no reality. It opens doors for the impostures of Satan. It substitutes truth for delusions. It leads the simple astray from the truth. It is silly. It separates the mutual bond of the Spirit and the Word. It is deadly dotting's. It invents an erroneous and wandering spirit in people. It goes beyond the Word of God. It arouses God's wrath, he says, and provokes him and leads people beyond the limits of Scripture to follow their own imaginations. For Calvin, a Charismatic Calvinist is an oxymoron, is a contradiction in terms like freezer burn, jumbo shrimp, you like...dead Live Oak, Baptist scholar (laughter) saved Methodist, sober...no, never mind.

All right, let me bring this to conclusion. I want to end with convictions Calvin asserted, and I want to leave you with three convictions. I just gave you a mass of quotations and I probably gave you more information and more readings than you were able to take in. But I want to end this in a very simple way.

What would Calvin say to this present generation? And the answer to that is the same that he has already said to his own generation. Number one, the exclusivity of biblical authority. It all boils down to this. Understand this. Either there is only one stream of revelation and that is the Bible, or there are two streams of revelation, that would be the Bible and these miraculous gifts. Either it is *sola scriptura*, only one stream of revelation, or there are two streams and Calvin faced it on both sides. On the one hand with the Catholics, they wanted two streams...they wanted the written Word of God and they wanted their church tradition and ecclesiastical councils and Papal authority. The Catholics had two streams of revelation on one side, they Charismatics had two streams of revelation on the other side, there is the written Word of God and the gift of prophecy, and speaking in tongues, and word of knowledge, and, and, and, and. And Calvin said, "No, there is only one stream of revelation for his church through the church age, after the first century, and it is *sola scriptura*, it is the written Word of God. (applause)

Calvin asserted, "We ought to a stain that substantial Word, the source of all revelations. It is the highest value to ask nothing beyond the Word of God. God begets and multiplies His church only by the means of His written Word. That's the first thing Calvin would say today to the Charismatic Calvinists. There are not two streams of revelation. There is only one and it is the written Word of God.

Second, he would say to this generation, the priority of biblical preaching. Calvin understood to whatever extent one looks to two streams of revelation. There is a diminishing of the pulpit. Calvin believed that only one stream of revelation, the Bible, mandates biblical preaching. However he discerned that two streams deludes biblical preaching. Two streams of revelation...that is one's

position, it waters down biblical preaching. It washes away biblical preaching. It erodes biblical preaching. It submerges biblical preaching. There will only be the priority of biblical, expository preaching in the fullest sense when one is committed that there is only one stream by which revelation is coming to us and it is in the written Word of God.

And third, and finally, Calvin would say to this present generation of Charismatic Calvinists, he would say to them the unity of Spirit and Word. We've already talked about this. But Calvin was convinced that only one stream of revelation which is the Bible, joins together the Spirit and the Word in their tightest bond and in their most powerful working in the world. Two streams of revelation severs and separates Word from Spirit and Spirit from Word. Two streams of revelation divides and distances the Word from the Spirit and the Spirit from the Word. It drives a wedge between them. But the Spirit is at work only where the written Word of God is being taught, is being preached, is being counseled, it is being shared, is being disseminated, the Spirit works through the written Word.

This is what John Calvin has said and continues to speak through his written Word. I do believe that Calvin towers over church history as the most substantial theologian that has been given to the church, its most powerful influence and we would do well to hear from our older brother. I will let John Calvin have the final word.

“Let the pastors boldly dare all things by the written Word of God by which they are constituted administrators. Let them constrain all the power, glory and excellence of the world to give place to and to obey the divine majesty of this Word. Let them enjoin everyone by it, from the highest to the lowest. Let them edify the body of Christ. Let them devastate Satan's reign. Let them pasture the sheep. Let them kill the wolves, instruct and exhort the rebellious. Let them bind and loose, let them thunder, let them lightning, but let them do all things in accordance to the Word of God. (Applause) If we are to see a new Reformation in this day, if we are to see this resurgence of reformed truth that has now begun in these last decades, continue to expand its borders and push out its fences into greater influence in the church and in the world, we must be exclusively committed to the written Word of God. (Applause) Amen.

Let us close in a word of prayer.

Our Father in heaven, how we thank You for this treasure of Your written Word that You have given to us. We thank You for the full record of it from Genesis to Revelation, the 66 books of the canon of Scripture breathed out by You through human authors some 40-plus human authors on three different continents in three different languages from all walks of life, and yet You so perfectly presided over this entire process that there is one body of truth, that there is one way of salvation, that there is one plan for the ages, that there is one standard for morality, that there are no contradictions in Your Word, that it is the pure, unvarnished, unadulterated truth to us and to all who hear it. I pray that You would set a flame our one tongue that we might confess Christ, preach Christ, exalt Christ and

magnify Christ in this world. And I pray, God, that You would continue the work that You have begun in these days. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our sovereign Lord and Savior. Amen.

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