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An investigation into Calvin's use of Augustine.

ABSTRACT

There is no doubt about Calvin's reception of Augustine in the 16th century and his frequent use of him, more than of anyone else, in his work. There is no doubt that Augustine exerted an influence on Calvin's writings. There can be doubt that these two ideas are necessarily related. This uncertainty is mainly due to the failure of some studies that set out to compare Calvin's teaching with that of Augustine.

1. RELEVANCE OF THIS INVESTIGATION

How can researchers overcome this impediment and go further to define Augustine's influence on Calvin's theology? First of all, investigations into the substantive similarities and differences between the two theologians should be placed on more solid ground. This can be accomplished through more precise determination of how Calvin made use of Augustine in comparison to other authorities, through focusing on which texts he consulted, and when, and the rhetorical function of his appeals to Augustine.¹ Secondly, studies of Calvin's use of the Fathers are less spectacular and less momentous than studies of the influence that shaped his theology. But it is only as his actual usage is studied *and* as these studies are heeded that there will be any solid and enduring results in the search for influences.²

Thus, the aim of this article is neither to compare the theologies of Augustine and Calvin, nor to establish a theory that reveals Augustine's influence on Calvin's theology. This research, rather, aims at suggesting a basic tool (or provide information) for further studies.

2. CALVIN'S USE OF AUGUSTINE IN HIS FIVE PERIODS OF WRITING

Calvin's writing periods can be divided into five phases according to the appearance of his *Institutio*: the first *Institutio*, the second *Institutio*, the period in Strasbourg, the second period in Geneva, until 1550 and the second period in Geneva, after 1550.

2.1 The first period

In his first work, the *Commentary on Seneca's De Clementia* (1532), Calvin shows virtually no specific knowledge of the Fathers.³ It is, however, remarkable how Calvin inserts Augustine

1 Barbara Pitkin, "Nothing but Concupiscence: Calvin's understanding of Sin and the Via Augustini," *Calvin Theological Journal* 34 (1999), 347.

2 A. N. S. Lane, "Calvin's use of the Fathers and the Medievals," *Calvin Theological Journal* 16 (1981), 156.

3 Johannes Van Oort, "John Calvin and the Church Fathers," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E J Brill, 1997), 663.

among the philosophers, the players and the historians such as Cicero, Horace, Ovid, Plutarch, etc. Augustine supplements (CO 5, 23),⁴ corrects (CO 5, 112), and sometimes concludes whole debates (CO 5, 154). Augustinian citations are dominant in all patristic citations. These Augustinian citations (thirteen among fifteen patristic citations) clearly show that Calvin has a certain respect for Augustine from the very beginning of his writing career, before his own theological writing career.

The *Psychopannychia* poses considerable critical problems. Against which groups or group was it originally intended? How much of the 1542 published version actually represents what Calvin originally wrote in 1534/5? Calvin used ten Augustinian citations in this work. These citations do not give a clue to these questions because the theme of this work is very unique. There is, however, a discernable tendency in Calvin's use of Augustine. When Calvin uses one citation for a specific issue in a certain time period, he repeatedly uses it for the same issue in a near time period, with or without adaptations. There is only one other place in which citations used in this work are used again. In his *Instruction contre la secte des Anabaptistes* of 1544, Calvin used Augustine for explaining the state of souls after death. This French citation (CO 7, 126) is largely the same as that which appeared in *Psychopannychia* in Latin (CO 5, 215).

Calvin's use of Augustine in the *Prefatory Address to King Francis* (1535) is primarily polemical. It is particularly against current Roman Catholic and Scholastic opinions that he cites Augustinian testimonies. Calvin expresses his confidence regarding the testimonies of the early Church Fathers, "if the contest were to be determined by patristic authority, the tide of victory would turn to our side" (OS 1, 27).⁵ Smits defines the first *Institutio* as devoted to the Sacraments and more than half of the citations are used according to this theme. Van Oort suggests that one citation from Augustine indicates Calvin's personal reading of Augustine, because the text is not present in textbooks like Lombard's *Sententiae* or the *Decretum Gratiani* (Van Oort 1997:667): "we grasp and obtain God's grace, and, as Augustine says, forgetting our merits, we embrace Christ's gifts" (CO 1, 48).

2.2 The second period

Calvin's scholarly standards as revealed in the *Minutes of the Lausanne Disputation* (1536) would not satisfy twenty-first century criteria but they were thorough by the standards of sixteenth century polemics. Furthermore, he had to demonstrate his knowledge of the Fathers in public with a series of lengthy quotations from Church Fathers, taken from memory. Actually, his Catholic opponents at Lausanne could not refute him.

In the second edition of *Institutio* (1539), the main focus falls on the issue of the depravation of human nature. And the frequency of Augustinian citations exactly reflects this concentration on the issue. Among the one hundred and thirty-one citations, more than fifty concern this particular issue. Generally speaking, the citations from Augustine are not so refined and articulated. It seems to reflect Calvin's situation in this period. Writing in 1543, he apologised for the lack of detailed quotation in the 1539 edition and explained that he had been obliged to quote from memory, having only a single volume of Augustine at hand (CO 6, 336).

4 John Calvin, *Ioannis Calvini Opera quae supersunt Omnia*, eds. G Baum, E Cunitz & E Reuss, vols. 59 (1863-1900).

5 John Calvin, *Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta*, eds. P Barth, W Niesel & D Scheuner, vols. 5 (München: Kaiser, 1956-1963).

2.3 The third period

When we consider the affinity of Paul's theology with Augustine's and Calvin's, it is truly strange to read Calvin's first commentary, the *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to Romans* (1540) with this preconception. Most citations are very positive in a doctrinal context. In exegetical use, we sometimes observe a very strong denial of this preferred Father's view. Calvin presents theological acceptance but exegetically denies Augustine's explanation in order to pursue Paul's true meaning (CO 49, 92).

In the third edition of the *Institutio* (1543), three characteristic factors are discernible. Firstly, many citations reflect Calvin's deepening understanding of Augustine with regard to Christology (eg CO 1, 532). And this deeper understanding of Christology is incorporated, especially in the views on the church and the sacraments. Secondly, citations on the Sacraments are more articulated and more refined in contrast to the two earlier editions of 1536 and 1539. For example, in the 1536 *Institutio*, Calvin uses the words of Augustine briefly (CO 1, 142), but now he explains the meaning of these words. "Let the word be added to the element and it will become a sacrament. ... 'This is the word of faith which we proclaim'" (CO 1, 940). Thirdly, Calvin's use of citations from Augustine concerning views on the church does not stop at the theoretical level but goes on to the practical level. This reflects his own experience in the church of Strasbourg and Smits agreed that "the fruit of his sojourn [was] incorporated in the third edition of *Institutio*...".⁶ This experience included ample patristic material at hand and most citations are very accurate with regard to loci.

2.4 The fourth period

The Bondage and Liberation of the Will (1543) contains many citations from Augustine. The main battle is over the freedom of the human will and human choice and the main character truly is Augustine: Among seventeen patristic authors who are quoted, Augustine is used two hundred and thirty-two times. Tertullian occupies the second seat with eleven citations. Except for these two Fathers, nobody could hit a number higher than ten. Here Calvin's use of the later Augustine is conspicuous. In contrast with Pighius's claim that the *nuda veritas* diminishes in Augustine's later work, Calvin sees there an increase of the *vera et sana doctrina* (CO 6, 294).

In his *Articuli facultatis theologiae Parisiensis* of 1544, Calvin refers to Augustine in eleven of the twenty-five articles. Before expounding the articles, he explains his working principle in dealing with these matters: "In the admirable words of Augustine, 'When an obscure matter is under dispute, no aid being offered by clear and certain passages of sacred Scripture, human presumption, which gains nothing by leaning to either side, ought to restrain itself'" (CO 7,6).

In the New Testament Commentaries,⁷ Calvin shows his usual trust in Augustine in theological matters. It diminishes by half in exegetical matters. Calvin is critical of Augustine's allegorical method. When there is a disagreement between Augustine's exegesis and Paul's, Calvin is severely critical of Augustine. Calvin's most preferred Church Father regarding the New Testament Commentaries is Chrysostom.

6 Luchsius Smits, *Saint Augustin dans l'oeuvre de Jean Calvin* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1956), 47.

7 *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians* (1546); *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (1548); *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (1548); *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (1548); *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Colossians* (1548); *the first and the second Commentaries on Paul's Epistle to Timothy* (1548); *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to Titus* (1549); *Commentary on Hebrews* (1549); and *the first and the second Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians* (1550).

When it comes to the Old Testament Commentaries,⁸ the situation is different. Augustine returns. Calvin's evaluation of Augustine's exegesis is mostly quite positive and the use of Chrysostom in the Old Testament Commentaries is of minor significance.

There is no major change in Calvin's 1550 edition of *Institutio*, but he inserted some minor additions into this edition. Nearly all new patristic references are to Augustine, one is to Ambrose, and one new but critical remark is made about Gregory the Great. Smits described this edition as 'the edition of the Holy Scriptures',⁹ with six of the seventeen new citations being dedicated to the issue of the authority of Scripture.

2.5 The fifth period

The treatise *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* (1552) provides clear evidence that reveals Calvin's heavy dependence on Augustine regarding the doctrine of predestination. Except for Augustine (ninety-six citations), the only quoted Church Father is Ambrose and he is cited only once. There are two reasons for this. First of all, Calvin's main opponent, Pighius, resorted to Augustine. But according to Calvin, "he [Pighius] explicitly condemns the opinion of Augustine" (CO 8, 259). Secondly, the words of Rom 9:20 *O homo, tu quis es?* is repeatedly advanced in the course of the argument, and Augustine's affirmation that God's grace does not find but makes men elect is adduced almost as frequently in varied forms. Much of the formal difficulty of his argument is resolved in these two basic structures, and the circularity and repetitiveness, which seem to characterise it, are seen to give it added strength.¹⁰

With regard to the debates with Westphal (1555, 1556 and 1557), there are relatively few Augustinian citations in the first two works (thirteen times in *Defensio doctrinae de Sacramentis*, of 1555; seventeen times in *Defensio Secunda contra Westphalum*, of 1556; and then, finally, one hundred and thirty-two times in *Ultima admonitio ad Westphalum*). This irregularity of frequency reveals one of the traits of Calvin's use of Augustine.¹¹

From 1551 to 1556, Calvin accomplished numerous New Testament commentaries.¹² In these commentaries, his most frequently quoted Church Father is Augustine. The second is Josephus who is used as a historical witness. Purely historical purposes and uses of the patristic citations can be shown in the citations from Josephus. One cannot say that Calvin's evaluation of Augustine in these commentaries is always positive. One can, however, as Lane suggested, say that even a negative comment may be a mark of respect in the commentaries.

8 *Commentary on Isaiah* (1549); *Commentary on Genesis* (1554).

9 Luchsius Smits, 82.

10 John Calvin, *Concerning the eternal predestination of God*, tr. J K S Reid (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1982), 10.

11 The first work was basically written for the mutual consent of the churches of Zurich and Geneva as to the sacraments. Though there had been a slight difference between the two churches, most differences were already solved by that time. And their mutual understanding of Augustine in this regard had not signified any other interpretations. The second work was a defense of the first work that had not contained so many citations. When the controversy had barely died down with the Second Admonition to Westphal, Calvin began to understand the character of the battle. Because Westphal brought Calvin into controversy with the ancient Church under the name of Augustine (CO 9, 148), Calvin decided to go to Augustine, as he believed all his writings proclaimed him to be wholly on his side (CO 9, 149).

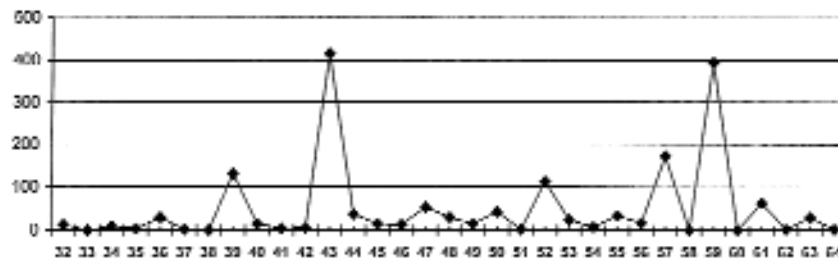
12 *Commentary on the First Peter* (1551); *Commentary on the First John* (1551); *Commentary on Jude* (1551); *Commentary on the Second Peter* (1551); *Commentary on Acts*, 1-13 (1552); *Commentary on John* (1553); *Commentary on Acts*, 14-28 (1554); *Commentary On A Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke* (1555); *Commentary on Philemon* (1556).

In the Old Testament Commentaries (1555-1565), Calvin lessens his use of the patristic sources. Sometimes Calvin uses quite neutral expressions concerning Augustine in the rhetorical sphere, especially in the *Commentaries on the four last books of Moses* (1563). This tendency is not a reflection of Calvin's reduced esteem of Augustine, but a reflection of Calvin's riper understanding and use of him.

In the last *Institutio* (1559), most of Calvin's explicit references are to Augustine's anti-Pelagian works, such as his *Contra duas epistolas Pelagianorum*, *De correptione et gratia*, *De bono perseverantiae*, and *Contra Iulianum*. In this respect, Calvin claims an essential conformity between Augustine and Reformed theology.¹³ Calvin's strong denial of 'merita nostra' or strong emphasis on 'sola gratia' is consistent with Augustine. This idea is embedded as background to the debates, especially regarding sin and grace, predestination and the Lord's Supper.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

The following table shows the frequency of Augustinian citation according to static data.



The high peaks are mostly coincidental with the appearance of Calvin's major work, the *Institutio*, in 1539, 1543 and 1559.¹⁴ Regarding the year 1536, the edition of that year's *Institutio* contains twenty-four citations from Augustine among twenty-nine citations in all. With the third *Institutio* of 1543, Calvin's use of Augustinian citations faced a crucial turning point. The citations used in this year were to be used repeatedly year after year. Among a total of 1 696 static data, 1 214 data were found in the *Institutio* and in three major polemical works such as *De libero arbitrio* (1543), *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione* (1552) and *Ultima admonitio ad Westphalum* (1557).

The last edition of Calvin's *Institutio* is selected for the thematic and functional analyses.¹⁵ And a multi-dimensional approach is used instead of the ecclesiastical-dogmatic approach used by

13 Van Oort, 683.

14 The static data, which came from Smits's and Mooi's data, contain only 17 newly used citations because Smits and Mooi did not include repeated citations. Thus, one could imagine one more peak in 1550, if the repeated citations were to be included.

15 A number of citations in this edition had already appeared in Calvin's exegetics, small tracts, confessions, letters and sermons. Moreover, a good amount of the data in this edition was to be used repeatedly in the subsequent works of Calvin, after 1559. In this regard, the data of the last edition provide an ideal sample group which reflects all the periods of writing with regard to Calvin's use of Augustinian citations in the case of data analysis.

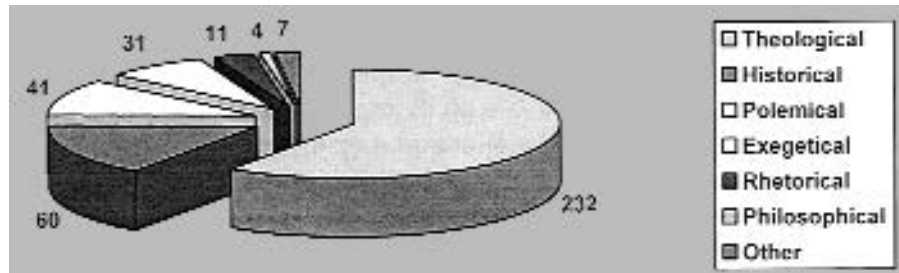
Smits and Mooi. According to Coertzen, “there is a definite need for a detailed analysis of the *Institutes* of Calvin, not only of the well known parts but an analysis of the complete *Institutes*. Important thoughts and themes in this regard have been neglected up to now.”¹⁶ A multi-dimensional approach helps researchers to focus on these important but neglected parts. The next table reveals themes of the static data used in the fifth edition of the *Institutio*. It clearly represents all the facets of Calvin’s themes that were derived from Augustine.

Themes of the static data used in the 5th edition of *Institutio*

Themes used more than 20 times	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Sacraments (68 times, including baptism and the Lord’s supper) 2. The church (54 times, including church custom, etc) 3. Will (34 times, including free will, God’s will, etc) 4. Sin (34 times, including concupiscence, total depravity, etc) 5. Grace (28 times, including gratuitous grace, work and grace, etc) 6. Christology (22 times, including sole mediator, etc)
Themes used from 10 to 20 times	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Predestination (17 times, including election, foreknowledge, etc) 8. Works (16 times, including merits, etc) 9. The Law (14 times, including Ten Commandments, etc) 10. On God (13 times, including divine providence, etc) 11. Faith (11 times, including justification, etc)
Themes used from 5 to 10 times	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Creation (7 times, including fall, etc) 13. Scripture (7 times, including the authority of cripture, etc) 14. Trinity (6 times) 15. Man (6 times, including human nature, etc)
Themes used less than 5 times	Adam, the Church Fathers, calling, care for the dead, councils, error, fate, heretics, humility, idolatory, image reverence, indulgence, the Jews, learning and ignorance, limited deliverance, magistrates, the Manicheans, Moses, peace of mind, the particular, the Pelagians, perseverance, prayer, pride, progress in understanding, punishment of an individual fault, proof of something being right, purgatory, responsibility to the truth, the righteous after death, salvation, soul, suffering of the Apostles, war (34 themes)

16 Pieter Coertzen, “Some observations on Calvin research with special reference to South Africa,” *In die Skriflig* 27:4 (1993), 554.

For the functional analysis, the last edition of the *Institutio* was analysed according to seven categories: theological, polemical, historical, exegetical, rhetorical, philosophical, and other (socio-political: one; just reference: four; and hard to identify: two). The result is shown below.



The theological function occupies more than half (theological, 59%; historical, 17%; polemical, 10%; exegetical, 8%; rhetorical, 3%; philosophical, 1%; and other, 2%). This table shows that Calvin's main intention in using the Augustinian citation in the last edition of the *Institutio* is theological. It is noteworthy that the theological-historical use of the citations outnumbers the theological-polemical use of them.¹⁷

According to dynamic data analysis, some general patterns occurred in Calvin's use of Augustinian citations. Firstly, the proportion of repeated citations increases according to Calvin's five periods of writing. Secondly, the increasing proportion, however, does not mean that the repeated citations are used in exactly the same way or in the same context. Calvin freely used the same Augustinian citations in different genres, in different contexts, or in different subjects. Thirdly, regarding negative citations, showing Calvin disagreeing with Augustine, it is very difficult to find such citations that are used more than three times. Fourthly, the most frequently used quotations can be regarded as a reflection of the intensity with which Calvin agreed with Augustine's specific ideas. According to Smits's data, Calvin's most frequently used citation is from Augustine's *Contra Maximinum arrianum libri duo* (ML 42, 772)¹⁸ regarding the authority of Scripture (used twenty-seven times in eighteen different works). Fifthly, Calvin employed rhetorical effects such as *copia*, *brevitas*, *amplificatio*, *inclusio*, *expletio* and so forth in his own statements,¹⁹ as well as in his use of Augustinian citations. His use of these devices is not only for literary eloquence, but also for the readers' convenience. Finally, Calvin was a very warm-hearted theologian who ceaselessly endeavoured to express himself according to readers' capacity to

17 The theological-polemical character is not as prominent in the last edition of the *Institutio* as in Calvin's polemical works in which the theological-polemical use of the Augustinian citations is important. For example, the data from Calvin's polemical work *De Aeterna Dei praedestinatione* (1552) consist in the proportion of theological (47%), polemical (36%), exegetical (9%), historical (4%), rhetorical (2%), and philosophical (2%).

18 Augustine, *Patrologiae cursus competus: Series latina*, eds. J P Migne & A Hamman, vols. 32-46 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1861).

19 Olivier Millet, *Calvin et la Dynamique de la Parole: Étude de rhétorique réformée* (Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, 1992), 744-752.

understand. The use of Augustinian citations in his commentaries, especially, reveals that Calvin was very aware of the effect of interaction between the biblical texts and his readers' sympathy towards them. The Augustinian citations were used as a bridge between the two sides.

4. RELATED QUESTIONS

4.1 What constitutes Augustine's uniqueness in Calvin's writings?

First of all, no one can compete with Augustine as far as the frequency with which he is quoted is concerned. According to Mooi's data, Calvin used Augustine 1 708 times and this represents more than 50% of all the patristic data from 33 patristic authors. And Calvin's interest in and use of Augustine were life-long and constant throughout his periods of writing, while Calvin's interest in and use of other Church Fathers were topical and periodical.

Secondly, Calvin used Augustine exclusively for some doctrines such as "justification by faith alone", "predestination" and the "Lord's Supper". For example, as Calvin himself expressed it²⁰ in his *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione* (1552), he composes his doctrine of predestination on evidence from Augustine's books. Except for Augustine (ninety-six times), the only quoted Church Father is Ambrose and he is cited once because of Augustine's introduction of him.

Thirdly, in Calvin's personal evaluation of the early Church Fathers, Augustine occupies an exclusive position. Calvin gladly presented Augustine as a representative of the whole of antiquity (CO 2, 441). As far as Augustine was concerned, even negative comments could strong evidence of respect (CO 13, 374). Although Calvin praised Chrysostom for being "the greatest exegete" and Augustine for being "the greatest theologian", he added that Augustine's overall interpretation of the economy and doctrine of Scripture was superior to that of Chrysostom (CO 9, 833-836). Did Calvin himself notice that he had a certain personal prejudice for this African Father? It seems so:

Perhaps I may seem to have brought a great prejudice upon myself when I confess that all ecclesiastical writers, except Augustine, have spoken so ambiguously or variously on this matter that nothing certain can be gained from their writings (CO 2, 193).

4.2 Calvin's own *schola Augustiniana*

When and through whom did Calvin first encounter Augustine? Did he really attend one of John Major's theological courses at the *college de Montaigu* in Paris? In spite of Reuter's newly-devised suggestion²¹ and Torrance's lengthy speculations,²² their opinions, in view of the facts, lack both historical and textual proof. What Reuter and Torrance see as proof of Calvin's indebtedness of Major, McGrath sees as evidence of the influence upon him of the *schola Augustiniana moderna*.²³ McGrath's theory, however, presents some textual evidence but also contains abundant counter-evidence.

Then, what is a conceivable influence? There is the possibility of "Calvin's own wide reading in Augustine"²⁴ leading to his own *schola Augustiniana*²⁵ with a "bypass of the circuitous road of

20 Further, Augustine is so much at one with me that, if I wished to write a confession of my faith [on predestination], it would abundantly satisfy me to quote wholesale from his writings (CO 8, 266).

21 K Reuter, *Vom Scholaren bis zum jungen Reformator: Studien zum Werdegang Johannes Calvins* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981).

22 T F Torrance, *The Hermeneutics of John Calvin* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988).

23 A E McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

24 Johannes Van Oort, 666-667.

25 J M J Lange van Ravenswaay, *Augustinus totus noster: Das Augustinverständnis bei Johannes Calvin* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 180.

scholastic reception”.²⁶ First of all, Calvin himself denies any intermediate transmission of medieval Augustinianism (CO 2, 214).²⁷ Secondly, there is a possibility that Calvin read Augustine by means of a new reading method of the Renaissance, which was different from various medieval readings of Augustine.²⁸ According to Smits,²⁹ Calvin adopted seven principles of interpretation such as *sensus literalis*, *simplicitas*, *brevitas*, *perspicuitas*, *mens scriptoris*, *circumstantia* and *intentio*.³⁰ These principles are largely identical with this Renaissance method.

Thirdly, Calvin seems to have begun to read his Bible in connection with Augustine or to understand and use Augustine in connection with the Bible, after his conversion. This is a clear fact when we see Calvin’s general use of Augustine in relation to the Bible (eg CO 2, 217; 9, 771-772). Calvin adopted unique principles of interpretation for his exegetical works. Firstly, the exegesis of Scripture had to be “natural” and “literal” in the grammatico-historical sense (CO 9, 835; 22, 123). *Simplex et verum* stands foremost among Calvin’s primary principles of interpretation for the Biblical passages. Secondly, if there was conflict between Paul and Augustine concerning exegetical matters, Calvin always followed Paul’s exegesis (CO 49, 92; 51, 187). Thirdly, he believed that sometimes a time arrives when it is better not to pursue further interpretation (CO 7, 6; 36, 130; 48, 301). The latter two principles testify to Calvin’s firm acceptance of the authority of Scripture in exegetical matters (CO 48, 188).

5. WHO IS CALVIN’S AUGUSTINE?

Augustine left his imprint on Calvin’s writings though the range of influence is varied: grace, justification and regeneration, original sin, free will (or unfree will), predestination, the Lord’s Supper, the doctrine of the Church, and the authority of the Bible.

There is no one as influential as Augustine in Calvin’s writings, though Calvin did not just use the opinions of Augustine mechanically. He judged and criticised them, like those of any other Church Father and any council, according to their fidelity to the single standard of the Scriptures. He hardly showed any appreciation for Augustine in certain doctrinal positions. He could neither accept the allegorical exegeses of the Biblical texts, nor the philosophical subtlety of the speculations. He nevertheless saw in him the Father of the Church who had best grasped the whole of the doctrines of the Scriptures and he regarded him as the best qualified representative of the old Church of the first five centuries, with regard to, in his eyes, remaining faithful to the Scriptures. In this context, I confirm Calvin’s own proclamation of *Augustinus totus noster est*.³¹ In other words, Calvin’s Augustine is the Augustine who was uniquely interpreted and used by Calvin in the sixteenth century.

26 Heiko A Oberman, “Initia Calvini: The Matrix of Calvin’s Reformation,” in *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor*, ed. Wilhelm H Neuser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 121.

27 My readers hence perceive that the doctrine which I deliver is not new, but the doctrine which old Augustine delivered with the consent of all the godly, and which was afterwards *shut up* in the cloisters of monks for almost *a thousand years*.

28 Charles Stinger, “Italian Renaissance learning and the Church Father,” in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E J Brill, 1997), 473-475.

29 Luchsius Smits, 248-253.

30 Literal sense, simplicity, brevity, clearness, author’s opinion, circumstances and intention.

31 Augustine is absolutely on our side!