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THE  
BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

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ARTICLE I.

SOME MISAPPREHENSIONS CONCERNING CALVIN.

BY O. T. LANPHEAR, D. D.

I. It is asserted that Calvin taught fatalism.

This error arises from the failure to observe that, in considering the being of God, Calvin excludes the order of time. This appears in his view of the divine omniscience, which is immutable. Time effects no changes in the divine mind and thought; such as, that God can be said to be wiser to-day than he was yesterday. He does not go to school to learn either by experience, reflection, or any evolution in time. If the contrary were true, then there would be a day somewhere in the past when God was ignorant, and then there was no God, for an ignorant God is no God. It is absurd, therefore, to admit the being of an omniscient God and assume at the same time that the knowledge of God is conditioned upon the order of time. His knowledge, therefore, must be an ever-present beholding of all things whatsoever that come to pass. As when, standing upon a high tower, one may look down upon a passing regiment, beholding every man at once, so God from the height of his omniscience sees at once from all eternity to all eternity, all things whatsoever that come to pass in time: all events, all nations, empires, and individuals, the movement of every planet as well as the flutter of every sparrow.

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Accordingly, Calvin held that in the divine mind there is no succession of thought, no relations of thought such as that of antecedent and consequent. Therefore, he says, "When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things have ever been, and perpetually remain, before his eyes; so that to his knowledge there is nothing future or past, but all things are present; and present in such a manner, that he does not merely conceive of them from ideas formed in his mind, as things remembered by us appear to be present to our minds, but really beholds and sees them as if actually placed before him. And this foreknowledge extends to the whole world, and to all creatures."<sup>1</sup>

In this view of foreknowledge, with the order of time excluded, there is no place for fatalism. Nor does this foreknowledge lay any necessity on God's creatures, for Calvin says, "I will readily grant that mere foreknowledge lays no necessity on the creatures; though this is not universally admitted, for there are some who maintain it to be the actual cause of what comes to pass."<sup>2</sup> Gottschalk, living about the middle of the ninth century, considered all foreknowledge in God as creative, and was therefore amenable to the charge of fatalism, as Calvin was not.

II. The second misapprehension of Calvin is, that though it be granted that the order of time is excluded, yet, fatalism follows from his view of the divine decrees; since all events take place pursuant to the divine will.

The error here lies in the tacit implication that the divine will and the divine knowledge stand in the relation of antecedent and consequent. But, since there is no succession of thought in the divine mind, no succession of the action of one attribute antecedent to the action of another attribute, it follows that there is no more decreeing from all eternity than decreeing to all eternity. As a court is prepared to issue a decree in a case when the facts are all in, so God is prepared

<sup>1</sup> Inst. iii. 21. 5.      <sup>2</sup> Inst. iii. 23. 6.

to issue his decrees from all eternity, since the facts are all before him, by virtue of his omniscience. To say that any divine attribute acts in the relation of antecedent or consequent to the action of another attribute, is to assert that evolution is as legitimate in the sphere of the infinite and eternal as it is in the finite and temporal, which is the *petitio principii* of pantheism, and because this is to assert that the action of the divine mind takes place in the order of time. In bringing in this order after its exclusion by Calvin, his critics are chargeable with the logical fallacy of the *ignoratio elenchi*, i. e. bringing in a conclusion which is not the one required, but made irrelevant by stealthily inserting in the premise what was not in Calvin's premise. Thus, when Calvin excludes the order of time from his premise respecting the being of God, his critic seemingly accepts this exclusion there, but claps it in again in one of Calvin's subsequent propositions, as respecting the divine omniscience, or the divine decrees, and then, as a conclusion, declares that Calvin is inconsistent in refusing to admit that foreknowledge lays necessity on creatures. Thus the *elenchus*, or proof, in the critic's contradiction of Calvin, is not Calvin's *elenchus*, but an *ignoratio* of Calvin's *elenchus*.

Many of Calvin's critics are chargeable with the logical fallacy in the form of sorites. According to this form, it is correct to say that A is B, every B is C, every C is D, every D is E, therefore A is E; which is a correct conclusion when no principle has been introduced in either of the subsequent propositions, B, C, D, not in the content of A. But when the critics of Calvin accept the content of Calvin's A, and then adroitly clap in a principle in a subsequent proposition not in the content of Calvin's A, then their conclusion that Calvin's A is their E is false. Thus it is rather amusing to notice the vivacity and assurance of Calvin's opponents in charging him with fallacies and sophistries which are only their own.

In the Socinian theology, formulated about thirty years after Calvin's death, it is affirmed that, "By the act of creating the world, God has voluntarily limited his omnipresence as to his essence, and by creating free agents he has voluntarily limited his power and his knowledge, because freewill is self-determined, and future events are not the object of knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Thus, by misapprehending Calvin's doctrine of foreknowledge, the Socinian found it necessary to frame this article, involving the absurdity that there is in the being of God the attribute of self-limitation, as to omnipresence and omniscience, and as to immutability as well, which, instead of self-limitation, ought to have been called self-mutilation. It makes against the divine omnipotence as well, since, to create man, God was compelled to subject himself to this self-mutilation.

Similar to this was the position of the Methodist divine, Adam Clark, that, "It might not be wise in God to foreknow all future events. It might be wise in God to foreknow some future events, *but not wise in him to foreknow all future events.*" But how God could determine what things were wise for him to know, in distinction from the things which it were unwise for him to know, without in the first place knowing all things, so as to make the proper selection of the things supposed to be wise for him to know, we are not told. If such a process were possible, it would argue a strange capacity in the divine mind for forgetting what was once known, in order to be wise!

Another Methodist divine, Dr. Whedon, accepting foreknowledge, but denying foreordination, as though there were succession in the divine mind, concludes that foreordination, according to Calvin, implies that "God is the author of sin."<sup>2</sup> The error here consists in failing to observe that foreknowledge and foreordination involve certainty, but not necessity.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's Cyc., art. "Socinians."

<sup>2</sup> Bib. Sac., Vol. xix. p. 247.

Thus, Dr. Whedon is logically bound to reject even foreknowledge, as well as foreordination, which is really the Arminian position. Accordingly, the apostasy of Adam and Eve, coming as a contingency which it was not wise for God to foreknow, God was in equity bound to make an atonement as a remedy for that evil which happened through God's own lack of foresight; or, as Alexander Hodge well says, "Arminianism, in its last analysis, makes the redemption of Christ a compensation brought in by the equitable Governor of the world to balance the disabilities brought upon the ill-deserving without their fault by the apostasy of Adam, while Calvinism exalts the redemption of Christ in its execution and in each moment of its application as an adorable act of transcendent grace to the ill-deserving."<sup>1</sup>

Again, from Calvin's view of foreordination and decrees, fatalism does not follow, for foreordination maintains the true causality of the creature and the free self-determination of men and of angels. Thus Calvin was neither a supralapsarian nor a sublapsarian, as he could not be either, having excluded the order of time. Therefore Calvin says, "The perdition of man depends on the divine predestination in such a manner, that the cause and matter of it is found in themselves"; and again, in the same section, "Man falls according to the appointment of divine providence; but he falls by his own fault."<sup>2</sup>

III. A third misapprehension of Calvin is, that his doctrine involves the peculiar fatalism of Stoicism, or at any rate the pantheism of the will.

Now, the pivotal principle of Stoicism is, that the unchangeable law of the universe is the "immanent necessity of reason." All law, evolution, the word of Zeus, providence, fate,—all signify the "immanent necessity of reason,"<sup>3</sup> i. e., of impersonal reason. Thus the highest conception of a God, ac-

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's Cyc., art. "Calvinism."    <sup>2</sup> Inst. iii. 23. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Neander's Church Hist., Vol. i. p. 16.

according to Stoicism, was not a Being who governs all things in wisdom, and for whom each individual has a distinct end to fulfill; not of a Being who can reconcile the good of the whole with the good of the individual, but the All-Spirit from which (not from whom) all individual existence has flowed, and into which, after certain periods, all individual existence is again resolved. Thus the "immanent necessity of reason" was, according to Stoicism, the immanence of an impersonal God, i. e., one form of pantheism. So Greek philosophy in all its forms is more or less pantheistic, as is shown by Brucker, Ritter, Tenneman, and, latest and best, by Döllinger's "Gentile and the Jew in the Court of the Temple of Christ."

It should be said here, that Hegel's system is in close touch and sympathy with the Greek philosophy, and the theology based upon it, in respect to which Dr. Allen, in his "Continuity of Christian Thought," says well that, "The statement of Hegel may differ in form from that of ancient Greek theology, but it is the same thing in its essential principle."<sup>1</sup> Now, Hegel says, that consciousness in man is the same in quality as consciousness in God. He says, "The consciousness which I have of myself is the same in quality as the consciousness which God has of himself."<sup>2</sup> Thus, while in quality the consciousness of God is the same as the consciousness of the individual man, yet in quantity the consciousness of God is equal to the sum of human self-consciousness of the race to date. Thus the divine self-consciousness is absolutely one with the advancing consciousness of mankind; so that Deity is a process ever going on, as by evolution, but never accomplished; so that God is not a person, except as the universal personality, which realizes itself in every human consciousness as so many thoughts of but one eternal mind. At death the individual existence of man ceases by becoming absorbed in the universal consciousness of Deity, just as, with Stoicism, all individual existence, being

<sup>1</sup> P. 431.    <sup>2</sup> Morells' History of Modern Philosophy.

in its nature unreal and transient, is after a period absorbed in the All-Spirit from which it flowed. Thus, according to Greek philosophy, the only reality of human existence is found in the divine immanence, and consists in the identity of the human with the divine, involving pantheistic fatalism, according to which, as Dr. Douglas, one of its advocates, has asserted, "Divine immanency stands opposed to dualism in all its forms;"<sup>1</sup> from which it must follow that we cannot distinguish between the infinite Creator and the finite created, between the infinite Giver of law and the finite creature to receive and keep the law, between the infinite Dispenser of mercy and the finite creature to gladly receive the needed mercy; so that, in short, all dualism disappears, because there is no Creator really other than something which is called God in the process of evolution.

Now the doctrine of Calvin does not involve the fatalism of Stoicism, because:—

1. Calvin affirms the being of a personal God, as Stoicism does not.

2. Calvin affirms the creation of the world out of nothing, *ex nihilo*, by a personal God; while Stoicism affirms the eternity of matter, and that there is no creation other than the evolution of matter into various forms through the force of immanent necessity.

3. Calvin declares, that through the omniscience of a personal God the certainty of future events may be affirmed, but not their necessity; but Stoicism affirms the necessity of future events through the impersonal immanent necessity of reason.

4. Calvin maintains that God made the creatures to be other than himself; but Stoicism maintains that what are called creatures are identical in essence with what it assumes to be God.

5. Calvin's doctrine does not imply the fatalism of Sto-

<sup>1</sup> Bib. Sac., Vol. xlv. p. 332.

icism, because he opposes all pantheism. He does not use the word "pantheism," for this word was first brought into use by Toland nearly one hundred and fifty years after Calvin's death, to designate the doctrine that identifies the totality of being with God, that the whole essence or substance proper is God, and that all phenomena are the necessary phenomena of God's nature. Calvin attacks this doctrine, as in Virgil, where it is said,—

"That God pervades, and like one common soul,  
Fills, feeds, and animates the world's great whole.

He attacks Lucretius for saying, in his "*De Rerum Natura*," that "a universal mind animates and actuates the world."<sup>1</sup> He charged Seneca the Stoic with practicing the subtleties of a profane philosophy in affirming, that "whatever we see, and whatever we do not see, is God."<sup>2</sup> He refutes the doctrine of Servetus, that "in the divine essence there are parts and divisions, every portion of which is God; and especially that the souls of the faithful are coeternal and consubstantial with God; though in another place he assigns substantial Deity, not only to the human soul, but to all created things."<sup>3</sup> Calvin combats the Manichæan error, which Servetus was then attempting to revive and propagate, that "the soul was an emanation from the substance of God,"<sup>4</sup> a doctrine which Neander defines as "pantheistic Monism."<sup>5</sup> In opposition to this doctrine, Calvin says, "By the soul I understand an immortal, yet created essence."<sup>6</sup>

Thus Calvin, with his thorough knowledge of the Greek philosophy, as well as of the theology of the Greek fathers, could not accept their doctrine of the divine immanence, or the doctrine as restated in the pantheism of Hegel, and others.

It should be observed, that now some theologians speak of the divine immanence, meaning by it only the divine omnipresence, and, like the late Dr. H. B. Smith, are careful so to

<sup>1</sup> Inst. i. 5. 5.    <sup>2</sup> Inst. i. 13. 1.    <sup>3</sup> Inst. i. 13. 22.    <sup>4</sup> Inst. i. 15. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Hist., Vol. i. p. 481.    <sup>6</sup> Inst. i. 15. 2.

define it. When used without this explanation, confusion of thought arises, since by the divine immanence a man may mean to assert the immanence of pantheism, and yet be understood to assert the divine omnipresence. The legitimate meaning, however, is the pantheistic, for Morell says rightly that, "Immanence implies the unity of the intelligent principle in creation, in the creation itself, and of course includes in it every genuine form of pantheism."<sup>1</sup>

Now, Calvin held the doctrine of the divine omnipresence firmly and persistently. And yet some of the new theologians declare, that, according to this doctrine, God is only brought into "contact" with his creatures, while they affirm that God must be proclaimed as "indwelling" in man by an organic unity with human nature, which is according to divine immanence. Without this organic unity with man and in man, they say that God is "a non-resident" of the world, which is the doctrine of Deism. But Calvin does not accept the doctrine of Deism, for he is particular to assert, that, while God is the Creator of all things, "he is also their perpetual Governor and Preserver; and that not by a certain universal motion, actuating the whole machine of the world, and all its respective parts, but by a particular providence sustaining, nourishing, and providing for everything which he has made."<sup>2</sup> By the doctrine of the organic unity of the divine with the human, according to the new theologians, it could, indeed, be said that the divine will were confounded with the human will, so as to effect the pantheism of the will, which is their charge against the doctrine of Calvin. But the doctrine of Calvin does not admit of such a charge. They themselves are the true advocates of the pantheism of the will.

Again, the new theologians say, that Augustine, as the predecessor of Calvin, through his doctrine of God as the righteous Governor of the world, was responsible for the Ro-

<sup>1</sup> Manchester Papers, No. 2, p. 108.    <sup>2</sup> Inst. i. 16. 1.

man hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> But this hierarchy rose from the perversion of the doctrines of Augustine, and was especially due to pantheistic ideas. For when it is admitted, according to Greek philosophy as restated by Le Conte, whose philosophy Dr. Lyman Abbott is understood to take as the foundation of his doctrine of evolution, viz., that "the divine spirit is in embryo in man, though in various stages of development,"<sup>2</sup> then the foundation is laid for making a pope of the man who is reputed to have the divine spirit developed in him in the highest degree: and for making cardinals of those in whom the divine spirit is reputed to be developed in a degree less than that of the pope, and so down through the hierarchy. In confirmation of this, witness the hierarchy of the Thibetan Lamaism, founded on the pantheistic doctrine that all things emanate from God, into whom all individual existence will at length be re-absorbed.

IV. The fourth misapprehension is, that, according to Calvin, all infants, or at least some infants, will be damned.

To prove this the passage is quoted, as translated by Allen, which reads: "I inquire again how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of a remedy, should involve so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God."<sup>3</sup> The Latin word *absque*, it was claimed by certain liberals, should have been translated as meaning "without," instead of "independent of," so that the passage would read, according to Professor Norton of Harvard College, "I ask again, how it has come to pass that the fall of Adam has involved so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, and this without remedy, but because such was the will of God." According to Allen's translation, notwithstanding the fall of Adam, infants may be saved from eternal death, because there is a remedy. But,

<sup>1</sup> Allen's *Continuity of Christian Thought*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Andover Review*, Vol. xvi. p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Inst.* iii. 23. 7.

according to Norton's translation, on account of the fall of Adam, infants cannot be saved, because there is no remedy. That Allen's translation is correct, appears from the fact that his rendering of the word *absque* is according to classical Latin usage, which is what was to have been expected, since Calvin was a highly educated classical scholar, and his Latin pronounced by competent judges to be as accurate and elegant as any since the days of Cicero and Virgil, while his French is equally deserving of praise. He wrote the "Institutes" in both languages, and made repeated and parallel revisions of each, except in the last instance, in which he revised the French text, but was unable to make the parallel revision in the Latin, which accounts for some variations between the two texts, but not in such a way as materially to affect the sense.

In support of Calvin's classic use of the word *absque* and of Allen's translation, it is sufficient to observe, that this word was used with this meaning by Terrence 160 years B. C., and by the philologist Aulus Gellius in the second century A. D. That the word may be rendered according to Norton when the collocation requires it is of no consequence in this case, for here the collocation requires Allen's rendering to make Calvin consistent with himself, as the other rendering does not, since elsewhere Calvin affirms a remedy for the consequences of Adam's fall. This rule of interpretation, requiring that, when possible, the consistency of an author must be maintained, ought to have been respected by Socinians, since it was urged by a man of no less ability than Grotius, for whom Socinians are supposed to have had great respect. Why Professor Norton did not respect this rule in this case may be accounted for on the hypothesis, either of his ignorance of Latin, or his lack of honesty as an interpreter: while in either case he could hardly be estimated as really a great scholar and thinker of the much-boasted nineteenth century,

unless it were shown that this boast in certain quarters were made in vain.

Again, it has been said, that Calvin does affirm the indiscriminate damnation of infants, and, to prove this, reference is made to this passage, "Therefore even infants themselves bring their own condemnation into the world with them, who, though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet have the seed of it within them."<sup>1</sup> But the context shows that Calvin means here by the term "condemnation," as elsewhere, that desert of condemnation which rests upon all, both adults and infants, who remain without interposition from the grace of Christ. This appears further from his refutation of Servetus, where he says, "Now, though I grant that all the descendants of Adam, being carnal, bring their condemnation into the world with them, yet I deny that this is any impediment to a remedy, as soon as God is pleased to impart it."<sup>2</sup>

But again it is said, that Calvin himself did relent in view of the decree, when he confessed it to be *decretum horribile*, a "horrible decree."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Schaff, with many others, has expressed great satisfaction with this confession, as in evidence that Calvin in this relenting showed that his heart was so much better than his head, in asserting itself in spite of his hard theology. But they all might have been saved from this waste of condolence by reflecting that the Latin *horribilis* has a wider use than the English word "horrible" of similar sound. Cicero and Cæsar sometimes use it to express what is frightful and horrible, in the sense of a horrible massacre, but it is also used by Petronius and others to signify what is very great, astonishing, sacred, awful, venerable. There is hardly a tyro in Latin who has not learned that it is unwise to render a Latin word into English by using an English word of similar sound. So Lucretius uses the Latin word *horror*, in describing the worship of the gods as originating in the "Mortalibus

<sup>1</sup> Inst. iv. 15. 10.    <sup>2</sup> Inst. iv. 16. 31.    <sup>3</sup> Inst. iii. 23. 7.

insitus horror," not meaning the English "horror," but the "astonishment" awakened in the minds of men. Accordingly, Allen does not translate *decretum horribile* as though it represented the action of God towards infants as comparable to the action of Herod in the horrible massacre of the children of Bethlehem, as some have said it did, but he gives the true sense of Calvin as an "awful decree," something astonishing, sacred, dreadful, in the reverential sense; as Jacob, when he awoke from his vision of the Lord, exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place." So Calvin looked with reverential awe upon the divine decree, in which was mirrored the certainty of all events, and, instead of any relenting of heart as against what was true in the head, he was filled with heartfelt adoration. Dr. Schaff is as unfortunate in his judgment of Calvin in this respect as when, in the *Evangelist* of November 14, 1889, he asserted that the Gallican, Belgic, Second Helvetic, First Scotch, and Dort symbols are silent on the decree of reprobation and preterition, which statement was proved to be an error from the "Creeds of Christendom," edited by himself.

That Calvin's view of the *decretum horribile* is the one here given is shown by his language respecting it in other places; as when, in the next section, he says, "*Predestinatio occultæ quidem*," using *occultæ* instead of *horribile*, meaning that which is "concealed," "mysterious," representing that the divine decree is in its depth beyond the human understanding.

Again, in answer to Servetus' objection, that "infants cannot be accounted new creatures, because they are not begotten by the Word," Calvin replies, "I must again repeat what I have so often remarked, that the doctrine of the gospel is the incorruptible seed, to regenerate those who are capable of understanding it; but that where, by reason of age, there is not yet any capacity of learning, God has his different degrees of regenerating,"<sup>1</sup> the Latin of the last clause,

<sup>1</sup> Inst. iv. 16. 31.

according to Tholuck's text, being "Deum tenere suos regenerandi gradus"; to which is added, in the French text, the clause, "ceux qu'il a adoptez," so that, combining the two, as Allen does in his English version, the passage reads, "where there is not yet any capacity of learning, God has his different degrees of regenerating those whom he has adopted." Now, while it is but fair to give here the clause in the French text, an equivalent for which is not found in the Latin text, it proves nothing contrary to what has already been advanced, when it is shown that Calvin is everywhere consistent with himself in assuming the adoption of all who die in infancy. Thus, when Calvin speaks of elect infants, it is not with the implication that there are non-elect infants, but in opposition to a scheme which does not allow of election at all: thus, Calvin writes to Servetus, "I do not doubt that when God removes infants from the world, they are regenerated by the secret influences of the Holy Spirit";<sup>1</sup> according to which there is no limitation as to the number of infants. Thus again, when Servetus argued, from John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life," that, "therefore infants who are incapable of believing, remain in their condemnation"; Calvin replies, "that in this passage Christ is not speaking of the general guilt in which all the descendants of Adam are involved, but only threatening the despisers of the gospel who proudly and obstinately reject the grace which is offered to them; and this has nothing to do with infants. I likewise oppose a contrary argument; all those whom Christ blesses are exempted from the curse of Adam and the wrath of God; and as it is known that infants were blessed by him, it follows that they are exempted from death":<sup>2</sup> according to which, as before, there is no limitation as to the number of infants.

In the *Congregationalist* of February 19, 1858, there is an

<sup>1</sup> Calvin's Letters to Servetus.    <sup>2</sup> Inst. iv. 16. 31.

exhaustive argument showing that infant perdition is not a doctrine of the orthodox faith, supposed to have been written by the facile pen of the late Dr. Dexter; which, besides Calvin, reviews Calvinism in general, and in which it is said, "The capital to be made out of outraged humanity, if the public can be persuaded to believe that the orthodox hold and would teach, if they dared, the stale slander which has so many times been alleged against them [to be indignantly refuted], that hell is paved with infant skulls, is such, that it is, perhaps, hoping too much from unsanctified men, to hope that they will ever cease from that charge, in the face of whatever evidence to the contrary, since they may always reasonably expect that some persons will read their slander who will never see its refutation."

If the author of these words were now here, he would find them verified again in a late eulogy of Dr. Holmes by a Unitarian clergyman of Boston, declaring that the deceased left the religion of his father because he could not endure the orthodox doctrine of the damnation of infants; while yet another Unitarian clergyman of Boston, in his attack on the "Pastoral of the Episcopal Bishops," declares that "it holds the fiercest doctrines of Calvin, that by implication the Prayer-Book teaches infant damnation, and that the House of Bishops declare this essential to be believed"; all of which is further proof that there be some who arrogate to themselves the title of great thinkers in the nineteenth century, whom, though one bray them in a logical mortar with a pestle, yet doth not their conceit depart from them.

V. Another misapprehension of Calvin makes the comparison between him and Luther invidious to Calvin.

It is true that Calvin used vigorous language in confuting his opponents, sometimes charging them with madness, especially those of the papal church, with all rejecters of the Bible. But Luther used language equally vigorous. When the Zwickau prophets came to him, ridiculing the clinging so

closely to the Bible, claiming that it was of no use to have got rid of the authority of the Pope if now the Bible must be Pope; and exclaiming, "It is by the Spirit alone that we can be enlightened. God himself speaks within us. God himself reveals to us what we should do, and what we should preach,"—a doctrine, by the way, now being recovered in certain quarters, and identified by the cry against the Bible, that it is not in the dogma of biblical doctrine, not in the words of the Bible, not even in the words of Christ himself, not in what Christ said, nor in what Christ did, but the Spirit within man as the person of Christ, which alone constitutes the Christian life,—when the prophets of Zwickau came to Luther with this confession of their creed, Luther replied: "Since nothing which you have said respecting your Spirit is based upon Holy Scripture, I slap your Spirit on the snout";<sup>1</sup> a slap which this illegitimate Spirit deserves as much in the nineteenth century as it did in the sixteenth.

It is generally agreed that, with the exception of the Eucharist, Luther's doctrine in his final statement does not differ essentially from that of Calvin. The difference is largely one of method. The system of Calvin begins with God and thence descends through the course of history, or, as has been said, "it begins at the top and comes down"; while the system of Luther begins below and ascends through history up to God. The system of Calvin takes the Scripture as the supreme source of doctrine; while the system of Luther, taking the Scripture as the "norm," or model of doctrine, admits the handing down apart from Scripture of a pure tradition within the church; by which subsequently the door was open for the admission of errors which, doubtless, Luther did not foresee. Through this door, pantheism found access to Lutheranism as it did not to Calvinism. Thus, according to Krauth, "the theology of the nineteenth century could only have risen in a land which had received the ineffaceable impression of

<sup>1</sup> D'Aubigné's *Hist. Ref.*, Vol. iii. pp. 46, 72, 73.

Lutheran life and thought. The grandeur of the wildest perversions of this theology and the ruins of its most unsparing destructiveness were only possible on the presupposition of eras of gigantic building. The ancient Lutheran theology, after the storm of war had swept over it, stood like Tadmor in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

Now it is natural that the system of Luther, being accessible to pantheism as the system of Calvin is not, should receive special favor from the Rev. Aubrey Moore, author of one of the essays in "*Lux Mundi*"; a volume which, confessed to be the "expression of a common mind" by its authors, maintains that "spirit and matter, as we call them, are now known to intermingle and blend, and fringe off, and fade into each other," so that matter is visible spirit, and spirit is invisible matter. In thus denying the distinction between the natural and the supernatural, the author maintains a form of pantheism whose nature is only partially disguised by calling it "higher pantheism," or "Christian pantheism." In reality it assumes that the Incarnation is but an evolution, since "the Incarnation may be said to have introduced a new species into the world—a Divine man transcending past humanity, as humanity transcended the rest of the animal creation, and communicating his vital energy by a spiritual process to subsequent generations of men."<sup>2</sup> This explains the position of Mr. Moore when he says that the system of Calvin is "awful and immoral." In support of this statement, he quotes J. S. Mill as saying, "I will call no being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures." Mr. Moore says, that these words of Mill are "a noble assertion of immutable morality," against a religion which Mill mistook for Christianity; and because Mill could not call a God good who should permit sin, or, having permitted sin, should allow a vicarious atonement to be made through the volun-

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's *Cyc.*, art. "Lutheran Church."

<sup>2</sup> *Lux Mundi*, p. 172.

tary suffering of an innocent and holy being. But when Mill, to escape this awful conclusion, finds as the logical result of his masterly science, as he does, that the being whom he calls God is not omnipotent, that his power is limited in various ways, so that evil and sin exist because God cannot help it, thus asserting that behind the divine personality there are impersonal forces of evolution which, according to Mill's conception, God cannot control; and when, moreover, it appears that, according to Mill's sensational philosophy, "we can never reach the valid conception of a God,"<sup>1</sup> then we perceive it to be Mill's real purpose to affirm the being of no God but that of a pantheistic evolution, or what has been called a materialistic pantheism. But this conception receives no favor from the Scriptures, to say nothing of Luther or Calvin. Therefore it does not seem worth while to effect any readjustment of theology for the sake of Mr. Mill, or any other scientists, in the endeavor to make the Word of God more agreeable to them, as Mr. Moore and his associates propose. For it does not appear that God's Holy Word, flowing out from the eternal throne like a crystal river, can be made more pellucid or life-giving by draining into it the sewage of any scientific ink factory. Nor does it appear that the pantheism which favors such a proceeding should be called Christian. As, when the Apostle spoke of Satan himself as transformed into an angel of light, he is not supposed to have given authority for christening the arch-apostate as a Christian Satan; so, by parity of reasoning, no authority is given for calling pantheism Christian, whatever its hallucinations.

VI. A sixth misapprehension is, that the Christology of to-day as represented in the new theology is the result of advanced thought unknown to Calvin.

Though there are varieties of expression in respect to this christology, they may be reduced to two, which are old in their origin. According to the first, Christ has one person,

<sup>1</sup> Morell's Hist. Philos.

and one nature in which the divine and the human interpenetrate each other, so that the predicates of the divine and the human are interchangeable. In the abstract the divine and the human may be spoken of as separate, but in the concrete reality they form one "indissoluble unity." The inference easily drawn from this unity is, that humanity must have its ground of reality in the very essence of God; else how were it possible for the divine and the human to be formed into the "indissoluble unity" of the person of Christ? These notions were variously expressed by Cyril of Alexandria, and others.

According to the other view referred to,—the Antiochian, of which Theodore of Mopsuestia was the teacher,—the Christ while on earth had two persons and two natures, "abiding without disturbance each in its own purity and completeness in a relation which might be called a certain fellowship, but not a unity of essence."<sup>1</sup> The person of the man Jesus being distinct from Deity, though having a knowledge transcending the previous capabilities of human nature, had nevertheless no participation in the divine omniscience, while on earth; thus furnishing the ground for the doctrine of the ignorance of Christ, called at that time Agnoëtism, and afterwards, Kenosis. The man Jesus, however, grew in wisdom and corresponding virtue during all his earthly trial, for which, as a reward, he was at his ascension into glory exalted to the divine immutability, omniscience, and omnipresence, i. e., the human nature of Christ became identical with the divine nature, so that, from this theory also, the inference is drawn that humanity had its primal reality in the divine substance. As Theodore held that this deification of the human nature of Christ was the goal to be reached by all human existence, his theory involved through evolution the pantheistic principle of the identity of the human with the divine, and also the

<sup>1</sup> Neander *in loco*.

doctrine of universal salvation in the form of restoration through this process of evolution.

This doctrine was revived by Felix of Urgel, in Spain, under the title of Adoptianism, which he gave to Theodore's deification of the man Jesus; i. e., the adoption of the human nature into the divine essence. This doctrine was refuted by Alcuin in the year 800, when Felix professed to abandon it. It appeared again in the pantheism of Erigena, who held that the body of Christ, being omnipresent, was really present in the bread of the Eucharist. This doctrine was revived by Andrew Osiander, who affirmed the old doctrine of the oneness of God and man; which Calvin refutes at length in the "Institutes," a doctrine which, according to Baur, found its scientific expression by Schleiermacher and Hegel in the affirmation that the divine nature is the truth of humanity, and that human nature is the reality or existence form of the divine nature, since Christ as Redeemer is the perfect creation of human nature.

In opposing this doctrine as held by Osiander, Calvin charges him with holding a doctrine contrary to Scripture, in conceiving a notion similar to what was held by the Manichees, so that he wished to transfuse the divine essence into men, and so asserts that Christ's essence is blended with ours, and so introduces a mixture of substances by which God, transfusing himself into us, makes us, as it were, a part of himself. Holding, according to the Council of Chalcedon, that Christ had one person and two natures, Calvin says, in speaking of the Eucharist: "As we have not the least doubt that Christ's body is finite, according to the invariable condition of a human body, and is contained in heaven, where it was once received, till it shall return to judgment, so we esteem it utterly unlawful to bring it back under these corruptible elements, or to imagine it to be present everywhere. Nor is there any need of this—since the Lord by his Spirit gives us the privilege of being united with himself, so that the Spirit is, as it

were, the channel by which all that Christ himself is and has is conveyed to us."<sup>1</sup>

Schwenkfeld, at first greatly interested in the Reformation, afterwards adopted the doctrine of the deification of Christ, being led to it in part by Luther's doctrine respecting the Eucharist, and in such a manner as to show that the incarnation was a measure by which the divine nature was confounded with human nature. In short, this was the principle variously expressed according to which the opponents of the deliverance of the Council of Chalcedon formulated their attack, as in the case of Schleiermacher, Baur, Rothe, and the modern Kenotists.

This attack upon the christology of Chalcedon is continued in the various phases of the new theology of to-day. It affirms the doctrine of Cyril in part, accepts the doctrine of agnoë-tism or kenosis, with the deification of Christ's humanity after his resurrection in what is called Christ's "delocalization," and asserts that the chief import of the incarnation lies in the organic union between the divine and the human, and that Christ's divinity is in nothing more clearly shown than in his perfect humanity; thus refurnishing the ground for the reaffirmation of the ancient declaration, that humanity is co-eternal and consubstantial with the nature of Deity.

This christology is maintained sometimes at the cost of misrepresentation, an instance of which occurs in a mistranslation of a passage in the "Incarnatione Verbi Dei" of Athanasius. Athanasius, speaking of the exaltation of men through faith in Christ, says that "He was made man that we might be made gods." But Mr. T. Herbert Bindley, of Oxford, translates the passage, "He became man that we might be made God."<sup>2</sup> The Greek word *θεοποιέω* does not warrant this rendering, for it applies more particularly to the artistic sense of making statues, or likenesses, of gods, and so

<sup>1</sup> Inst. iv. 17. 12.

<sup>2</sup> De Incarnatione Verbi Dei, 54.

requires the plural-gods, and not God. In this sense Athanasius could indicate the Christian life as becoming in conformity to the moral likeness of the divine without committing himself in any manner to polytheism. He could use the notion of the exaltation of men so as to be called heroes and gods, to illustrate the higher life attained by men through the incarnation by faith in Christ. In the Latin version published at Strassburg in 1522, and in another Latin version published in Paris in 1627, this passage is translated according to the Greek text of Athanasius, using the Latin for "gods": the former being "ut nos efficeret deos," and the latter "ut nos dii efficeremur." Yet Mr. Moore quotes this passage according to Mr. Bindley's translation, and apparently for the purpose of deriving from it some support for pantheism. The passage is translated in harmony with Bindley in the version of Athanasius under the editorial supervision of Schaff and Wace, and also in other passages, where Athanasius, with the same intention, uses the Greek *θεοί*, "gods," this version renders it as though it were written *θεός*, "God"; with the apology for this mistranslation, that the plural-gods has the heathenish associations of polytheism; and so they change the plural of Athanasius' text to the singular, and thus carry the passage into the heathenish associations of pantheism; and this, when Athanasius furnishes no reason for being charged with exposing himself to either form of heathenish associations. As Athanasius guarded himself against polytheism, so he especially guarded himself against pantheism, as, in reference to the Saviour's prayer in John xvii., he says, "the Saviour then saying of us, 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they too may be one in us,' does not signify that we are to have identity with him."<sup>1</sup>

The attempt is sometimes made to soften the doctrine of identity in this christology by claiming a transcendence of difference, correspondence, or contrast. It is said that, while

<sup>1</sup> Oratio iii. 25.

there is a real identity of the divine with the human in the person of Christ, by which he is in organic unity with the race; there is a transcendence of difference, and contrast of such infinite and eternal proportions that, in comparison with it, Christ's identity with man is a small matter. Now, this argument is unsatisfactory, because the identity is one of quality, while the transcendence is one of quantity. If the quality is pantheistic, then that quality cannot be changed or minimized by any increase of its quantity. The quality of an ounce of silver is unchanged by placing it in contrast with a transcendent mass of the same metal. If the bayou that indents the shore of the ocean contains salt water by contact, its identity is unchanged by the transcendent quantity of the comparatively limitless ocean that lies in contrast with the bayou.

VII. The seventh misapprehension of Calvin is, that, the New England theology is a mediating theology between the doctrine of Calvin and the new theology, or what is called the theology of to-day, and that, as it is said, it furnishes a proper transition from the former to the latter.

Now, though the New England theology is styled "consistent Calvinism," its general purpose is not to contradict Calvin, but to make some points in his doctrine clearer to the general apprehension, and also to show the consistency of Calvin's doctrine by delivering it from some wrong interpretations on the part of those who adopt a Calvinism inconsistent with Calvin. This can be briefly indicated by referring:—

I. First, to the doctrine of sin according to the New England theology. Here the distinction is made between original sin and actual sin, or sin as the known transgression of law according to the forensic idea. To this sin, guilt is properly attached, as it could not be to a child before coming to the age of understanding, although the child is a sinner by heredity, and must be saved through a work of the Holy Spirit no less than the adult. But this is entirely consistent

with Calvin's doctrine, while it relieves his doctrine of the seeming inconsistency of calling an infant actually guilty before it has come to know either good or evil.

2. Secondly, in the New England theology, the distinction between certainty and necessity admitted by Calvin, is drawn out with greater clearness, and completeness of illustration. In this connection the divine decrees are also set forth according to Calvin, but more impressively, in consequence of a more elaborate discussion than Calvin had room for on account of the brevity of his plan. On this subject the New England theology rules out the order of time, and keeps it out, in the declaration that God no more decrees from all eternity than to all eternity.

It is proper to observe that the New England theology is here considered according to its great master and faithful interpreter, Dr. Park, whose profound learning and brilliant powers of analysis enabled him to render this theology with a view to its just balance of parts and harmony of proportion.

3. In the third place, the New England theology explains and emphasizes Calvin's doctrine of total depravity, by showing that it does not consist in the depravity of the faculties themselves, so much as in putting to a wrong use faculties which in themselves are comparatively good and efficient. It is in this connection affirmed that man has such a good faculty of will that he can repent, and that depravity is here evinced in the fact that when man can repent, he won't repent; that when the sinner has the natural ability to repent, such is his moral inability—improperly so called—which consists only in the sinner's purposed obstinacy, that he will not repent. And this ability to repent is affirmed by every instance of remorse in which the sinner's conscience shudders under the awful conviction, that, when the sinner knew that he could repent, he would not repent. But in thus affirming that the sinner can repent, it is denied that the sinner can renew his own heart; thus excluding all Pelagian and Armin-

ian synergism, as that there are two efficient agents in regeneration, since this is alone the work of God the Holy Spirit, which he performs according to his good pleasure at the same moment with the sinner's repentance, and ever after sustains the penitent in the righteousness which is by faith in Christ. Thus, since regeneration is a divine act, there is nothing here asserted contrary to regeneration as held by Calvin.

4. In the fourth place, the general atonement as held in the New England theology gives no countenance to such a departure from Calvin's doctrine as to favor pantheistic universalism positively proclaimed, or cautiously implied; or the pantheistic christology which affirms the universal headship of Christ, according to Rely and Murray, and which is as certainly logically committed to the doctrine of universal salvation now, as it was by the Antiochian school, however it may be evaded or ignorantly denied.

Misapprehension arises here from not taking into definite account how much is meant by General Atonement. A clue to its meaning is found in the distinction which the New England theology makes between God's love of benevolence and his love of complacency. In his love of benevolence, desiring the salvation of all men, God makes atonement which is sufficient for all. To this sufficiency all agree, even those who prefer to speak of the atonement as limited. This is the doctrine both of the Synod of Dort and of Princeton, that no man perishes for want of an atonement, because what is sufficient for the salvation of one is sufficient for the salvation of all. It is agreed then that the atonement is a gracious provision for all, and so ordained through God's love of benevolence. But the effect of the atonement is such that only those who accept it in faith become the objects of God's love of complacency. They only enter into spiritual communion with God through Christ by having God's love of complacency shed abroad in their hearts. Thus, whatever the general sufficiency of the atonement, the actual efficiency of the

atonement is limited to those who receive it in faith. And here the question arises, whether it is more philosophical to define a doctrine according to what might be conceived as its possible result, or according to its actual result. Doubtless, all but Universalists will readily admit, that, defined by its actual results, the atonement is limited; while, defined in the light of God's love of benevolence, the atonement is general in the sense of being sufficient for all. But to argue from this that the New England theology has taken a step in transition from the doctrine of Calvin towards the doctrine of Universalism in any form, or towards the so-called Broad Church, or towards any form of what is called the reconstructed theology of to-day, is absurd.

5. In the fifth place, the New England theology furnishes no warrant for the call now made to go back to Clement, and learn from him how to consider Christianity as a universal religion by receiving into it elements from all other religions of the nations, on the ground that their great teachers were as truly prophets, in God's plan of educating mankind, as were the Jewish prophets. This is hardly in keeping with the advantages of the Jews above those of all other people in having committed to them the oracles of God, as declared by St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> In this light, salvation is of the Jews, and, as coming from that source, is to be preached to all nations for their acceptance. It is easy to see how Clement was led to his position. When Christ was preached to the Greeks and the prophets rehearsed concerning him, as Christ himself rehearsed them to his disciples, it was natural that the national pride of the Greeks should be offended, and that they should ask, Have we then no prophets, no divine teachers? As Naaman thought that the waters of Damascus were better than all the waters of Israel, so there were those among the Greeks who thought that their philosophers and wise men were better than all the prophets of Judah. Then came, through

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 2.

Clement and others, the process of settling this difference by the compromise of endeavoring to combine the teachings of pagan philosophy with the teachings of the Scriptures, and thus, as many a church historian has stated it, there was brought into what was assumed to be Christian doctrine a pantheistic incubus of corruption lasting more than a thousand years, with many of its corruptions extending in some directions to the present hour.

It is not strange that they would like to repeat this compromise to-day who desire to go back to Clement; that they also advocate this policy of compromise with the philosophy of the East, so as to confound the Christ of the Scriptures with the Oriental Christ of Mozoomdar, according to which it is said, as at the Parliament of Religions, that, "To-day no greater obstacle exists to the success of foreign missions than the unchristian and antagonistic attitude of missionaries to other faiths and philosophies"; as though a missionary, instead of being an ambassador of Christ to declare his whole counsel according to the instructions of his word, were only a member of a board of arbitration to settle the differences between the Christian religion and pagan philosophies by compromise. Those who say that the doctrine of Calvin cuts the nerve of missions would find that, were this compromise carried, there would be no missions in existence to require nerve, for the process of carrying the pantheism of the West to the pantheism of the East were as useless, to use an English saying, as to carry coals to Newcastle, where there is enough of coals already. The New England theology sanctions such an experiment no more than does Calvin's doctrine.

Not back to Clement, but to the Scriptures as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and to Christ their central thought; not the Christ of the pagan Logos of Alexandria, but the Christ promised in the Garden, the Christ of the Abrahamic covenant, the typical Christ of the Jewish ritual, the David of the Psalms, the Messiah of the prophets, the Christ

incarnate of the Gospels, the preached Christ of the Acts, the doctrinal Christ of the Epistles, the Christ with his church triumphant in the Apocalypse. Thus there is something fixed so that it cannot be moved or overturned, however the heathen rage against the King whom God has set in his holy hill; and so, because the Word of the Lord is forever settled in heaven, there is no prospect that a biblical theology will be overturned on earth by any pantheistic squall of wind in the name of any advanced thought, either to-day or to-morrow.