

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield

## CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD<sup>1</sup>

The first chapters of Calvin's "Institutes" are taken up with a comprehensive exposition of the sources and guarantee of the knowledge of God and divine things (Book I. chs. i.-ix.). A systematic treatise on the knowledge of God must needs begin with such an exposition; and we require no account of the circumstance that Calvin's treatise begins with it, beyond the systematic character of his mind and the clearness and comprehensiveness of his view. This exposition therefore makes its appearance in the earliest edition of the "Institutes," which attempted "to give a summary of religion in all its parts," redacted in orderly sequence; that is to say, which was intended as a textbook in theology. This was the second edition, published in 1539, which was considered by Calvin to be the first which at all corresponded to its title. In this edition this exposition already stands practically complete. Large insertions were made into it subsequently, by which it was greatly enriched as a detailed exposition and validation of the sources of our knowledge of God; but no modifications were made in its fundamental teaching by these additions, and the ground plan of the exposition as laid down in 1539 was retained unaltered throughout the subsequent development of the treatise.

We may observe in the controversies in which Calvin had been engaged between 1536 and 1539 a certain preparation for writing this comprehensive and admirably balanced statement, with its equal repudiation of Romish and Anabaptist error and its high note of assurance in the face of the scepticism of the average man of the world. We may trace in it the fruits of his eager and exhaustive studies prosecuted in the interval, as pastor, professor, and Protestant statesman; and especially of his own ripening thought as he worked more and more into detail his systematic view of the body of truth. But we can attribute to nothing but his theological genius the feat by which he set a compressed apologetical treatise in the forefront of his little book—for the "Institutes" were still in 1539 a little book, although already expanded to more than double the size of their original form (edition of 1536). Thus he not only for the first time supplied the constructive basis for the Reformation movement, but even for the first time in the history of Christian theology drew in outline the plan of a complete structure of Christian Apologetics. For this is the significance in the history of thought of Calvin's exposition of the sources and guarantee of the knowledge of God, which forms the opening topic of his "Institutes." "Thus," says Julius Köstlin, after cursorily surveying the course of the exposition, "there already rises with him an edifice of Christian Apologetics, in its outlines complete (*fertig*). With it, he stands, already in 1539, unique (*einzig*) among the Reformers, and among Christian theologians in general up to his day. Only as isolated building-stones can appear in comparison with this, even what Melanchthon, for example, offered in the last elaboration of the *Loci* with reference to the proofs for the existence of God."<sup>2</sup> In point of fact, in Augustine alone among his predecessors do we find anything like the same grasp of the elements of the problem as Calvin here exhibits; and nowhere among his predecessors do we find these elements brought together in a constructive statement of anything like the completeness and systematic balance which he gave to it.

At once on its publication, however, Calvin's apologetical construction became the property of universal Christian thought, and it has entered so vitally into Protestant, and especially

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<sup>1</sup> From *The Princeton Theological Review*, vii. 1909, pp. 219-325.

<sup>2</sup> Article on "Calvin's Institutio, nach Form und Inhalt, in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung," printed in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* for 1868, p. 39. Köstlin's whole account of the origin of these sections in the edition of 1539 is worth reading (pp. 38-39).

Reformed, thinking as to appear now-a-days very much a matter of course. It is difficult for us to appreciate its novelty in him or to realize that it is not as native to every Christian mind as it now seems to us the inevitable adjustment of the elements of the problems raised by the Christian revelation. Familiar as it seems, therefore, it is important that we should apprehend it, at least in its outlines, as it lies in its primary statement in Calvin's pages. So only can we appreciate Calvin's genius or estimate what we owe to him. A very brief abstract will probably suffice, however, to bring before us in the first instance the elements of Calvin's thought. These include the postulation of an innate knowledge of God in man, quickened and developed by a very rich manifestation of God in nature and providence, which, however, fails of its proper effect because of man's corruption in sin; so that an objective revelation of God, embodied in the Scriptures, was rendered necessary, and, as well, a subjective operation of the Spirit of God on the heart enabling sinful man to receive this revelation—by which conjoint divine action, objective and subjective, a true knowledge of God is communicated to the human soul.

Drawn out a little more into detail, this teaching is as follows. The knowledge of God is given in the very same act by which we know self. For when we know self, we must know it as it is: and that means we must know it as dependent, derived, imperfect, and responsible being. To know self implies, therefore, the co-knowledge with self of that on which it is dependent, from which it derives, by the standard of which its imperfection is revealed, to which it is responsible. Of course, such a knowledge of self postulates a knowledge of God, in contrast with whom alone do we ever truly know self: but this only the more emphasises the fact that we know God in knowing self, and the relative priority of our knowledge of two objects of knowledge which we are conscious only of knowing together may for the moment be left undetermined. Meanwhile, it is clear that man has an instinctive and ineradicable knowledge of God, which, moreover, must produce appropriate reactions in his thought, feeling, and will, whence arises what we call religion. But these reactions are conditioned by the state of the soul which reacts. Although, then, man cannot avoid possessing a knowledge of God, and this innate knowledge of God is quickened and developed by the richest manifestations of God in nature and providence, which no man can escape either perceiving or so far apprehending, yet the actual knowledge of God which is framed in the human soul is affected by the subjective condition of the soul. The soul, being corrupted by sin, is dulled in its instinctive apprehension of God; and God's manifestation in nature and history is deflected in it. Accordingly the testimony of nature to God is insufficient that sinful man should know Him aright, and God has therefore supernaturally revealed Himself to His people and deposited this revelation of Himself in written Scriptures. In these Scriptures alone, therefore, do we possess an adequate revelation of God; and this revelation is attested as such by irresistible external evidence and attests itself as such by such marks of inherent divinity that no normal mind can resist them. But the sin-darkened minds to which it appeals are not normal minds, but disordered with the awful disease of sin. What is to give subjective effect in a sin-blinded mind to even a direct revelation from God? The revelation of God is its own credential. It needs no other light to be thrown upon it but that which emanates from itself: and no other light can produce the effect which its own splendor as a revelation of God should effect. But all fails when the receptivity is destroyed by sin. For sinners, therefore, there is requisite a repairing operation upon their souls before the light of the Word itself can accredit itself to them as light. This repairing operation on the souls of sinful men by which they are enabled to perceive light is called the testimony of the Holy Ghost: which is therefore just the subjective action of the Spirit of God on the heart, by virtue of which it is opened for the perception and reception of the objective revelation of God. The testimony of the Spirit cannot, then, take the place of the objective revelation of the Word: it is no revelation in this strict sense. It presupposes the objective revelation and only prepares the heart to respond to and embrace it. But the objective revelation can take no effect on the unprepared heart. What the operation of

the Spirit on the heart does, then, is to implant, or rather to restore, a spiritual sense in the soul by which God is recognized in His Word. When this spiritual sense has been produced the necessity of external proofs that the Scriptures are the Word of God is superseded: the Word of God is as immediately perceived as such as light is perceived as light, sweetness as sweetness—as immediately and as inamissibly. The Christian's knowledge of God, therefore, rests no doubt on an instinctive perception of God native to man as man, developed in the light of a patefaction of God which pervades all nature and history; but particularly on an objective revelation of God deposited in Scriptures which bear in themselves their own evidence of their divine origin, to which every spiritual man responds with the same strength of conviction with which he recognizes light as light. This is the basis which Calvin in his "Institutes" places beneath his systematic exposition of the knowledge of God.

The elements of Calvin's thought here, it will readily be seen, reduce themselves to a few great fundamental principles. These embrace particularly the following doctrines: the doctrine of the innate knowledge of God; the doctrine of the general revelation of God in nature and history; the doctrine of the special revelation of God and its embodiment in Scriptures; the doctrine of the noetic effects of sin; the doctrine of the testimony of the Holy Spirit. That we may do justice to his thought we must look in some detail at his treatment of each of these doctrines and of the subordinate topics which are necessarily connected with them.

## I. NATURAL REVELATION

That the knowledge of God is innate (I. iii. 3), naturally engraved on the hearts of men (I. iv. 4), and so a part of their very constitution as men (I. iii. 1), that it is a matter of instinct (I. iii. 1, I. iv. 2), and every man is self-taught it from his birth (I. iii. 3), Calvin is thoroughly assured. He lays it down as incontrovertible fact that "the human mind, by natural instinct itself, possesses some sense of a deity" (I. iii. 1, *ad init. et ad fin.*; 3—*sensus divinitatis or deitatis*),<sup>3</sup> and defends the corollaries which flow from this fact, that the knowledge of God is universal and indelible. All men know there is a God, who has made them, and to whom they are responsible. No savage is sunk so low as to have lost this sense of deity, which is wrought into his very constitution: and the degradation of men's worship is a proof of its ineradicableness—since even such dehumanization as this worship manifests has not obliterated it (I. iii. 1). It is the precondition of all religion, without which no religion would ever have arisen; and it forms the silent assumption of all attempts to expound the origin of religion in fraud or political artifice, as it does also of all corruptions of religion, which find their nerve in men's incurable religious propensities (I. iii. 1). The very atheists testify to its persistence in their ill-concealed dread of the deity they profess to despise (I. iv. 2); and the wicked, strive they ever so hard to banish from their consciousness the sense of an accusing deity, are not permitted by nature to forget it (I. iii. 3). Thus the cases alike of the savages, the atheists, and the wicked are made contributory to the establishment of the fact, and the discussion concludes with the declaration that it is by this innate knowledge of God that men are discriminated from the brutes, so that for men to lose it

3 "Institutes," I. iii. 1: *Quemdam inesse humanae menti, et quidem naturali instinctu, divinitatis sensum, extra controversiam ponimus*; iii. 3, *ad init.*: "This indeed with all rightly judging men will always be assured, that there is engraved on the minds of men *divinitatis sensum, qui delera numquam potest*"; iii. 3, *med.*: *vigere tamen ac subinde emergere quem maxime extinctum cuperent, deitatis sensum*; iv. 4, *ad fin.*: *naturaliter insculptum esae deitatis sensum humanis cordibus*; iv. 4, *ad fin.*: *manet tamen semen illud quod revelli a radice nullo modo potest, aliquam esse divinitatem*. The phraseology by which Calvin designates this "natural instinct" (*naturalis instancus*; iii. 1, *ad init.*) varies from *sensus divinitatis* or *sensus deitatis* to such synonyms as: *numinis intelligentia, dei notio, dei notitia*. It is the basis on the one hand of whatever *cognitio dei* man attains to and on the other of whatever *religio* he reaches; whence it is called the *semen religionis*.

would be to fall away from the very law of their creation (I. iii. 3, *ad fin.*).<sup>4</sup>

If the knowledge of God enters thus into the very idea of humanity and constitutes a law of its being, it follows that it is given in the same act of knowledge by which we know ourselves. This position is developed at length in the opening chapter. The discussion begins with a remark which reminds us of Augustine's familiar contention that the proper concern of mankind is the knowledge of God and the soul; to which it is added at once that these two knowledges are so interrelated that it is impossible to assign the priority to either. The knowledge of self involves the knowledge of God and also profits by the knowledge of God: the better we know ourselves the better we shall know God, but also, we shall never know ourselves as we really are save in contrast with God, by whom is supplied the only standard for the formation of an accurate judgment upon ourselves (I. i. 2). In his analysis of the mode of the implication of the knowledge of God in the knowledge of self, Calvin lays the stress upon our nature as dependent, derived, imperfect, and responsible beings, which if known at all must be known as such, and to be known as such must be known as over against that Being on whom we are dependent, to whom we owe our being, over against whom our imperfection is manifest, and to whom we are responsible (I. i. 1). As we are not self-existent, we must recognize ourselves as "living and moving" in Another. We recognize ourselves as products, and in knowing the product know the cause; thus our very endowments, seeing that they distil to us by drops from heaven, form so many streams up which our minds must needs travel to their Fountainhead. The perception of our imperfections is at the same time the perception of His perfection; so that our very poverty displays to us His infinite fulness. Our sense of dissatisfaction with ourselves directs our eyes to Him whose righteous judgment we can but anticipate; and when in the presence of His majesty we realize our meanness and in the presence of His righteousness we realize our sin, our perception of God passes into consternation as we recognize in Him our just Judge.

The emphasis which Calvin places in this analysis upon the sense of sin and the part it plays in our knowledge of God, at once attracts attention. It is perhaps above everything the "miserable ruin" in which we find ourselves, which compels us, according to him, to raise our eyes towards heaven, spurred on not merely by a sense of lack but by a sense of dread: it is only, he declares, when we have begun to be displeased with ourselves that we energetically turn our thoughts Godward. This is already an indication of the engrossment of Calvin in this treatise with practical rather than merely theoretical problems. He is less concerned to show how man as man attains to a knowledge of God, than how man as he actually exists upon the earth attains to it. In the very act of declaring that this knowledge is instinctive and belongs to the very constitution of man as such, therefore, he so orders the exposition of the mode of its actual rise in the mind as to throw the emphasis on a quality which does not belong to man as such, but only to man as actually existing in the world—in that "miserable ruin into which we have been plunged by the defection of the first man" (I. i. 1). Man as unfallen, by the very necessity of his nature would have known God, the sphere of his being, the author of his existence, the standard of his excellences; but for man as fallen, Calvin seems to say, the strongest force compelling him to look upwards to the God above him, streams from his sense of sin, filling him with a fearful

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4 That the knowledge of God is innate was the common property of the Reformed teachers. Peter Martyr, "Loci Communes," 1576, *praef.*, declares that *Dei cognitio omnium animis naturaliter innata [est]*. It was thrown into great prominence in the Socinian debate, as the Socinians contended that the human mind is natively a *tabula rasa* and all knowledge is acquired. But in defending the innate knowledge of God, the Reformed doctors were very careful that it should not be exaggerated. Thus Leonh. Riissen, "F. Turretini Compendium ... auctum et illustratum," 1695, i. 8, remarks: "Some recent writers explain the natural sense of deity (*numinis*) as *an idea of God impressed on our minds*. If this idea is understood as an innate faculty for knowing God after some fashion, it should not be denied; but if it expresses an *actual and adequate representation of God from our birth*, it is to be entirely rejected." (Heppe, "Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformirten Kirche," 1861, p. 4.)

looking forward to judgment.

It is quite obvious that such a knowledge of God as Calvin here postulates as the unavoidable and ineradicable possession of man, is far from a mere empty conviction that such a being as God exists. The knowledge of God which is given in our knowledge of self is not a bare perception, it is a conception: it has content. "The knowledge of ourselves, therefore," says Calvin (I. i. 1, *ad fin.*), "is not only an incitement to seek after God, but becomes a considerable assistance towards finding God." The knowledge of God with which we are natively endowed is therefore more than a bare conviction that God is: it involves, more or less explicated, some understanding of what God is. Such a knowledge of God can never be otiose and inert; but must produce an effect in human souls, in the way of thinking, feeling, willing. In other words, our native endowment is not merely a *sensus deitatis*, but also a *semen religionis* (I. iii. 1, 2; iv. 1, 4; v. 1). For what we call religion is just the reaction of the human soul to what it perceives God to be. Calvin is, therefore, just as insistent that religion is universal as that the knowledge of God is universal. "The seeds of religion," he insists, "are sown in every heart" (I. iv. 1; cf. v. 1); men are propense to religion (I. iii. 2, *med.*); and always and everywhere frame to themselves a religion, consonant with their conceptions of God.

Calvin's ideas of the origin and nature of religion are set forth, if succinctly, yet with eminent clearness, in his second chapter. Wherever any knowledge of God exists, he tells us, there religion exists. He is not speaking here of a competent knowledge of God such as redeemed sinners have in Christ. But much less is he speaking of that mere notion that there is such a being as God which is sometimes called a knowledge of God. It may be possible to speculate on "the essence" of God without being moved by it. But certainly it is impossible to form any vital conception of God without some movement of intellect, feeling, and will towards Him; and any real knowledge of God is inseparable from movements of piety towards Him. Piety means reverence and love to God; and the knowledge of God tends therefore to produce in us, first, sentiments of fear and reverence; and, secondly, an attitude of receptivity and praise to Him as the fountain of all blessing. If man were not a sinner, indeed, such would be the result: men, knowing God, would turn to Him in confidence and commit themselves without reserve to His care—not so much fearing His judgments, as making them in sympathetic loyalty their own (I. ii. 2). And herein we see what pure and genuine religion is: "it consists in faith, united with a serious fear of God, comprehending a voluntary reverence, and producing legitimate worship agreeable to the injunctions of the law" (I. ii. 2, *ad fin.*).<sup>5</sup>

The definition of religion to which Calvin thus attains is exceedingly interesting, and that not merely because of its vital relation to the fundamental thought of these opening chapters, but also because of its careful adjustment to the state of the controversy in which he was engaged as a leader of the Reformation. In the first of these aspects, as we have already pointed out, religion is with him the vital effect of the knowledge of God in the human soul; so that inevitably religions will differ as the conceptions of God determining our thought and feeling and directing our life differ. In the estate of purity, the knowledge of God produces reverence and trust: and the religion of sinless man will therefore exhibit no other traits but trust and love. In sinful man, the same knowledge of God must produce, rather, a reaction of fear and hate—until the grace of God intervenes with a message of mercy. Sinful man cannot be trusted, therefore, to form his own religion for himself, but must in all his religious functioning place himself unreservedly under the direction of God in His gracious revelation. In its second aspect, then, we perceive Calvin carefully framing his definition so as to exclude all "will-worship" and to prepare the way

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5 En quid sit pura germanaque religio, nempe *fides*, cum serio *Dei timore* coniuncta; ut timor et *voluntariam reverentiam* in se contineat, et secum trahat *ligitimum cultum*, qualis in *Lege* praescribitur.

for the condemnation of the "formal worship" and "ostentation in ceremonies" which had become prevalent in the old Church. The position he takes up here is essentially that which has come down to us under the name of "the Puritan principle." Religion consists, of course, not in the externalities of worship, but in faith, united with a serious fear of God, and a willing reverence. But its external expression in worship is not therefore unimportant, but is to be strictly confined to what is prescribed by God: to "legitimate worship, agreeable to the injunctions of the law" (I. ii. 2, *ad fin.*). This declaration is returned to and expounded in a striking section of the fourth chapter (I. iv. 3; cf. I. v. 13), where Calvin insists that "the divine will is the perpetual rule to which true religion is to be conformed," and asserts of newly invented modes of worshipping God, that they are tantamount to idolatry. God cannot be pleased by showing contempt for what He commands and substituting other things which He condemns; and none would dare to trifle in such a manner with Him unless they had already transformed Him in their minds into another and different Being: and in that case it is of little importance whether you worship one god or many.<sup>6</sup>

From this digression for the sake of asserting the "Puritan," that is, the "Reformed," principle with reference to acceptable worship, it is already apparent that Calvin did not suppose that men have been left to the *notitia Dei insita* for the framing of their religion, although he is insistent that therefrom proceeds a propensity to religion which already secures that all men shall have a religion (I. ii. 2). On the contrary, he teaches that to the ineradicable revelation of Himself which He has imprinted on human nature, God has added an equally clear and abundant revelation of Himself externally to us. As we cannot know ourselves without knowing God, so neither can we look abroad on nature or contemplate the course of events without seeing Him in His works and deeds (I. v.). Calvin is exceedingly emphatic as to the clearness, universality, and convincingness of this natural revelation of God. The whole world is but a theatre for the display of the divine glory (I. v. 5); God manifests Himself in every part of it, and, turn our eyes whichever way we will, we cannot avoid seeing Him; for there is no atom of the world in which some sparks of His glory do not shine (I. v. 1). So pervasive is God in nature, indeed, that it may even be said by a pious mind that nature is God (I. v. 5)—though the expression is too readily misapprehended in a Pantheistic (I. v. 5) or Materialistic (I. v. 4) sense to justify its use. Accordingly, no man can escape this manifestation of God; we cannot open our eyes without seeing it, and the language in which it is delivered to us penetrates through even the densest stupidity and ignorance (I. v. 1). To every individual on earth, therefore, with the exclusion of none (I. v. 7), God abundantly manifests Himself (I. v. 2). Each of the works of God invites the whole human race to the knowledge of Him; while their contemplation in the mass offers an even more prevalent exhibition of Him (I. v. 10). And so clear are His footsteps in His providence, that even what are commonly called accidents are only so many proofs of His activity (I. v. 8).

In developing this statement of the external natural revelation of God, Calvin presents first His patefaction in creation (I. v. 1-6) and then His patefaction in providence (I. v. 7-9), and under each head lays the primary stress on the manifestations of the divine wisdom and power (I. v. 2-5, wisdom; 6, power; 8, wisdom and power). But the other attributes which enter into His glory are not neglected. Thus, under the former caption, he points out that the perception of the

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6 The significance and relations of "the Puritan principle" of absolute dependence on the Word of God as the source of knowledge of His will, and exclusive limitation to its prescriptions of doctrine, life, and even form of Church government and worship, are suggested by J. A. Dorner, "Hist. of Protest. Theol.," 1871, i. p. 390, who criticizes it sharply from his "freer" Lutheran standpoint. But even Luther knew how, on occasion, to invoke "the Puritan principle." Writing to Bartime von Sternberg, Sept. 1, 1523, he says: "For a Christian must do nothing that God has not commanded, and there is no command as to such masses and vigils, but it is solely their own invention, which brings in money, without helping either living or dead" ("The Letters of Martin Luther" (selected and translated) by Margaret A. Currie, 1908, p. 115).

divine power in creation "leads us to the consideration of His eternity; because He from whom all things derive their origin must necessarily be eternal and self-existent," while we must postulate goodness and mercy as the motives of His creation and providence (I. v. 6). Under the second caption, he is particularly copious in drawing out the manifestations of the divine benignity and beneficence—of His clemency—though he does not scruple also to point to the signs of His severity (I. v. 7, cf. 10). From the particular contemplation of the divine clemency and severity in their peculiar distribution here, indeed, he pauses to draw an argument for a future life when apparent irregularities will be adjusted (I. v. 10).

The vigor and enthusiasm with which Calvin prosecutes his exposition of the patefaction of God in nature and history is worth emphasising further. He even turns aside (I. v. 9) to express his special confidence in it, in contrast to *a priori* reasoning, as the "right way and the best method of seeking God." A speculative inquiry into the essence of God, he suggests, merely fatigues the mind and flutters in the brain. If we would know God vitally, in our hearts, let us rather contemplate Him in His works. These, we shall find, as the Psalmist points out, declare His greatness and conduce to His praise. Once more, we may observe here the concreteness of Calvin's mind and method, and are reminded of the practical end he keeps continually in view.<sup>7</sup> So far is he from losing himself in merely speculative elaborations or prosecuting his inquiries under the spur of "presumptuous curiosity," that the practical religious motive is always present, dominating his thought. His special interest in the theistic argument is, accordingly, due less to the consideration that it rounds out his systematic view of truth than to the fact that it helps us to the vital knowledge of God. And therefore he is no more anxious to set it forth in its full force than he is to point out the limitations which affect its practical value.<sup>8</sup> In and of itself, indeed, it has no limitations; Calvin is fully assured of its validity and analyses its data with entire confidence; to him nothing is more certain than that in the mirror of His works God gives us clear manifestations both of Himself and of His everlasting dominion (I. v. 11). But Calvin cannot content himself with an intellectualistic contemplation of the objective validity of the theistic argument. So dominated is he by practical interests that he actually attaches to the chapter in which he argues this objective validity a series of sections in which he equally strongly argues the subjective inability of man to receive its testimony. Objectively valid as the theistic proofs are, they are ineffective to produce a just knowledge of God in the sinful heart. The

7 Cf. P. J. Muller, "De Godsleer van Zwingli en Calvijn," 1883, p. 8: "If Zwingli follows more the *a priori*, Calvin follows the *a posteriori* method"; and E. Rabaud, "Hist. de la doctrine de l'inspiration, etc.," 1883, p. 58: "his lucid and, above everything, practical genius."

8 It is this distribution of Calvin's interest which leads to the impression that he lays little stress on "the theistic proofs." On the contrary, he asserts their validity most strenuously: only he does not believe that any proofs can work true faith apart from "the testimony of the Spirit," and he is more interested in their value for developing the knowledge of God than for merely establishing His existence. Hence P. J. Muller is wrong when he denies the one to affirm the other, as, e.g., in his "De Godsleer van Zwingli en Calvijn," 1883, p. 11: "Neither by Zwingli nor by Calvin are proofs offered for the existence of God, although some passages in their writings seem to contain suggestions of them. The proposition, 'God exists,' needed no proof either for themselves, or for their coreligionists, or even against Rome. The so-called cosmological argument has no doubt been found by some in Zwingli (Zeller, *Das theolog. Syst. Zwingli's* extracted from the *Theol. Jahrbücher*, Tübingen, 1853, p. 33; [or p. 126 in the *Th. Jahrb.*]), and the physico-theological in Calvin (Lipsius, *Lehrbuch der ev. Prot. Dogmatik*, ed. 2, 1879, p. 213); but it would not be difficult to show that we have to do in neither case with a philosophical deduction, but only with a means for attaining the complete knowledge of God." Though Calvin (also Zwingli) makes use of the theistic proofs to develop the knowledge of God, it does not follow that he (or Zwingli) did not value them as proofs of the existence of God. And we do not think Muller is successful (pp. 12 *sq.*) in explaining away the implication of the latter in Zwingli's use of these theistic arguments, or in Calvin's (p. 16). Schweizer, "Glaubenslehre der ev.-ref. Kirche," 1844, i. p. 250, finds in Calvin's citation of Cicero's declaration that there is no nation so barbarous, no tribe so degraded, that it is not persuaded that a God exists, an appeal to the so-called historical argument for the divine existence (cf. the use of it by Zwingli, "Opera," Schuler und Schultess ed., 1832, iii. p. 156): but Calvin's real attitude to the theistic argument is rather to be sought in the implications of the notably eloquent ch. v.

insertion of these sections here is the more striking in that they almost seem unnecessary in view of the clear exposition of the noetic effects of sin which had been made in the preceding chapter (ch. iv.)—although, of course, there the immediate reference was to the *notitia Dei insita*, while here it is to the *notitia Dei acquisita*.

Thus, however, our attention is drawn very pointedly to Calvin's doctrine of the disabilities with reference to the knowledge of God which are induced in the human mind by sin. He has, as has just been noted, adverted formally to them twice in these opening chapters of his treatise—on the earlier occasion (ch. iv.) with especial reference to the revelation of God made in the constitution of human nature, and on the later occasion (ch. v. §§ 11-15) with especial reference to the revelation of God made in His works and deeds. Were man in his normal state, he could not under this double revelation, internal and external, fail to know God as God would wish to be known. If he actually comes short of an adequate knowledge of God, therefore, this cannot be attributed to any shortcomings in the revelation of God. Calvin is perfectly clear as to the objective adequacy of the general revelation of God. Men, however, do come short of an adequate knowledge of God; and that not merely some men, but all men: the failure of the general revelation of God to produce in men an adequate knowledge of Him is as universal as is the revelation itself. The explanation is to be found in the corruption of men's hearts by sin, by which not merely are they rendered incapable of reading off the revelation of God which is displayed in His works and deeds, but their very instinctive knowledge of God, embedded in their constitution as men, is dulled and almost obliterated. The energy with which Calvin asserts this is almost startling, and matches in its emphasis that which he had placed on the reality and objective validity of the revelation of God. Though the seeds of religion are sown by God in every heart, yet not one man in a hundred has preserved even these seeds sound, and in no one at all have they grown to their legitimate harvest. All have degenerated from the true knowledge of God, and genuine piety has perished from the earth (I. iv. 1). The light which God has kindled in the breasts of men has been smothered and all but extinguished by their iniquity (I. iv. 4). The manifestation which God has given of Himself in the structure and organization of the world is lost on our stupidity (I. v. 11). The rays of God's glory are diffused all around us, but do not illuminate the darkness of our mind (I. v. 14). So that in point of fact, "men who are taught only by nature, have no certain, sound or distinct knowledge, but are confined to confused principles; they worship accordingly an unknown God " (I. v. 12, *fin.*): "no man can have the least knowledge of true and sound doctrine without having been a disciple of the Scriptures" (I. vi. 2, *ad fin.*): "the human mind is through its imbecility unable to attain any knowledge of God without the assistance of the Sacred Word" (I. vi. 4, *ad fin.*).

Calvin therefore teaches with great emphasis the bankruptcy of the natural knowledge of God. We must keep fully in mind, however, that this is not due in his view to any inadequacy or ineffectiveness of natural revelation, considered objectively.<sup>9</sup> He continues to insist that the seeds of religion are sown in every heart (I. v. 1, *ad init.*); that through all man's corruption the instincts of nature still suggest the memory of God to his mind (I. v. 2); that it is impossible to eradicate that sense of the deity which is naturally engraved on all hearts (I. iv. 4, *ad fin.*); that the structure and organization of the world, and the things that daily happen out of the ordinary course of nature, that is under the providential government of God, bear a witness to God which the dullest ear cannot fail to hear (I. v. 1, 3, 7, esp. II. vi. 1); and that the light that shines from creation, while it may be smothered, cannot be so extinguished but that some rays of it find their way into the most darkened soul (I. v. 14). God has therefore never left Himself without a witness; but, "with various and most abundant benignity sweetly allures men to a knowledge of

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9 P. J. Muller, "De Godsleer van Zwingli en Calvijn," 1883, pp. 18 *sq.*, does not seem to bear this in mind, although he had clearly stated it in his "De Godsleer van Calvijn," 1881, pp. 13-25.



Him, though they persist in following their own ways, their pernicious and fatal errors" (I. v. 14). The sole cause of the failure of the natural revelation is to be found, therefore, in the corruption of the human heart. Two results flow from this fact. First, it is not a question of the extinction of the knowledge of God, but of the corruption of the knowledge of God. And secondly, men are without excuse for their corruption of the knowledge of God. On both points Calvin is insistent.

He does not teach that all religion has perished out of the earth, but only that no "genuine piety" remains (I. iv. 1, *ad init.*): he does not teach that men retain no knowledge of God, but no "certain, sound or distinct knowledge" (I. v. 12, *ad fin.*). The seed of religion remains their inalienable possession, "but it is so corrupted as to produce only the worst fruits" (I. iv. 4, *ad fin.*). Here we see Calvin's judgment on natural religion. Its reality he is quick to assert: but equally quickly its inadequacy—and that because not merely of a negative incompleteness but also of a positive corruption. Men have corrupted the knowledge of God; and perhaps Calvin might even subscribe the declaration of a modern writer that men's religions are their worst crimes.<sup>10</sup> Certainly Calvin paints in dark colors the processes by which men form for themselves conceptions of God under the light of nature, or rather, in the darkness of their minds, from which the light of nature is as far as lies in their power excluded. "Their conceptions of God are formed, not according to the representations He gives of Himself, but by the invention of their own presumptuous imaginations" (I. iv. 1, *med.*). They set Him far off from themselves and make Him a mere idler in heaven (I. iv. 2); they invent all sorts of vague and confused notions concerning Him, until they involve themselves in such a vast accumulation of errors as almost to extinguish the light that is within them (I. iv. 4); they confuse Him with His works, until even a Plato loses himself in the round globe (I. v. 11); they even endeavor to deny His very existence (I. v. 12), and substitute demons in His place (I. v. 13). Certainly it is not surprising, then, that the Holy Spirit, speaking in Scripture, "condemns as false and lying whatever was formerly worshipped as divine among the Gentiles," nay, "rejects as false every form of worship which is of human contrivance," and "leaves no Deity but in Mount Zion" (I. v. 13). The religions of men differ, doubtless, among themselves: some are more, some less evil; but all are evil and the evil of none is trivial.

Are men to be excused for this, their corruption of the knowledge of God? Are we to listen with sympathy to the plea that light has been lacking? It is not a case of insufficient light, but of an evil heart. Excuses are vain, for this heart-darkness is criminal. If we speak of ignorance here, we must remember it is a guilty ignorance; an ignorance which rests on pride and vanity and contumacy (I. iv. 1), an ignorance which our own consciences will not excuse (I. v. 15). What! shall we plead that we lack ears to hear what even mute creatures proclaim? that we have no eyes to see what it needs no eyes to see? that we are mentally too weak to learn what mindless creatures teach? (I. v. 15). We are ignorant of what all things conspire to inform us of, only because we sinfully corrupt their message; their insufficiency has its roots in us, not in them; wherefore we are without excuse (I. iv. 1; v. 14-15). Our "folly is inexcusable, seeing that it originates not only in a vain curiosity, but in false confidence, and an immoderate desire to exceed the limits of human knowledge" (I. iv. 1, *fin.*). "Whatever deficiency of natural ability prevents us from attaining the pure and clear knowledge of God, yet, since that deficiency arises from our own fault, we are left without any excuse" (I. v. 15, *ad init.*).

The natural revelation of God failing thus to produce its legitimate effects of a sound

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. F. C. Baur, "Die christliche Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit, etc.," iii. 1843, p. 41: "From this point of view"—he is expounding Calvin's doctrine—"the several manifestations in the history of religions are conceived not as stages in the gradually advancing evolution of the religious consciousness, but as inexcusable, sinful aberrations, as wilful perversions and defacements of the inborn idea of God."

knowledge of God, because of the corruption of men's hearts, we are thrown back for any adequate knowledge of God upon supernatural activities of God communicating His truth to men. It is accordingly in an assertion and validation of these supernatural revelatory operations of God that Calvin's discussion reaches its true center. To this extent his whole discussion of natural revelation—in its inception in the implantation in man of a *sensus deitatis*, in its culmination in the patefaction of God in His works and deeds, and in its failure through the sin-bred blindness of humanity—may be said to be merely introductory to and intended to prepare the way for his discussion of the supernatural operations of God by which He meets this otherwise hopeless condition of humanity sunk in its corrupt notions of God. These operations obviously must meet a twofold need. A clearer and fuller revelation of God must be brought to men than that which is afforded by nature. And the darkened minds of men must be illuminated for its reception. In other words, what is needed, is a special supernatural revelation on the one hand, and a special supernatural illumination on the other. It is to the validation of this twofold supernatural operation of God in communicating the knowledge of Himself that Calvin accordingly next addresses himself (chs. vi.-ix.).

One or two peculiarities of his treatment of them attract our notice at the outset, and seem to invite attention, before we enter into a detailed exposition of the doctrine he presents. It is noticeable that Calvin does not pretend that this supernatural provision of knowledge of God to meet men's sin-born ignorance is as universal in its reach as the natural revelation which it supplements and, so far as efficiency is concerned, supersedes. On the contrary, he draws it expressly into a narrower circle. That general revelation "presented itself to all eyes" and "is more than sufficient to deprive the ingratitude of men of every excuse, since," in it, "God, in order to involve all mankind in the same guilt, sets an exhibition of His majesty, delineated in the creatures, before them all without exception" (I. vi. 1, *init.*). But His supernatural revelation He grants only "to those whom He intends to unite in a more close and familiar connection with Himself" (*ibid.*); "to those to whom He has determined to make His instructions effectual" (I. vi. 3); in a word, to "the elect" (I. vi. 1; vii. 5 near end). In dealing with the supernatural revelation of God, therefore, Calvin is conscious of dealing with a special operation of the divine grace by means of which God is communicating to those He is choosing to be His people the saving knowledge of Himself. It is observable also that, in speaking of this supernatural revelation, he identifies it from the outset distinctly with the Scriptures (ch. vi.). This is in accordance with the practical end and engrossment which, as we have already had occasion to note, dominate his whole discussion. He was not unaware that the special revelation of God antedates the Scriptures: on occasion he speaks discriminatingly enough of this revelation in itself and the Scriptures in which it is embodied. But his mind is less on the abstract truth than on the concrete conditions which surrounded him in his work. Whatever may have been true ages gone, to-day the special revelation of God coalesces with the Scriptures, and he does not occupy himself formally with it except as it presents itself to the men of his own time. The task which he undertakes, therefore, is distinctly to show that men have in the Scriptures a special revelation of God supplementing and so far superseding the general revelation of God in nature; and that God so operates with this His special revelation of Himself as to overcome the sin-bred disabilities of man.

In this state of the case we may perhaps be justified in leaving at this point the logical development of his construction and expounding Calvin's teaching more formally under the heads of his doctrine of Holy Scripture and his doctrine of the Testimony of the Holy Spirit.

## II. HOLY SCRIPTURE

First, then, what was Calvin's doctrine of Holy Scripture?

Under the designation of "Scripture" or "the Scriptures" Calvin understood that body of writings which have been transmitted to us as the divinely given rule of faith and life. In this body of writings, that is to say, in "the Canon of Scripture," he included all the books of the Old Covenant which were recognized by the Jewish Church as of divine gift, and as such handed down to the Christian Church; and all the books of the New Covenant which have been given the Church by the Apostles as its authoritative law-code. Calvin's attitude towards the canon was thus somewhat more conservative than, say, Luther's. He knew of no such distinction as that between Canonical and Deutero-Canonical Books, whether in the Old or the New Testament. The so-called "Apocryphal Books" of the Old Testament, included within the canon by the decrees of Trent, he rejected out of hand: the so-called "Antilegomena" of the New Testament he accepted without exception.<sup>11</sup>

The representations which are sometimes made, to the effect that he felt doubts of the canonicity of some of the canonical books or even was convinced of their uncanonicity,<sup>12</sup> rest on

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- 11 Cf. J. Cramer, *Nieuwe Bijdragen op het gebied van Godgeleerdheid en Wijsbegeerte*, iii. 1881, p. 102: "By the Scripture or the Scriptures he [Calvin] understood the books of the Old and New Testaments which have been transmitted to us by the Church as canonical, as the rule of faith and life. The Apocrypha of the O. T. as they were determined by the Council of Trent, he excludes. They are to him indeed *libri ecclesiastici*, in many respects good and useful to be read; but they are not *libri canonici* 'ad fidem dogmatum faciendam' (*Acta Synodi Tridentinae, cum antidoto*, 1547)." In a later article, "De Roomsche-Katholieke en de Oud-protestantsche Schriftbeschouwing," 1883, p. 36, Cramer declares that by the Scriptures, Calvin means "nothing else than the canon, established by the Synods of Hippo and Carthage, and transmitted by the Catholic Church, with the exception of the so-called Apocrypha of the O. T.," etc. Cf. Leipoldt, "Geschichte des N. T. Kanons," ii. 1908, p. 149: "We obtain the impression that it is only for form's sake that Calvin undertakes to test whether the disputed books are canonical or not. In reality it is already a settled matter with him that they are. Calvin feels himself therefore in the matter of the N. T. canon bound to the mediæval tradition." Cf. also Otto Ritschl, "Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus," i. 1908, pp. 70, 71, to the same effect.
- 12 Cf. e.g. J. Pannier, "Le témoignage du Saint-Esprit," 1893, pp. 112 *sq.*: "One fact strikes us at first sight: not only did Calvin not comment on the Apocryphal books, for which he wrote a very short preface, which was ever more and more abridged in the successive editions, but he did not comment on all the Canonical books. And if lack of time may explain the passing over of some of the less important historical books of the Old Testament, it was undoubtedly for a graver reason that he left to one side the three books attributed to Solomon, notably the Song of Songs. 'In the New Testament there is ordinarily mentioned only the Apocalypse, neglected by Calvin undoubtedly for critical or theological motives analogous to those which determined the most of his contemporaries, but it is necessary to note that the two lesser epistles of John are also lacking, and that in speaking of the large epistle Calvin always expresses himself as if it were the only existing one' (Reuss, *Revue de Théologie de Strasbourg*, vi. 1853, p. 229). In effect, at the very time when he was defending particularly the authority of the Scriptures against the Council of Trent, when he was dedicating to Edward VI, the King of England, his Commentaries on the 'Epistles which are accustomed to be called Canonical' (1551), he included in the Canon only the First Epistle of Peter, the First Epistle of John, James and, at the very end, the Second Epistle of Peter and Jude."—Reuss, however, in his "History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures in the Christian Church" (1863, E. T. 1884), greatly modifies the opinion here quoted from him: "Some have believed it possible to affirm that he [Calvin] rejected the Apocalypse because it was the only book of the N. T., except the two short Epistles of John, on which he wrote no commentary. But that conclusion is too hasty. In the *Institutes*, the Apocalypse is sometimes quoted like the other Apostolic writings, and even under John's name. If there was no commentary, it was simply that the illustrious exegete, wiser in this respect than several of his contemporaries and many of his successors, understood that his vocation called him elsewhere" (p. 318). He adds, indeed, of II and III John: "It might be said with more probability that Calvin did not acknowledge the canonicity of these two writings. He never quotes them, and he quotes the First Epistle of John in a way to exclude them: *Joannes in sua canonica, Instit.* iii. 2. 21; 3. 23 (*Opp.* ii. 415, 453)." But this opinion requires revision, just as that on the Apocalypse did, as we shall see below. Cf. further, in the meantime: Reuss, "Hist. of the Sacred Scriptures of the N. T.," 1884, ii. p. 347, and S. Berger, "La Bible au seizième siècle," 1879, p. 120, who expresses himself most

a fundamental misconception of his attitude, and are wrecked on his express assertions. No doubt he has not left us commentaries on all the Biblical Books, and no doubt his omission to write or lecture on certain books is not to be explained merely by lack of time, but involves an act of selection on his part, which was not unaffected by his estimate of the relative importance of the several books or by his own spiritual sympathies.<sup>13</sup> He has also occasionally employed a current expression, such as, for example, "the Canonical Epistle of John,"<sup>14</sup> when speaking of I John, which, if strictly interpreted, might be thought to imply denial of the genuineness of certain books of the canon—such as II and III John—and not merely the momentary or habitual neglect of them; just as the common use of the term "the Apostle" of Paul might be said, if similarly strictly pressed, to imply that there was no other Apostle but he. It is also true that he expresses himself with moderation when adducing the evidence for the canonicity of this book or that, and in his modes of statement quite clearly betrays his recognition that the evidence is more copious or more weighty in some cases than in others. But he represents the evidence as sufficient in all cases and declares with confidence his conclusion in favor of the canonicity of the whole body of books which make up our Bible, and in all his writings and controversies acts firmly on this presupposition. How, for example, is it possible to contend that some grave reason connected with doubts on his part of their canonical authority underlies the failure of Calvin to comment on "the three books attributed to Solomon, particularly the Song of Songs,"<sup>15</sup> in the face of the judgment of the ministers of Geneva with regard to Castellion, which is thus reported

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positively: "Calvin expresses no judgment on the lesser Epistles of St. John. But we remark that he never cites them and that he mentions the First in these terms: 'As John says in his canonical.' This word excludes, in the thought of the author, the two other Epistles attributed to this Apostle."

- 13 This may have been the case with the Apocalypse, which not only Reuss, as we have seen, but Scaliger thought him wise not to have entered upon; and which he is—perhaps credibly—reported to have said in conversation he did not understand (cf. Leipoldt's "Geschichte des N. T. Kanons," ii. 1908, p. 148, note). But how impossible it is to imagine that this implies any doubt of the canonicity or authority of the book will be quickly evident to anyone who will note his frequent citation of it in the same fashion with other Scripture and alongside of other Scripture (e.g. *Opp.* i. 736 = ii. 500; i. 953—ii. 957; i. 1033 = ii. 1063; i. 1148; ii. 88, 859; v. 191, 196, 532; vi. 176; vii. 29, 118, 333; xxxi. 650, sometimes mentioning it by name (vii. 469; i. 733 = ii. 497), sometimes by the name of John (i. 715 = ii. 492, viii. 338 [along with I John]), sometimes by the name of both "John" and "the Apocalypse" (ii. 124, vii. 116, xxx. 651, xlvi. 122), and always with reverence and confidence as a Scriptural book. He even expressly cites it under the name of Scripture and explicitly as the dictation of the Spirit: vii. 559, "Fear, not, says the Scripture (Eccles. xviii. 22).... Again (Rev. xxii. 11) . . . and (John xv. 2)"; i. 624: "Elsewhere also the Spirit testifies . . ." (along with Daniel and Paul). Cf. also such passages as ii. 734, "Nor does the Apocalypse which they quote afford them any support . . ."; xlvi. 238: "I should like to ask the Papists if they think John was so stupid that . . . etc. (Rev. xxii. 8)"; also vi. 369; v. 198.
- 14 We use the simple expression "the Epistle of John"; the apparently, but only apparently, stronger and more exclusive, "the Canonical Epistle of John," which Calvin employs, although it would be misleading in our associations, is its exact synonym. Those somewhat numerous writers who have quoted the form "the *Canonical* Epistle of John" as if its use implied the denial of the *canonicity* of the other epistles of John forget that this was the ordinary designation in the West of the Catholic Epistles—"the Seven Canonical Epistles"—and that they are all currently cited by this title by Western writers. The matter has been set right by A. Lang: "Die Bekehrung Johannis Calvins" (II. i. of Bonwetsch and Seeberg's "Studien zur Geschichte der Theologie und der Kirche," 1897, pp. 2Cr29). On the title "Canonical Epistles" for the Catholic Epistles, see Lücke, *SK.* 1836, iii. pp. 643-650; Bleek, "Introd. to the N. T.," § 202 at end (vol. ii. 1874, p. 135); Hilgenfeld, "Einleitung in d. N. T.," 1875, p. 153; Westcott, "Epp. of St. John," 1883, p. xxix.; Salmon, *Hastings' BD.* i. 1898, p. 360. In 1551, Calvin published his "Commentarii in Epistolas Canonicas"—that is on the Catholic Epistles; also his "Commentaire sur l'Épître Canonique de St. Jean," i.e. on "the Epistle of John"; also his "Commentaire sur l'Épître Canonique de St. Jude." Calvin does not seem ever to have happened to quote from II and III John. The reference given in the Index printed in *Opp.* xxii., viz., III John 9, *Opp.* xb. 81, occurs in a letter, not by Calvin but by Christof Libertetus to Farel. Cf. J. Leipoldt, "Geschichte des N. T. Kanons" (2nd Part, Leipzig, 1908), p. 148, note 1: "The smaller Johannine Epistles Calvin seems never to have cited. He cites I John in Inst. III. ii. 21 by the formula: dicit Johannes in sua canonica. Nevertheless it is very questionable whether inferences can be drawn from this formula as to Calvin's attitude to II and III John." He adds a reference to Lang as above.
- 15 Pannier, as cited, p. 113.

by Calvin himself over his signature.<sup>16</sup> "We unanimously judged him one who might be appointed to the functions of the pastor, except for a single obstacle which opposed it. When we asked him, according to custom, whether he was in accord with us on all points of doctrine, he replied that there were two on which he could not share our views: one of them . . . being our inscribing the Song of Solomon in the number of sacred books. . . . We conjured him first of all, not to permit himself the levity of treating as of no account the constant witness of the universal Church; we reminded him that there is no book the authenticity of which is doubtful, about which some discussion has not been raised; that even those to which we now attach an undisputed authenticity were not admitted from the beginning without controversy; that precisely this one is one which has never been openly repudiated. We also exhorted him against trusting unreasonably in his own judgment, especially where nothing was toward which all the world had not been aware of before he was born. . . . All these arguments having no effect on him, we thought it necessary to consider among ourselves what we ought to do. Our unanimous opinion was that it would be dangerous and would set a bad precedent to admit him to the ministry in these circumstances. . . . We should thus condemn ourselves for the future to raise no objection to another, should one present himself and wish similarly to repudiate Ecclesiastes or Proverbs or any other book of the Bible, without being dragged into a debate as to what is and what is not worthy of the Holy Spirit."<sup>17</sup> Not merely the firmness with which Calvin held to the canonicity of all the books of our Bible, but the importance he attached to the acceptance of the canonical Scriptures in their integrity, is made perfectly clear by such an incident; and indeed so also are the grounds on which he accepted these books as canonical.

These grounds, to speak briefly, were historico-critical. Calvin, we must bear in mind, was a Humanist before he was a Reformer,<sup>18</sup> and was familiar with the whole process of determining the authenticity of ancient documents. If then he received the Scriptures from the hands of the Church, not indulging himself in the levity of treating the constant witness of the universal Church as of no account, he was nevertheless not disposed to take "tradition" uncritically at its face value. His acceptance of the canon of the Church was therefore not a blind but a critically mediated acceptance. Therefore he discarded the Apocrypha: and if he accepted the Antilegomena it was because they commended themselves to his historico-critical judgment as holding of right a place in the canon. The organon of his critical investigation of the canon was in effect twofold. He inquired into the history of the books in question. He inquired into their internal characteristics. Have they come down to us from the Apostolic Church, commanding either unbrokenly or on the whole the suffrages of those best informed or best qualified to judge of their canonical claims? Are they in themselves conformable to the claims made for them of

16 *Opera*, xi. 674-676: cf. Buisson, "Castellion," 1892, i, pp. 198-199. Buisson discusses the whole incident and quotes from the minutes of the Council before which Castellion brought the matter: the point of dispute is there briefly expressed thus: "Moss' Calvin recognizes as holy, and the said Bastian repudiates" (p. 197) the book in question.

17 Calvin employs all these "three books attributed to Solomon" freely as Scripture and deals with them precisely as he does with other Scriptures. As was to be expected, he cites Proverbs most frequently, Canticles least: but he cites them all as Solomon's and as authoritative Scripture. "'I have washed my feet' says the believing soul in Solomon . . ." is the way he cites Canticles (*Opp.* i. 778, ii. 589). "They make a buckler of a sentence of Solomon's, which is as contrary to them as is no other that is in the Scriptures" (vii. 130) is the way he cites Ecclesiastes. He indeed expressly contrasts Ecclesiastes as genuine Scripture with the Apocryphal books: "As the soul has an origin apart, it has also another preeminence, and this is what Solomon means when he says that at death the body returns to the earth from which it was taken and the soul returns to God who gave it (Eccl. xii. 7). For this reason it is said in the Book of Wisdom (ii. 23) that man is immortal, seeing that he was created in the image of God. This is not an authentic book of Holy Scripture, but it is not improper to avail ourselves of its testimony as of an ancient teacher (*Docteur ancien*)—although the single reason ought to be enough for us that the image of God, as it has been placed in man, can reside only in an immortal soul, etc." (vii. 112, written in 1544).

18 Cf. A. Bossert, "Calvin," 1906, p. 6: "Humanist himself as well as profound theologian . . ."; Charles Borgeaud, "Histoire de l'Universite de Geneve," 1900, p. 21: "Before he was a theologian, Calvin was a Humanist..."

apostolic, which is as much as to say, divine origin? It was by the application of this twofold test that he excluded the Apocrypha of the Old Testament from the canon. They had in all ages been discriminated from the canonical books, and differ from them as the writing of an individual differs from an instrument which has passed under the eye of a notary and been sealed to be received of all.<sup>19</sup> Some Fathers, it is true, deemed them canonical; even Augustine was of that way of thinking, although he had to allow that opinions differed widely upon the matter. Others, however, could admit them to no higher rank than that of "ecclesiastical books," which might be useful to read but could not supply a foundation for doctrine; among such were Jerome and Rufinus.<sup>20</sup> And, when we observe their contents, no sane mind will fail to pass judgment against them.<sup>21</sup> Rome may, indeed, find her interest in defending them, for she may discover support in them for some of her false teachings. But this very fact is their condemnation. "I beg you to observe," he says of the closing words of II Maccabees, where the writer sets his hope in his own works: "I beg you to observe how far this confession falls away from the majesty of the Holy Spirit"<sup>22</sup>—that is to say, from the constant teaching of Holy Scripture.

And it was by the application of the same two-fold test that he accredited the Antilegomena of the New Testament as integral parts of the canon. In the Preface which he has prefixed to II Peter, for example, he notes that Eusebius speaks of some who rejected it. "If it is a question," he adds, "of yielding to the simple authority of men, since he [Eusebius] does not name those who brought the matter into doubt, no necessity seems to be laid on us to credit these unknown people. And, moreover, he adds that afterwards it was generally received without contradiction. . . . It is a matter agreed upon by all, of common accord, that there is nothing in this Epistle unworthy of Saint Peter, but that, on the contrary, from one end of it to the other, there are apparent the force, vehemence and grace of the Spirit with which the Apostles were endowed. . . . Since, then, in all parts of the Epistle the majesty of the Spirit of Christ is clearly manifest, I cannot reject it entirely, although I do not recognize in it the true and natural phrase of Saint Peter."<sup>23</sup> To meet the difficulty arising from the difference of the style from that of I

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19 Cf. the Preface he prefixed to the Apocryphal Books (for the history of which, see *Opera*, ix. 827, note) : "These books which are called Apocryphal have in all ages been discriminated from those which are without difficulty shown to be of the Sacred Scriptures. For the ancients, wishing to anticipate the danger that any profane books should be mixed with those which certainly proceeded from the Holy Spirit, made a roll of these latter which they called 'Canon'; meaning by this word that all that was comprehended under it was the assured rule to which we should attach ourselves. Upon the others they imposed the name of Apocrypha; denoting that they were to be held as private writings and not authenticated, like public documents. Accordingly the difference between the former and latter is the same as that between an instrument, passed before a notary, and sealed to be received by all, and the writing of some particular man. It is true they are not to be despised, seeing that they contain good and useful doctrine. Nevertheless it is only right that what we have been given by the Holy Spirit should have preëminence above all that has come from men." Cf., in his earliest theological treatise, the "Psychopannychia" of 1534-1542 (*Opp.* v. 182), where, after quoting Ecclus. xvii. 1 and Wisd. ii. 23 as "two sacred writers," he adds: "I would not urge the authority of these writers strongly on our adversaries, did they not oppose them to us. They may be allowed, however, some weight, if not as canonical, yet certainly as ancient, as pious, and as received by the suffrages of many. But let us omit them and let us retain . . ." etc. In the "Psychopannychia" his dealing with Baruch on the other hand is more wavering. On one occasion (p. 205) it is quoted with the formula, "sic enim loquitur propheta," and on another (p. 227), "in prophetia Baruch" corrected in 1542. In the "Institutes" of 1536 he quotes it as Scripture: "alter vero propheta scribit" (*Opp.* i. 82)—referring back to Daniel. This is already corrected in 1539 (i. 906; cf. ii. 632). In 1534-1536, then, he considered Baruch canonical: afterwards not so. His dealing with it in v. 271 (1537), vi. 560 (1545), vi. 638 (1546) is *ad hominem*.

20 "Acta Synodi Tridentinae, cum antidoto" (1547), *Opp.* vii. 365-506.

21 "Vera ecclesiae reformandae ratio," *Opp.* vii. 613: quae divinitus non esse prodita, sani omnes, saltem ubi moniti fuerint, iudicabunt.

22 "Acta Synodi Tridentinae, cum antidoto," *Opp.* vii. 413: Quantum, obsecro, a Spiritus Sancti maiestati aliena est haec confessio!

23 This is translated from the French version, ed. Meyrueis, iv. 1855, p. 743. The Latin is the same, though somewhat more concise: nihil habet Petro indignum, ut vim spiritus apostolici et gratiam ubique exprimat ...

Peter, he therefore supposed that the Epistle is indeed certainly Peter's, since otherwise it would be a forgery, a thing inconceivable in a book of its high character,<sup>24</sup> but was dictated in his old age to some one of his disciples, to whom it owes its peculiarities of diction. Here we have an argument conducted on the two grounds of the external witness of the Church and the internal testimony of the contents of the book: and these are the two grounds on which he everywhere depends. Of the Epistle of Jude he says:<sup>25</sup> "Because the reading of it is very useful, and it contains nothing that is not in accord with the purity of the Apostolic doctrine; because also it has long been held to be authentic by all the best men, for my part, I willingly place it in the number of the other epistles." In other cases the external evidence of the Church is not explicitly mentioned and the stress of the argument is laid on the Apostolic character of the writing as witnessed by its contents. He receives Hebrews among the Apostolic Epistles without difficulty, because nowhere else is the sacrifice of Christ more clearly or simply declared and other evangelical doctrines taught: surely it must have been due to the wiles of Satan that the Western Church so long doubted its canonicity.<sup>26</sup> James seems to him to contain nothing unworthy of an Apostle of Christ, but to be on the contrary full of good teaching, valuable for all departments of Christian living.<sup>27</sup> For the application of this argument he of course takes his start from the Homologoumena, which gave him the norm of Apostolic teaching which he used for testing the other books. It must not be supposed that he received even these books, however, without critico-historical inquiry: but only that the uniform witness of the Church to their authority weighed with him above all grounds of doubt. It was, in a word, on the ground of a purely scientific investigation that Calvin accredited to himself the canon. It had come down to him through the ages, accredited as such by the constant testimony of its proper witnesses: and it accredited itself to critical scrutiny by its contents.<sup>28</sup>

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eam prorsus repudiare mihi religio est.

24 Haec sutem fictio indigna esset ministro Christi, obtendere alienam personam.

25 Ed. Meyrueis, iv. p. 780.

26 *Ibid.*, iv. p. 362.

27 *Ibid.*, iv. p. 694. Latin: mihi ad epistolam hanc recipiendam satis est, quod nihil continet Christi apostolo indignum.

28 Cf. J. Cramer, as cited, p. 126: "It was thus, in the first place, as the result of scientific investigations that Calvin fixed the limits of the canon . . . not *a priori*, but *a posteriori*, that he came to the recognition of the canonicity of the Biblical books." But especially see the excellently conceived passage on pp. 155-6, to the following effect: "What great importance Calvin attaches to the question whether a Biblical book is apostolic! If it is not apostolic, he does not recognize it as canonical. To determine its apostolicity, he appeals not merely to the ecclesiastical tradition of its origin, but also and principally to its contents. This is what he does in the case of all the antilegomena. The touchstone for this is found in the homologoumena. That he undertakes no investigation of the apostolic origin of these latter is a matter of course. This, for him and for all his contemporaries, stood irreversibly settled. The touchstone employed by Calvin is a scientific one. The *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* no doubt made its influence felt. But without the help of the scientific investigation, this internal testimony would not have the power to elevate the book into a canonical book. That Calvin was treading here in the footprints of the ancient Church will be understood. The complaint sometimes brought against the Christians of the earliest centuries is unfounded, that they held all writings canonical in which they found their own dogmatics. No doubt they attached in their criticism great weight to this. But not less to the question whether the origin of the books was traceable back to the apostolical age, and their contents accorded with apostolic doctrine, as it might be learned from the indubitably apostolic writings. So far as science had been developed in their day, they employed it in the formation of the canon. . . ." In a later article Cramer says: "In the determination of the compass of Scripture, he [Calvin], like Luther, took his start from the writings which more than the others communicated the knowledge of Christ in His kingdom and had been recognized always by the Church as genuine and trustworthy. Even if the results of his criticism were more in harmony than was the case with those of the German reformer with the ecclesiastical tradition, he yet walked in the self-same critical pathway. He took over the canon of the Church just as little as its version and its exegesis without scrutiny" ("De Roomsche Katholieke en de Oud-protestantsche Schriftbeschouwing," 1883, pp. 31-32). Cramer considers this critical procedure on Calvin's part inconsistent with his doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit, but (p. 38) he recognizes that we cannot speak of it as the nodding of Homer: "It is not here and there, but throughout; not in his exegetical writings alone, but in his dogmatic ones, too, that he walks in this critical path. We never find the

The same scientific spirit attended Calvin in his dealing with the text of Scripture. As a Humanist he was familiar with the processes employed in settling the texts of classical authors; and naturally he used the same methods in his determination of the text of the Biblical books. His practice here is marked by a combination of freedom and sobriety; and his decisions, though often wrong, as they could not but be in the state of the knowledge of the transmission of the New Testament text at the time, always manifest good sense, balance, and trained judgment. In his remarks on the pericope of the adulteress (John viii. 1-11), we meet the same circle of ideas with which we are familiar from his remarks on the Antilegomena: "because it has always been received by the Latin Churches and is found in many of the Greek copies and old writers, and contains nothing which would be unworthy of an apostolical spirit, there is no reason why we should refuse to take our profit from it."<sup>29</sup> He accepts the three-witness passage of I John v. 7. "Since the Greek codices do not agree with themselves," he says, "I scarcely dare reach a conclusion. Yet, as the context flows most smoothly if this clause is added, and I see that it stands in the best codices and those of the most approved credit, I also willingly adopt it."<sup>30</sup> When puzzled by difficulties, he, quite like the Humanist dealing with a classical text, feels free to suggest that there may be a "mendium in voce." This he does, for example, in Mat. xxiii. 35, where he adduces this possibility among others; and still more instructively in Mat. xxvii. 9, where he just as simply assumes "Jeremiah" to be a corrupt reading<sup>31</sup> as his own editors assume that the "Apius" which occurs in the French version of the "Institutes" in connection with Josephus is due to a slip of his translators, not of his own—remarking: "It is evident that it cannot be Calvin who translated this passage."<sup>32</sup> His assurance that it cannot be the Biblical writer who stumbles leads him similarly to attribute what seems to him a manifest error to the copyists. It is only, however, in such passages as these that he engages formally in textual emendation. Ordinarily he simply follows the current text, although he is, of course, not without an intelligent ground for his confidence in it.<sup>33</sup> As we cursorily read his commentaries we feel ourselves in the hands of one who is sanely and sagely scrutinizing the text with which he is dealing from the point of view of a scholar accustomed to deal with ancient texts, whose confidence in its general integrity represents the well-grounded conclusion of a trained judgment. His occasional remarks on the text, and his rare suggestion of a corruption, are indicia of the alertness of his general scrutiny of the text and serve to assure us that his acceptance of it as a whole as sound is not merely inert acquiescence in tradition, but represents the calm judgment of an instructed intelligence.

## INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

Now, these sixty-six books of canonical Scriptures handed down to us, in the singular providence of God,<sup>34</sup> in a sound text which meets the test of critical scrutiny, Calvin held to be

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faintest trace of hesitation."

29 Comment on John viii. 1 (Meyrueis' ed. of the Commentaries, ii. 1854, p. 169).

30 Comment on I John v. 7 (Meyrueis' ed. of the Commentaries, iv. 1855, p. 682).

31 Quomodo Jeremiae nomen obreperit, me nescire fateor, nee anxie laboro; certe Jeremiae nomen errore positum esse pro Zacharia rea ipsa ostendit; quia nihil tale apud Jeremiam legitur (*Opera*, xlv. 749).

32 *Opera*, iii. 100, note 3.

33 Cf. J. Cramer, as cited, pp. 11f-117: "Calvin does not largely busy himself with textual criticism. He follows the text which was generally received in his day. It deserves notice only that he exercises a free and independent judgment and recognizes the rights of science." Cramer adduces his treatment of I John v. 7 and proceeds: "He comes forward on scientific grounds against the Vulgate. The decree of Trent that this version must be followed as 'authentic,' he finds silly; and reverence for it as if it had fallen down from heaven, ludicrous. 'How can anyone dispute the right to appeal to the original text? And what a bad version this is! There are scarcely three verses in any page well rendered' (*Acta Synod. Trident.*, etc., pp. 414-116)."

34 "Institutes," I. viii. 10. Cf. I. vi. 2-3.



the very Word of God. This assertion he intended in its simplest and most literal sense. He was far from overlooking the fact that the Scriptures were written by human hands: he expressly declares that, though we have received them from God's own mouth, we have nevertheless received them "through the ministry of men."<sup>35</sup> But he was equally far from conceiving that the relation of their human authors to their divine author resembled in any degree that of free intermediaries, who, after receiving the divine word, could do with it what they listed.<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, he thought of them rather as notaries (IV. viii. 9), who set down in authentic registers (I. vi. 3) what was dictated to them (*Argumentum in Ev. Joh.*).<sup>37</sup> They wrote, therefore, merely as the organs of the Holy Ghost, and did not speak *ex suo sensu*, not *humano impulsu*, not *sponte sua*, not *arbitrio suo*, but set out only *quae coelitus mandata fuerant*.<sup>38</sup> The diversity of the human authors thus disappears for Calvin before the unity of the Spirit, the sole responsible author of Scripture, which is to him therefore not the *verba Dei*, but emphatically the *verbum Dei*.<sup>39</sup> It is *a Deo* ("Institutes," I. vii. 5); it has "come down to us from the very mouth of God" (I. vii. 5);<sup>40</sup> it has "come down from heaven as if the living words of God themselves were heard in it" (I. vii. 1);<sup>41</sup> and "we owe it therefore the same reverence which we owe to God Himself, since it has proceeded from Him alone, and there is nothing human mixed with it" (Com. on II Tim. iii. 16).<sup>42</sup> According to this declaration the Scriptures are altogether divine, and in them, as he puts it energetically in another place, "it is God who speaks with us and not mortal men" (Com. on II Pet. i. 20).<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, he cites Scripture everywhere not as the word of man but as the pure word of God. His "holy word" is "the scepter of God"; every statement in which is "a heavenly oracle" which "cannot fail" (Dedicatory Epistle to the "Institutes," *Opp.* ii. 12): in it God "opens His own sacred mouth" to add His direct word to the voice of His mute creatures (I. vi. 1). To say "Scripture says" and to say "the Holy Ghost says" is all one. We contradict the Holy Spirit, says

35 I. vii. 5, *ad init.*: "We have received it from God's own mouth by the ministry of men."

36 It is quite common to represent Calvin as without a theory, at least an expressed theory, of the relation of the divine and human authors of Scripture. Thus J. Cramer, as cited, p. 103, says: "How we are to understand the relation of the divine and human activities through which the Scriptures were produced is not exactly defined by Calvin. A precise theory of inspiration such as we meet with in the later dogmaticians is not found in him."

Cramer is only sure that Calvin did not hold to the theory which later Protestants upheld: "It is true that Calvin gave the impulse [from which the later dogmatic view of Scripture grew up], more than any other of the Reformers. But we must not forget that here we can speak of nothing more than the impulse. We nowhere find in Calvin such a magical conception of the Bible as we find in the later dogmaticians. It is true he used the term 'dictare' and other expressions which he employs under the influence of the terminology of his day, but on the other hand—in how many respects does he recognize the human factor in the Scriptures!" (p. 142). Similarly Pannier, as cited, p. 200: "In any case Calvin has not written a single word which can be appealed to in favor of *literal* inspiration. What is divine for him, if there is anything specifically divine beyond the contents, the brightness of which is reflected upon the container, is the *sense* of each book, or at most of each phrase,—never the employment of each word. Calvin would have deplored the petty dogmatics of the *Consensus Helveticus*, which declares the vowel points of the Hebrew text inspired, and the exaggerations of the theopneusty of the nineteenth century." Yet nothing is more certain than that Calvin held both to "verbal inspiration" and to "the inerrancy of Scripture," however he may have conceived the action of God which secured these things.

37 Cf. Otto Ritschl, "Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus," 1908, i. p. 63: "If we may still entertain doubts whether Bullinger really defended the stricter doctrine of inspiration, it certainly is found in Calvin after 1543. He may have merely taken over from Butzer the expression *Spiritus Sancti amanuenses*; but it is peculiar to him that he conceives both the books of the Old Testament inclusively as contained in the historical enumerations, and those of the New Testament, as arising out of a verbal dictation of the Holy Spirit."

38 These phrases are brought together by J. Cramer (as cited, pp. 102-3) from the Comments on II Tim. iii. 16 and II Pet. i. 20.

39 Cf. Pannier, as cited, p. 203: "The Word of God is for him one, *verbum Dei*, and not *verba Dei*. The diversity of authors disappears before the unity of the Spirit."

40 *Ab ipsissimo Dei ore ad nos fluxisse.*

41 *E coelo fluxisse acsi vivae ipsae Dei voces illic exaudirentur.*

42 *Hoc prius est membrum, eandem scripturae reverentiam deberi quam Deo deferimus, quia ad eo solo manavit, nee quidquam humani habet admistum.*

43 *Justa reverentia inde nascitur, quum statuimus, Deum nobiscum loqui, non homines mortales.*

Calvin—meaning the Scriptures—when we deny to Christ the name of Jehovah or anything which belongs to the majesty of Jehovah (I. xiii. 23). "The Holy Spirit pronounces," says he, . . . "Paul declares . . . the Scripture condemns . . . wherefore it is not surprising if the Holy Spirit reject"—all in one running context, meaning ever the same thing (I. v. 13): just as in another context he uses interchangeably the "commandments of Christ" and the "authority of Scripture" of the same thing (Dedicatory Letter).

It may be that Calvin has nowhere given us a detailed discussion of the mode of the divine operation in giving the Scriptures. He is sure that they owe their origin to the divine gift (I. vi. 1, 2, 3) and that God has so given them that they are emphatically His word, as truly as if we were listening to His living voice speaking from heaven (I. vii. 1): and, as we have seen, he is somewhat addicted to the use of language which, strictly taken, would imply that the mode of their gift was "dictation." The Scriptures are "public records" (I. vi. 2), their human authors have acted as "notaries" (IV. viii. 9), who have set down nothing of their own, but only what has been dictated to them, so that there appears no admixture of what is human in their product (on II Tim. iii. 16).<sup>44</sup> It is not unfair to urge, however, that this language is figurative; and that what

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44 The account of Calvin's doctrine of inspiration given by E. Rabaud, "Histoire de la doctrine de l'inspiration . . . dans les pays de langue française," 1883, pp. 52 *sq.*, is worth comparing. Calvin's thought on this subject, he tells us, was more precise and compact than that of the other Reformers, although even his conception of inspiration was far from possessing perfectly firm contours or supplying the elements of a really systematic view (p. 52). He was the first, nevertheless, to give the subject of Sacred Scripture a fundamental, theoretic treatment, led thereto not by the pressure of controversy, but by the logic of his systematic thought: for his doctrine of inspiration (not yet distinguished from revelation) is one of the essential bases, if not the very point of departure of his dogmatics (p. 55). To him "the Bible is manifestly the word of God, in which He reveals Himself to men," and as such "proceeds from God." "But " (pp. 56 *sq.*) "the action of God does not, in Calvin's view, transform the sacred authors into machines. Jewish verbalism, Scriptural materialism, may be present in germ in the ideas of the Institutes—and the cold intellects of certain doctors of the Protestant scholasticism of the next century developed them—but they are very remote from the thought of the Reformer. Chosen and ordained by God, the Biblical writers were subject to a higher impulse; they received a divine illumination which increased the energy of their natural faculties; they understood the Revelation better and transmitted it more faithfully. It was scarcely requisite for this, however, that they should be passive instruments, simple secretaries, pens moved by the Holy Spirit. Appointed but intelligent organs of the divine thought, far from being subject to a dictation, in complete obedience to the immediate will of God, they acted under the impulsion of a personal faith which God communicated to them. 'Now, whether God was manifested to men by visions or oracles, what is called celestial witnesses, or ordained men as His ministers who taught their successors by tradition, it is in every case certain that He impressed on their hearts such a certitude of the doctrine, that they were persuaded and convinced that what had been revealed and preached to them proceeded from the true God: for He always ratified His word so as to secure for it a credit above all human opinion. Finally, that the truth might uninterruptedly remain continually in vigor from age to age, and be known in the world, He willed that the revelations which He had committed to the hands of the Fathers as a deposit, should be put on record: and it was with this design that He had the Law published, to which He afterwards added the Prophets as its expositors' (*Institutes*, I. vi. 2). These few lines resume in summary form the very substance of Calvin's doctrine of inspiration. We may conclude from it that he did not give himself to the elaboration of this dogma, with the tenacity and logical rigor which his clear and above all practical genius employed in the study and systematization of other points of the new doctrine. We shall seek in vain a precise declaration on the mode of revelation, on the extent and intensity of inspiration, on the relation of the book and the doctrine. None of these questions, as we have already had occasion to remark, had as yet been raised: the doctors gave themselves to what was urgent and did not undertake to prove or discuss what was not yet either under discussion or attacked. The principle which was laid down sufficed them. God had spoken—this was the faith which every consciousness of the time received without repugnance, and against which no mind raised an objection. To search out how He did it was wholly useless: to undertake to prove it, no less so" (p. 58). There is evident in this passage a desire to minimize Calvin's view of the divinity of Scripture; the use of the passage from I. vi. 2 as the basis of an exposition of his doctrine of inspiration is indicative of this—whereas it obviously is a very admirable account of how God has made known His will to man and preserved the knowledge of it through time. The double currents of desire to be true to Calvin's own exposition of his doctrine and yet to withhold his imprimatur from what the author believes to be an overstrained doctrine, produces some strange confusion in his further exposition.

Calvin has in mind is not to insist that the mode of inspiration was dictation, but that the result of inspiration is as if it were by dictation, viz., the production of a pure word of God free from all human admixtures. The term "dictation" was no doubt in current use at the time to express rather the effects than the mode of inspiration.<sup>45</sup> This being allowed, it is all the more unfair to urge that, Calvin's language being in this sense figurative, he is not to be understood as teaching that the effect of inspiration was the production of a pure word of God, free from all admixture of human error. This, on the contrary, is precisely what Calvin does teach, and that with the greatest strenuousness. He everywhere asserts that the effects of inspiration are such that God alone is the responsible author of the inspired product, that we owe the same reverence to it as to Him Himself, and should esteem the words as purely His as if we heard them proclaimed with His living voice from heaven; and that there is nothing human mixed with them. And he everywhere deals with them on that assumption. It is true that men have sought to discover in Calvin, particularly in his "Harmony of the Gospels," acknowledgments of the presence of human errors in the fabric of Scripture.<sup>46</sup> But these attempts rest on very crass misapprehensions of Calvin's efforts precisely to show that there are no such errors in the fabric of Scripture. When he explains, for example, that the purpose "of the Evangelists"- or "of the Holy Spirit," for he significantly uses these designations as synonyms—was not to write a chronologically exact record, but to present the general essence of things, this is not to allow that the Scriptures err humanly in their record of the sequences of time, but to assert that they intend to give no sequences of time and therefore cannot err in this regard. When again he suggests that an "error" has found its way into the text of Mat. xxvii. 9 or possibly into Mat. xxiii. 35, he is not speaking of the original, but of the transmitted text;<sup>47</sup> and it would be hard if he were not permitted to make such excursions into the region of textual criticism without laying himself open to the charge of denying his most assured conviction that nothing human is mixed with Scripture. In point of fact, Calvin not only asserts the freedom of Scripture as given by God from all error, but never in his detailed dealing with Scripture allows that such errors exist in it.<sup>48</sup>

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45 Cf. J. Cramer, as cited, p. 114: "How Calvin conceives of this *dictare* by the Holy Ghost it is difficult to say. He borrowed it from the current ecclesiastical usage, which employed it of the *auctor primarius* of Scripture, as indeed also of tradition. Thus the Council of Trent uses the expression *dictante Spiritu Sancto* of the unwritten tradition inspired by the Holy Spirit." Otto Ritschl, "Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus," i. 1908, p. 59, argues for taking the term strictly in Calvin. It is employed, it is true, in contemporary usage in the figurative sense, of the deliverances of the natural conscience, for example; and some Reformed writers use it of the internal testimony of the Spirit. Calvin also himself speaks as if he employed it of Scripture only figuratively—e.g. *Opp.* i. 632: *verba quodammodo dictante Christi Spiritu*. Nevertheless, on the whole Ritschl thinks he meant it in the literal sense.

46 Cf., e.g., J. Cramer, as cited, pp. 114-116, whose instances are followed in the remarks which succeed. Cf. also p. 125. How widespread this effort to discover in Calvin some acknowledgment of errors in Scripture has become may be seen by consulting the citations made by Dunlop Moore, *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 1893, p. 60: he cites Cramer, van Oosterzee, Farrar. Cf. even A. H. Strong, "Syst. Theol.," ed. 1907, vol. i. p. 217, whose list of "theological writers who admit the errancy of Scripture writers as to some matters unessential to their moral and spiritual teaching" requires drastic revision. Leipoldt ("Geschichte des N. T. Kanons," ii. 1908, p. 149) says: "Fundamentally Calvin holds fast to the old doctrine of verbal inspiration. His sound historical sense leads him, here and there, it is true, to break through the bonds of this doctrine. In his harmony of the Gospels (*Commentarii in harmoniam ex Mat., Mk., et Lk. compositam*, 1555), e.g., Calvin shows that the letters are not sacred to him; he moves much more freely here than Martin Chemnitz. But in other cases again Calvin draws strict consequences from the doctrine of verbal inspiration. He ascribes, e.g., to all four Gospels precisely similar authority, although he (with Luther and Zwingli) considers John's Gospel the most beautiful of them all.

47 This is solidly shown, e.g., by Dunlop Moore, as cited, pp. 61-62: also for Acts vii. 16.

48 Despite his tendency to lower Calvin's doctrine of inspiration with respect to its effects, J. Cramer in the following passage (as cited, pp. 120-121) gives in general a very fair statement of it: "we have seen that Calvin, although he has not given us a completed theory of inspiration, yet firmly believed in the inspiration of the entirety of Scripture. It is true we do not find in him the crass expressions of the later Reformed, as well as Lutheran, theologians. But the foundation on which they subsequently built—though somewhat onesidedly—is

If we ask for the ground on which he asserts this high doctrine of inspiration, we do not see that any other reply can be given than that it was on the ground of the teaching of Scripture itself. The Scriptures were understood by Calvin to claim to be in this high sense the word of God; and a critical scrutiny of their contents brought to him nothing which seemed to him to negative this claim. There were other grounds on which he might and did base a firm confidence in the divine origin of the Scriptures and the trustworthiness of their teaching as a revelation from God. But there were no other grounds on which he could or did rest his conviction that these Scriptures are so from God that there is nothing human mixed with them, and their every affirmation is to be received with the deference which is due to the living voice of God speaking from heaven. On these other grounds Calvin was led to trust the teaching of the Scriptures as a divine revelation: and he therefore naturally trusted their teaching as to their own nature and inspiration.

Such, then, are the Scriptures as conceived by Calvin: sixty-six sacred books, "dictated" by God to His "notaries" that they might, in this "public record," stand as a perpetual special revelation of Himself to His people, to supplement or to supersede in their case the general revelation which He gives of Himself in His works and deeds, but which is rendered ineffective by the sin-bred disabilities of the human soul. For this, according to Calvin, is the account to give of the origin of Scripture, and this the account to give of the function it serves in the world. It was because man in his sinful imbecility was unable to profit by the general revelation which God has spread before all eyes, so that they are all without excuse (I. vi. 1), that God in His goodness gave to "those whom He intended to unite in a more close and familiar connection with Himself," a special revelation in open speech (I. vi. 1). And it was because of the mutability of the human mind, prone to errors of all kinds, corrupting the truth, that He committed this His special revelation to writing, that it might never be inaccessible to "those to whom He determined to make His instructions effectual" (I. vi. 3). In Calvin's view, therefore, the Scriptures are a documentation of God's special revelation of Himself unto salvation (I. vi. 1, *ad init.*); but a documentation cared for by God Himself, so that they are, in fine, themselves the special revelation of God unto salvation in documentary form (I. vi. 2, 3). The necessity for the revelation documented in them arises from the blindness of men in their sin: the necessity for the documentation of this revelation arises from the instability of men, even when taught of God. We must conceive of special revelation, and of the Scriptures as just its documentation, therefore, as not precisely a cure, but rather an assistance to man dulled in his sight so as not to be able to perceive God in His general revelation. "For," says Calvin, "as persons who are old, or

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here. We cannot infer much from such expressions as 'from God,' 'came from God,' 'flowed from God.' Just as in Zwingli, these expressions were sometimes in Calvin synonyms of 'true.' Thus, at Titus ii. 12, he says he cannot understand why so many are unwilling to draw upon profane writers,—'for, since all truth is from God (*a Deo*), if anything has been said well and truly by profane men, it ought not to be rejected, for it has come from God (*a Deo est profectum*). More significant are such expressions as, 'nothing human is mixed with Scripture,' 'we owe to them the same reverence as to God,' God 'is the author of Scripture' and as such has 'dictated' (*dictavit*) all that the Apostles and Prophets have written, so that we 'must not depart from the word of God in even the smallest particular,' etc. All this applies not only to the Scriptures as a whole, not merely to their fundamental ideas and chief contents, but to all the sixty-six books severally. In contra-distinction from the Apocrypha, they have been given by the Holy Spirit (*Préface mise en tête des livres apocryphes de l'Ancien Test.: Opp.* ix. 827). The book of Acts 'beyond question is the product of the Holy Spirit Himself,' Mark 'wrote nothing but what the Holy Spirit gave him to write,' etc. To think here merely of a providential direction by God, in the sense that God took care that His people should lack nothing of a Scriptural record of His revelation—is impossible. For, however often Calvin may have directed attention to such a 'singularis providentiae cura' (*Inst.*, I. vi. 2, cf. I. viii. 10; *Argumentum in Ev. Joh.*) with respect to Scripture, he yet saw something over and above this in the production of the sacred books. He looked upon them as the writings of God Himself, who, through an extraordinary operation of His Spirit, guarded His amanuenses from *all* error as well when they transmitted histories as when they propounded the doctrine of Christ. Thus to him Scripture (naturally in its original text) was a complete work of God, to which nothing could be added and from which nothing could be taken away."

whose eyes have somehow become dim, if you show them the most beautiful book, though they perceive that something is written there, can scarcely read two words together, yet by the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly—so the Scripture . . ." etc. (I. vi. 1). The function of Scripture thus, as special revelation documented, is to serve as spiritual spectacles to enable those of dulled spiritual sight to see God.

Of course, the Scriptures do more than this. They not only reveal the God of Nature more brightly to the sin-darkened eye; they reveal also the God of Grace, who may not be found in nature. Calvin does not overlook this wider revelation embodied in them: he particularly adverts to it (I. vi. 1). But he turns from it for the moment as less directly germane to his present object, which is to show that without the "spectacles" of Scripture, sinful man would not be able to attain to a sound knowledge of even God the Creator. It is on this, therefore, that he now insists. It was only because God revealed Himself in this special, supernatural way to them, that our first fathers—"Adam, Noah, Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs"—were able to retain Him in their knowledge (I. vi. 1). It was only through this special revelation, whether renewed to them by God, or handed down in tradition, "by the ministry of men," that their posterity continued in the knowledge of God (I. vi. 2). "At length, that the truth might remain in the world in a continual course of instruction to all ages, God determined that the same oracles which He deposited with the patriarchs, should be committed to public records"—first the Law, then the Prophets, and then the books of the New Covenant (I. vi. 2). It is now, therefore, only through these Scriptures that man can attain to a true knowledge of God. The revelation of God in His works is not useless: it makes all men without excuse; it provides an additional though lower and less certain revelation of God to His people—to a consideration of which all should seriously apply themselves, though they should principally attend to the Word (I. vi. 2). But experience shows that without the Word the sinful human mind is too weak to reach a sound knowledge of God, and therefore without it men wander in vanity and error. Calvin seems to speak sometimes almost as if the Scriptures, that is special revelation, wholly superseded general revelation (I. v. 12, *ad fin.*; vi. 2, *ad fin.*; 4, *ad fin.*). More closely scrutinized, it becomes evident, however, that he means only that in the absence of Scripture, that is of special revelation, the general revelation of God is ineffective to preserve any sound knowledge of Him in the world: but in the presence of Scripture, general revelation is not set aside, but rather brought back to its proper validity. The real relation between general and special revelation, as the matter lay in Calvin's mind, thus proves to be, not that the one supersedes the other, but that special revelation supplements general revelation indeed, but in the first instance rather repeats and by repeating vivifies and vitalizes general revelation, and flows confluent in with it to the one end of both, the knowledge of God (I. vi. 2). What special revelation is, therefore—and the Scriptures as its documentation—is very precisely represented by the figure of the spectacles. It is aid to the dulled vision of sinful man, to enable it to see God.

The question forcibly presents itself, however, whether "spectacles" will serve the purpose here. Has not Calvin painted the sin-bred blindness of men too blackly to encourage us to think it can be corrected by such an aid to any remainders of natural vision which may be accredited to them? The answer must be in the affirmative. But this only opens the way to point out that Calvin does not present special revelation, or the Scriptures as special revelation documented, as the entire cure, but places by the side of it the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*. Special revelation, or Scripture as its documented form, provides in point of fact, in the view of Calvin, only the objective side of the cure he finds has been provided by God. The subjective side is provided by the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*. The spectacles are provided by the Scriptures: the eyes are opened that they may see even through these spectacles, only by the witness of the Spirit in the heart. We perceive, then, that in Calvin's view the figure of the spectacles is a perfectly just one.

He means to intimate that special revelation alone will not produce a knowledge of God in the human soul: that something more than external aid is needed before it can see: and to leave the way open to proceed to point out what further is required that sinful man may see God. Sinful man, we say again: for the whole crux lies there. Had there been no sin, there would have been no need of even special revelation. In the light of the splendid revelation of Himself which God has displayed in the theatre of nature, man with his native endowment of instinctive knowledge of God would have bloomed out into a full and sound knowledge of Him. But with sinful man, the matter is wholly different. He needs more light and he needs something more than light—he needs the power of sight.<sup>49</sup> That we may apprehend Calvin's thought, therefore, we must turn to the consideration of his doctrine of the Testimony of the Spirit.

### III. THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT

What is Calvin's doctrine of the Testimony of the Spirit?

The particular question which Calvin addresses himself to when he turns to the consideration of what he calls the testimony of the Spirit concerns the accrediting of Scripture, not the assimilation of its revelatory contents. The reader cannot fail to experience some disappointment at this. The whole development of the discussion hitherto undoubtedly fosters the expectation, not, indeed, of an exclusive treatment of the assimilation of special revelation by sinful man—for both problems are raised by it and the two problems are at bottom one and their solution one—but certainly of some formal treatment of it, and indeed of such a treatment of the double problem that the stress should be laid on this. Calvin, however, is preoccupied with the problem of the accrediting of Scripture. This is due in part, doubtless, to its logical priority: as he himself remarks, we cannot be "established in the belief of the doctrine, till we are indubitably persuaded that God is its Author" (I. vii. 4, *ad init.*). But it was rendered almost inevitable by the state of the controversy with Rome, who intrenched herself in the position that the Protestant appeal to Scripture as over against the Church was inoperative, seeing that it is only by the Church that the Scriptures can be established in authority: for who but the Church can assure us that these Scriptures are from God, or indeed what books enter into the fabric of Scripture, or whether they have come down to us uncorrupted? As a practical man writing to practical men for a practical purpose, Calvin could not fail, perhaps, to give his primary attention to the aspect of the problem he had raised which was most immediately pressing. But this scarcely prepares us for the almost total neglect of its other aspect, with the effect that the construction of his general doctrine is left with a certain appearance of incompleteness. Not really incomplete; for the solution of the one problem is, as we have already suggested, the solution of the other also; and even the cursory reader—or perhaps we may say especially the cursory reader—may well be trusted to feel this as he is led on through the discussion, particularly as there are not lacking repeated suggestions of it, and the discussion closes with a direct reference to it and a formal postponement of the particular discussion of the other aspect of the double problem to a later

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49 In I. v. 14 Calvin says that the Apostle in Heb. xi. 3, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God" wishes to intimate that "the invisible divinity *was represented* indeed by such displays of His power, but that we have no eyes *to perceive it* unless they are illuminated through faith by the inner revelation of God" (*Invisibilem divinitatem repraesentari quidem talibus spectaculis, sed ad illam perspiciendam non esse nobis oculos, nisi interiore Dei revelatione per fidem illuminentur*). Here he distinguishes between the external, objective representation, and the internal, subjective preparation to perceive this representation. God is objectively revealed in His works: man in his sins is blind to this revelation: the interior operation of God is an opening of man's eyes: man then sees. The operation of God is therefore a palingenesis. This passage is already in ed. 1539 (i. 291); the last clause (*nisi ...*) is not, however, reproduced in the French versions of either 1541 or 1560 (iii. 60).

portion of the treatise. "I pass over many things for the present," says Calvin, "because this subject will present itself for discussion in another place. Only, let it be known here that that alone is true faith which the Spirit of God seals in our hearts. And with this one reason every reader of docility and modesty will be satisfied" (I. vii. 5, near the end). That is as much as to say, This whole subject is only one application of the general doctrine of faith; and as the general doctrine of faith is fully discussed at another place in this treatise, we may content ourselves here with the somewhat incomplete remarks we have made upon this special application of that doctrine; we only need to remind the reader that there is no true faith except that which is begotten in the soul by the Holy Spirit.

We can scarcely wonder that Calvin contents himself with this simple reference of the topic now engaging his attention, as a specific case, to the generic doctrine of faith, when we pause to realize how nearly this simple reference of it, as a species to its genus, comes to a sufficient exposition of it. We shall stop now to signalize only two points which are involved in this reference, the noting of which will greatly facilitate our apprehension of Calvin's precise meaning in his doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit to the divinity of Scripture. This doctrine is no isolated doctrine with Calvin, standing out of relation with the other doctrines of his system: it is but one application of his general doctrine of faith; or to be more specific, one application of his general doctrine of the function of the Holy Spirit in the production of faith. Given Calvin's general doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit in applying salvation, and his specific doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* in the attestation of Scripture, and in the applying of its doctrine as well, was inevitable. It is but one application of the general doctrine that there is no true faith except that which the Spirit of God seals in our hearts. For Calvin in this doctrine—and this is the second point we wish to signalize—has in mind specifically "true faith." He is not asking here how the Scriptures may be proved to be from God. If that had been the question he was asking, he would not have hesitated to say that the testimony of the Church is conclusive of the fact. He does say so. "The universal judgment of the Church" (I. vii. 3, *fin.*) he represents as a very useful argument, "the consent of the Church" (I. viii. 12, *init.*) as a very important consideration, in establishing the divine origin of the Scriptures: although, of course, he does not conceive the Church as lending her authority to Scripture "when she receives and seals it with her suffrage," but rather as performing a duty of piety to herself in recognizing what is true apart from her authentication, and treating it with due veneration (I. vii. 2, *ad fin.*). For what is more her duty than "obediently to embrace what is from God as the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd"?<sup>50</sup> Were it a matter of proving the Scriptures to be the Word of God, Calvin would, again, have been at no loss for rational arguments which he was ready to pronounce irresistible. He does adduce such arguments and he does pronounce them irresistible. He devotes a whole chapter "to the adduction of these arguments (ch. viii.)—such arguments as these: the dignity of the subject-matter of Scripture—the heavenliness of its doctrine and the consent of all its parts— (§ 1), the majesty of its style (§ 2), the antiquity of its teaching (§ 3), the sincerity of its narrative (§ 4), its miraculous accompaniment, circumstantially confirmed (§§ 5, 6), its predictive contents authenticated by fulfilment (§§ 7, 8), its continuous use through so many ages (§§ 9-12), its sealing by martyr blood (§ 13): and these arguments he is so far from considering weak and inconclusive (I. viii. 13, *med.*) that he represents them rather as capable of completely vindicating the Scriptures against all the subtleties of their calumniators (*ibid.*). Nay, he declares that the proofs of the divine origin of the Scriptures are so cogent, as "certainly to evince, if there

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50 In his response to the Augsburg Interim ("Vera Ecclesiae reformandae ratio," 1549, *Opp.* vii. 591-674) he allows it to be the *proprium ecclesiae officium* to *scripturas veras a suppositiis discernere*; but only that *obedienter amplectitur, quicquid Dei est*, as the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd. It is nevertheless *sacrilega impietas ecclesiae iudicio submittere sacrosancta Dei oracula*. See J. Cramer, as cited, p. 104, note 3. Cramer remarks in expounding Calvin's view: "By the approbation she gives to them"—the books of Scripture—"the Church does not make them authentic, but only yields her homage to the truth of God."

is a God in heaven, that He is the author of the Law, and the Prophecies, and the Gospel" (I. vii. 4, near the beginning); as to extort with certainty from all who are not wholly lost to shame, the confession of the divine gift of the Scriptures (*ibid.*).<sup>51</sup> "Though I am far from possessing any peculiar dexterity" in argument "or eloquence," he says, "yet were I to contend with the most subtle despisers of God, who are ambitious to display their wit and their skill in weakening the authority of Scripture, I trust I should be able without difficulty to silence their obstreperous clamor" (*ibid.*). But objective proofs—whether the conclusive testimony of witnesses, or the overwhelming evidence of rational considerations—be they never so cogent,<sup>52</sup> he does not consider of themselves capable of producing "true faith." And it is "true faith," we repeat, that Calvin has in mind in his doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*. If it seemed to him a small matter that man should know that God is if he did not know what God is, it equally seemed to him a small matter that man should know what God is, in the paradigms of the intellect, if he did not really know this God in the intimacy of communion which that phrase imports. And equally it seemed to him utterly unimportant that a man should be convinced by stress of rational evidence that the Scriptures are the Word of God, unless he practically embraced these Scriptures as the Word of God and stayed his soul upon them. The knowledge of God which Calvin has in mind in this whole discussion is, thus, a vital and vitalizing knowledge of God, and the attestation of Scripture which he is seeking is not an attestation merely to the intelligence of men, compelling from them perhaps a reluctant judgment of the intellect alone (since those convinced against their will, as the proverb has it, are very apt to remain of the same opinion still), but such an attestation as takes hold of the whole man in the roots of his activities and controls all the movements of his soul.

This is so important a consideration for the exact apprehension of Calvin's doctrine that it may become us to pause and assure ourselves of the simple matter of fact from the language which Calvin employs of it in the course of the discussion. We shall recall that from the introduction of the topic of special revelation he has in mind and keeps before his readers' mind its destination for the people of God alone. The provisions for producing a knowledge of God, consequent on the inefficiency of natural revelation, Calvin is careful to explain, are not for all men, but for "the elect" (I. vi. 1), or, as they are more fully described, "those whom God intends to unite in a more close and familiar connection with Himself" (*ibid.*), "those to whom He determines to make His instructions effectual" (I. vi. 3). From the first provisions of His supernatural dealings, therefore, He "intends to make His instructions effectual." More pointedly still he speaks of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* as an act in which "God deigns to confer a singular power on His elect, whom He distinguishes from the rest of mankind" (I. vii. 5).<sup>53</sup> This singular power, now, is nothing else but "saving faith," and Calvin speaks of it in all the

51 It would require that we should be wholly hardened (*nisi ad perditam impudentiam obduruerint*) that we should not perceive that the doctrine of Scripture is heavenly, that we should not have the confession wrung from us that there are manifest signs in Scripture that it is God who speaks in and through it (*extorquebitur illia haec confessio, manifestis, signa loquentia Dei conspici in Scriptura ex quibus pateat coelestem esse eius doctrinam*)—I. vii. 4.

52 The exact relations of the "proofs" to the divinity of Scripture, which Calvin teaches, was sufficiently clear to be caught by his successors. It is admirably stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, i. 5. And we may add that the same conception is stated also very precisely by Quenstedt: "These motives, as well internal as external, by which we are led to the knowledge of the authority of Scripture, make the theopneusty of Sacred Scripture probable, and produce a certitude which is not merely conjectural but moral . . . they do not make the divinity of Scripture infallible and altogether indubitable." (*Theologia didactico-polemica, sive Systema theologicum*," Lipsiae, 1715, Pars prima, pp. 141-2.) That is to say, they are not of the nature of *demonstration*, but nevertheless give moral certitude: the testimony of the Spirit is equivalent to demonstration—as is the deliverance of any simply acting sense.

53 Cf. Pannier, as cited, pp. 207-8: "we see that this understanding of the Scriptures, this capacity to receive the testimony of the Spirit, is not, according to Calvin, possible for all; and that, less and less . . . He continually emphasises more and more the incapacity of man to persuade another of it, without the aid of God; but he



synonymy of "saving faith." He calls it "true faith" (I. vii. 5), "sound faith" (I. vii. 4), "firm faith" (I. viii. 13), "the faith of the pious" (I. vii. 3), "the certainty of the pious" (I. vii. 3), "that assurance which is essential to true piety" (I. vii. 4), "saving knowledge" (I. viii. 13), "a solid assurance of eternal life" (I. vii. 1). It is the thing which is naturally described by this synonymy which Calvin declares is not produced in the soul except by the testimony of the Holy Spirit. This obviously is nothing more than to declare that that faith which lays hold of Christ unto eternal life is the product of the Holy Spirit in the heart, and that it is one of the exercises of this faith to lay hold of the revelation of this Christ in the Scriptures with assured confidence, so that it is only he who is led by the Spirit who embraces these Scriptures with "sound faith," that is, "with that assurance which is essential to true piety" (I. vii. 4). What Calvin has in mind, in a word, is simply an extended comment on Paul's words: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . but he that is spiritual judgeth all things" (I Cor. ii. 14, 15).<sup>54</sup>

Calvin does not leave us, however, to gather from general remarks referring it to its class or to infer from its general effects, what he means by the testimony of the Spirit of God to the divinity of Scripture, but describes for us its nature and indicates the mode of its operation and specific effects with great exactitude.<sup>55</sup> He tells us that it is a "secret" (I. vii. 4), "internal" (I. vii. 4; viii.

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emphasises still more progressively the impossibility of obtaining this aid if God does not accord it first. 1550 (I. viii. at end): "Those who wish to prove to unbelievers by arguments that the Scriptures are from God are inconsiderate; for this is known *only to faith*." 1559 (I. vii. *in fine*): The mysteries of God are not understood, *except by those to whom it is given*. . . . It is quite certain that the witness of the Spirit does not make itself felt except to believers, and is not *in itself* an apologetic means with respect to unbelievers. . . . The *natural* man receiveth not spiritual things."

- 54 Cf. Pannier, as cited, pp. 195-6: "First let us recall this,—for Calvin this testimony of the Holy Spirit is only one act of the great drama which is enacted in the entire soul of the religious man, and in which the Holy Spirit holds always the principal role. While the later dogmatists make the Holy Spirit, so to speak, function mechanically, at a given moment, in the pen of the prophets or in the brain of the readers, Calvin sees the Holy Spirit constantly active in the man whom He wishes to sanctify, and the fact that He leads him to recognize the divinity and the canonicity of the sacred books is only one manifestation,—a very important one, no doubt, but only a particular one,—of His general work." It is only, of course, the Lutheran and Rationalizing dogmatists who, constructively, subject the action of the Spirit to the direction of man—whether by making it rest on the application of the "means of grace" or on the action of the human will. Calvin and his followers—the Reformed—make the act of man depend on the free and sovereign action of the Spirit.
- 55 J. Cramer, as cited, pp. 122-3, somewhat understates this, but in the main catches Calvin's meaning: "Calvin does not, it is true, tell us in so many words precisely what this *testimonium Sp. S.* is, but it is easy to gather it from the whole discussion. He is thinking of the Holy Spirit, who, as the spirit of our adoption as children, leads us to say Amen to the Word which the Father speaks in the Holy Scriptures to His children. He even says expressly in *Inst.* I. vii. 4: 'As if the Spirit was not called "seal" and "earnest" just because He confers faith on the pious.' But more plainly still, and indeed so that no doubt can remain, we find it in Beza, the most beloved and talented pupil of Calvin, who assuredly also in his conception of Scripture was the most thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his teacher. In his reply to Castellion, Beza says: 'The testimony of the Spirit of adoption does not lie properly in this, that we believe to be true what the Scriptures testify (for this is known also to the devils and to many of the lost), but rather in this, that each applies to himself the promise of salvation in Christ of which Paul speaks in Rom. viii. 15, 16.' Accordingly a few lines further down he speaks of a 'testimony of adoption and free justification in Christ.' In the essence of the matter Calvin will have meant just this by his testimony of the Holy Spirit. . . ." Beza's words are in his "Ad defensiones et reprehensiones Seb. Castellionis" ("Th. Bezae Vezelii Opera," i. Geneva, 1582, p. 503): *Testimonium Spiritus adoptionis non in eo proprie positum est ut credamus verum esse quod Scriptura testatur (nam hoc ipsum quoque sciunt diaboli et reprobi multi), sed in eo potius ut quisque sibi salutis in Christo promissionem applicet, de qua re agit Paulus, Rom. viii. 15, 16....* That it was generally understood in the first age that this was the precise nature of the witness of the Spirit is shown by its definition in this sense not only by the Reformed, but by the Lutherans. For example, Hollaz defines thus: "The testimony of the Holy Spirit is the supernatural act (*actus supernaturalis*) of the Holy Spirit by means of the Word of God attentively read or heard (His own divine power having been communicated to the Scriptures) by which the heart of man is moved, opened, illuminated, turned to the obedience of faith, so that the illuminated man out of these internal spiritual movements truly perceives the Word which is propounded to him to have proceeded from God, and gives it therefore his unwavering assent." ("Examiniis theologici acroamatici univers.

13), "inward" (I. vii. 5) action of the Holy Spirit on the soul, by which the soul is "illuminated" (I. vii. 3, 4, 5), so as to perceive their true quality in the Scriptures as a divine book. We may call this "an inward teaching" of the Spirit which produces "entire acquiescence in the Scriptures," so that they are self-authenticating to the mind and heart (I. vii. 5); or we may call it a "secret testimony of the Spirit," by which our minds and hearts are convinced with a firmness superior to all reason that the Scriptures are from God (I. vii. 4). In both instances we are using figurative language. Precisely what is produced by the hidden internal operation of the Spirit on the soul is a new spiritual sense (*sensus*, I. vii. 5, *med.*), by which the divinity of Scripture is perceived as by an intuitive perception. "For the Scripture exhibits as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black things do of their color, and sweet and bitter things of their taste" (I. vii. 2, end); and we need only a sense to discern its divine quality to be convinced of it with the same immediacy and finality as we are convinced by their mere perception of light or darkness, of whiteness or blackness, of sweetness or bitterness (*ibid.*). No conclusions based on "reasoning" or "proofs" or founded on human judgment can compare in clearness or force with such a conviction, which is instinctive and immediate, and finds its ultimate ground and sanction in the Holy Spirit who has wrought in the heart this spiritual sense which so functions in recognizing the divine quality of Scripture. Illuminated by the Spirit of God, we believe, therefore, not on the ground of our own judgment, or on the ground of the judgment of others, but with a certainty above all human judgment, by a spiritual intuition.<sup>56</sup> With the utmost explicitness Calvin so describes this instinctive conviction in a passage of great vigor: "It is, therefore," says he, "such a persuasion as requires no reasons; such a knowledge as is supported by the highest reason and in which the mind rests with greater security and constancy than in any reasons; in fine, such a sense as cannot be produced but by a revelation from heaven" (I. vii. 5).<sup>57</sup> Here we are told that it is a *persuasio*, or rather a *notitia*, or rather a *sensus*. It is a persuasion which does not require reasons—that is to say, it is a state of conviction not induced by arguments, but by direct perception: it is, that is to say, a knowledge, a direct perception in accord with the highest reason, in which the mind rests, with an assurance not attainable by reasoning; or to be more explicit still, it is a sense which comes only from divine gift. As we have implanted in us by nature a sense which distinguishes between light and darkness, a sense which distinguishes between sweet and bitter, and the verdict of these senses is immediate and final; so we have planted in us by the creative action of the Holy Spirit a sense for the divine, and its verdict, too, is immediate and final: the spiritual man discerneth all things. Such, in briefest outline, is Calvin's famous doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit.

### MODE OF THIS TESTIMONY

Certain further elucidations of its real meaning and bearing appear, however, to be necessary, to guard against misapprehension of it. When we speak of an internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, it is evident that we must conceive it as presenting itself in one of three ways. It may be conceived as of the nature of an immediate revelation to each man to whom it is given. It may be conceived as of the nature of a blind conviction produced in the minds of its recipients. It may be

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theologiam thet. polem.," Holmiae et Lipsiae, 1741, p. 125.) The Lutheranism of this definition resides in the clauses: "By means of the Word of God" . . . "His own divine power having been communicated to the Scriptures" . . . which make the action of the Holy Spirit to be from out of the Word, in which He dwells *intrinsicus*. But the nature of the testimony of the Spirit is purely conceived as an act of the Holy Spirit by which the heart of man is renewed to spiritual perception, in the employment of which he perceives the divine quality of Scripture.

56 *Supra humanum iudicium, certo certius constituimus (non secus ac si ipsius Dei numen illic intueremur) hominum ministerio, ab ipsissimo Dei ore ad nos fluxisse (I. vii. 5).*

57 *Talis ergo est persuasio quae rationes non requirat; talis notitia, cui optima ratio constet: nempe in qua securius constantiusque mens quiescit quam in ullis rationibus; talis denique sensus, qui nisi ex coelesti revelatione nasci queat (I. vii. 5).*

conceived as of the nature of a grounded conviction, formed in their minds by the Spirit, by an act which rather terminates immediately on the faculties, enabling and effectively persuading them to reach a conviction on grounds presented to them, than produces the conviction itself, apart from or without grounds. In which of these ways did Calvin conceive the testimony of the Spirit as presenting itself? As revelation, or as ungrounded faith, or as grounded faith?

Certainly not the first. The testimony of the Spirit was not to Calvin of the nature of a propositional "revelation" to its recipients. Of this he speaks perfectly explicitly, and indeed in his polemic against Anabaptist mysticism insistently. He does indeed connect the term "revelation" with the testimony of the Spirit, declaring it, for example, such a sense (*sensus*) as can be produced by nothing short of "a revelation from heaven" (I. vii. 5, *med.*). But his purpose in the employment of this language is not to describe it according to its nature, but to claim for it with emphasis a heavenly source: he means merely to assert that it is not earth-born, but God-wrought, while at the same time he intimates that in its nature it is not a propositional revelation, but an instinctive "sense." That he did not conceive of it as a propositional revelation is made perfectly clear by his explicit assertions at the opening of the discussion (I. vii. 1, *init.*), that we "are not favored with daily oracles from heaven," and that the Scriptures constitute the sole body of extant revelations from God. It is not to supersede nor yet to supplement these recorded revelations that the testimony of the Spirit is given us, he insists, but to confirm them (I. ix. 3): or, as he puts it in his polemic against the Anabaptists, "The office of the Spirit which is promised us is not to feign new and unheard-of revelations, or to coin a new system of doctrine, which would seduce us from the received doctrine of the Gospel, but to seal to our minds the same doctrine which the Gospel delivers" (I. ix. 1, *fin.*).

In this polemic against the Anabaptists (ch. ix.) he gives us an especially well-balanced account of the relations which in his view obtain between the revelation of God and the witness of the Spirit. If he holds that the revelation of God is ineffective without the testimony of the Spirit, he holds equally that the testimony of the Spirit is inconceivable without the revelation of God embodied in the Word. He even declares that the Spirit is no more the agent by which the Word is impressed on the heart than the Word is the means by which the illumination of the Spirit takes effect. "If apart from the Spirit of God" we "are utterly destitute of the light of truth," he says (I. ix. 3, *ad fin.*), equally "the Word is the instrument by which the Lord dispenses to believers the illumination of the Spirit." So far as the knowledge of the truth is concerned, we are as helpless, then, without the Word as we are without the Spirit, for the whole function of the Spirit with respect to the truth is, not to reveal to us the truth anew, much less to reveal to us new truth, but efficaciously to confirm the Word, revealed in the Scriptures, to us, and efficaciously to impress it on our hearts (I. ix. 3). This Calvin makes superabundantly plain by an illustration and a didactic statement of great clearness. The illustration (I. ix. 3) is drawn from our Lord's dealings with His two disciples with whom after His rising He walked to Emmaus. "He opened their understandings," Calvin explains, "not that rejecting the Scriptures they might be wise of themselves, but that they might understand the Scriptures." Such also, he says, is the testimony of the Spirit to-day: for what is it—and this is the didactic statement to which we have referred—but an enabling of us by the light of the Spirit to behold the divine countenance in the Scriptures that so our minds may be filled with a solid reverence for the Word (I. ix. 3)? Here we have the nature of the testimony of the Spirit, and its manner of working and its effects, announced to us in a single clause. It is an illumination of our minds, by which we are enabled to see God in the Scriptures, so that we may reverence them as from Him.

Other effect than this Calvin explicitly denies to the testimony of the Spirit, and he defends his denial from the charge of inconsistency with the stress he has previously laid upon the

necessity of this testimony (I. ix. 3). It is not to deny the necessity of this work of the Spirit, he argues, to confine it to the express confirmation of the Word and of the revelation contained therein. Nor is it derogatory to the Spirit to confine His operations now to the confirmation of the revealed Word. While on the other hand to attribute to Him repeated or new revelations to each of the children of God, as the mystics do, is derogatory to the Word, which is His inspired product. To lay claim to the possession of such a Spirit as this, he declares, is to lay claim to the possession of a different Spirit from that which dwelt in Christ and the Apostles—for their Spirit honored the Word—and a different Spirit from that which was promised by Christ to His disciples—for this Spirit was "not to speak of Himself." It is to lay claim to a Spirit for whose divine mission and character, moreover, we lack all criterion—for how can we know that the Spirit that speaks in us is from God, save as He honors the Word of God (I. ix. 1 and 2)? From all which it is perfectly plain not only that Calvin did not conceive the testimony of the Spirit as taking effect in the form of propositional revelations, but that he did conceive it as an operation of God the Holy Spirit in the heart of man which is so connected with the revelation of God in His Word, that it manifests itself only in conjunction with that revelation.

Calvin's formula here is, The Word and Spirit.<sup>58</sup> Only in the conjunction of the two can an effective revelation be made to the sin-darkened mind of man.<sup>59</sup> The Word supplies the objective factor; the Spirit the subjective factor; and only in the union of the objective and subjective factors is the result accomplished. The whole objective revelation of God lies, thus, in the Word. But the whole subjective capacitating for the reception of this revelation lies in the will of the Spirit. Either, by itself, is wholly ineffective to the result aimed at—the production of knowledge in the human mind. But when they unite, knowledge is not only rendered possible to man: it is rendered certain. And therefore it is that Calvin represents the provision for the knowledge of God both in the objective revelation in the Word and in the subjective testimony of the Spirit as destined by God not for men at large, but specifically for His people, His elect, those "to whom He determined to make His instructions effectual" (I. vi. 3). The Calvinism of Calvin's doctrine of religious knowledge comes to clear manifestation here; and that not merely because of its implication of the doctrine of election, but also because of its implication of Calvin's specific doctrine of the means of grace. Already in his doctrine of religious knowledge, we find Calvin teaching that God is known not by those who choose to know Him, but by those by whom He chooses to be known: and this simply because the knowledge of God is God-given, and is therefore given to whom He will. Men do not wring the knowledge of God from a Deity reluctant to be known: God imparts the knowledge of Himself to men reluctant to know Him: and therefore none know Him save those to whom He efficaciously imparts, by His Word and Spirit, the knowledge of Himself. "By His Word and Spirit"—therein is expressed already the fundamental formula of the Calvinistic doctrine of the "means of grace." In that doctrine the Spirit is not, with the Lutherans, conceived as in the Word, conveyed and applied where-ever the

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58 Köstlin, as cited, pp. 412-13, especially 413, note a, adverts to this with a reference to Dorner, "Gesch. d. protest. Theologie," p. 377, who makes it characteristic of Calvin in distinction from Zwingli to draw the outer and inner Word more closely together. The justice of Dorner's view, which would seem to assign to Calvin in his doctrine of the Word as a means of grace a position somewhere between Zwingli and Luther, may well be doubted. According to Dorner, Calvin "modified the looser connection between the outward and inward Word held by Zwingli and connected the two sides more closely together." "In reference, therefore, to the principle of the Reformation," he continues, "with its two aides, Calvin is still more than Zwingli, of one mind and spirit with the German Lutheran Reformation" (E. T. i. 1871, p. 387). Again (i. p. 390): "The double form of the *Verbum Dei externum* and *internum*, held by Zwingli, gives place indeed in Calvin to a more inward connecting of the two sides; the Scriptures are according to him not merely the sign of an absent thing, but have in themselves divine matter and breath, which makes itself actively felt." We do not find that Calvin and Zwingli differ in this matter appreciably.

59 Cf. his response to Sadolet (1539), *Opp.* v. 393: tuo igitur experimento disce non minus importunum esse spiritum iactare sine verbo, quam futurum sit insulsum, sine spiritu verbum ipsum obtendere.

Word goes: nor is the Word, with the mystics, conceived as in the Spirit always essentially present wherever He is present in His power as a Spirit of revelation and truth. The two are severally contemplated, as separable factors, in the one work of God in producing the knowledge of Himself which is eternal life in the souls of His people; separable factors which must both, however, be present if this knowledge of God is to be produced. For it is the function of the Word to set before the soul the object to be believed; and it is the function of the Spirit to quicken in the soul belief in this object: and neither performs the work of the other or its own work apart from the other.

It still remains, however, to inquire precisely how Calvin conceived the Spirit to operate in bringing the soul to a hearty faith in the Word as a revelation from God. Are we to understand him as teaching that the Holy Spirit by His almighty power creates, in the souls of those whom God has set upon to bring to a knowledge of Him, an entirely ungrounded faith in the divinity of the Scriptures and the truth of their contents, so that the soul embraces them and their contents with firm confidence as a revelation from God wholly apart from and in the absence of all *indicia* of their divinity or of the truth of their contents? So it has come to be very widely believed; and indeed it may even be said that it has become the prevalent representation that Calvin taught that believers have within themselves a witness of the Spirit by which they are assured of the divinity of Scripture and the truth of its contents quite apart from all other evidence. The very term, "the testimony of the Spirit," is adduced in support of this representation, as setting a divine witness to the divinity of Scripture over against other sources of evidence, and of course superseding them: and appeal is made along with this to Calvin's strong assertions of the uselessness and even folly of plying men with "the proofs" of the divine origin of Scripture, seeing that, it is said, in the absence of the testimony of the Spirit such "proofs" must needs be ineffective, and in the presence of that effective testimony they cannot but be adjudged unnecessary. What can he mean, then, it is asked, but that the testimony of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to assure us of the divinity of Scripture apart from all *indicia*, and does its work entirely independently of them?

The sufficient answer to this question is that he can mean—and in point of fact does mean—that the *indicia* are wholly insufficient to assure us of the divinity of Scripture apart from the testimony of the Spirit; and effect no result independently of it. This is quite a different proposition and gives rise to quite a different series of corollaries. Calvin's dealing with the *indicia* of the divinity of Scripture has already attracted our attention in one of its aspects, and it is quite worthy of renewed scrutiny. We have seen that he devotes a whole chapter to their exposition (chap. viii.) and strongly asserts their objective conclusiveness to the fact of the divine origin of Scripture (I. vii. 4). Nor does he doubt their usefulness whether to the believer or the unbeliever. The fulness and force of his exposition of them is the index to his sense of their value to the believer: for he adduces them distinctly as confirmations of believers in their faith in the Scriptures (I. viii. 1, 13), and betrays in every line of their treatment the high significance he attaches to them as such. And he explicitly declares that they not only maintain in the minds of the pious the native dignity and authority of Scripture, but completely vindicate it against all the subtleties of calumniators (I. viii. 13). No man of sound mind can fail to confess on their basis that it is God who speaks in Scripture and that its doctrine is divine (I. vii. 4). It is a complete misapprehension of Calvin's meaning, then, when it is suggested that he represents the *indicia* of the divinity of Scripture as inconclusive or even as ineffective.<sup>60</sup> Their conclusiveness could

<sup>60</sup> There is a certain misapprehension involved, also, in speaking of Calvin *subordinating* the *indicia* to the witness of the Spirit, as if he conceived them on the same plane, but occupying relatively lower and higher positions on this plane. The witness of the Spirit and the *indicia* move in different orbits. We find Köstlin, as cited, p. 413, accordingly speaking not quite to the point, when he says: "He subordinated to the power of this one, immediate, divine testimony, all those several criteria by the pious and thoughtful consideration of which

not be asserted with more energy than he asserts it: nor indeed could their effectiveness—their effectiveness in extorting from the unbeliever the confession of the divinity of Scripture and in rendering him without excuse in refusing the homage of his mind and heart to it—in a word, will he, nill he, convincing his intellect of its divinity; their effectiveness also in confirming the believer in his faith and maintaining his confidence intact. This prevalent misapprehension of Calvin's meaning is due to neglect to observe the precise thing for which he affirms the *indicia* to be ineffective and the precise reason he assigns for this ineffectiveness. There is only one thing which he says they cannot do: that is to produce "sound faith" (I. vii. 4), "firm faith" (I. viii. 13)—that assurance which is essential to "true piety" (I. vii. 4). And their failure to produce "sound faith" is due solely to the subjective condition of man, which is such that a creative operation of the Holy Spirit on the soul is requisite before he can exercise "sound faith" (I. vii. 4; I. viii. 13). It is the attempt to produce this "sound faith" in the heart of man, not renewed for believing by the creative operation of the Holy Spirit, which Calvin pronounces preposterous and foolish. "It is acting a preposterous part," he says, "to endeavor to produce *sound faith* in the Scriptures by disputations": objections may be silenced by such disputations, "but this will not fix in men's hearts *that assurance which is essential to true piety*"; for religion is not a matter of mere opinion, but a fundamental change of attitude towards God (I. vii. 4). It betrays, therefore, great folly to wish to demonstrate to infidels that the Scriptures are the Word of God, he repeats in another place, obviously with no other meaning, "since this cannot be known without faith," that is, as the context shows, without the internal working of the Spirit of God (I. viii. 13, end).

That Calvin should thus teach that the *indicia* are incapable of producing "firm faith" in the human heart, disabled by sin, is a matter of course: and therefore it is a matter of course that he should teach that the *indicia* are ineffective for the production of "sound faith" apart from the internal operation of the Spirit correcting the sin-bred disabilities of man, that is to say, apart from the testimony of the Spirit. But what about the *indicia* in conjunction with the testimony of the Spirit? It would seem to be evident that, on Calvin's ground, they would have their full part

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our faith in the Scriptures and their contents may and should be further mediated. Even miracles, as Niedner has rightly remarked (*Philosophie- und Theologieggeschichte*, p. 341, note 2), take among the evidences for the divinity of the Biblical revelation, 'nothing more than a coordinate' place: we add in passing that Calvin introduces them here only in the edition of 1550, and then enlarges the section which treats of them in the edition of 1559. He does not, however, put a low estimate on such criteria; he would trust himself—as he says in an addition made in the edition of 1559 (xxx. 59)—to silence with them even stiff-necked opponents; but this certainty which faith should have, can never be attained, says he, by disputation, but can be wrought only by the testimony of the Spirit." The question between the testimony of the Spirit and the *indicia* is not a question of which gives the strongest evidence; it is a question of what each is fitted to do. The *indicia* are supreme in their sphere; they and they alone give objective evidence. But objective evidence is inoperative when the subjective condition is such that it cannot penetrate and affect the mind. All objective evidence is in this sense subordinate to the subjective change wrought by the Spirit: but considered as objective evidence it is supreme in its own sphere. The term "subordinate" is accordingly misleading here. For the rest, it is true that Calvin places the miracles by which the giving of Scripture was accompanied rather among the objective evidences of their divinity than at their apex: but this is due not to an underestimation of the value of miracles as evidence, but to the very high estimate he placed on the internal criteria of divinity, by which the Scriptures evidence themselves to be divine. And above all we must not be misled into supposing that he places miracles below the testimony of the Spirit in importance. Such a comparison is outside his argument: miracles are part of the objective evidence of the deity of Scripture; the testimony of the Spirit is the subjective preparation of the heart to receive the objective evidence in a sympathetic embrace. He would have said, of course—he does say—that no miracle, and no body of miracles, could or can produce "true faith": the internal creative operation of the Spirit is necessary for that. And in that sense the evidence of miracles is subordinated to the testimony of the Spirit. But this is not because of any depreciation of the evidential value of miracles; but because of the full appreciation of the deadness of the human soul in sin. The evidential value of miracles, and their place in the objective evidences of the divine origin of the Scriptures, are wholly unaffected by the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit; and the strongest assertions of their valuelessness in the production of faith, apart from the testimony of the Spirit, do not in the least affect the estimate we put on them, as objective evidences.

to play here, and that we must say that, when the soul is renewed by the Holy Spirit to a sense for the divinity of Scripture, it is through the *indicia* of that divinity that it is brought into its proper confidence in the divinity of Scripture. In treating of the *indicia*, Calvin does not, however, declare this in so many words. He sometimes even appears to speak of them rather as if they lay side by side with the testimony of the Spirit than acted along with it as co-factors in the production of the supreme effect. He speaks of their ineffectiveness in producing sound faith in the unbeliever: and of their value as corroboratives to the believer: and his language would sometimes seem to suggest that therefore it were just as well not to employ them until after faith had formed itself under the testimony of the Spirit (I. viii. 1, 13). Of their part in forming faith under the operation of the testimony of the Spirit he does not appear explicitly to speak.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, there are not lacking convincing hints that there was lying in his mind all the time the implicit understanding that it is through these *indicia* of the divinity of Scripture that the soul, under the operation of the testimony of the Spirit, reaches its sound faith in Scripture, and that he has been withheld from more explicitly stating this only by the warmth of his zeal for the necessity of the testimony of the Spirit which has led him to a constant contrasting of this divine with those human "testimonies." Thus we find him repeatedly affirming that these *indicia* will produce no fruit until they be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit (I. vii. 4, 5; viii. 1, 13): "Our reverence may be conciliated by its internal majesty [the Scripture's], but it never seriously affects us, *till* it is confirmed by the Spirit in our hearts" (I. vii. 5). "*Without this certainty, . . . in vain will the authority of Scripture be either defended by arguments or established by the consent of the Church, or of any other supports: since, unless the foundation be laid, it remains in perpetual suspense*" (I. viii. 1). The *indicia* "are *alone* not sufficient to produce firm faith in it [the Scriptures], *till* the heavenly Father, discovering His own power therein, places its authority above all controversy " (I. viii. 13). It is, however, in his general teaching as to the formation of sound faith in the divinity of Scripture that we find the surest indication that he thought of the *indicia* as co-working with the testimony of the Spirit to this result. This is already given, indeed, in his strenuous insistence that the work of the Spirit is not of the nature of a revelation, but of a confirmation of the revelation deposited in the Scriptures,

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61 Cf. Köstlin, as cited, pp. 413-415: "We find in Calvin the aforementioned several criteria set alongside of this witness of the Spirit, and indeed especially those which are internal to the Scriptures themselves, such as their elevation above all merely human products, which cannot fail to impress every reader, etc. It would certainly be desirable to trace an inner connection between this impression made by the character, by the style of speech, by the contents of Scripture, and that supreme immediate testimony of the Spirit for it. Assuredly God Himself, the Author of Scripture, works upon us also in such impressions, which we analyse in our reflecting human consideration, and in our debates strive to set before opponents; and we feel, on the other side, a need to analyse, as far as is possible for us, even the supreme witness of the Spirit, in spite of its immediacy, and to relate it with our other experiences and observations with respect to Scripture, so as to become conscious of the course by which God passes from one to the other. Calvin, however, does not enter into this; he sets the two side by side and over against one another: 'Although (Scripture) conciliates reverence to itself by its own supreme majesty, it does not seriously affect us, until it is sealed to our hearts by the Spirit' (XXIX. 295; XXX. 60; ed. 3, I. vii. 5): he does not show the inner relation of one to the other. He does not do this even in the edition of 1559, where he with great eloquence speaks more fully of the power with which the Word of the New Testament witnesses manifests its divine majesty. The witness of the Spirit comes forward with Calvin thus somewhat abruptly. By means of it the Spirit works true faith, which the Scripture, even through its internal criteria, cannot establish in divine certainty; and indeed He does not work it in the case of all those—and has no intention of working it in the case of all those—to whom the Scripture is conveyed with its criteria, but, as the section on Predestination further shows, only in the case of those who have been elected thereto from all eternity. Here we are already passing over into the relation of the Calvinistic conception of the Formal Principle or the Authority of Scripture, to its conception of the means of grace. In this matter the Lutheran doctrine stands in conflict with it. But with reference to what we have been discussing, we do not find that the Lutheran dogmatists, when they come to occupy themselves more particularly with the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* to the Scriptures, dealt more vitally with its relation to the operation of these criteria on the human spirit. No doubt, in Luther's own conception this was more the case: but he gave no scientific elaboration of it."

especially when this is taken in connection with his teaching that Scripture is self-authenticating. What the Spirit of God imparts to us, he says, is a sense of divinity: such a sense discovers divinity only where divinity is and only by a perception of it—a perception which of course rests on its proper *indicia*. It is because Scripture "exhibits the plainest evidence that it is God who speaks in it" that the newly awakened *sense* of divinity, quickened in the soul, recognizes it as divine (I. vii. 4). The senses do not distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter—to use Calvin's own illustration (I. vii. 2)—save by the mediation of those *indicia* of light and darkness, whiteness and blackness, sweetness and bitterness, by which these qualities manifest themselves to the natural senses; and by parity of reasoning we must accredit Calvin as thinking of the newly implanted spiritual sense discerning the divinity of Scripture only through the mediation of the *indicia* of divinity manifested in Scripture. To taste and see that the Scriptures are divine is to recognize a divinity actually present in Scripture; and of course recognition implies perception of *indicia*, not attribution of a divinity not recognized as inherent. Meanwhile it must be admitted that Calvin has not at this point developed this side of his subject with the fulness which might be wished, but has left it to the general implications of the argument.

### OBJECT TESTIFIED TO

Closely connected with the question of the mode in which Calvin conceived the testimony of the Spirit to be delivered, is the further question of the matters for which he conceived that testimony to be available. On the face of it it would seem that he conceived it directly available solely for the divinity of the Scriptures and therefore for the revelatory character of their contents. So he seems to imply throughout the discussion, and, indeed, to assert repeatedly. Nevertheless, there is a widespread impression abroad that he appealed to it to determine the canon of Scripture too,<sup>62</sup> and indeed also to establish the integrity of its text. This impression is

62 Cf. Köstlin, as cited, p. 417: "The certainty that the Scriptures really possess such authority, rests for us not on the authority of the Church, but just on this testimony of the Spirit. Calvin's reference here is even to the several books of Scripture: he is aware that the opponents ask how, without a decree of the Church, we are to be convinced what book should be received with reverence, what should be excluded from the canon; he himself adduces in opposition to this, even here, nothing else except the *testimonium Spiritus*: the entirety of Scripture seems to him to be equally, so to say, *en bloc*, divinely legitimated by this." So also Pannier, as cited, p. 202: "The question of canonicity never presented itself to the thought of Calvin, except in the second place as a corollary of the problem of the divinity (I. vii. 1). If the Holy Spirit attests to us that a given book is divine, He in that very act attests that it forms a part of the rule of faith, that it is canonical. Nowhere has Calvin permitted, as his successors have done, a primary place to be taken by a theological doctrine which became less capable of resisting the assaults of adversaries when isolated from the practical question. Perhaps, moreover, he did not render as exact an account as we are able to render after the lapse of two centuries, of the wholly new situation in which the Reformation found itself with respect to the canon, or of the new way in which he personally resolved the question." Accordingly, at an earlier point Pannier says: "It is true that the faculty of recognizing the Word of God under the human forms included for Calvin, and especially according to the Confession of Faith of 1559, the faculty of determining the canonicity of the books. This is a consequence secondary but natural, and so long as they maintained the principle, the Reformed doctors placed themselves in a false position when they showed themselves disposed to abandon the consequences to the criticisms of their opponents" (p. 164). Cf. J. Cramer, *Nieuwe Bijdragen*, iii. p. 140: "But you must not think . . . of an immediate witness of the Spirit to the particular parts of the Holy Scriptures. The old theologians did not think of that. They conceived the matter thus: The *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* gives witness directly to the religio-moral contents of Scripture only. Since, however, the religio-moral contents must necessarily have a particular form, and the dogmatic content is closely bound up with the historical, neither the chronological nor the topographical element can be separated out, etc.—therefore the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* gives to the total content of Scripture witness that it is from God." This, after all, then, is not to appeal to the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti*, directly to authenticate the canon; but to construct a canon on the basis of a testimony of the Spirit given solely to the divinity of Scripture, the movement of thought being this: All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable; this Scripture is given by inspiration of God; accordingly this Scripture belongs to the category of profitable Scripture, that is to the canon.



generally, though not always, connected with the view that Calvin conceived the mode of delivery of the testimony of the Spirit to be the creation in the soul of a blind faith, unmotivated by reasons and without rooting in grounds; and it has been much exploited of late years in the interests of a so-called "free" attitude towards Scripture, which announces itself as following Calvin when it refuses to acknowledge as authoritative Scripture any portion of or element in the traditionally transmitted Scriptures which does not spontaneously commend itself to the immediate religious judgment as divine. Undoubtedly this is to reverse the attitude of Calvin towards the traditionally transmitted Scriptures, and it is difficult to believe that two such diametrically contradictory attitudes towards the Scriptures can be outgrowths of the same principal root. In point of fact, moreover, as we have already seen, not only does Calvin not conceive the mode of the delivery of the testimony of the Spirit to be by the creation of a blind and unmotivated faith, but, to come at once to the matter more particularly in hand, he does not depend on the testimony of the Spirit for the determination of canonicity or for the establishment of the integrity of the text of Scripture. So far from discarding the *via rationalis* here, he determines the limits of the canon and establishes the integrity of the transmission of Scripture distinctly on scientific, that is to say, historico-critical grounds. In no case of his frequent discussion of such subjects does he appeal to the testimony of the Spirit and set aside the employment of rational and historical argumentation as invalid or inconclusive; always, on the contrary, he adduces the evidence of valid tradition and apostolicity of contents as conclusive of the fact. It is hard to believe that such a consequent mind could have lived unconsciously in such an inconsistent attitude towards a question so vital to him and his cause.<sup>63</sup>

So far as support for the impression that Calvin looked to the testimony of the Spirit to determine for him the canon of Scripture and to assure him of its integrity is derived from his writings, it rests on a manifest misapprehension of a single passage in the "Institutes," and what seems to be a misassignment to him of a passage in the old French Confession of Faith.

The passage in the "Institutes" is a portion of the paragraphs which are devoted to repelling the Romish contention that "the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church; as though the eternal and inviolable truth of God depended on the arbitrary will of men" (I. vii. 1). "For thus," Calvin says—and this is the passage which is appealed to—"For thus, dealing with the Holy Spirit as a mere laughing stock (*ludibrio*), they ask, Who shall give us confidence that these [Scriptures] have come from God,—who assure us that they have reached our time safe and intact,—who persuade us that one book should be received reverently, another expunged from the number (*numero*)—if the Church should not prescribe a certain rule for all these things? It depends, therefore, they say, on the Church, both

63 Reuss, in the sixteenth chapter of his "History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures," E. T. 1884, expounds Calvin, with his usual learning and persuasiveness, as basing the determination of the canon solely on the testimony of the Spirit. But the exposition falls into two confusions: a confusion of the authority of Scripture with its canonicity, and a confusion of the divine with the apostolic origin of Scripture. Of course, Calvin repelled the Romish conception that the authority of Scripture rests on its authentication by the Church and its tradition (p. 294), but that did not deter him from seeking by a historical investigation to discover what especial books had been committed by the apostles to the Church as authoritative. Of course, he founded the sure conviction of the divine origin of the Scriptures on the witness of the Spirit of God by and with them in the heart, but that did not prevent his appealing to history to determine what these Scriptures which were so witnessed were in their compass. Accordingly even Reuss has to admit that it is exceedingly difficult to carry through his theory of Calvin's theoretical procedure consistently with Calvin's observed practice. In point of fact, the Reformers, and Calvin among them, did not separate the Apocrypha from the Old Testament on the sole basis of the testimony of the Spirit: they appealed to the evidence of the Jewish Church (p. 312). Nor did they determine the question of the New Testament antilegomena on this principle: this, too, was with them "a simple question of historical criticism" (p. 316)—although Reuss here (p. 318) confuses Calvin's appeal to the internal evidence of apostolicity with appeal to "religious intuition." In a word, Reuss's exposition of Calvin's procedure in determining the canon rests on a fundamental misconception of that procedure.

what reverence is due to Scripture, and what books should be inscribed (*censendi sint*) in its catalogue (*in eius catalogo*)" (I. vii. 1). This passage certainly shows that the Romish controversialists in endeavoring to prove that the authority of Scripture is dependent on the Church's suffrage, argued that it is only by the Church that we can be assured even of the contents of Scripture and of its integrity—that its very canon and text rest on the Church's determination. But how can it be inferred that Calvin's response to this argument would take the form: No, of these things we can be assured by the immediate testimony of the Spirit? In point of fact, he says nothing of the kind, and the inference does not lie in the argument. What he says is that the Romish method of arguing is as absurd as it is blasphemous, a mere cavil (I. vii. 2), as well as derogatory to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, he says, assures us that in the Scriptures God speaks to us. To bid us pause on the ground that it is only the Church who can assure us that this or that book belongs to the body of the Scriptures, that the text has been preserved to us intact and the like, is to interpose frivolous objections, and can have no other end than to glorify the Church at the expense of souls. Accordingly, he remarks that these objectors are without concern what logical difficulties they may cast themselves into: they wish only to prevent men taking their comfort out of the direct assurance by the Spirit of the divinity of the Scriptures. He repudiates, in a word, the entire Romish argument: but we can scarcely infer from this, that his response to it would be that the immediate witness of the Spirit provides us with direct answers to their carping questions. It is at least equally likely from the mere fact that he speaks of these objections as cavils (I. vii. 2) and girds at the logic of the Romish controversialists as absurd, that his response would be that the testimony of the Spirit for which he was contending had no direct concernment with questions of canon and text.

The passage in the Confession of La Rochelle, on the other hand, does certainly attribute the discrimination of the canonical books in some sense—in what sense may admit of debate—to the testimony of the Spirit. In the third article of this Confession there is given a list of the canonical books.<sup>64</sup> The fourth article, then, runs as follows: "We recognize these books to be canonical and the very certain rule of our faith, not so much by the common accord and consent of the Church, as by the inward witness and persuasion of the Holy Spirit, who makes us distinguish them from the other ecclesiastical books, upon which, though they may be useful, no article of faith can be founded." This article, however, was not the composition of Calvin, but was among those added by the Synod of Paris to the draft submitted by Calvin.<sup>65</sup> Calvin's own article "On the Books of Holy Scripture," which was expanded by the Synod into several, reads only: "This doctrine does not derive its authority from men, nor from angels, but from God alone; we believe, too (seeing that it is a thing surpassing all human sense to discern that it is God who speaks), that He Himself gives the certitude of it to His elect, and seals it in their hearts by His Spirit."<sup>66</sup> In this fine statement we find the very essence of the teaching of the "Institutes" on this subject; the ideas and even the phraseology of which are reproduced.

We may learn, therefore, at most, from the Confession of La Rochelle, not that Calvin, but that some of his immediate followers attributed in some sense the discrimination of the canonical books to the witness of the Spirit. Other evidences of this fact are not lacking. The Belgian Confession, for example, much like that of La Rochelle, declares of the Scriptural books, just enumerated (Art. v.): "We receive all these books alone, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation and establishment of our faith, and we fully believe all that they contain, not so much because the Church receives and approves them, but principally because the Spirit

64 "All this Holy Scripture is comprised in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, the number (*le nombre*) of which is as follows" . . . the list ensuing. See *Opp.* ix. 741.

65 *Opp.* ix., *prolg.*, pp. lvii.-lx.: cf. Dieterlen, "Le Synode general de Paris," 1873, pp. 77, 89; Pannier, as cited, pp. 126-7; and for a brief *précis*, Müller, "Bekennnisschriften der reform. Kirche," 1903, p. xxxiii.

66 *Opp.* ix. 741.

gives witness to them in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they are approved by themselves; for the very blind can perceive that the things come to pass which they predict." Perhaps, however, we may find a more instructive instance still in the words of one of the Protestant disputants in a conference held at Paris in 1566 between two Protestant ministers and two doctors of the Sorbonne.<sup>67</sup> To the inquiry, How do you know that some books are canonical and others Apocryphal, the Protestant disputant (M. Lespine) answers: "By the Spirit of God which is a Spirit of discrimination, by whom all those to whom He is communicated are illuminated, so as to be made capable of judging and discerning spiritual things and of recognizing (*cognoistre*) and apprehending the truth (when it is proposed to them), by the witness and assurance which He gives to them in their hearts. And as we discriminate light and darkness by the faculty of sight which is in the eye; so, we can easily separate and recognize (*reconoistre*) truth from falsehood, and from all things in general which can be false, absurd, doubtful or indifferent, when we are invested with the Spirit of God and guided by the light which He lights in our hearts." M. Lespine had evidently read his Calvin; though there is a certain lack of crisp exactness in his language which may raise doubt whether he has necessarily reproduced him with precision. Clearly his idea is that the Spirit of God in His creative operation on the hearts of Christ's people has implanted in them—or quickened in them—a spiritual sense, which recognizes the stamp of divinity upon the books which God has given to the Church, and so separates them out from all others and thus constitutes the canon. This is to attribute the discrimination of the canonical books to the witness of the Spirit not directly but indirectly, namely, through the intermediation of the determination of the books which are of divine origin, which, then, being gathered together, constitute the canon, or divinely given rule of our faith and life. This conception of the movement of the mind in this matter became very common, and was given very clear expression, for example, by Jurieu, in a context which bears as evident marks of reminiscences of Calvin as do M. Lespine's remarks. "That grace which produces faith in a soul," says he,<sup>68</sup> "does not begin . . . by persuading it that a given book is canonical. This persuasion comes only afterwards and as a consequence. It gives to the consciousness a taste for the truth: it applies this truth to the mind and heart; it proceeds from this subsequently that the believer believes that a given book is canonical, because the truths which 'find' him are found in it. In a word, we do not believe that which is contained in a book to be divine because this book is canonical. But we believe that a given book is canonical because we have perceived that what it contains is divine. And we have perceived this as we perceive the light when we look on the fire, sweetness and bitterness when we eat." Whether we are to attribute this movement of thought, however, to Calvin, is another question.<sup>69</sup> There is no hint of it in his writings.

It is not even obvious that this precise movement of thought is the conception which lay in the mind of the authors of the additional articles in the Confession of La Rochelle and of the similar statement in the Belgian Confession. The interpretation of these articles is particularly interesting, as they both undoubtedly came under the eye of Calvin and their doctrine was never

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67 "Actes de la dispute et conference tenue à Paris ès mois de juillet et aoust 1566" (Strasbourg, 1566), printed in the *Biblioth. de la Soc. de l'Hist. du Prot. franc.* We draw from the account of it in Pannier, as cited, pp. 141 sq.

68 "Le vray systeme de l'Eglise et la veritable analyse de la foy," 1686, III. ii. 453. Pannier, as cited, quotes this, pp. 167-168.

69 As we have seen, it is attributed to Calvin by both Pannier and Cramer. Pannier (p. 203) remarks that "if Calvin was not able to appreciate in all its purity" the new situation with regard to the canon into which the Reformation brought men, "it was even less incumbent on him to render account of the personal attitude which he himself took up with reference to it." "It is his successors only who, in adopting his conclusions (except that they apply them more or less), have asked themselves how they reached them, and have reconstructed the reasoning which no doubt Calvin himself had unconsciously followed." Is not this a confession that after all the view in question was not Calvin's own view? At least not consciously to himself? But Pannier would say, no doubt, either this was Calvin's view or he appealed to the testimony of the Spirit directly to authenticate the canon.

disavowed by him. It is not, however, altogether easy, because of a certain ambiguity in the use of the term "canonical." It is on account of the ambiguity which attends the use of this term that in speaking of their teaching we have guardedly said that they appear to suspend the canonicity of the Scriptural books in some sense directly on the testimony of the Spirit. This ambiguity may be brought sharply before us by placing in juxtaposition two sentences from Quenstedt in which the term "canonical" is employed, obviously, in two differing senses. "We deny," says he, "that the catalogue of canonical books is an article of faith, superadded to the others [articles of faith] contained in Scripture. Many have faith and may attain salvation who do not hold the number of canonical books. If the word 'canon' be understood of the number of the books, we concede that such a catalogue is not contained in Scripture." "These are two different questions," says he again, "whether the Gospel of Matthew is canonical, and whether it was written by Matthew. The former belongs to saving faith; the latter to historical knowledge. For if the Gospel which has come down to us under the name of Matthew had been written by Philip or Bartholomew, it would make no difference to saving faith." In the former extract the question of canonicity is removed from the category of articles of faith; in the latter it is made an integral element of saving faith. The contradiction is glaring—unless there be an undistributed middle. And this is what there really is. In the former passage, where Quenstedt is engaged in repelling the contention that there are articles of faith that must be accepted by all, which are not contained in Scripture—in defending, in a word, the Protestant doctrine of the sufficiency or perfection of Scripture—he uses the terms "canon," "canonical" in the purely technical sense of the extent of Scripture. In the latter passage, where he is insisting that the authority of Scripture as the Word of God hangs on its divine, not on its human, author, he uses the term "canonical" in the sense of "divinely given." The term "canonical" was current, then, in the two senses of "belonging to the list of authoritative Scriptures," "entering into the body of the Scriptures," and "God-given," "divine." In which of these two senses is it used in the Gallican and Belgian Confessions? If in the former, then these Confessions teach that the testimony of the Spirit is available directly for the determination of the canon: if in the latter, then they teach no such thing, but only that it is on the testimony of the Spirit that we are assured of the divine origin and character of these books.

That the Gallican Confession employs the term in the latter of these senses, seems at least possible when once attention is called to it, although regard for the last clause of the statement, "who makes us distinguish them from the other ecclesiastical books," etc., prevents the representation of this interpretation as certain. Its declaration, succeeding the catalogue of the books given in the third section, is obviously intended to affirm something that is true of them already as a definite body of books before the mind. "We recognize *these* books," it says, "to be canonical and the very certain rule of our faith." That is to say, to this body of books we ascribe the quality of canonicity and recognize their regulative character. What would seem, then, to be in question is a quality belonging to a list of books already determined and in the mind of the framer of the statement as a whole. The same may be said of the Belgian Confession. It, too, has already given a list of the canonical books, and now proceeds to affirm something that is true of "all of these books and them only." The thing affirmed is that they are "holy and canonical," where the collocation suggests that "canonical" expresses a quality which ranges with "holy." We cannot help, suspecting, then, that these early confessions use the term "canonical" not quantitatively but qualitatively, not extensively but intensively; and in that sense it is the equivalent of "divine."<sup>70</sup> Even the inference back from them to Calvin that he may have supposed

70 The following is the account of the treatment of the question of the canon in these creeds, given by J. Cramer ("De Roomsche-Katholieke en de Oud-protestantische Schriftbeschouwing," 1883, pp. 48 sq.): "And on what now, does that authority rest? This question, too, is amply discussed in the Reformed Confessions, and that, as concerns the principal matter, wholly in the spirit of Calvin. Only, more value is ascribed to the testimony of the Church. No doubt the authority of the Scriptures is not made to rest on it; but it is permitted an important voice

that the testimony of the Spirit is available to determine the canon becomes therefore doubtful: and no other reason exists why we should attribute this view to him. We cannot affirm that the movement of his thought was never from the divinity of Scripture, assured to us by the testimony of the Spirit, to the determination of the limits of the canon: but we have no reason to ascribe this movement of thought to him except that it was adopted by some of his successors.

On the other hand, Calvin constantly speaks as if the only thing which the testimony of the Spirit assures us of in the case of the Scriptures is the divinity of their origin and contents: and he always treats Scripture when so speaking of it as a definite entity, held before his mind as a whole.<sup>71</sup> In these circumstances his own practice in dealing with the question of canonicity and

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in the question of the canon. When it is said that 'all that is said in the Holy Scriptures is to be believed *not so much* because the Church receives them and holds them as canonical, but especially because the Holy Spirit bears witness to them in our heart that they are from God,' a certain weight is attributed to the judgment of the Church. This appears particularly from the way in which the canonical books are spoken of in distinction from the Apocryphal books. In enumerating the Bible books, the Belgian Confession prefixes the words: 'Against which nothing can be said' (Art. iv.). By this apparently is meant, that against the canonicity of these books, from a historical standpoint, with the eye on the witness of the Church, nothing can be alleged (a thing not to be said of the Apocrypha). In the same spirit the Anglican Articles, when speaking of the books of the Old and New Testaments, says that 'Of their authority there has never been any doubt in the Church.' I will not raise the question here how that can be affirmed with the eye on the Antilegomena. It shows, however, certainly that much importance is attached to the ecclesiastical tradition. The fundamental ground, however, why the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are to be held to be the Word of God is sought in the Scriptures themselves, and, assuredly, in the testimony which the Holy Spirit bears to their divinity in the hearts of believers. Like Calvin, the Confessions suppose that thus they have given an immovable foundation to the divine authority of the Scriptures, and have taken an impregnable position over against Rome, which appealed to the witness of the Catholic Church. . . ." Calvin, however, allowed as much to the testimony of the Church—external evidence—as is here allowed, and the very adduction of its testimony shows that sole dependence was not placed on the testimony of the Spirit for the canonicity of a book: what it is appealed to for is the divinity of the canonical books.

71 So even Köstlin perceives, as cited, p. 417: "The entirety of Scripture appeared to him divinely legitimated by the *testimonium Spiritus*, altogether, so to say, *en bloc*. . . . The declarations of Calvin as to the Word spoken by the prophets and apostles, which they rightly asserted to be God's Word, pass without hesitation over into declarations as to the Holy Scriptures, as such, and that in their entirety; with the proposition 'the Law and the Prophets and the Gospel have emanated from God' is interchanged the proposition 'the Scripture is from God,'—and the witness of the Spirit assures us of it." So also Pannier (pp. 203-204): "Everything goes back to his considering things not in detail but *en bloc*. The Word of God is for him one, *verbum Dei*, not *verba Dei*. The diversity of the authors disappears before the unity of the Spirit. The same reasoning applies to each single book as to the whole collection. All the verses hold together; and if one introduces us to the knowledge of salvation we may conclude that the book is canonical. Given the collection, it is enough in practice, since all the parts are of a sort, to establish the value of one of them to guarantee the value of all the others. It is certain that the critical theologian and the simple believer even yet proceed somewhat differently in this matter; the simplest and surest method is that of the humble saint, and Calvin was very right not to range himself among the theologians at this point. 'The just shall live by faith.' This affirmation seemed to him a revealed truth: he concluded from it that the whole epistle to the Romans is inspired; some remarks of this kind in other passages of the Epistles, of the Gospels, and the canonicity of the New Testament is established. The same for the Old Testament. The Second Epistle of Peter and the Song of Songs thus go with the rest. The human testimonies, internal and external criteria, useful for confirming the other parts of a book of which a passage has been recognized as inspired, are insufficient to expel from the canon a book which the witness of the Spirit has not recognized as opposed to the doctrine of salvation." We quote the whole passage to give Pannier's whole thought: but what we adduce it for is at present merely to signalize the admission it contains that Calvin dealt with the Scriptures in the matter of the testimony of the Spirit, so to speak, "in the lump"—as a whole. Pannier cites apparently as similar to Calvin's view, Gaussen, "Canon," ii. p. 10: "This testimony, which every Christian has recognized when he has read his Bible with vital efficacy, may be recognized by him only in a single page; but this page is enough to spread over the book which contains it an incomparable brightness." That is, Calvin, like the simple believer, has a definite book—the Bible—in his hands and treats it as all of a piece—of course, in Calvin's case, not without reasonable grounds for treating it as all of a piece: in other words, the canon was already determined for him before he appealed to the testimony of the Spirit to attest its divinity. Cf. Cramer (p. 140) as quoted above. Cramer is quite right so far, therefore, when he says (pp. 156-157): "Although we determine securely by means of the historical-

text, makes it sufficiently clear that he held their settlement to depend on scientific investigation, and appealed to the testimony of the Spirit only to accredit the divine origin of the concrete volume thus put into his hands. The movement of his thought was therefore along this course: first, the ascertainment, on scientific grounds, of the body of books handed down from the Apostles as the rule of faith and practice; secondly, the vindication, on the same class of grounds, of the integrity of their transmission; thirdly, the accrediting of them as divine on the testimony of the Spirit. It is not involved in this that he is to be considered to have supposed that a man must be a scholar before he can be a Christian. He supposed we become Christians not by scholarship but by the testimony of the Spirit in the heart, and he had no inclination to demand scholarship as the basis of our Christianity. It is only involved in the position we ascribe to him that he must be credited with recognizing that questions of scholarship are for scholars and questions of religion only for Christians as such. He would have said—he does say—that he in whose heart the Spirit bears His testimony will recognize the Scriptures whenever presented to his contemplation as divine, will depend on them with sound trust and will embrace with true faith all that they propound to him. He would doubtless have said that this act of faith logically implicates the determination of the "canon." But he would also have said—he does in effect say—that this determination of the canon is a separable act and is to be prosecuted on its own appropriate grounds of scientific evidence. It involves indeed a fundamental misapprehension of Calvin's whole attitude to attribute to him the view that the testimony of the Spirit determines immediately such scientific questions as those of the canon and text of Scripture. The testimony of the Spirit was to him emphatically an operation of the Spirit of God on the heart, which produced distinctively a spiritual effect: it was directed to making men Christians,<sup>72</sup> not to making them theologians. The testimony of the Spirit was, in effect, in his view, just what we in modern times have learned to call "regeneration" considered in its noetic effects. That "regeneration" has noetic effects he is explicit and iterative in affirming; but that these noetic effects of "regeneration" could supersede the necessity of scientific investigation in questions which rest for their determination on matters of fact—Calvin would be the last to imagine. He who recognized that the conviction of the divinity of Scripture wrought by the testimony of the Spirit rests as its ground on the *indicia* of the divinity of Scripture spiritually discerned in their true weight, could not imagine that the determination of the canon of Scripture or the establishment of its text could be wholly separated from their proper basis in evidence and grounded solely in a blind testimony of the Spirit alone: which indeed in that case would be fundamentally indistinguishable from that "revelation" which he rebuked the Anabaptists for claiming to be the recipients of.

## THE TESTIMONY AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

When we clearly apprehend the essence of Calvin's doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit to the divinity of Scripture to be the noetic effects of "regeneration" we shall know what estimate to place upon the criticism which is sometimes passed upon him that he has insufficiently correlated his doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit with the inner<sup>73</sup> religious life of the

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critical method what must be carried back to the apostolical age and what accords with the apostolical doctrine, we have not yet proved the divine authority of these writings. This hangs on this,—whether the Holy Spirit gives us His witness to them. On this witness alone rests our assurance of faith, not on the force of a historical-critical demonstration." This, so far as appears, was Calvin's method.

72 Calvin would certainly have subscribed to these words of Pannier, as cited, p. 164: The most of the Catholics "have always strangely misapprehended the illumination which, according to the Reformed, the least of believers is capable of receiving and of applying to the reading of the Bible. It is a question, not as they suppose, of becoming theologians, but of becoming believers, of having not the plenitude of knowledge, but the certitude of faith."

73 Cf. Köstlin, as cited, pp. 415-416. After raising the question of the relation of the witness of the Spirit to the inner experience of the Christian, and the relative priority of the two—and remarking that in case the vital

Christian, has given too separate a place to the Spirit's witness to Scripture, and thus has overestimated the formal principle of Protestantism in comparison with the material principle,<sup>74</sup> with the effect of giving a hard, dry, and legalistic aspect to Christianity as expounded by him. With Luther, it is said, everything is made of Justification and the liberty of the Christian man fills the horizon of thought; and this is because his mind is set on the "faith" out of which all good things flow and by which everything—Scripture itself—is dominated. With Calvin, on the other hand, with his primary emphasis on the authority of Scripture, accredited to us by a distinct act of the Holy Spirit, the watchword becomes obedience; and the horizon of thought is filled with a sense of obligation and legalistic anxiety as to conduct.

How Calvin could have failed to correlate sufficiently closely the testimony of the Spirit with the inner Christian life, or could have emphasized the formal principle of Protestantism at the

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process is conceived as preceding the witness of the Spirit to the divinity of the Scriptures, it will be hard not to allow to the Christianized heart the right and duty of criticism of the Scriptures (where the fault in reasoning lies in the term *process*), Köstlin continues: "We touch here on the relation between the formal and material sides of the fundamental evangelical principle. And we think at once of the relation in which they stood to one another in Luther's representation, by which his well-known critical attitude, with respect, say, to the Epistle of James, was rendered possible. Calvin, too, now has no wish to speak of a witness of the Spirit merely with reference to the Scriptures, and is far from desiring to isolate that witness of the Spirit for the Scriptures. He comes back to it subsequently, when speaking of faith in the saving content of the Gospel, declaring that the Spirit seals the contents of the Word in our hearts (1539, XXIX. 456 sq., 468 sq.; further in 1559, III. 2 [In Köstlin's pagination, given here, XXIX. refers to the "Corpus Ref." as a whole; III. 2 stands for "Institutes," Book III. chap. ii., or XXX. 397 sq.]). He also inserted in the section on the Holy Scriptures and the witness of the Spirit to them, in 1550, an additional special sentence, in which he expressly refers to his intention to speak further on such a witness of the Spirit in a later portion of the treatise, and declares of faith in general, that there belongs to it a sealing of the divine Spirit (XXIX. 296 [1559, I. vii. 5, near end]). In any event he must have recurred to such a Spiritual testimony for the assurance of individual Christians of their personal election. But in the first instance—and this again is precisely what is characteristic for Calvin—he nevertheless treats of the doctrine of the divine origin and the divine authority of the Scriptures, and of the witness of the Spirit for them, wholly apart. The presentation proceeds with him in such a manner, that the Spirit first of all fully produces faith in this character of the Scriptures, and only then the Bible-believing Christian has to receive from the Scriptures its contents, in all its several parts, as divinely true,—though, no doubt, this reception and this faith in the several elements of the truth are by no means matters of human thought, but are rather to be performed under the progressive illumination and the progressive sealing of these contents in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Even though he, meanwhile, calls that the 'truth' of the Scriptures, which we come to feel in the power of the Spirit, he means by this in the section before us, an absolute truth-character, which must from the start be attributed to the Scriptures as a whole, and will be experienced in and with the divinity of the Scriptures in general. So the matter already stands in the edition of 1539 ... (XXIX. 292 sq.)." Accordingly Calvin teaches that the Scriptures in all their parts are of indefectible authority, and should be met in all their prescriptions with unlimited obedience (p. 418), because it is just God who speaks in them. Then: "With Dorner (*Geschichte der protest. Theologie*, p. 380)—and even more decisively than he does it—we must remark on all this: 'The formal aide of the protestant principle remains with Calvin an over-emphasis, in comparison with the material, and with this is connected that he sees in the Holy Scriptures above all else the revelation of the will of God which he has dictated to man through the sacred writers.' And this tendency came ever more strongly forward with him in the successive revisions of the *Institutes*. His conception of the formal principle thus left no room for such a criticism as Luther employed on the several parts of the canon." Later Lutheranism, however, Köstlin concludes by saying, adopted Calvin's point of view here and even exaggerated it.

74 "The formal side of the Protestant principle retains with Calvin the ascendancy over the material; and with this is connected the fact that he sees in the Holy Scriptures chiefly the revelation of the will of God, which he has prescribed to men through the sacred writers."—Dorner, "Hist. of Protest. Theology," i. 1871, p. 390. Cf. p. 387: "The formal principle is, according to him, the norm and source of dogma, whilst he does not treat faith, in the same way as Luther, as a source of knowledge for the dogmatical structure, that is to say, as the mediative principle of knowledge." Hence Dorner complains (p. 390) of the more restricted freedom which Calvin left "for the free productions of the faith of the Church in legislation and dogma," and instances his treatment of "the Apostolic Age as normative for all times, even for questions of Church constitution," and the little room he left for destructive Biblical criticism. Cf. what is said above of Calvin's adoption of "the Puritan principle" (pp. 38 sq.).

expense of the material, when he conceived of the witness of the Spirit as just one of the effects of "regeneration," it is difficult to see. So to conceive the testimony of the Spirit is on the contrary to make the formal principle of Protestantism just an outgrowth of the material. It is only because our spirits have been renewed by the Holy Spirit that we see with convincing clearness the *indicia* of God in Scripture, that is, have the Scriptures sealed to us by the Spirit as divine. It is quite possible that Calvin may have particularly emphasized the obligations which grow out of our renewal by the Holy Spirit and the implantation in us of the Spirit of Adoption whereby we become the sons of God—obligations to comport ourselves as the sons of God and to govern ourselves by the law of God's house as given us in His Word; while Luther may have emphasized more the liberty of the Christian man who is emancipated from the law as a condition of salvation and is ushered into the freedom of life which belongs to the children of God. And it is quite possible that in this difference we may find a fundamental distinction between the two types of Protestantism—Lutheran and Reformed—by virtue of which the Reformed have always been characterized by a strong ethical tendency—in thought and in practice. But it is misleading to represent this as due to an insufficient correlation on Calvin's part of the testimony of the Spirit to the divinity of Scripture with the inner Christian life. It would be more exact to say that Calvin in this correlation thinks especially of what in our modern nomenclature we call "regeneration," while the mind of his Lutheran critics is set more upon justification and that "faith" which is connected with justification. With Calvin, at all events, the recognition of the Scriptures as divine and the hearty adoption of them as the divine rule of our faith and life is just one of the effects of the gracious operation of the Spirit of God on the heart, renewing it into spiritual life, or, what comes to the same thing, one of the gracious activities into which the newly implanted spiritual life effloresces.

Whether we should say also that it was with him the first effect of the creative operation of the Spirit on the heart, the first act of the newly renewed soul, requires some discrimination. If we mean logically first, there is a sense in which we should probably answer this question also in the affirmative. Calvin would doubtless have said that it is in the Scriptures that Christ is proposed to our faith, or, to put it more broadly, that Christ is the very substance of the special revelation documented in the Scriptures, and that the laying hold of Christ by faith presupposes therefore confidence in the revelation the substance of which He is—which is as much as to say the embracing of the Scriptures in firm faith as a revelation from God. If the Word is the vehicle through which the knowledge of Christ is brought to the soul, it follows of itself that it is only when our minds are filled with a solid reverence for the Word, when by the light of the Spirit we are enabled and prevalently led to see Christ therein, that we can embrace Christ with a sound faith: so that it may truly be said that no man can have the least true and sound knowledge of Christ without learning from Scripture (cf. I. ix. 3; I. vi. 2). In this sense Calvin would certainly have said that our faith in Christ presupposes faith in the Scriptures, rather than that we believe in the Scriptures for Christ's sake. But if our minds are set on chronological sequences, the response to the question which is raised is more doubtful. Faith in the revelation the substance of which is Christ and faith in Christ the substance of this revelation are logical implicates which involve one another: and we should probably be nearest to Calvin's thought if, without raising questions of chronological succession, we should recognize them as arising together in the soul. The real difference between Calvin's and the ordinary Lutheran conception at this point lies in the greater profundity of Calvin's insight and the greater exactness of his analysis. The Lutheran is prone to begin with faith, which is naturally conceived at its apex, as faith in Jesus Christ our Redeemer; and to make everything else flow from this faith as its ultimate root. For what comes before faith, out of which faith itself flows, he has little impulse accurately to inquire. Calvin penetrates behind faith to the creative action of the Holy Spirit on the heart and the new creature which results therefrom, whose act faith is; and is therefore compelled by an impulse



derived from the matter itself to consider the relations in which the several activities of this new creature stand to one another and to analyse the faith itself which holds the primacy among them (for trust is the essence of religion, chap. ii.), into its several movements. The effect of this is that "efficacious grace"—what we call in modern speech "regeneration"—takes the place of fundamental principle in Calvin's soteriology and he becomes preeminently the theologian of the Holy Spirit. In point of fact it is from him accordingly that the effective study of the work of the Holy Spirit takes its rise, and it is only in the channels cut by him and at the hands of thinkers taught by him that the theology of the Holy Spirit has been richly developed.<sup>75</sup>

It is his profound sense of the supernatural origin of all that is good in the manifestations of human life which constitutes the characteristic mark of Calvin's thinking; and it is this which lies at the bottom of and determines his doctrine of the witness of the Holy Spirit. He did not doubt that the act of faith by which the child of God embraces the Scriptures as a revelation of God is his own act and the expression of his innermost consciousness. But neither did he doubt that this consciousness is itself the expression of a creative act of the Spirit of God. And it was on this account that he represented to himself the act of faith performed as resting ultimately on "the testimony of the Spirit." Its supernatural origin was to him the most certain thing about it. That language very much resembling his own might be employed in a naturalistic sense was, no

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75 Cf. the Introduction to the English Translation of Kuyper's "The Work of the Holy Spirit," 1900, especially pp. xxxiii.-iv. Cf. what Pannier, pp. 102-104, says of Calvin's general doctrine of the work of the Spirit and the relation borne to it by his particular doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit to Scripture. "If we pass beyond the two particular chapters whose contents we have been analysing and seek in the *Institutes* from 1536 to 1560 for other passages relating to the Holy Spirit, we shall see Calvin insisting ever more and more and on all occasions—as in the Commentaries—upon these diverse manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and presenting them all more or less as testimonies. He constantly recurs to the natural incapacity of man and the necessity of divine illumination in his mind, and especially in his heart, for the act of faith. It is from this point of view that he brings together the ideas of the Spirit and the Word of God in the definition of faith: 'It is a firm and certain knowledge of the good will of God towards us: which, being grounded in the free promise given in Jesus Christ, is revealed to our heart by the Holy Spirit.' He introduces the same ideas in his introductory remarks on the Apostles' Creed, and they lie at the basis of the explication he gives of the Third Article in all its forms, . . . e.g., in the ed. of 1580: 'In sum, He is set before us as the sole fountain from which all the celestial riches flow down to us. . . . For it is by His inspiration that we are regenerated into celestial life, so as no longer to govern or guide ourselves, but to be ruled by His movement and operation; so that if there is any good in us, it is only the fruit of His grace. . . . But since faith is His prime master-piece, the most of what we read in the Scriptures of His virtue and operation relates itself to this faith, by which He brings us to the brightness of the Gospel, in a manner which justifies calling Him the King by whom the treasures of the kingdom of heaven are offered to us, and His illumination may be called the longing of our souls.' From these quotations it is made plain that the witness of the Holy Spirit which at the opening of the *Institutes* in 1539 appeared as the means of knowledge, was thenceforward nevertheless considered, in the progress of the work, as the means of grace, and that taking his start from this point of view, Calvin discovered ever more widely extending horizons, so as at the end to speak particularly of the Holy Spirit in at least four different connections, but always—even in the first—in direct and constant relation to faith, with respect to its origin, and with respect to its consequences; and by no means almost exclusively with respect to assurance of the authority of the Scriptures." The progress which Pannier supposes he traces in Calvin's doctrine of the work of the Spirit seems illusory: the general doctrine of the work of the Spirit is already pretty fully outlined in 1536. But the relating of the testimony of the Spirit to Scripture to Calvin's general doctrine of faith as the product of the Spirit is exact and important for the understanding of his teaching. From beginning to end, Calvin conceived the confidence of the Christian in Scripture, wrought by the Holy Spirit, as one of the exercises of saving faith. Calvin is ever insistent that all that is good in man comes from the Spirit—whether in the sphere of thought, feeling, or act. "It is a notion of the natural man," he says on John xiv. 17 (1553: xlvi. 329-330), "to despise all that the Sacred Scriptures say of the Holy Spirit, depending rather on his own reason, and to reject the celestial illumination. . . . For ourselves, feeling our penury, we know that all we have of sound knowledge comes from no other fountain. Nevertheless the words of the Lord Jesus show clearly that nothing can be known of what concerns the Holy Spirit by human sense, but He is known only by the experience of faith." "No one," says he again ("Institutes" of 1543, i. 330), "should hesitate to confess that he attains the knowledge of the mysteries of God only so far as he has been illuminated by God's grace. He that attributes more knowledge to himself is only the more blind that he does not recognize his blindness."

doubt, made startlingly plain in his own day by the teaching of Castellion. Out of his pantheising rationalism Castellion found it possible to speak almost in Calvin's words. "It is evident," says he, "that the intention and secret counsels of God, hidden in the Scriptures, are revealed only to believers, the humble, the pious, who fear God and have the Spirit of God." If the wicked have sometimes spoken like prophets, they have nevertheless not really understood what they said, but are like magpies in a cage going through the forms of speech without inner apprehension of its meaning.<sup>76</sup> But Castellion meant by this nothing more than that sympathy is requisite to understanding. Since his day multitudes more have employed Calvin's language to express little more than this; and have even represented Calvin's own meaning as nothing more than that the human consciousness acquires by association with God in Christ the power of discriminating the truth of God from falsehood. Nothing could more fundamentally subvert Calvin's whole teaching. The very nerve of his thought is, that the confidence of the Christian in the divine origin and authority of Scripture and the revelatory nature of its contents is of distinctively supernatural origin, is God-wrought. The testimony of the Spirit may be delivered through the forms of our consciousness, but it remains distinctively the testimony of God the Holy Spirit and is not to be confused with the testimony of our consciousness.<sup>77</sup> Resting on the language of Rom. viii. 16, from which the term "testimony of the Spirit" was derived, he conceived it as a co-witness along with the witness of our spirit indeed, but on that very account distinguishable from the witness of our spirit. This particular point is nowhere discussed by him at large, but Calvin's general sense is perfectly plain. That there is a double testimony he is entirely sure—the testimony of our own spirit and that of the Holy Spirit: that these are though distinguishable yet inseparable, he is equally clear: his conception is therefore that this double testimony runs confluent together into one. This is only as much as to say afresh that the testimony of the Holy Spirit is not delivered to us in a propositional revelation, nor by the creating in us of a blind conviction, but along the lines of our own consciousness. In its essence, the act of the Spirit in delivering His testimony, terminates on our nature, or faculties, quickening them so that we feel, judge, and act differently from what we otherwise should. In this sense, the testimony of the Spirit coalesces with our consciousness. We cannot separate it out as a factor in our conclusions, judgments; feelings, actions, consciously experienced as coming from without. But we function differently from before: we recognize God where before we did not perceive Him; we trust and love Him where before we feared and hated Him; we firmly embrace Him in His Word where before we turned indifferently away. This change needs accounting for. We account for it by the action of the Holy Spirit on our hearts; and we call this His "testimony." But we cannot separate His action from our recognition of God, our turning in trust and love to Him and the like. For this is the very form in which the testimony of the Spirit takes effect, into which it flows, by which it is recognized. We are profoundly conscious that of ourselves we never would have seen thus, and that our seeing thus can never find its account in anything in us by nature. We are sure, therefore, that there has come upon us a revolutionary influence from without; and we are sure that this is the act of God. Calvin would certainly have cried as one of his most eloquent disciples cries to-day: "The Holy Spirit is God, and not we ourselves. What we are speaking of is

<sup>76</sup> *Opp.* xiv. 727-733 (Pannier, as cited, p. 120).

<sup>77</sup> The classical instance of this confusion is supplied by the teaching of Claude Pajon (1626-1685), who, in accordance with his general doctrine that "without any other grace than that of the Word, God changes the whole man, from his intellect to his passions," explained the "testimony of the Spirit" as nothing else than the effect of the *indicia* of divinity in Scripture on the mind. The effect of these "marks" is a divine effect, because it is wrought in prearranged circumstances prepared for this effect: *facit per alium facit per se*. The conception is essentially deistic. It is no small testimony to the cardinal place which the doctrine of "the testimony of the Spirit" held in the Reformed system of the seventeenth century that Pajon still taught it; and it is no small testimony to its current conception as just "regeneration" that Pajon too identified it with regeneration, explained, of course, in accordance with his fundamental principle that all that God works He works through means. See on the whole matter Jurieu, "Traité de la Nature et de la Grace," 1688, pp. 25, 26, who quotes alike from Pajon and his followers.

a Spirit which illuminates our spirit, which purifies our spirit, which strives against our spirit, which triumphs over our spirit. And you say this Spirit is nothing but our spirit? By no means. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God—this is God coming into us, not coming from us."<sup>78</sup> It is with equal energy that Calvin declares the supernaturalness of the testimony of the Spirit and repels every attempt to confound it with the human consciousness through which it works. To him this testimony is just God Himself in His intimate working in the human heart, opening it to the light of the truth, that by this illumination it may see things as they really are and so recognize God in the Scriptures with the same directness and surety as men recognize sweetness in what is sweet and brightness in what is bright. Here indeed lies the very hinge of his doctrine.<sup>79</sup>

It has seemed desirable to enter into some detail with respect to Calvin's doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit, not only because of its intrinsic interest, but also because of its importance for understanding Calvin's doctrine of the knowledge of God and indeed his whole system of truth, and for a proper estimate of his place in the history of thought. His doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit is the keystone of his doctrine of the knowledge of God. Men endowed by nature with an ineradicable *sensus deitatis*, which is quickened into action and informed by a rich revelation of God spread upon His works and embodied in His deeds, are yet held back from attaining a sound knowledge of God by the corruption of their hearts, which dulls their instinctive sense of God and blinds them to His revelation in works and deeds. That His people may know Him, therefore, God lovingly intervenes by an objective revelation of Himself in His Word, and a subjective correction of their sin-bred dullness of apprehension of Him through the operation of His Spirit in their hearts, which Calvin calls the Testimony of the Holy Spirit. Obviously it is only through this testimony of the Holy Spirit that the revelation of God, whether in works or Word, is given efficacy: it is God, then, who, through His Spirit, reveals Himself to His people, and they know Him only as taught by Himself. But also on this very account the knowledge they have of Him is trustworthy in its character and complete for its purpose; being God-given, it is safeguarded to us by the dreadful sanction of deity itself. This being made clear, Calvin has laid a foundation for the theological structure—the scientific statement and elaboration of the knowledge of God—than which nothing could be conceived more firm. There remained nothing more for him to do before proceeding at once to draw out the elements of the

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78 Doumergue, "Le probleme protestant," 1892, p. 46 (Pannier, as cited, p. 192).

79 Pannier, as cited, pp. 188 *sq.*, is quite right in insisting on this. After quoting D. H. Meyer ("De la place et du rôle de l'apologetique dans la théologie protestante," in the *Revue de théologie et des quest. relig.*, Jan., 1893, p. 1) to the effect that "the witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart of Christians is not a subjective phenomenon . . . it is an objective thing and comes from God,"—he continues: "Now this objective character of the witness of the Holy Spirit is precisely what appears to make it 'incomprehensible' to our modern theologians (so A. E. Martin, *La Polemique de R. Simon et de J. Le Clerc*, 1880, p. 29: 'This intervention of the Holy Spirit distinct from the individual consciousness appears to us incomprehensible'). We are not speaking of those who venture to pretend that Calvin identifies the witness of the Holy Spirit with 'the intimate feeling' of each Christian. When one takes his place by the side of Castellion he may lawfully say, For me as for him 'the inspiration of the Holy Ghost confounds itself with consciousness; these revelations made to the humble are nothing more than the intuitions of a moral and religious sense fortified by meditation' (Buiason, *Castellion*, i. p. 304, cf. p. 201: 'Castellion placed above the tradition of the universal Church his own sense, his own reason, or rather, let us say it all at once, for it is the foundation of the debate, his consciousness'). But when one invokes the real fathers of the real Reformation, ah, please do not take for theirs the very opinions they combat. To make of the testimony of the Holy Spirit the equivalent of the testimony of the human spirit, of the individual consciousness, is to deny the real existence and the distinct role of the Holy Spirit, is to show that we have nothing in common with the faith expounded by Calvin so clearly, and defended through a century against the attacks of the Catholics as one of the essential bases of the Reformed theology and piety." Again, Pannier is quite right in his declaration (p. 214): "What we deny is that our reason—moral consciousness, religious consciousness, the term is of no importance—can, of itself, make us see the divinity of the Scriptures. It is this which sees it; but it is the Holy Spirit which makes us see it. He is not the inner eye for seeing the truth which is outside of us, but the supernatural hand which comes to open the eye of our consciousness—an eye which is, no doubt, divine in the sense that it too was created by God, but which has been blinded by the consequences of sin."

knowledge of God as they lie in the revelation so assured to us, except to elucidate the *indicia* by which the Christian under the influence of the testimony of the Spirit is strengthened in his confidence that the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and to repudiate the tendency to neglect these Scriptures so authenticated to us in favor of fancied continuous revelations of the Spirit. The former he does in a chapter (chap. viii.) of considerable length and great eloquence, which constitutes one of the fullest and most powerful expositions of the evidence for the divine origin of the Scriptures which have come down to us from the Reformation age. The latter he does in a briefer chapter (chap. ix.), of crisp polemic quality, the upshot of which is to leave it strongly impressed on the reader's mind that the whole knowledge of God available to us, as the whole knowledge of God needful for us, lies objectively displayed in the pages of Scripture, which, therefore, becomes the sole source of a sound exposition of the knowledge of God.

This strong statement is not intended, however, to imply that the Spirit-led man can learn nothing from the more general revelation of God in His works and deeds. Calvin is so far from denying the possibility of a "Natural Theology," in this sense of the word, that he devotes a whole chapter (chap. v.) to vindicating the rich revelation of God made in His works and deeds: though, of course, he does deny that any theology worthy of the name can be derived from this natural revelation by the "natural man," that is, by the man the eyes of whose mind and heart are not opened by the Spirit of God—who is not under the influence of the testimony of the Spirit; and in this sense he denies the possibility of a "Natural Theology." What the strong statement in question is intended to convey is that there is nothing to be derived from natural revelation which is not also to be found in Scripture, whether as necessary presupposition, involved implication or clear statement; and that beside that documented in Scripture there is no supernatural revelation accessible to men. The work of the Spirit of God is not to supplement the revelation made in Scripture, far less to supersede it, but distinctively to authenticate it. It remains true, then, that the whole matter of a sound theology lies objectively revealed to us in the pages of Scripture; and this is the main result to which his whole discussion tends. But side by side with it requires to be placed as a result of his discussion secondary only to this, this further conclusion, directly given in his doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit—that only a Christian man can profitably theologize. It is in the union of these two great principles that we find Calvin's view of the bases of a true theology. This he conceives as the product of the systematic investigation and logical elaboration of the contents of Scripture by a mind quickened to the apprehension of these contents through the inward operations of the Spirit of God. It is on this basis and in this spirit that Calvin undertakes his task as a theologian; and what he professes to give us in his "Institutes" is thus, to put it simply, just a Christian man's reading of the Scriptures of God.

The Protestantism of this conception of the task of the theologian is apparent on the face of it. It is probably, however, still worth while to point out that its Protestantism does not lie solely or chiefly in the postulate that the Scriptures are the sole authoritative source of the knowledge of God—"formal principle" of the Reformation though that postulate be, and true, therefore, as Chillingworth's famous declaration that "the Bible and the Bible only is the religion of Protestants" would be, if only Chillingworth had kept it to this sense. It lies more fundamentally still in the postulate that these Scriptures are accredited to us as the revelation of God solely by the testimony of the Holy Spirit—that without this testimony they lie before us inert and without effect on our hearts and minds, while with it they become not merely the power of God unto salvation, but also the vitalizing source of all our knowledge of God. There is embodied in this the true Protestant principle, superior to both the so-called formal and the so-called material principles—both of which are in point of fact but corollaries of it. For it takes the soul completely and forcibly out of the hands of the Church and from under its domination, and casts it wholly

upon the grace of God. In its formulation Calvin gave to Protestantism for the first time, accordingly, logical stability and an inward sense of security. Men were no more puzzled by the polemics of Rome when they were asked, You rest on Scripture alone, you say: but on what does your Scripture rest? Calvin's development of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit provided them with their sufficient answer: "On the testimony of the Spirit of God in the heart." Here we see the historical importance of Calvin's formulation of this doctrine. And here we see the explanation of the two great facts which reveal its historical importance, the facts, to wit, that Calvin had no predecessors in the formulation of the doctrine, and that at once upon his formulation of it it became the common doctrine of universal Protestantism.

#### IV. HISTORICAL RELATIONS

The search for anticipations of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit among the Fathers and Scholastics<sup>80</sup> reveals only such sporadic assertions of the dependence of man on the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit for the knowledge or the saving knowledge of God as could not fail in the speech of a series of Christian men who had read their Bibles. A sentence of this kind from Justin Martyr,<sup>81</sup> another from Chrysostom,<sup>82</sup> two or three from Hilary of Poitiers,<sup>83</sup> almost exhaust what the first age yields. It is different with Augustine. With his profound sense of dependence on God and his vital conviction of the necessity of grace for all that is good in man, in the whole circle of his activities, he could not fail to work out a general doctrine of the knowledge of God in all essentials the same as Calvin's. In point of fact, as we have already pointed out, he did so. There remain, however, some very interesting and some very significant differences between the two.<sup>84</sup> It is interesting to note, for instance, that where Calvin speaks of an innate *sensus deitatis* in man, as lying at the root of all his knowledge of God, Augustine, with a more profound ontology of this knowledge, as at least made explicit in the statement, speaks of a continuous reflection of a knowledge of Himself by God in the human mind.<sup>85</sup> There is here, however, probably only a difference in fulness of statement, or at most only of emphasized

80 See especially P. Du Moulin, "Du Iuge dea controverses traitté," 1838, pp. 294 sq., and cf. Pannier, as cited, pp. 64-88.

81 "Dialogue with Trypho," vii. ("Opera," ed. Otto. I. ii. 32): οὐ γὰρ συνοπατὰ οὐδὲ συννοητὰ πᾶσιν ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ τῷ θεῷ δῶ συιέναι, καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτοῦ: "these things cannot be perceived or understood by all, but only by the man to whom God and His Christ have given it to understand them."

82 "In Cap. v. et vi. Genes. homil. xxi." (Migne, liii. 175): Διάτοι τοῦτο προσήκει ἡμᾶς ὑπὸ τῆς ἄνωθεν χάριτος ὀδηγουμένους, καὶ τὴν παρὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἔλλαμψιν δεξαμένους οὕτως ἐπιέναι τὰ θεία λόγια. Οὐδὲ γὰρ σοφίας ἀνθρωπίνης δέεται ἡ θεία Γραφή πρὸς τὴν κατανοήσιν τῶν γεγραμμένων, ἀλλὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἀποκαλύψεως . . . .  
"For we must be led by the grace from above, and must receive the illumination of the Holy Spirit, to approach the divine oracles; for it is not human wisdom but the revelation of the Holy Spirit that is needed for understanding the Holy Scriptures." It will be perceived that it is more distinctly the understanding of the Scriptures than the reception of them as from God which is in question with both Justin and Chrysostom.

83 "De Trinitate," ii. 34: Animus humanus, nisi per fidem donum Spiritus hauserit, habebit quidem naturam Deum intelligendi, sed lumen acientiae non habebit; iii. 24: non enim concipiunt imperfecta perfectum, neque quod ex alio subsistit, absolute vel auctoris sui potest intelligentiam obtinere, vel propriam; v. 21: neque enim nobis ea natura est, ut se in coelestem cognitionem suis viribus efferat. A Deo discendum est quid de Deo intelligendum sit; quia non nisi se auctore cognoscitur. . . . Loquendum ergo non aliter de Deo est, quam ut ipse ad intelligentiam nostram de se locutus est. (For these citations see Migne, "Patro. Lat.," x. 74-75; x. 92; x. 143.) Hilary certainly teaches that for such creatures as men there can be no knowledge of God except it be God-taught: but it is not so clear that he teaches that for sinful creatures there must be a special illapse of the Spirit that such as they may know God-may perceive Him in His Word and so recognize that Word as from Him and derive a true knowledge of Him from it. It is this soteriological doctrine which is Calvin's doctrine of the Holy Spirit's testimony: not that ontological one.

84 Cf. article: "Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge and Authority," in *The Princeton Theological Review* for July and October, 1907.

85 Ibid., pp. 360 sq.

aspect. On the other hand, it is highly significant that, instead of Calvin's doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit, Augustine, in conformity with the stress he laid upon the "Church" and the "means of grace" in the conference of grace, speaks of the knowledge of God as attainable only "in the Church."<sup>86</sup> Accordingly, in him also and his successors there are to be found only such anticipations specifically of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit as are afforded by the increased frequency of their references to the dependence of man for all knowledge of God and divine things on grace and the inward teaching of the heavenly Instructor. The voice of men may assail our ears, says Augustine, for instance, but those remain untaught "to whom that inward unction does not speak, whom the Holy Spirit does not inwardly teach": for "He who teaches the heart has His seat in heaven."<sup>87</sup> Moses himself, yea, even if he spoke to us not in Hebrew but in our own tongue, could convey to us only the knowledge of what he said: of the truth of what he said, only the Truth Himself, speaking within us, in the secret chamber of our thought, can assure us though He speaks neither in Hebrew nor in Greek nor in Latin, nor yet in any tongue of the barbarians, but without organs of voice or tongue and with no least syllabic sound.<sup>88</sup> Further than this men did not get before the Reformation:<sup>89</sup> nor did the first Reformers themselves get further. No doubt they discerned the voice of the Spirit in the Scriptures, as the Fathers did before them; and in a single sentence, written, however, after the "Institutes" of 1539 (viz., in 1555), Melancthon notes with the Fathers that the mind is "aided in giving its assent" to divine things "by the Holy Spirit."<sup>90</sup> Zwingli here stands on the same plane with his brethren. He strongly repels the Romish establishment of confidence in the Scriptures on the *ipse dixit* of the Church, indeed: and asserts that those who sincerely search the Scriptures are taught by God, and even that none acquire faith in the Word except as drawn by the Father, admonished by the Spirit, taught by the unction—as, says he, all pious men have found.<sup>91</sup> But such occasional remarks as this could not fail wherever the Augustinian conception of grace was vitally felt; and show only that the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit was always implicit in that doctrine.<sup>92</sup>

86 *Ibid.*, pp. 571 sq.

87 "Tract. iii. in Ep. Joan. ad Parthos," ii. 13 (Migne, xxxv. 2004). Again: "There is, then, I say, a Master within that teacheth: Christ teacheth; His inspiration teacheth. Where His inspiration and His unction are not, in vain do words make a noise from without."

88 "Confessions," xi. 3 (Migne, xxxii. 811). Cf. vi. 5 (Migne, xxxii. 723).

89 Pannier, *loc. cit.*, says: "The whole of the testimony of the Holy Spirit is not yet here. Only once is the Holy Spirit Himself named [in these passages from Augustine] in a formal way. But Augustine has the intuition of a mysterious work wrought in the soul of the Christian, of an understanding of the Bible which comes not from man but from a power exterior and superior to him; and he sets forth the role which this direct correspondence between the book and the reader may play in the foundation of Christian certitude. In this, as in so many other points, Augustine was the precursor of the Reformation, and a precursor without immediate followers: for except a couple of very vague and isolated hints in Salvianus (*De Provid.*, iii. 1) and Gregory the Great († 604, *Homil. in Ezek.*, I. x.), nothing further is found on this subject through ten centuries: it comes into view again at the approach of the new age, when thought aspired to free itself from the Scholastic ruts, with Biel († 1495, *Lib. iii. Sent. dist. 25, dub. 3*) and Cajetan († 1534, *Opera*, II. i. 1)."

90 "Loci," ed. 1555 ("Corpus Ref.," xxi. 605).

91 "De vera et falsa religione": Cum constet verbo nusquam fidem haberi quam ubi Pater traxit, Spiritus monuit, unctio docuit ... hanc rem solae piae mentea norunt. Neque enim ab hominum disceptatione pendet, sed in animis hominum tenacissime sedet. Experientia est, nam pii omnes eam experti sunt. "Articles of 1523" (Niemeyer, "Collectio confessionum in eccles. ref. publ.," 1840, p. 5): Art. xiii. Verbo Dei quum auscultant homines pure et sinceriter voluntatem Dei discunt. Deinde per Spiritum Dei in Deum trahuntur et veluti transformantur. "Von Klarheit und Gewissen des Worts Gottes" ("Werke," Schuler und Schulthess, 1828, i. 81; or "Werke" in "Corp. Ref.," i. 382): "The Scriptures . . . came from God, not from man; ... and the God who has shined into them will Himself give you to understand that their speech comes from God." Cf. the interesting biographical account of how he came to depend on the Scriptures only, on p. 79 (or "Corp. Ref.," i. 379).

92 E. Rabaud, "Hist. de la doct. de l'inspiration," etc., 1883, pp. 32-33, 42-43, 47 sq., 50, expounds the earlier Reformers as in principle standing on the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit. With respect to the interpretation of Scripture he remarks: "The hermeneutical principle of the witness of the Holy Spirit (if we may speak of it as a principle) is common to all the Reformers. Luther only, without being ignorant of it, makes no use of it. Besides responding to the polemic needs, it responded to the aspirations of the faith and of the piety of

The same remark applies to the first edition of Calvin's "Institutes" (1536) also, though with a difference. This difference—that, if we cannot say that the doctrine of the internal testimony of the Spirit to the divinity of the Scriptures is found there already in germ<sup>93</sup> any more than we can say the same of the Augustinian Fathers, and the criticism passed<sup>94</sup> on the adduction of Melancthon's single sentence in this reference to the effect that he speaks rather "of the action of the Holy Spirit with reference to the object of faith, that is to say, to the contents of the Word of God" than "with reference to the divinity of the Scriptures themselves," is valid also for Calvin's first edition; yet it is certainly true that the general doctrine of the internal testimony of the Spirit comes much more prominently forward in even the first edition of the "Institutes" than in any preceding treatise of the sort—that much more is made in it than in any of its predecessors of the poverty of the human spirit and the need and actuality of the prevalent influence of the Spirit of God that man may have—whether in knowledge or act—any good thing. We shall have to go back to Augustine to find anything comparable to the conviction and insight with which even in this his earliest work Calvin urges these things. Calvin's whole thought is already dominated by the conception of the powerlessness of the human soul in its sin in all that belongs to the knowledge of God which is salvation, and its entire dependence on the sovereign operations of the Holy Spirit: and in this sense it may be said that the chapters in the new "Institutes" of 1539 in which he develops this doctrine of the noetic effects of sin and their cure by objective revelation, documented in Scripture, and subjective illumination wrought by the Holy Spirit, lay implicitly in his doctrine of man's need and its cure by the indwelling Spirit which pervades the "Institutes" of 1536. There he already teaches that the written law was required by the decay of our consciousness of the law written on the heart; that to know God and His will we have need to surpass ourselves; that it is the Spirit dwelling in us that is the source of all our right knowledge of God; and that it is due to the power of the Spirit alone" that we hear the word of the Holy Gospel, that we accept it by faith, and that we abide in this faith" (p. 137, or *Opp.* i. 72). With eminent directness and simplicity he already there tells us that "our Lord first teaches and instructs us by His Word; secondarily confirms us by His Sacraments; and

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simple men, better than rational demonstrations" (p. 50, note 4). "In a general way," he remarks, pp. 32-33, "Luther considered the Bible as the sole incontestable and absolute authority. Here is the solid foundation of the edifice, the impregnable citadel in which he shut himself in order to repel victoriously all attacks. It is for him, in truth, a religious axiom, a postulate of faith, and not a dogma or a theory; it is revealed to his believing soul independently of all intellectual activity. Thus Luther, trusting in the action of the Holy Spirit, operating through the Scriptures, does not pause to prove its authority, nor to establish it dialectically: it imposes itself; a systematic treatment is not needed. More and more as circumstances demanded it, he gave reasons for his faith and his submission. Poor arguments to modern thinking, but in his times, and commended by his vibrant eloquence and powerful personality, possessing a power of persuasion very impressive. . . . It seemed idle to Luther, we may say, to enter into an argument to establish what was evident to him. He did not attempt, therefore, to prove the authority of the Bible—he asserted it repeatedly in warm words, . . . in passionate declarations, but rarely if ever proceeds by a formal demonstration." Raising the question of Zwingli's doctrine of the mode and extent of inspiration (p. 47), he remarks: "No more than the others does Zwingli respond to these questions, which had not yet been raised. God has spoken: the Bible contains His word: that is enough. The divinity of the Bible is once more a fact, an axiom, so much so that he does not dream of establishing it dialectically or of defending it."

93 So Pannier, as cited, p. 83: "Like all the other essential parts of the Reformed Dogmatics, the doctrine of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit is found in germ in the first edition of the *Institutes*, although still without any development. It is almost possible to deny that it exists there, as has been done with predestination. Nevertheless, if the doctrine is not yet scientifically formulated, it may yet be perceived to preexist necessarily as an essential member of the complete body of doctrine which is slowly to grow up." When Pannier comes, however (pp. 72-77), to expound in detail the germs of the doctrine as they lie in the edition of 1536, it turns out that there is not only no full development of the doctrine in that edition, but also no explicit mention of it, as it is applied to the conviction which the Christian has of the divinity of Scripture; so that it preexists in this edition only as implicit in its general doctrine of the Spirit and His work.

94 By Pannier, p. 69.

thirdly by the light of His Holy Spirit illuminates our understandings and gives entrance into our hearts both to the Word and to the Sacraments, which otherwise would only beat upon our ears and stand before our eyes, without penetrating or operating beneath them" (p. 206, or *Opp.* i. 104). There is, in other words, very rich teaching in the "Institutes" of 1536 of the entire dependence of sinful man on the Spirit of God for every sound religious movement of the soul: but there is no development of the precise doctrine of the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the divinity of the Scriptures. It is not merely that the term *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* does not occur in this early draft, or occurs only once, and then not in this sense:<sup>95</sup> it is that the thing is not explicated and is present only as implicated in the general doctrine of grace, which is very purely conceived.

It was left, then, to the edition of 1539 to create the whole doctrine at, as it were, a single stroke.<sup>96</sup> For, as we have already had occasion to note, Calvin's whole exposition of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit to the divinity of Scripture appears all at once in its completeness in the second edition of the "Institutes," the first edition which he issued as a textbook on theology, that of 1539. This exposition was reproduced without curtailment or alteration in all subsequent editions, and is thereby given the great endorsement of Calvin's permanent approval: while the additions which are made to it in the progressive expansion of the treatise, while large in amount, are devoted to guarding it from the misapprehension that the necessity it asserted for the testimony of the Spirit in any way detracted from the objective value of the *indicia* of the divinity of Scripture, rather than to modifying the positive doctrine expounded. The additions within the limits of chapter vii. consist essentially of the insertion of the discussion of Augustine's doctrine in § 3 and of the caveat with reference to the underestimation of the *indicia* in § 4, while practically the whole of chapter viii.—all except the opening sentence—is of later origin. If we will omit the first sentence of chapter vii., the whole of §§ 3 and 4, with the exception of the sentence near the beginning of the latter, which begins: "Now if we wish to consult the true intent of our conscience"—and the beginning and end of § 5, retaining only the central passage beginning: "For though it conciliate our reverence . . ." down to the words: "Superior to the power of any human will or knowledge," and also the two striking sentences, beginning with: "It is such a persuasion" and ending with "a just explication of the subject"—we shall have substantially the text of the edition of 1539, needing only to add the two opening sentences of chapter viii. and the major part of chapter ix. It will at once be seen that the edition of 1539 contains the entire positive exposition of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit as retained by Calvin to the end.

The formulation of this principle of the testimony of the Spirit by Calvin in 1539 had an extraordinary effect both immediate and permanent.<sup>97</sup> Universal Protestantism perceived in it at

95 Pannier, as cited, p. 77, notes that "the words: *testimonio Spiritus Sancti* occur only a single time, at the end, and in the old sense of—"by the divinely inspired Scriptures." He refers to the ed. of 1536, p. 470, that is, *Opp.* i. 228: and notes that this passage was dropped in the edition of 1559 (*Opp.* iv. 796, note 5). The passage runs: "Thus Hezekiah is praised by the testimony of the Holy Spirit"—that is, obviously, "by the inspired Scriptures"—"for having broken up the brazen serpent which Moses had made by Divine command."

96 Köstlin, as cited, p. 411, strongly states these facts. The whole of the discussion on the sources and norms of religious truth "is altogether lacking in the original form" of the "Institutes": "Calvin worked out this section for the first time for the edition of 1539": but it is found here already thoroughly done, "in all its fundamental traits already complete and mature." He adds that the Lutheran dogmatists (as well as the Reformed) at once, however, took up the construction of Calvin and made it their own.

97 The history of the doctrine among the Reformed is touched on by A. Schweizer, "Glaubenslehre," i. § 32; among the old Lutherans by Klaiber, "Die Lehre der altprotestantischen Dogmatiker von dem test. Sp. Sancti" in the *Jahrbucher für d. Theologie*, 1857, pp. 1-54. Its history among French theologians is traced by Pannier, as cited, Part iii. pp. 139-181, cf. 188-193: his notes on the history outside of France (pp. 181-185) are very slight. On pp. 161-163 Pannier essays to gather together, chiefly, as it appears, from the scattered citations in the Protestant



sight the pure expression of the Protestant principle and the sheet-anchor of its position. The Lutherans as well as the Reformed adopted it at once and made it the basis not only of their reasoned defence of Protestantism, but also of their structure of Christian doctrine and of their confidence in Christian living.<sup>98</sup> To it they both continued to cling so long and so far as they continued faithful to the Protestant principle itself. It has given way only as the structure of Protestantism has itself given way in reaction to the Romish position, or, more widely, as the structure of Christian thought has given way in rationalizing disintegration. No doubt it has undergone at the hands of its various expounders, from time to time, more or less modification, and in its journeyings to the ends of the earth, has suffered now and again some sea-change—sometimes through sheer misapprehension, sometimes through sheer misrepresentation, sometimes through more or less admixture of both. A spurious revival of the doctrine was, for example, set on foot by Schleiermacher in his strong revulsion from the cold rationalism which had so long reigned in Germany to a more vital religious faith; and sentences may be quoted from his writings which, when removed out of the context of his system of thought, almost give expression to it.<sup>99</sup> But after all, his revival of it was rather the revival of subjectivity in religion

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controversialists of the seventeenth century (p. 162, note 2), the hints which appear in the Romish writers, mainly Jesuits of the early seventeenth century, of recognition of the internal work of the Holy Spirit illuminating the soul. These bear more or less resemblance to the Protestant doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit. Some of the passages he cites are quite striking, but do not go beyond the common boundaries of universal Christian supernaturalism.

- 98 In his brief remarks on the subject in his "Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus," i. 1908, pp. 178 sq., Otto Ritschl seeks to discriminate between the Reformed and Lutherans in their conception of the testimony of the Spirit; but his discrimination touches rather the application than the essence of the matter.
- 99 Some of them are cited, e.g., by Schweizer, *op. cit.*, followed, e.g., by Pannier, as cited (p. 186, note 1)—such as: "Faith is already presupposed when a peculiar authority is conceded to Scripture,"—"The recognition of what is canonical comes into existence only gradually and progressively, since the sense for the truly Apostolic is a gracious gift which grows up only gradually in the Church,"—"Faith cannot be established in unbelievers by the Scriptures, so that their divine authority is in the first instance proved from merely rational considerations."—"There is much that is true and well said in such remarks, and they enrich the writings of Schleiermacher and his followers with a truly spiritual element. But at bottom the central position occupied is vitiated by the use of "faith" as an "undistributed middle," and the remarks of writers of this type do not so much tend to exalt the place of saving faith as to depress the authority of Scripture, by practically denying the existence or validity of *fides humana*. That attitude towards the Scriptures which gladly and heartily recognizes them as the Word of the Living God, and with all delight in them as such, seeks to subject all thought and feeling and action to their direction, certainly is, if not exactly a product of "true faith," yet (as the Westminster Confession defines it) an exercise of true faith, and a product of that inward creative operation of the Holy Spirit from which all true faith comes: that keen taste for the divine which is the outgrowth of the spiritual gift of discrimination—the "distinguishing of things that differ" which Paul gives a place among Christian graces—is assuredly a "gift of grace" which may grow more and more strong as the Christian life effloresces; and such a taste for the divine cannot be awakened in unbelievers by the natural action of the Scriptures or any rational arguments whatever, but requires for its production the work of the Spirit of God *ab extra accidens*. But it is a totally different question whether the peculiarity of Scripture as a divine revelation can call out no intellectual recognition in the minds of inquiring men, but must remain wholly hidden and produce no mental reaction conformable to its nature, until true faith has already been born in the heart: whether there are no valid tests of what is apostolical except a spiritual sense for the truly apostolical which can only gradually grow up in the Church; whether the unbeliever may not be given a well-grounded intellectual conviction of the apostolic origin, the canonical authority, and the divine character of Scripture by the presentation to him of rational evidence which, however unwillingly on his part, will compel his assent. The question here is not whether this *fides humana* is of any great use in the spiritual life: the question is whether it is possible and actual. We may argue, if we will, that it is not worth while to awake it—though opinions may differ there: but how can we argue that it is a thing inherently impossible? To say this is not merely to say that reason cannot save, which is what Calvin said and all his followers: it is to say that salvation is intrinsically unreasonable—which neither Calvin nor any of his true followers could for a moment allow. Sin may harden the heart so that it will not admit, weigh, or yield to evidence: but sin, which affects only the heart subjectively, and not the process of reasoning objectively, cannot alter the relations of evidence to conclusions. Sin does not in the least degree affect the cogency of any rightly constructed syllogism. No man, no doubt, was ever reasoned into the kingdom of heaven: it is the Holy Spirit alone who can translate us into the kingdom of God's dear Son. But there are excellent reasons why every man

than of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit as the basis of all faith: and it has borne bitter fruit in a widespread subjectivism, the mark of which is that it discards (as "external") the authority of those very Scriptures to which the testimony of the Spirit is borne. Not in such circles is the continued influence of the doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit to be sought or its continued advocacy to be found. If we would see it in its purity in the modern Church we must look for it in the hands of true successors of Calvin—in the writings, to name only men of our own time, of William Cunningham<sup>100</sup> and Charles Hodge<sup>101</sup> and Abraham Kuyper<sup>102</sup> and Herman Bavinck.<sup>103</sup>

As we have already had occasion to note, the principle of the testimony of the Spirit as the true basis of our confidence in the Scriptures as the Word of God was almost from the hands of Calvin himself incorporated into the Reformed Creeds. We have already pointed out the sharpness and strength of its expression in the Gallican (1557-1571) and Belgian (1501-1571) Confessions, and it finds at least the expression of suggestion in the Second Helvetic Confession (1562). It was not, however, merely into the Confessions of the Reformation age that it was incorporated. It is given an expression as clear as it is prudent, as decided as it is comprehensive, in that confession of their faith which the persecuted Waldenses issued after the massacres of 1655;<sup>104</sup> and it is incorporated into the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) in perhaps the best and most balanced statement it has ever received—the phraseology of which is obviously derived in large part from Calvin, either directly or through the intermediation of George Gillespie,<sup>105</sup> but the substance of which was but the expression of the firmly held faith of the

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should enter the kingdom of heaven; and these reasons are valid in the forum of every rational mind, and their validity can and should be made manifest to all.

100 "Theological Lectures," etc., New York, 1878, pp. 317, 320 sq.

101 "The Way of Life," 1841; also "Systematic Theology," as per Index.

102 "Encyclopædie, etc.," ii. 1894, pp. 505 sqq.

103 "Gereformeerde Dogmatiek," ed. 1, i. pp. 142-145, 420-422, 490-491.

104 Written, no doubt, by Léger, moderator at the time of "the Table," and preserved for us in his "Histoire générale des églises évangéliques des vallées de Piémont," 1669, i. p. 112 (cf. p. 92). See Pannier, as cited, p. 133.

105 Dr. A. F. Mitchell ("The Westminster Assembly, its History and Standards," the Baird Lecture for 1882, ed. 2, 1897, p. 441, note), following Prof. J. S. Candlish (*Brit. and For. Ev. Rev.*, 1877, p. 173), is "very sure" that Gillespie has here "left his mark on the Confession." The "Miscellany Questions," in the xxi. of which occurs the passage from Gillespie from which the Confession is supposed to have drawn, was a posthumous work, published in 1649; but a number of the papers of which it is made up have the appearance of being briefs drawn up by Gillespie for his own satisfaction, or as preparations for speeches, or possibly even as papers handed in to committees, during the discussions of the Westminster Assembly. The language in question, however, whether in Gillespie or in the Confession, is so strongly reminiscent of Calvin, that the possibility seems to remain open that the resemblance between Gillespie and the Confession is due to their common relation to Calvin. Here is the passage in Gillespie ("Presbyterian Armoury" ed., vol. ii. pp. 105-106): "The Scripture is known to be indeed the Word of God by the beams of divine authority it hath in itself, and by certain distinguishing characters, which do infallibly prove it to be the Word of God; such as the heavenliness of the matter; the majesty of the style; the irresistible power over the conscience; the general scope, to abase man and to exalt God; nothing driven at but God's glory and man's salvation; the extraordinary holiness of the penmen of the Holy Ghost, without respect to any particular interests of their own, or of others of their nearest relations (which is manifest by their writings); the supernatural mysteries revealed therein, which could never have entered into the reason of men; the marvellous consent of all parts and passages (though written by divers and several penmen), even where there is some appearance of difference; the fulfilling of prophecies; the miracles wrought by Christ, by the prophets and apostles; the conservation of the Scriptures against the malice of Satan and fury of persecutors;—these and the like are characters and marks which evidence the Scriptures to be the Word of God; yet all these cannot beget in the soul a full persuasion of faith that the Scriptures are the Word of God; this persuasion is from the Holy Ghost in our hearts. And it hath been the common resolution of sound Protestant writers (though now called in question by the sceptics of this age [the allusion being to "Mr. J. Godwin in his Hagiomastix"]) that these arguments and infallible characters in the Scripture itself, which most certainly prove it to be the Word of God, cannot produce a certainty of persuasion in our hearts, but this is done by the Spirit of God within us, according to these Scriptures, I Cor. ii. 10-15; I Thes. i. 5; I John ii. 27; v. 6-8, 10; John vi. 45."—Whatever may be the immediate source of the Confessional statement, Calvin is clearly the real source of Gillespie's

whole body of the framers of that culminating Confession of the Reformed Churches.

"We recognize the divinity of these sacred books," says the Waldensian Confession (chap. iv.), "not only through the testimony of the Church, but principally through the eternal and indubitable truth of the doctrine which is contained in them, through the excellence, sublimity, and majesty of the pure divinity (*du tout divine*) which are apparent in them, and through the operation of the Holy Spirit which makes us receive with deference the testimony which the Church gives to them, which opens our eyes to receive the rays of the celestial light which shines in the Scriptures, and so corrects our taste that we discern this food by the divine savor which it possesses." The dependence of this fine statement on Calvin's exposition is evident; but what is most striking about it is the clarity with which it conceives and the fulness with which it expounds the exact mode of working of the testimony of the Spirit and its relation to the *indicia* of divinity in Scripture, through which, and not apart from or in opposition to which, it performs its work. So far from supposing that the witness of the Spirit is of the nature of a new and independent revelation from heaven or works only a blind faith in us, setting thus aside all evidences of the divinity of Scripture, external and internal alike, this careful statement particularly explains that our faith in the divinity of Scripture rests, under the testimony of the Spirit, on these evidences as its ground, but not on these evidences by themselves, but on them as apprehended by a Spirit-led mind and heart—the work of the Spirit consisting in so dealing with our spirit that these evidences are, under His influence, perceived and felt in their real bearing and full strength.

An even more notable statement of the whole doctrine is that incorporated into the Westminster Confession (i. 4, 5), and in a more compressed form into the Larger Catechism (Q. 4). "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed," says the Confession, "dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and

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statement.—For the essence of the matter Gillespie's discussion is notably clear and exact, particularly with reference to the relation of the *indicia* to the testimony of the Spirit, a matter which he strangely declares had not to his knowledge been discussed before. The clarity of his determinations here is doubtless due to the specific topic which he is in this Question investigating, viz., the validity of the argument from marks and fruits of sanctification to our interest in Christ: a parallel question in the broader soteriological sphere to the place of *indicia* in our conviction of the divinity of Scripture, which he therefore uses illustratively for his main problem. "It may be asked," he remarks, "and it is a question worthy to be looked into (though I must confess I have not read it, nor heard it, handled before), How doth this assurance by marks agree with or differ from assurance by the testimony of the Holy Spirit? May the soul have assurance either way, or must there be a concurrence of both (for I suppose they are not one and the same thing) to make up the assurance?" (p. 105). He proves that they are "not one and the same thing"; and then shows solidly that for assurance there "must be a concurrence of both." "To make no trial by marks," he says, "and to trust an inward testimony, under the notion of the Holy Ghost's testimony, when it is without the least evidence of any true gracious marks, this way (of its own nature, and intrinsically, or in itself) is a deluding and ensnaring of the conscience" (p. 105). That is to say, a blind confidence and conviction, without cognizable grounds in evidence cannot be trusted. Again and very clearly: "So that, in the business of assurance and full persuasion, the evidences of graces and the testimony of the Spirit, are two concurrent causes or helps, both of them necessary. Without the evidence of graces, it is not a safe nor a wellgrounded assurance" (p. 106). It remains only to add that while arguing this out in the wider soteriological sphere, Gillespie appears to take it as a matter of course in the accrediting of the Scriptures as divine-giving that case, in the course of his argument, as an illustration to aid in determining his conclusion.

assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our heart." In the Larger Catechism this is reduced to the form: "The Scriptures manifest themselves to be the Word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation; but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the Scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very Word of God." The fundamental excellence of this remarkable statement (for the full understanding of which what is said of "faith" in chapter xiv. of the Confession and Question 72 of the Catechism should be compared with it—just as Calvin referred his readers to his later discussion of "faith" for further information on the topic of the testimony of the Spirit) is the care with which the several grounds on which we recognize the Scriptures to be from God are noted and their value appraised, and that yet the supreme importance of the witness of the Spirit is safe-guarded.<sup>106</sup> The external testimony of the Church is noted and its value pointed out: it moves and induces us to a high and reverent esteem for Scripture. The internal testimony of the characteristics of the Scriptures themselves is noted and its higher value pointed out: they "abundantly evidence" or "manifest" the Scriptures "to be the Word of God." The need and place of the testimony of the Spirit is then pointed out in the presence of this "abundant evidencing" or "manifesting": it is not to add new evidence—which is not needed—but to secure deeper conviction—which is needed; and not independently of the Word with its evidencing characteristics, but "by and with the Word" or "the Scriptures." What this evidence of the Spirit does is "fully to persuade us" that "the Scriptures are the very Word of God,"—to work in us "full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority" of the Word of God. It is a matter of completeness of conviction, not of grounds of conviction; and the testimony of the Spirit works, therefore, not by adding additional grounds of conviction, but by an inward work on the heart, enabling it to react upon the already "abundant evidence" with a really "full persuasion and assurance." Here we have the very essence of Calvin's doctrine, almost in his own words, and with even more than his own eloquence and precision of statement.

What Calvin has given to the Reformed Churches, therefore, in his formulation of the doctrine of the Testimony of the Spirit is a fundamental doctrine, which has been as such expounded by the whole body of their theologians, and incorporated into the fabric of their public Confessions, so that it has been made and continues to be until to-day the officially declared faith of the Reformed Churches in France and Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Scotland, and America, wherever the fundamental Reformed Creeds are still professed.

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*Scanned, proofread, and marked up by Lance George Marshall*

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<sup>106</sup> For the meaning of the Confession's statement, supported by illustrative excerpts from its authors, see *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, iv. 1893, pp. 624-32; and cf. W. Cunningham, "Theological Lectures," New York, 1878, pp. 320 sq., and *The Presbyterian Quarterly*, January, 1894, pp. 19 sq.