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I.

ST. PAUL AND INSPIRATION.*

WHEN looking at the New Testament collection, we find ourselves confronted by one personality in particular who, next to Christ Himself, is impressed most largely and weightily both upon the New Testament and upon historic Christianity. I refer, of course, to the apostle of the Gentiles. Of him the student of the New Testament must take particular account. He is the author certainly of thirteen, and perhaps of fourteen, of the twenty-seven books. His epistles constitute that part of the New Testament which gives to it articulated theological structure. He was the man who opened the door by which the world entered into the fold of Christ. His mission made the gospel of Jesus a universal religion. And yet he is one whose right to the place traditionally assigned him has, in various ways in different ages, been hotly contested. His own epistles show that in his lifetime itself his apostleship was denied and his mission violently opposed by many who claimed to be followers of Jesus. In the succeeding age we not only find the extreme section of Jewish Christians continuing to deny his apostleship; but we find the singular and significant fact that, while the orthodox Church acknowledged and honored him, used his epistles as Scripture and reaped the benefit of his mission to the Gentiles, yet it apparently did not grasp his real teaching, and, if its extant literature may be trusted as evidence, rejected some of his fundamental theological principles. Later on, his distinctive theological

* [This paper contains the substance of the address delivered by Dr. Purves at his inauguration as Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis in Princeton Theological Seminary.—EDITORS.]

III.

CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

THERE is now no more important subject under discussion in Evangelical Churches than the inerrancy of Scripture. It is a question which is at present profoundly agitating the Presbyterian Church. It is behind the movement for the revision of the Confession of Faith. Calvinism can be held only on the supposition of the infallibility of the Bible. Nothing could be more erroneous than the prevalent idea that Calvin was a daring speculator in theology, who searched the Scriptures for materials to support a theory which he had arrived at by the coercion of "remorseless logic." Never was there a man more submissive to what he believed to be divine revelation.* He could sincerely affirm: "Certainly no one can have a greater objection to paradoxes than I have, and I do not take the slightest pleasure in mere intellectual puzzles. But nothing shall prevent me from openly avowing those things which I have learned from the Word of God; for He is a Master in whose school we learn nothing that is not useful. The Bible is my only guide." Low views of the inspiration of Scripture have generally characterized latitudinarian divines. We see this in Castellio and others in the time of Calvin; in Clericus and his party in a later age; and the concurrence is strikingly exemplified in our own time. The fact that Calvin regarded the Bible as authoritative on all questions, and allowed its clear statements to outweigh all other considerations, and accepted doctrines to which human reason is most ready to take exception on its sole testimony, awakens a strong presumption that he held it to contain the truth of God without any admixture of error. It is significant that a man like Guizot, in his *Life of Calvin*, finds fault with just two things in the theology of the reformer—his doctrine of the plenary inspiration of Scripture, and his doctrine of divine foreordination. The supreme

* On this point the testimony of Dr. Schaff is worth quoting: "Calvin, though one of the most logical minds, cared less for logic than for the Bible, and it is his obedience to the Word of God as the infallible rule of faith that induced him to accept the *decretum horribile* against his wish and will." (*Andover Review*, April, 1892, pp. 332, 334.) Dr. Schaff makes this admission while opposing Calvin's doctrine of predestination. But Arminius himself had said that Calvin "is incomparable in the interpretation of Scripture."

authority and infallibility of Scripture must be undermined in order to assail successfully the doctrine of predestination. Guizot had no doubt that Calvin taught the inerrancy of the Bible and its verbal inspiration.* It certainly, at first blush, is surprising that it should now be maintained by those who deny the infallibility of the Bible that the first reformers of the sixteenth century held no such doctrine, but, on the contrary, freely conceded the existence of errors in the Sacred Writings. But it is now boldly affirmed that the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of Scripture is a false and burdensome dogma, which the degenerate epigoni of the reformers imposed on the Protestant Churches. In particular, Calvin has been singled out as a reformer who held free views on the subject of inspiration, and was far from contending for an errorless Bible. Examples of mistakes on the part of the original writers of Scripture which Calvin is said to have roundly admitted, have been professedly drawn from his commentaries, and those who now contend for an inerrant Bible are charged with being more orthodox than Calvin was.†

Calvin's view on this question is entitled to the highest respect.‡ He has left commentaries on the greater part of the Bible. He was a man of unsurpassed perspicacity in perceiving its meaning, and of deepest reverence for its teaching. In expounding Scripture he manifested a singular freedom from doctrinal bias, and he was careful to note difficulties. His commentary on the Synoptic Gospels is given in the form of a Harmony, and he testifies to the great fidelity and diligence with which he had labored in its composition. He had to confront the passages which modern critics condemn as tainted with error. Calvin could not have avoided letting his judgment be clearly known on the question of the inerrancy of Scripture. If he had found in it indubitable errors which must be imputed to the original writers, he must have plainly said so; and if he did make such admission, Reformed Christians should be slow in excluding from their communion such public teachers as can be charged only with ascribing to the Bible such an amount of error as he acknowledged.

* "Like Calvin, many pious and learned men uphold the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; they assert that not only the thoughts, but the words in which they are clothed are divinely inspired—every word on every subject, the language as well as the doctrine." (*Life of Calvin*, chap. vi.)

† Cf. an article in the *New York Evangelist*, October 15, 1891, "Was Calvin a Calvinist?"

‡ "His judgment is of the greatest weight, for he had no superior, and scarcely an equal for thorough and systematic Bible knowledge and exegetical insight" (Schaff in *Andover Review*, l. c.). Reuss has pronounced Calvin "beyond all question the greatest exegete of his century."

We have considered this subject to be of sufficient importance to warrant a careful study of Calvin's writings with a view to ascertain his real opinion on the question under discussion, and we now present our readers with the conclusion which we have reached, and the grounds on which it is based.

Strauss in his *Glaubenslehre* has affirmed that "theology is only in so far productive as it is destructive." We do not accept the declaration in the sense intended. But the productivity of the destructive critics is the marvel of our age, if we think only of their fecundity in the composition of books and essays. But to "object is always easy;" as Dr. Johnson has observed, "the hand which cannot build a hovel may demolish a temple." Calvin's tendency was conservative. His great aim was the setting forth of positive truth. The source from which he drew his doctrine was the Bible. To its teaching he unconditionally submitted. Whatever was delivered in the Sacred Scripture ought, in his judgment, to be received with meekness and docility, and without exception—" *Nam sapere nostrum nihil aliud esse debet quam mansueta docilitate amplecti, et quidem sine exceptione, quicquid in sacris Scripturis traditum est*" (*Instit.*, Lib. i, xviii, 4). *Whatever is propounded in the Scriptures* Calvin would have us receive with unquestioning assent. He would give no room for the exercise of the so-called "Christian consciousness" in discriminating divine truth from human error in the Bible. He did not distinguish the Scripture from the Word of God, as if the former designation were more extensive than the latter. Another clear proof that Calvin did not exempt any part of Scripture from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but regarded it all as a divine product, is furnished in his commentary on Rom. xv. 4, where he makes this reflection: "Whatever, then, is recorded in Scripture, let us take pains in learning it. For it would be to insult the Holy Spirit if we should think that He taught anything which it does not at all concern us to know. . . . Although he (Paul) is speaking of the Old Testament, yet we are to judge the same of the apostolic writings." Calvin's doctrine, it cannot be questioned, was that whatever is recorded in Scripture (*quicquid in Scriptura proditum est*) is to be held by us as the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and as written for our learning. It is a favorite allegation of those who would make the Word of God of narrower import than the Scriptures, to say that the Word of God is contained in the Scriptures, but that we cannot affirm that the Scriptures are the Word of God. But this is what the Westminster Confession of Faith does affirm. Holy Scripture is convertible according to it with "the Word of God written" (*Confession*, chap. i, sec. 2). If the Shorter Catechism speaks of the

Word of God as *contained in* the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, this is to oppose the Romish doctrine that the Word of God is not wholly recorded in the Bible, but is in part transmitted by tradition. It is strange that any one professing to be acquainted with the history of Protestant theology should misunderstand the force of this statement in the Catechism, or claim it in support of an opinion which was far from the minds of the compilers. But confining ourselves to the doctrine of Calvin, we find him expressly teaching that our only wisdom lies *in embracing with meek docility, and without exception, whatever is contained in the Sacred Scriptures*. For him *quicquid in Sacris Scripturis traditum (or proditum) est was the Word of God*.

It is enough to consult Calvin's commentary on 2 Tim. iii. 16 to learn that Calvin held the very highest doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. The whole annotation is too long to be quoted. From the assertion that Scripture is given by inspiration of God he concludes that men are without controversy to receive it reverently. "This," says he, "is the import of the first clause, that the same reverence is due to Scripture which we pay to God, because it flowed from Him alone, and has no admixture of what is human" (*eandem Scripturæ reverentiam deberi, quam Deo deferimus, quia ab eo solo manavit, nec quicquam humani habet admixtum*).^{*} In his commentary on 1 Pet. i. 25, he declares "that God wished to speak to us by apostles and prophets, and that their mouths are the mouth of the one God" ("*habendum est, Deum per Apostolos et Prophetas voluisse nobis loqui, et illorum ora os unius Dei esse*"). How perfect was the inspiration which Calvin ascribed to the sacred writers is seen from his remarks on Acts i. 16, 20: "*It was needful that the Scripture should be fulfilled which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David*." Referring to these words he observes: "Such forms of speaking win greater reverence for the Scriptures, while we are admonished that David and all the prophets spake under the sole direction of the Spirit, so that they themselves are not the authors of the prophecies, but the Spirit who used their tongue as an instrument." "If any one," he continues, "should object that imprecations, not prophecies, are related

^{*} Comp. *Institutes* (Lib. i, vii, i), "*Sed quoniam non quotidiana e cælis redduntur oracula, et Scripturæ solæ extant, quibus visum est Domino suam perpetuæ memoriæ veritatem consecrare; non alio jure plenam apud fideles auctoritatem obtinent, quam ubi statuunt, e cælo fluxisse, acsi vivæ ipsæ Dei voces illic exaudirentur*."—"But since daily oracles are not given from heaven, and the Scriptures are the only memorials in which it pleased the Lord to immortalize His truth by making it perpetually remembered; the Scriptures obtain their full authority with the faithful only on this condition, that they settle it that they have come from heaven, as if the very, living utterances of God were heard in them."

in the Psalm, and that therefore Peter improperly infers that this behooved to be done, the solution is easy. For David was not incited by a perverse or vicious carnal affection to seek for vengeance, but had the Spirit as his leader and director. Therefore, whatever things he prayed for, moved by the Spirit, have the force of predictions, because the Spirit does not ask for other things than what God has purposed with Himself to perform, and wishes also to promise to us."

On the sufficiency of Scripture as a rule of faith Calvin has expressed his judgment with all clearness and force. In his commentary on John xx. 9, he affirms that the Scripture is so full and complete in every part that any defect in our faith is to be ascribed to our ignorance of Scripture (*"In summa tenendum est, adeo plenam et omni ex parte absolutam esse Scripturæ doctrinam, ut ejus ignotatio jure censeri debeat quicquid fidei nostræ deest"*). According to him we are to hold it as a fixed axiom that no doctrine is worthy of faith, if we do not find it to be founded on the Scriptures (on Acts xvii. 11). How vehemently and frequently Calvin declaims against the doctrine of the Papists as to the obscurity, uncertainty and ambiguity of the Scriptures is known to all familiar with his writings. He regarded as blasphemous the doctrine of Roman Catholic theologians that nothing can be certainly determined by Scripture. Often, too, he takes occasion to animadvert on the error of fanatics and enthusiasts who thought they could dispense with the letter of Scripture, and rely on the illumination of the Spirit without the aid of the written Word.*

So, too, he often testifies to the present value and utility of the Old Testament for our instruction in truth and righteousness against those who would regard it as now obsolete and of no further use. On this point his notes on Luke xxiv. 27 and Rom. xv. 4 may be consulted. Scripture was, in his esteem, the most sacred thing in the world (*res omnium, quæ in terris sunt, sacratissima*), and he would have men to come to the reading of it rightly prepared, with a reverent, obedient and docile spirit (on 2 Pet. i. 20). He would have reformers of religion to proceed with such moderation and prudence that people may know that the eternal Word of God is not torn to pieces, nor any novelty introduced which would derogate from Scripture, nor the faith of the pious shaken by any suspicion of contrariety.† He admitted that there might be in the

* Cf. *Inst.*, Lib. i, ix, 1.

† More fitting counsel could not be given to innovators and reformers in our day than in the words of Calvin on Matt. v. 17: "*Si res dissipatas in melius restituere animus est, semper adhibenda est hæc prudentia et moderatio ut agnoscat populus non convelli propterea aeternum Dei verbum, nec ingeri novitatem*

works and words of God and Christ what would not agree with our understanding. In such a case we are not with unbridled boldness to clamor against it, but rather to preserve a modest silence until that which is hidden from us is made known from heaven (on John iv. 27). The fact that the human author of a book of Scripture was not known, did not give Calvin any anxiety, or make him disposed to question its divine authority. Thus, in the Argument of the Book of Joshua, after mentioning the uncertainty that exists regarding the writer of the book, he expresses himself in these words: "Let us not hesitate, therefore, to pass over a matter which we are unable to determine, or the knowledge of which is not very necessary, while we are in no doubt as to the essential point—that the doctrine herein contained was dictated by the Holy Spirit for our use, and confers benefits of no ordinary kind on those who attentively peruse it."

It is well known that Calvin denied the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. On this point he spoke with all decision, and declared that he could not be brought to regard Paul as the author; but he contended with equal positiveness for the apostolic authority of the epistle. He had no doubt in his mind that it formed part of the Word of God, and is at pains to point out the inestimable importance of the doctrine which it contains. There is not a book of the New Testament from which he does not adduce proof-texts in his *Institutes*, with the exception of the Epistle of Paul to Philemon and the Third Epistle of John. From the nature of their contents and their brevity, these writings were not likely to be drawn on by the framer of a theological system. He makes mention of the doubts formerly entertained about receiving the Second Epistle of Peter, as related by the Church historian Eusebius. But Calvin attaches comparatively little weight to the fact that this epistle was, in the time of Eusebius, reckoned among the *antilegomena*. He finds a stronger reason to question its Petrine authorship in the marked difference of style between it and Peter's first epistle. He inclines to the view that it was composed by one of the disciples of Peter, at his instigation, when he was very old, and thus bears his name. He cannot reject a writing in which, as he expresses it, the majesty of the Spirit of Christ comes forth in all its parts. In regard to the epistles of James and Jude, Calvin mentions the doubts formerly existing about their canonicity, but he maintains the authority of both. He wrote no commentaries

quæ Scripturæ deroget, ne quæ repugnantis suspicio piorum fidem labefactet, ac ne insolescant temerarii homines novitatis prætextu : denique ut profano verbi Dei contemptui obviæ eatur." Well would it be if the Higher Critics would lay to heart these admonitions.

on the second and third epistles of John or the Apocalypse; but from this omission we are not warranted to infer that he did not own their apostolicity, as he did not hesitate to appeal to the testimony of 2 John and Revelation as parts of inspired Scripture. But even if Calvin had excluded from the canon of Scripture certain of the books of the Bible now received in the Church as sacred, this would not justify the position that he held only the partial inspiration of what he regarded as Canonical Scripture, or that he admitted in it the existence of error. It would still be possible for him to have entertained the highest doctrine of inspiration in respect to the *homologoumena*.

We have shown sufficiently that Calvin taught that the Scriptures in general are the Word of God, and that in reading them we are to hear God Himself speaking to us; but we must define and illustrate his doctrine of Scripture more particularly, and consider certain statements made by Calvin in his commentary which, it is alleged, forbid our ascribing to him a belief in the absolute infallibility of the Bible, and require us so to qualify his doctrine of inspiration as to make it consistent with the admission of human errors in the original text of Scripture. We think it can be demonstrated that Calvin's declarations are of such a nature that they exclude the possibility of the admixture of human mistakes in Scripture, that he makes God to such a degree its Author that all its peculiarities of diction and choice of materials have His sanction. The marks of apparent defect in Scripture he deliberately attributes to the divine intention. While recognizing the free and natural exercise of their mental powers by the sacred writers, he yet unequivocally asserts that both the matter and form of what they wrote are due to the action of the Spirit of God. To make Calvin admit that there are real errors in Scripture would be, by implication, to charge him with teaching that there are errors inspired by God. An inspired error is utterly inconceivable, and Calvin is not guilty of countenancing the existence of such an absurdity.

Let us attend to the manner in which Calvin treats the manifest diversity that presents itself in the four Gospels. He does not believe that either Mark or Luke made any use of the Gospel of Matthew. He calls upon us to hold that Mark, though not an apostle, is a legitimate and divinely ordained witness, who related nothing without the guidance and dictation of the Holy Spirit (*qui nihil nisi præeunte dictanteque Spiritu sancto prodiderit*).^{*} He shows, in explaining the introductory words of the Gospel of Luke, that

^{*} *Argumentum in Evangelium Jesu Christi secundum Matthæum, Marcum et Lucam.*

the evangelist did not follow private authors in his narrative, but those who were *ministers of the Word*, those to whom was divinely committed the office of publishing it, and who were, therefore, witnesses above all exception. He blames Erasmus for not giving due weight to the character of the witnesses from whom Luke drew the matter of his Gospel. They were called by God; and in what is related by the evangelist as derived from them we are to hear the Son of God speaking through His apostles. It is a great thing that they are called eye-witnesses, but by being called *ministers* they are taken out of the common order of men, so that our faith has its support in heaven, not in the earth. As to the diversity observed in the Gospels, it is the constant contention of Calvin that it never amounts to a contradiction between them. He never acknowledges irreconcilable discrepancies. He has a solution for every difficulty that he can discover. He teaches once and again that the apparent diversity is by divine arrangement. Thus in his Argument prefixed to the Synoptic Gospels he states that this diversity was not purposely aimed at by the evangelists, but since each had resolved to write in good faith what he knew to be certain, each one pursued the plan which he considered the best. But as this did not happen accidentally, but under the overruling providence of God, so the Holy Spirit in the diverse form of writing produced a wonderful agreement among them, which alone would almost suffice to gain credit for them, if they did not possess a higher authority from another source (*ita Spiritus sanctus in diversa scribendi forma mirabilem illis consensum suggessit*, etc.). So in the Argument of the Gospel of John he observes that God so dictated to the evangelists what they should write, that from the parts distributed among them He might make one complete body (*Sic ergo quatuor Evangelistis dictavit quod scriberent, ut distributis inter ipsos partibus corpus unum integrum absolveret*). In commenting on Luke xxiv. 13, respecting the narrative of the journey of the two disciples to Emmaus, after saying that it is only briefly touched on by Mark and not referred to in a single word by Matthew or John, but is, for good reason, accurately described by Luke, he makes this remark: "But I have already often notified that the Spirit of God fitly allotted to the several evangelists their parts, so that what we do not find in one or two of them we can learn from others."

We are, then, according to Calvin, to hold fast the principle that the differences in the gospels are consistent with their plenary inspiration. Very remarkable are the words of Calvin on Matt. v. 1, while harmonizing the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew with the corresponding discourse which begins Luke vi. 20. After remarking that both evangelists make no mention of the time when our

Lord uttered this discourse, and expressing his opinion that it was not delivered till after the twelve had been chosen, he subjoins : " But in preserving the order of time, which I saw was neglected by the Spirit of God (*quem videbam a Spiritu Dei neglectum*), I did not wish to be too curious." The very disregard of the order of time, which might be attributed to human carelessness, he describes as proceeding from the Holy Spirit. In considering the genealogy of Christ as given by Matthew, he states that it is clear from the sacred history that three kings have been omitted. Then he adds : " They who say that this has been done through forgetfulness are by no means to be listened to " (*Hoc qui oblivione factum esse dicunt, minime sunt audiendi*). The idea that an error of memory had been committed by the sacred writer Calvin would not tolerate. He never suggests such an explanation of any discrepancy in Scripture. He does admit error through the carelessness or fault of *copyists*, and, indeed, suggests such a cause to account for a difficulty in the genealogical table of Matthew. But he does not concede that there existed any error in the two genealogies in the *original Gospels*, and he attempts a solution of every apparent discrepancy now found in them. In the varying accounts of the resurrection of our Lord, Calvin notes carefully the points of difference, but sees nothing contradictory, no real disagreement, and undertakes to bring their apparently conflicting statements into harmony. The most difficult cases of seeming discrepancy between the narratives in the Gospels Calvin does not despair of being able to reconcile. We might go over them in order, and show that in *no* instance does he concede that one evangelist is really at variance with another. We have not space here for making an examination of the way in which he deals with every seeming discrepancy. But we are confident that our readers who undertake to test the accuracy of our statement, will not be able to find a single example of apparent disagreement between the Gospels which Calvin pronounces incapable of a satisfactory solution.

In regard to the quotation of the Old Testament in the New Calvin acknowledges the freedom with which this is done by the apostles, but he is careful to show that they never make an unjustifiable or improper use of the Old Testament. We cannot here discuss the subject at length. Any one who will take the trouble to examine particularly Calvin's Commentary on the New Testament to learn how he explains the Old Testament quotations, will see that in every case he vindicates the application made of them, and exhibits his own skill as an interpreter in his masterly treatment of this difficult subject. To charge apostles with abusively employing the Old Testament or imposing a false meaning on it, was looked

upon by him as what none but an impious man could think of doing. Thus, in his comment on Ephesians iv. 8, he repels the accusation that Paul was not justified in the application which he makes of Psalm lxviii. 19 (*Impii eum criminantur, quasi Scriptura abusus fuerit*), "The ungodly accuse him [Paul] of abusing Scripture." Only an impious man could, in Calvin's judgment, think of an apostle making any other than a legitimate use of Scripture. In commenting on Matt. ii. 6, he makes the general remark that the apostles always quote and apply the testimonies of Scripture fitly and appositely (*congruenter et apposite*), though they may be far from making their citations word for word. He would have us to be satisfied with this one thing, that the evangelists never wrest from Scripture a meaning which it does not bear, but put it to its genuine use (*Scriptura nunquam ab illis torquetur in alienum sensum, sed proprie in genuinum usum aptatur*). In his commentary on 1 Cor. ii. 9, Calvin, after mentioning a certain plausible view of the Old Testament passage quoted by the apostle (Isa. lxiv. 4), thus expresses himself regarding it: "But it is less accordant with the mind of Paul in whom we are to trust more than in any reasons. For who can be a more certain or more faithful interpreter of this oracle, which He Himself dictated to Isaiah, than the Spirit of God, as He has expounded it by the mouth of Paul" (*Quis enim Spiritu Dei certior aut fidelior erit interpret hujus oraculi, quod ipse Iesaiæ dictavit, sicut per os Pauli exposuit?*). Calvin would not admit that a New Testament writer was liable to error in his exposition of Old Testament Scripture. We advise our readers, if they see any extracts from his commentary, which seem to imply the contrary, to consult the commentary for themselves. We have met with garbled quotations which give quite a false impression of the views which he puts forward. We must pass from this subject with the remark that we have been greatly helped by Calvin's elucidation of the principles involved in the use and application made by our Lord and the apostles of passages of the Old Testament. We say this, while we dissent from Calvin's views on certain Messianic prophecies, which he does not apply to Christ as their primary object. A study of his treatment of quotations from the Old Testament in the New has only deepened our conviction that he regarded both Testaments as the Word of God, the divine authority and infallibility of which he would not dare to call in question.

How entire, in Calvin's view, was the divine inspiration of Scripture, is very impressively testified by the terms in which he refers to the lowly style which often meets us in Scripture, and which men readily conceive to be unbecoming the divine majesty. Calvin

does not tell us that in such parts of Scripture the Spirit of God left the writers to give their own imperfect utterances, which we are not to think of as at all inspired by Him. On John iii. 12 he is led to use these words, which show that in all forms of speech employed in Scripture we are to hear the voice of God. "Most men have less esteem for the gospel, because they do not find in it a magniloquence which fills their ears. And so they do not deign to occupy themselves in the study of common and lowly doctrine. But such impudence is too bad, that we pay less honor to God when He speaks, because He lets Himself down to our ignorance. Let us know, therefore, that it is on our account that the Lord speaks stammeringly with us in Scripture, rudely and in a vulgar style (*Ergo quod crasse et plebeio stylo nobiscum balbutit Dominus in Scriptura, hoc sciamus causa nostra fieri*)."

It is still the LORD that speaks in Scripture, no matter what defects of style a critic may find in it. Where *he* takes offense, Calvin would have us praise the divine condescension. In his remarks on the closing words of the Gospel of John, Calvin expresses himself similarly. The evangelist is not to be blamed for employing a trite and current figure to commend the excellency of the works of Christ. For we know how God accommodates Himself, for the sake of our ignorance, to the common manner of speaking, nay rather sometimes, in a measure, stammers (*Scimus enim ut se ad communem loquendi modum accomodet Deus ruditatis nostræ causa, imo interdum quodammodo balbutiat*). Let no one imagine, then, that, according to Calvin, we are to exclude divine inspiration from any part of Scripture, on the ground that the language is unworthy of the God of glory. He can humble Himself to employ our low forms of speech. This is not impossible with God; but there is a thing which He will *not* condescend to do; it is impossible for God to lie. This was with Calvin a certain article of belief; and he could never father on God a false statement, or admit that anything contrary to truth is contained in that Scripture which is HIS WORD, of all of which He again and again declares, THE MOUTH OF THE LORD HATH SPOKEN IT. Rather than confess that there was any place of Scripture in which we are not to hear God speaking to us, Calvin would prefer to say that God of His condescending grace stammers, as it were; and just because the voice of a God of truth is to be heard sounding everywhere in Scripture, even in its poorest forms of speech, and those most liable to be mistaken, Scripture must be free from error, can state nothing which, rightly understood, can be declared false.

But "facts are brutal; they strike all our theories in the face;" and it is contended that Calvin, in defiance of that theory of the

inspiration of the whole of Scripture which we have set forth as held by him, nevertheless, in his Commentary on Scripture admits that in certain places it is not free from error. If Calvin really made such an admission, it would be extraordinary inconsistency on his part, and might well excite our astonishment. However, it is now assumed as an indisputable fact that Calvin freely confesses that there are mistakes in the Bible. Cremer, in his article on "Inspiration" in Herzog's *Real-Encyklopædie* (vi, p. 754), assumes that Calvin allows that there are inaccuracies and errors in Scripture, though the only instance which Cremer specifies is Matt. xxvii. 9. Even a man of such unflinching orthodoxy as Dr. Adolph Zahn informs us that here "Luther and Calvin will find a mistake of the evangelist."* Van Oosterzee puts forth this statement: "Errors and inaccuracies in matters of subordinate importance are, as we have already seen, undoubtedly to be found in the Bible. A Luther, a Calvin, a Coccejus, among the older theologians; a Tholuck, a Neander, a Lange, a Stier, among the modern ones, have admitted it without hesitation."† Prof. Prentiss tells us that Prof. Briggs' position in denying perfect correspondence of minor details in Scripture is "the view of Calvin."‡ Prof. M. R. Vincent, too, in his lecture on *Exegesis*, claims Calvin among the scholars who "asserted the denial of verbal infallibility." Archdeacon Farrar, also, in his *History of Interpretation* (p. 345), supposes that he does Calvin honor by saying of him, "He did not hold the theory of verbal dictation. He will never defend or harmonize what he regards as oversight or mistake in the sacred writers." As examples of such mistakes, which Calvin would not defend or harmonize, we are referred in a footnote to Matt. xxvii. 9; Acts vii. 16. Again, on p. 349, Farrar further declares of Calvin: "Yet if he held that Scripture flowed from the very mouth of God, he gives us no explanation of his own admission of inaccuracies in Scripture." Again Farrar points to Calvin's notes on the same passages, Matt. xxvii. 9; Acts vii. 16. Farrar evidently regards it as passing strange that Calvin should give no explanation of his supposed admission of inaccuracies in Scripture, while he held the highest doctrine of its inspiration. Farrar must have thought him self-contradictory, especially when on the next page he charges Calvin with "letter worship," which is stigmatized as a very "harmful error." Further, Farrar complains of Calvin that "he stood far below Luther, making no distinction between different parts of the Bible."

Calvin must have been self-contradictory in a very flagrant man-

* *Wanderung durch Schrift*, p. 93.

† *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. i, p. 205.

‡ *The Agreement*, etc., p. 140.

ner, if he really made the admission of mistakes in Scripture with which he is so frequently and confidently charged. But let us consider what he says on Matt. xxvii. 9: "How the name Jeremiah crept in I confess that I do not know, nor do I anxiously trouble myself; certainly, that the name Jeremiah has been put by an error for Zechariah, the thing itself shows; for nothing like this is read in Jeremiah" (*Certe Jeremiæ nomen errore positum esse pro Zacharia (xiii. 7) res ipsa ostendit*, etc). It is utterly unwarranted to make Calvin here acknowledge an error in the original text of Scripture. He speaks of the name Jeremiah as having "crept in" *obrepserit*; * and this naturally suggests the idea of a corruption of the original text of Scripture. He holds that the name Jeremiah is put by error for Zechariah, but he does not say that the error was committed by the evangelist. The curt expression "put by error" rather leads us to think of an error of transcription. We have already seen how, in commenting on our Lord's genealogy, Calvin tells us that they are not to be heard who would make the sacred historian commit a mistake through forgetfulness; while in the same connection he admits the fault or carelessness of copyists to have caused error in the sacred text. Why then shall we make him contradict here his previous teaching; make him without a word of explanation admit what would belie his solemnly and repeatedly avowed belief? It is most unreasonable to hold that Calvin here supposes the admitted error to attach to the original text. The more we study this passage, which is the chief one relied on, and the one most frequently appealed to in support of the allegation that Calvin did not hold the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture, the more assured we are that it does not serve the purpose for which it is adduced. Calvin does not charge an error on Matthew, or on God who spake by him.† Beza, Calvin's successor, has been referred to as another distinguished orthodox theologian who admitted an error in Matt. xxvii. 9, which he ascribed to the evangelist. But one has only to consult his commentary on

* Cf. the Note on Acts vii. 14: *Incertum est an errore postea obrepserit.*

† Dr. Briggs (*Whither?* p. 72) says: "It seems to me that no candid mind without invincible dogmatic prepossessions can doubt that there is an error of citation in Matt. xxvii. 9, that goes back to the original autograph. A passage is cited from Jeremiah that belongs to Zechariah. Dr. Warfield tries hard to overcome the error by three plausible theories." We should have more difficulty in explaining how a *candid* mind could have invincible dogmatic prepossessions, than in explaining the difficulty in Matthew. We had supposed that a candid mind was one "free from undue bias." A good annotator on an old Greek classic would treat it with more respect than certain critics treat the Holy Gospel. Nothing but necessity will induce him to charge a mistake on the author whom he interprets.

the verse to see how far he was from thinking that there was any error in the original text of Matthew.

We take up the other passage most relied on as a witness that Calvin acknowledged the errancy of Sacred Scripture. In his exposition of Acts vii. 16 Calvin uses these words: "*In nomine Abrahæ erratum esse palam est*" ("It is well known that there is an error in the name Abraham"). And at the close of his comment he makes this statement, "*Quare hic locus corrigendus est*" ("Wherefore this place is to be corrected"). A writer in the *New York Evangelist* (October 15, 1891) ventures to translate: "It is evident that he [Luke] made a mistake in the name of Abraham." If this were a fair rendering of Calvin's language, it would answer the purpose for which it is cited. But Calvin does not say, as every Latin scholar can see at a glance, that the mistake, which he allows to be in the passage, was made by the sacred historian. He admits simply that a mistake is there, without telling who is the author of it. Why may we not suppose that Calvin blamed copyists for the error existing in the text, as he accounts for a supposed error in the fourteenth verse of the same chapter in this way? The sentence with which Calvin concludes his comment on the passage seems to indicate that, in Calvin's opinion, the error did not belong to the autograph of Luke: "*Wherefore this passage is to be corrected.*" The Latin word rendered "corrected" is the one that is ordinarily used by critical editors of the New Testament of amending a passage by restoring the true reading.

We have considered the strongest evidence that has been adduced that Calvin was not a believer in the inerrancy of Scripture. No other passages have been quoted from his writings in which he uses the word "error" as in any sense applicable to the Bible.

What advantage, it has been asked, is there in resting in the belief that the autographs of the books of Scripture were free from error, if the text as we now have it is not such? We reply, that if the Scriptures in their original form were errorless, we can believe that God was their author. We could not suppose God to be the author of an errant Bible, without denying His veracity. Calvin maintained that whatever Scripture contains is the Word of the Lord; and, if he taught that Scripture is not true in all its parts, it would follow that he made God a liar. There is no possibility of evading this shocking consequence. We have more reverence for Calvin than to suppose that he would, in the actual interpretation of Scripture, forget the teaching regarding it which he has been at pains repeatedly and emphatically to promulgate, that it is the Word of God. Men like Archdeacon Farrar may say of the Apostle Paul: "He shared, doubtless, in the views of the later Jewish schools—the

Tanaim and Amoraim—on the nature of inspiration. These views, which we find also in Philo, made the words of Scripture coextensive and identical with the words of God.”* Latitudinarian writers may say this of the apostle, and afterwards represent him as false to the views in which he doubtless shared. But we have a higher opinion of Calvin’s consistency than to say of him, without satisfactory evidence, that he has been really guilty of that “sin of sins, self-contradiction.” But such evidence has not been produced, and cannot be produced.

It is no trivial question whether we have an inerrant Bible; and we are glad that we are able to redeem the good name of Calvin from a grave misrepresentation which has been fastened on it, and to place him among the number of those who hold the historic doctrine of the Church regarding inspiration. We read, when a student of theology, certain words of warning uttered by Prof. Moses Stuart, among the last which he wrote, respecting the fearful injury to the cause of religion which might be expected to follow the prevalence among us of the low views of the inspiration of Scripture which were then current in Germany, but had not then spread far in America and Great Britain. We have never forgotten that warning, and we think it worthy of being repeated after forty years. It comes from one who was accounted, in his day, a liberal theologian, and who was certainly no vain alarmist: “Could their position in regard to the Scriptures [he is speaking of Neander, Tholuck, Müller and Nitzsch] be received by the indiscriminating multitude of men, both learned and unlearned, without the most absolute hazard of all belief in the Bible as divinely authoritative; of all belief in its doctrines, its precepts and its facts? Impossible, altogether impossible. The ground once abandoned, which Paul has taken, that ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, every man of common attainments will feel at liberty to say whatever his own subjective feelings may dictate: to say: ‘This is unimportant; that is unessential; this is a doubtful narrative; that is a contradictory one; this is in opposition to science, and that to reason; this may be pruned, and that lopped off, while the tree may still remain as good as ever.’ In a word, every one is left wholly, and without any check, to be his own judge in the case, how much of the Bible is consonant with his own reason and subjective feelings, and how much is not; and these feelings are, of course, the high court of appeal. What now has become of the Word of God, true, authoritative, decisive of all duty and all matters of faith? Gone, absolutely gone, irretrievably gone, as to the mass of men who

* *Life and Work of St. Paul*, chap. iii. By the way, Paul wrote before the Tanaim and Amoraim doctors arose.

are not philosophers in casuistry and the theory of religion. And if any doubt remains as to the effect of such doctrine, I appeal again to the religious state of the great German community.”*

Calvin shows in his commentary on 1 Cor. vii that the apostle does not in this chapter express any doubt as to his own inspiration or confess that he sets forth in any case his own private opinions which were not to be regarded as divine oracles. On the last verse, “*But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God,*” he remarks: “In adding, *according to my judgment*, he does not understand by this expression a dubious opinion; but it is just as if he should say that such is his judgment on that question, for he immediately subjoins that *he has the Spirit of God*, which is enough for full and complete authority. Yet he does not seem to be wanting in irony in saying, *I think*. For since the false apostles often with inflated cheeks boasted of the Spirit of God to arrogate to themselves authority, and meanwhile studied to disparage Paul, he says that he also seems to himself to possess the Spirit no less than they.” On 1 Cor. vii. 10, Calvin remarks of the apostle, “In adding, *not I, but the Lord*, he signifies by this correction that what he here delivers was taken from the Law of God. For other things which he delivered he had also from revelation of the Spirit, but he alleges that God is the author of this, because it was manifest from the Law of God.” On 1 Cor. vii. 12, Calvin observes: “What does it mean that Paul makes himself the author of these things, since they seem to conflict somewhat with what he had lately put forward from the Lord? But he does not so understand that they are from himself without his deriving them from the Spirit of God; but since there existed nowhere in the Law or the Prophets a certain and express word on this subject, he anticipates in this way the calumnies of the wicked, when he ascribes to himself what he was about to say. But lest all this should be little esteemed, as originating in the head of man, he will afterwards deny that whatever he speaks are figments of his own understanding. But there is *no repugnance* with what goes before.” On 1 Cor. vii. 25, Calvin writes: “He tells us that *he has no commandment of the Lord*, because the Lord nowhere in the [Old Testament] Scriptures pronounces who ought to remain unmarried.” Again, *I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*. “He gives authority for his judgment, lest any one should think himself at liberty to repudiate it if he pleased. For he asserts that he speaks not as a man, but as a faithful teacher of the Church and an apostle of Christ.” Calvin will not

* *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January, 1852, pp. 69, 70.

concede that the apostle anywhere in his epistles delivers a merely human counsel or fallible judgment.

Calvin has been sharply censured for not distinguishing properly between the different parts of the Bible. Farrar quotes from a letter of his to the Duchess of Ferrara, and observes on it, "It is strange that he should never have thought of the Sermon on the Mount, 'It was said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies.'"^{*} Calvin did think of the Sermon on the Mount; and in that noble letter from which Farrar quotes in an unfair manner, he shows a truly Christian spirit, and rightly contends that the Old Testament prohibits private vengeance as well as the New. Farrar complains that when the Duchess "had, in a letter, made the wise remark that David's example in hating his enemies is not applicable to us, Calvin curtly and sternly answered that 'such a gloss would upset all Scripture,' that even in his hatred David is an example to us, and a type of Christ; and should we presume to set up ourselves as superior to Christ in sweetness and humanity?" Now the curtness and sternness of Calvin's answer would not appear if it had been quoted fairly. Calvin, in referring to David as our model, says of him: "We see that David surpassed in kindness of character the best of those that would be found in our days. Thus, when he protests that he has wept in secret and shed tears for those who were plotting his death, we see that his hatred was consistent with mourning for their death, that he was as meek-spirited as could possibly be desired. But when he says he holds the reprobate in mortal aversion, it cannot be doubted that he glories in an upright, pure and well-regulated zeal." Further on he thus expounds excellently to his royal correspondent the morality common to the Old and New Testaments: "I pray you again, Madame, not to dwell any longer on that distinction which deceives you, while you imagine it was permitted under the Law to avenge one's self, because it is there said, 'an eye for an eye;' for vengeance was as much forbidden then as it is under the Gospel, seeing that we are commanded to do good even to the beast of our enemy; but what was addressed to the judges each individual applied to himself. There remains the abuse of the precept which our Lord Jesus Christ corrects. Be that as it will, we are all agreed that, in order to be recognized as children of God, it behooves us to conform ourselves to his example, striving to do good to those who are unworthy of it, just as he causes his sun to shine on the evil and the good. Thus hatred and Christianity are things incompatible. I mean hatred towards persons, in opposition to the love we owe them. On the contrary, we are to wish, and

^{*} *History of Interpretation*, p. 350.

even procure their good; and to labor, as much as in us lies, to maintain peace and concord with all men." The letter, which Farrar pronounced curt and stern, and wanting in Christian love in the answer which it gives regarding Renée's objection to David as an example, is marked 664 in the fourth volume of Bonnet's *Collection of Calvin's Letters*. It reveals not only Calvin's right understanding of the teaching of the Old Testament, but also his magnanimity and Christian temper, and extraordinary liberality, considering the age in which he lived. In it he praises the Duchess of Ferrara for not permitting the shops of the Papists to be robbed and pillaged; relates how he refused to give his consent to have that cruel persecutor and worst enemy of the Huguenots, the Duke of Guise, exterminated by those men of prompt and ready execution who were bent on that object, and who were restrained only by Calvin's exhortation; and declares that he did not approve of those who said of the Duke after his death that he was damned. Guizot considers this last declaration a wonderful utterance for a theologian to make in the sixteenth century. Yet this letter, so remarkable for its moderation and the spirit of forbearance which it breathes, gives occasion to Farrar to say of Calvin (p. 351), "From his failure to apprehend the full force of the new commandment he ruthlessly burnt Servetus." We may question the critic's own appreciation of the new commandment, when he could so misrepresent Calvin's part in the execution of Servetus. So far from "ruthlessly burning" him, Calvin exerted himself to the utmost to prevent Servetus from being burnt; and it is hard to believe that Farrar was ignorant of this well-known fact.

Calvin was right in teaching that the direction, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was not designed to sanction vindictiveness. In the three passages of the law of Moses in which it is found (Ex. xxi. 24, 25; Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 18, 19), it is evident from the context that it belonged to judges to follow this rule, that punishment should be exacted commensurate to the injury inflicted. Likewise under the New Testament the civil magistrate is the minister of God, who beareth not the sword in vain, but is a revenger—which the individual is not to be—to execute wrath on him that doeth evil (Rom. xiii. 4). But in the law of Moses this rule is prescribed to private individuals: "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18). Calvin would not admit that the law of love to our neighbor was unknown before the coming of Christ, and he distinguished between the exact teaching of the Old Testament, and the glosses put on it by Jewish doctors, and by some Christian commentators also.

We can only very briefly touch on that part of Calvin's doctrine of Holy Scripture which answers the question as to the way in which Scripture may be certainly known to be the Word of God. Its self-evidencing power is strongly asserted by the reformer. Replying to those who inquire, "Whence shall we be persuaded that Scripture has flowed from God, unless we have recourse to the decree of the Church?" he makes answer: "This is just as if one should ask, 'Whence shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter?' For Scripture of itself does not let us have a more obscure perception of its truth than white things of their color, sweet and bitter things of their taste."* Calvin strenuously contends against the doctrine that the deference due to Scripture depends on the authority of the Church and its determination. By appealing to Eph. ii. 20, he proves that the Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, that is, the doctrine of the apostles and prophets. The foundation, then, must have preceded the existence of the Church built on it. The Church, in receiving and attesting Scripture, does not make authentic what was doubtful and disputed, but dutifully recognizes the truth of God. A saying of Augustine that "he would not believe the gospel unless the authority of the Church induced him," is explained by Calvin as spoken from the standpoint of unbelievers, who had not yet known Christ, nor been illuminated by the Spirit of God. Such are rendered teachable by a regard to the Church so as to submit to learn the faith of Christ from the gospel. But the faith of the *godly* is not founded on the authority of the Church, nor does the certainty of the gospel depend on it. The perfect conviction of the pious that God is the Author of Scripture is derived not from human reasons, or judgments, or conjectures, but from the secret testimony of the Spirit. This is the highest proof of Scripture. The only true faith is that which the Spirit seals in our hearts. Those inwardly taught by the Spirit acquiesce completely in Scripture, and do not ask for arguments or probabilities; Scripture is *αὐτόπιστος*, credible in itself, and is seen to be such by those enlightened by the Spirit. This singular privilege belongs to the elect alone, who are taught of God, and whom he distinguishes from the whole human race. "They act preposterously who strive by disputing to build a full faith in Scripture" (*Præpostere faciunt qui disputando contendunt solidam Scripturæ fidem astruere*).† So, again, in words that are often quoted of late: "They act foolishly who wish it to be proved to unbelievers that the Scripture is the Word of God; which cannot be known without faith."‡

These latter declarations of Calvin have been completely misunder-

**Inst.*, Lib. i, vii, 2.

†*Inst.*, Lib. i, vii, 4.

‡*Inst.*, Lib. i, viii, 13.

stood. He is speaking of a firm, immovable, entire faith and saving knowledge such as by no artifice of man we can be deprived of. Just before making the affirmation which we have last quoted, we find him stating: "There are other reasons, neither few nor feeble, by which the dignity and majesty of Scripture may be not only asserted for pious souls, but signally vindicated against the arts of chicaners, but these reasons are not able by themselves to produce firm faith in it until God, by manifesting His own divinity in it, place our reverence for it beyond all controversy. Wherefore, Scripture will suffice to a saving knowledge of God only then when its certainty is founded on the inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit." Calvin, while steadfastly maintaining that the saving truth of Scripture cannot be certainly known and believed in without internal divine illumination, gave no countenance to the supposition that he who has this divinely implanted faith may remain indifferent and unaffected while criticism makes havoc of the historical character of Scripture. He did not neglect the external evidence of Scripture; and the *internal* evidence of Scripture *which a man not enlightened by the Spirit of God can perceive*, does not appear to have been valued higher by Calvin than the evidence of miracles and prophecy. Both would not suffice to produce the faith of God's elect. In chapter viii of the first book of the *Institutes* he presents such internal evidence of Scripture as can be laid before unbelievers, and he does not rate it any higher than the arguments from miracles and prophecy. The internal evidence, which the true Christian sees in Scripture, is hidden from all others, no matter how wise and intelligent they may be. He remarks: "It annoys certain good people, because, while the ungodly murmur with impunity against the Word of God, they have not at hand a clear proof. As if the Spirit were not called both the seal and pledge to confirm the faith of the pious, just because, until He illuminates their minds, they fluctuate amid many uncertainties."*

It is not necessary for us to name well-known critics, who entirely mistake Calvin's doctrine as to the paramount value of the internal evidence of Scripture. This internal evidence, which he cannot sufficiently magnify, is not such as a man by his own investigation of Scripture can discover. It is such as God's Spirit alone can enable us to see. Though Calvin speaks deprecatingly of human reasons for establishing the truth of Scripture *in comparison with* the secret testimony of the Spirit, he yet regards them as very strong and convincing, and sufficient *to reduce to silence* those who deny the divine origin of Scripture. "It is indeed true," he says, "if we wish to proceed by way of arguments, many things can

* *Inst.*, Lib. i, vii, 4.

be brought forward which easily prove that if there is a God in heaven, the Law and the Prophecies and the Gospel have flowed from Him." He professes his own ability to silence the most cunning contemners of Scripture, and to refute their cavils without much difficulty. "But," he adds, "if one should maintain the sacred Word of God against the abusive sayings of men, he would not yet immediately fix in their hearts the certainty which piety requires" (*Verum si quis sacrum Dei verbum asserat ab hominum maledictis, non protinus tamen quam requirit pietas certitudinem cordibus infiget*).* For this certainty, this thorough conviction that we hold unassailable truth, the testimony of the same Spirit is needed who spake by the mouth of the prophets.

We cannot exhibit the several proofs which Calvin in the eighth chapter of the first book of his *Institutes* adduces to evince the divine origin of Scripture. We will refer particularly to his way of handling the argument from prophecy. There are predictions, he maintains, in the books of Moses of such a character that it is clear to sane men that it is God who speaks (*ut sanis hominibus constet Deum esse qui loquitur*). "In the remaining prophets this is even more clearly discerned." He gives examples, among others one taken from the latter part of Isaiah, in which Cyrus is mentioned by name and the work which he should accomplish is described a hundred years before he was born. He asks: "Does not this simple narration, without any embellishment of words, demonstrate that it is oracles of God, not conjectures of man, which Isaiah speaks?" So he appeals to the prophecy of Jeremiah about the length of time which the captivity in Babylon should last, and to the predictions in Dan. ix *sq.*, and observes that "if pious men would duly meditate on these things, they would be abundantly instructed to restrain the barkings of the ungodly; for the demonstration is too clear to be liable to any cavils." But while Calvin frequently attributes great weight to the evidences of the divine origin of Scripture which can be exhibited to all men, he yet maintains that a faith which rests only on such evidences is wanting in living power, and not strong enough to withstand all objections and assaults. For our comfort and steadfastness our faith must not depend on probable evidence, but be raised to the sphere of divine certainty through the illumination of the Spirit enabling us to see the Scripture as the very Word of the living God.

Calvin seems to us to go too far when he represents it as a great insult to the Holy Spirit to doubt that His inward testimony is sufficient to decide absolutely the books that ought to be admitted

* *Inst.*, Lib. i, vii, 4.

into the canon of Holy Scripture.* We are not prepared to affirm that the inward testimony of the Spirit makes it evident, without human testimony, that *every* book of the Bible was written by divine inspiration. Dr. William Cunningham† unites with Dr. Chalmers in approving of a statement of Richard Baxter, in which he acknowledges that for his part he never could boast of any such testimony or light of the Spirit, as without human testimony, would have made him believe that the Book of Canticles is canonical and written by Solomon, and the Book of Wisdom apocryphal and written by Philo. Calvin himself, too, writes in a way to show that he admitted the need of human testimony to help to determine what books should be excluded from the canon, and what should be received into it. "I know," says he, "what some bad men (*nebulones*) cry out in corners, that they may show the acuteness of their understanding in attacking the truth of God. They ask, Who has made us certain that those books which are read under their names were written by Moses and the prophets? They even dare to question whether such a person as Moses ever lived. But if any one should doubt whether there ever was a Plato, or an Aristotle, or a Cicero, who would not say that such madness should be chastised with blows of the hand or of the whip? The law of Moses was wonderfully preserved, more by divine providence than by human care. . . . There hardly ever was an age in which its authority was not confirmed and renewed. Was Moses unknown to those who handled the Psalter of David? It is most certain that the writings of Moses and the prophets were transmitted to posterity in no other way than from hand to hand."‡ We do well to maintain that there is a self-evidencing power in Scripture to those taught by the Spirit of God; but this does not render superfluous the process of historical proof which Christian apologists, Calvin himself among them, have been wont to employ.

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* *Inst.*, Lib. i, vii, 1.

† *Theological Lectures*, p. 291.

‡ *Inst.*, i, viii, 9.