

our quickened and renewed spirits can work happily and happily express all that is in them? He who has given us his Spirit, shall He not with Him freely give us all things that pertain to life and godliness? The gift we already possess—is not that the surest pledge, the strongest guarantee, that all which is necessary to complete the gift will be added unto it?

In fine, I know no verse in the New Testament richer in strength and consolation for as many of us as are apt to despond of themselves, if not to despair. As we enter into its meaning, we may well take courage and brush away our fears. We *have* the Spirit of life within us or we should never have been quickened to new life and new aims; and in that Spirit we have an infallible proof and assurance that at last, even in us, mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

S. Cox.

CALVIN AS AN EXPOSITOR.

It must be admitted that Calvin is not an attractive figure in the history of the Reformation. The mass of mankind revolt against the ruthless logical rigidity of his "*horribile decretum*," and dislike the thought of the theocratic sacerdotalism which he established at Geneva. Above all, they find it impossible to forgive him for the judicial murder of Servetus. It may of course be pleaded, that in that deed of persecution, he only acted in accordance with the views of his own day, and that his conduct throughout the bad business was approved even by the mild and shrinking Melancthon. But the fact remains that Calvin has never inspired a tithe of the affection which has been lavished on the memory of the more passionate, genial, and largehearted Luther. It has been felt that in many respects he gave us back the

tyranny and arrogance of Romanism, and illustrated the truth of Milton's bitter complaint that

“New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large.”

It is perhaps in consequence of these feelings that Calvin's immense merits as an Expositor have been somewhat grudgingly recognised. Richard Simon in his *Histoire des Commentateurs*, while he admits that apart from dogmatic views Calvin's commentaries would be useful to all the world, yet betrays his dislike by the exceedingly unjust and demonstrably false remark, that Calvin only knew Greek moderately, and knew no more of Hebrew than the letters.¹ E. W. Meyer complains of his masterful dogmatism as detracting from the value of his exegetic works.² Winer, in the first two editions of his Commentary on the Galatians, did not mention his name, though in the third he praises his subtlety, perspicuity, and insight. Bayle, however, does him full justice as “a man on whom God had conferred great talents, much wit, an exquisite judgment, a faithful memory, a pen solid and eloquent, indefatigable toil, great knowledge, great zeal for truth.” Even Scaliger exclaims, “Oh, how excellently does Calvin attain to the meaning of the Prophets—no one better!” One of the reasons which Pole in the preface to his *Synopsis* assigns for not frequently referring to him is, that Calvin's successors have borrowed from him so largely that to quote from them is to quote from him. In modern times he has been generally and justly regarded as the greatest exegete of the age of the

¹ R. Simon, *l.c.* p. 747. To avoid overlaying the notes with references, I may mention that in writing this article, besides the Prefaces and Commentaries of Calvin, I have consulted R. Simon, Klausen, *Hermeneutik*, 227 *fg.*; Meyer, *Gesch. d. Schrifterkl.* vol. ii. pp. 448–475; Diestel, *Gesch. d. Alt. Test.* pp. 289–230 *fg.*; Reuss, *Gesch. d. Heil. Schrift. Neu. Test.*, § 569, etc.; Dr. Beard's *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 258 *fg.*; Tholuck, *Vermischte Schriften*, ii. 330–360; Bungener, *Life of Calvin*; Dyer's *Life of Calvin*; the article on Calvin, in Haag, *La France Protestante*; and especially Merx, *Joel*, pp. 428–444.

² *Gesch. d. Schrifterklärung*, vol. ii. p. 450.

Reformation. His commentaries are at the present day far more frequently consulted, and are indeed far better worth consulting, than those of Melancthon, Zwingli, or even Luther. They still live, while those of Musculus, Chytræus, Brentius, Bugenhagen, Baldwin, Bullinger, Beza, Bucer, Mercer, Camerarius, and a host of other Reformation Expositors, are for all practical purposes dead. Semler charged him with copying Pellicanus, but Tholuck finds the charge untenable. He was more indebted to Bucer than to others,¹ but he was as original as he was powerful; and the fact that an English translation of his voluminous commentaries has been so recently published shews the living estimation in which he still is held. The *extent* of his services as a commentator is one of the elements of our gratitude to him. Luther only left a complete commentary on one Epistle of St. Paul, but Calvin wrote on the whole New Testament, with the single exception of the Apocalypse. He also wrote on the whole of the Old Testament, except on a few of the historic and hagiographic books. He tells us that his Harmony of the Gospels cost him severe labour. Like all writers, he is unequal. He is not always at his best, as he is in the commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's letters. Some of his notes and Lectures, especially those on the Minor Prophets, were written without elaborate study; but the fact remains that he was beyond all question the greatest exegete of the Reformation Age, which produced greater exegetes than all the long preceding centuries.

We find in Calvin the same general characteristics which mark his immediate predecessors, but the vigour of his intellect, his logic, his fearlessness, his insight, enabled him to follow the same principles with more consistency. He

¹ In his Dedication to the Gospel Harmony, he says, "Bucerum præsertim, sanctæ memoriæ virum, et eximium Ecclesiæ doctorem sum imitatus." He says that he availed himself of Bucer's industry, as Bucer had availed himself of the labour of the ancients. In his Preface to the Psalms he also praises Musculus.

dwelt, as they did, on the necessity for finding one certain and simple sense. Like them, he set aside the inherent and superior authority of the Fathers.¹ Like them he totally rejected the fourfold sense, and abandoned the use of Allegory. But in carrying out these views, he shewed that he held them with a firmer grasp, as indeed was natural in the case of one who belonged to a later generation of Reformers. Thus, loudly as Luther and Melancthon declaim against the use of Allegory, which Melancthon² calls one of the ways of producing a *prodigiosa metamorphosis* in the meaning of Scripture, they both indulge in it far too freely. Calvin says that "since for many centuries no one was considered to shew any acumen who was not willing subtly to transfigure the word of God, that is nothing but a device of the devil (*commentum Satanae*),³ to annihilate the dignity of Scripture"; and he shakes off the influence of these long centuries far more completely than had been ever done before. Even where he is most hard pressed, he will scarcely admit the use of the word "allegory." Thus in his comment on Joel iii. 7, 8, he says that it would be "puerile" to understand the passage literally, and yet he says that it would be "far fetched (*coactum*) to take it allegorically," and that he "gladly abstains from allegories because there is nothing in them firm and solid."⁴ Yet we must not be surprised that even Calvin is so far fettered as to yield to the subjective rationalism of explaining away the plain words of the author by introducing the conception

¹ Calvin is however less sweeping and more conservative than Luther in his attitude towards exegetic *tradition*. In his Preface to the Romans he says that we should always be careful not to be influenced by the spirit of controversy or the desire for novelty, and should only abandon an accepted view, "*necessitate coacti nec aliud quaerentes quam prodesse*." In an admirable passage in the Preface to the Institutes, he says that "it is false to say that we despise the Fathers" who (as he shews) agreed in many points with Reformation principles.

² Melancthon, *Element. Rhetorices*, vol. i. p. 90.

³ *Comm. in Gal.* iv. 22.

⁴ "Afinis sacrilegio audacia est Scripturas temere huc illuc versare et quasi in re lusoria lascivire."—*Praef. in Rom.*

of "the Church," in the place of the Jews, and by totally impossible glosses, instead of contenting himself with a rigid adherence to his own admirable rule, that it is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think that he *ought* to say.¹

Much of Calvin's excellence is due to the Divine training which he, in common with other great Reformers, had the blessing to enjoy. Shelley has said,—

"Most wretched men
Are cradled into poetry by wrong:
They learn in suffering what they teach in song."²

The same thing is eminently true of great religious teachers. Almost all of them have been taught essential truths by bitter experience.

It is common to attribute the Reformation to the Revival of Letters. It had its root—so many have said—in Humanism, and the study of "the Humanities." This is no doubt true; but the *litterae humaniores* would have led Europe, as they led men like Bembo, and Bibbiena, and Leo X., to an elegant paganism if they had not been combined with deep religious emotions. If Luther found in Justification by Faith a key to the teaching of St. Paul; if the invitation to the weary and heavy laden was to Zwingli the essence of the Gospel; if Christianity revealed itself to Calvin under the aspect of the opposition of the world to God,—the reason was that the Reformers of Wittenberg, Zurich, and Geneva had been placed in the forefront of the great battle of truth, and amid fears and fightings had found in Holy Scripture alone the teaching which enabled them to bear their troubles and overcome their doubts. The education of life had given them that insight into the human heart (*Menschenkenntniss*), which Schleiermacher

¹ See Præf. in Rom.

² Julian and Maddalo.

declared to be indispensable to the true interpreter. Luther had recognized that it was the trials of life which had opened to him the understanding of St. Paul. Calvin makes the same remark in the famous Preface to the Psalms, which tells us almost all we know of his inner life. That commentary on the Psalms is a masterpiece of psychological analysis, and like his set of Discourses on the Book of Job, which was so dear to Admiral Coligny, it was highly valued because in both Calvin had drawn many of his lessons from that which he had himself seen of the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, of the human heart. "If," he said, "the perusal of these my commentaries brings as great advancement to the Church of God as I have found in them myself, I shall have no occasion to repent of having undertaken this labour. *I am wont to call this book an anatomy of all the parts of the soul.* The Holy Ghost has here vividly described the sorrows, sadnesses, fears, doubts, hopes, anxieties, and perplexities, and even the confused emotions by which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. The experience which I have gained from the combats in which the Lord has exercised me, albeit it has not been very great, has greatly helped me therein." Comparing his own struggles to those of David, he says, that personal experience has helped him not only to apply to present use whatever doctrine he had learnt, but also to find an easier path to understand the meaning of the writer. God, he says, "had so led and whirled him about as to bring him into light and action, by leaving him no repose in any place whatever."

The prevalence then of deep religious feeling is one element which gives a value throughout to the Commentaries of Calvin. Tholuck, who has written an admirable study on them,¹ says that to read the Old Testament under his

¹ *Die Verdienste Calvin's als Ausleger der Heiligen Schrift.* (Vermischte Schriften. ii.)

guidance would be to deepen our sense of its practical religious value. On Isaiah xxxvi. 15 he dwells on the ease with which people are perverted by their immediate interests, and our temptation to think too much of what is at hand. On Micah iv. 6 he reminds us that a Church which is darkened is not necessarily dead, and makes the fine remark that "no Church can live without many resurrections." On Isaiah xiii. he speaks of the unreality through which men fail really to believe in the Providence which they profess to acknowledge. In days so prolific as our own of homiletic material—I had almost said sermon-pemmican—it may be useful to point to Calvin as a source of clear and manly thought. There is a specially beautiful passage in his Preface to the Commentaries on the Corinthians which he addressed to Galeazzo Caraccioli, who, though he was a nephew to Pope Paul IV., had forsaken all and joined the Protestant cause. Calvin's exhortations to self-denial for Christ's sake derived additional force from his own contented poverty. Calvin never adopts the weak plan of "improving the text" by commonplace homiletics, but his knowledge of life gives vividness to the scenes and characters, and his religious remarks are not dragged in, but spring naturally from the text which he has to explain.

We may speak of his special characteristics under two heads—merits of form, and merits in treatment.

I. Under the merits of form in Calvin's exegetical works we may mention—

a. His neatness and precision of language. His Latin is admirable; like Milton's, it is the Latin of a man, not of an echo. It is human, not Ciceronian. He scorned from the depth of his heart the euphuistic Paganism of Renaissance Latinists who, in their classic affectation, could only talk of the Holy Spirit as "the breath of the Celestial Zephyr"; of the Church as a Republic; of an Angel as a genius; of

conversion as an *emendatio morum*. Seeing the danger of false connotations, and despising a purist conventionality, he used *sanctimonia*, not *honestas*, and kept *poenitentiam agite*, instead of Beza's *resipiscite*. He shews his good sense by freely using convenient barbarisms, like *e converso*, *secundum litteram*, *circumstantiae*, etc. He tells us that he purposely retained the barbarous *Salvator* with the Fathers, rather than the more classic, but less expressive *Servator*, which Cicero had said did not fully express the Greek $\Sigma\omega\rho\eta\pi$. If any commentator had said to him, "Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone," Calvin would, with the Echo in Erasmus, have answered "Ove." He writes Latin with the dignity and originality and ease of a native language.¹

β . *His terseness*. Calvin abhorred padding. He found the commentaries of Melancthon and Bucer too long and too digressive.² He would, I think, have looked with some contempt on the mass of modern commentaries, which consist in a *congeries* of vacillating *variorum* annotations, in which we are bewildered with the aimless multiplicity of views, like the "upwards of 300" on Galatians iii. 20. Pages, and almost volumes, have been written upon 1 Corinthians xi. 10: "a woman must have power on her head." Does not Calvin, whether his exposition be correct or not, say all that is essential in three lines, when he remarks that "power" is a metonymy for "a symbol of her husband's power over her." *Est autem velum, sive peplum sit, sive carbasus, sive aliud quodvis tegumentum*. No reading could be more absolutely unprofitable, or more dreadfully tedious, than this wading through scores of opinions,

¹ Pasquier, Raemond, Casaubon, De Thou, and even Bossuet bear testimony to the force and dignity of Calvin's style in French also.

² "Cupiebamus unum aliquem qui et *facilitati studeret* et simul operam daret ne *prolixis commentariis studiosos ultra modum detineret*. . . . Dimoveri non possum ab amore compendii." *Praef. in Rom.* Sayons excellently says of his commentaries, "Exposition brève, facile, lumineuse, sagacité rare, et entière bonne foi."

of which some are absurd, the majority impossible, and all but one must be wrong. There is nothing of this kind in Calvin. He rarely quotes. In the dedication of his Commentary on the Romans to his friend Grynaeus, he says that in conversation they had often agreed *praecipuam interpretis virtutem in perspicua brevitate esse positam*; and that they both desired some commentators who would not (as Melancthon too often does) expatiate on dogmatic propositions, or digress into alien polemics.¹ As to this last point however, Calvin would have been compelled to say *Monitis sum minor ipse meis*.²

γ. *His contempt for exegetic frivolities and insincerities.* His thorough comprehension of the truth that the language of the Old Testament is full of Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathy—i.e. the attribution to God of human traits and passions—is often the source of valuable remarks.³ The Rabbis have a rule that whenever a prophet's father is mentioned in the Bible, this father was also a prophet. Calvin sweeps this tradition aside with the remark, "We see how impudent they were in such fictitious comments; when they have no reason to offer, *they invent a fable and obtrude it as an oracle*."⁴ But he is just as rude to Christian figments. The Vulgate rendering of Joel i. 1 begins "*Verbum Dei quod factum est ad Joel*," and it was of course irresistible to St. Jerome and other patristic and mediæval commentators to drag the incidental idiom into an intimation of the Incarnation, as though it in some way implied the same as that "the *Word* was *made* flesh"! The honesty and strong good sense of Calvin rightly regarded such com-

¹ The Preface to the Romans, and a letter to Viret (May 19th, 1540), give us most clearly his conception of the duties of an exegete.

² For some of his remarks on Allegory, see notes on Gett. ii. 8, vi. 14.

³ See notes on Gen. i. 31, ii. 19, iii. 8, vi. 5, 6, 8, vii. 16, viii. 21, etc. The remark on iii. 21 is worth quoting. "Non sic accipi hæc verba convenit quasi Deus fuerit pellifex. Credibile non est pelles illis fortuito esse oblatas sed necessitate coactos mactasse aliqua (animalia) quorum se corio tegerent."

⁴ On Joel i. 1.

ments as a discreditable play on words, and he throws the comment aside with the contemptuous word *Nugae!* Writing on John i. 3, he rejects Augustine's allusion to the Platonic doctrine of ideas. In Hebrews xi. 31, he is too honest not to see that *πόρνη* means *meretrix*, and that it is a mere subterfuge to make it mean *caupona*. Speaking of the Ceremonial Law, and the attempts to give it a mystic significance, he says, "It is better to confess ignorance than to play with frivolous guesses."

δ. *His learning.* This is all the more remarkable because it is solid, yet is never obtruded. The notes, both on Hebrew¹ and Greek philology,² are almost always valuable and sound. He cares less than Erasmus and Beza about various readings, nor does he often refer to the Greek fathers. His object was not the acervation of glosses, but the production of a compendium for persons of every age, condition, and degree of culture. He recognized, with the great Cappadocian Father, the reality of Ethnic Inspiration.³ On 1 Corinthians viii. 1 he rebukes the fanatics who rave (*furiose clamitant*) against all knowledge. The first work he ever wrote was a comment on Seneca *De Clementia*; and though he does not enrich his pages with classical parallels to anything like the same extent as Grotius or Wetstein, he yet quotes, in different places, from Plato,⁴ Plutarch,⁵ Polybius,⁶ Cicero, Ovid, Horace, Quinctilian, and Aulus Gellius. His object is always to bring his knowledge to bear, but only for purposes of real elucidation, and never for display. That he would have been as able as the best to parade his classical learning is shewn by his notes to the treatise of Seneca.

¹ See notes on Gen. i. 2, v. 29; Ps. iv. 4; Isa. iii. 1; Rom. ix. 28; Heb. vii. 17, ix. 6; 1 Pet. ii. 6, etc.

² Notes on Rom. i. 28, ii. 7, viii. 3; 1 Tim. i. 4; Heb. xi. 1; Acts xxiv. 20, etc.

³ Note on Tit. i. 12.

⁴ On 1 Cor. x. 20, xiv. 7; Eph. iv. 17; Col. ii. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 1, v. 19; Tit. i. 7.

⁵ On 1 Tim. v. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 29.

⁶ On 2 Cor. x. 4.

Turning to deeper characteristics of Calvin's exposition, we may notice—

i. *His attention to the context.* He always studies the whole scope of the passage with which he is dealing. In explaining St. Paul especially, he is thus enabled to make the meaning and reasoning of the Apostle wonderfully clear. Had Calvin been more studied, the field of Christian controversy would not be strewn as it now is with scores, perhaps hundreds, of texts and expressions which are habitually misapplied. Calvin's constant aim is to explain the whole with reference to all its constituent parts, and each part by its relation to the whole.

ii. *His method.* Calvin sets himself with order and thoroughness to his work as an expositor. He does not rush at a text with the object of saying the first thing which comes into his head, or of extracting from it some favourite prepossession; but he first considers any difficulties caused by the construction (such as unfinished sentences, or the transposition of words); then he explains such rhetorical figures as Klimax, Antithesis, Paronomasia; then he examines—often in a very useful manner—the verbal usages of the particular author;¹ then, lastly, he gives the sense of the passage, specially with reference to the whole context. The reader is thus led on step by step, and whether he agrees with the final conclusion or not, feels at heart that he has been led up to it in a fair and methodical manner.²

iii. *His manly independence.* Calvin is never satisfied with a current interpretation merely because it is current. In the midst of all the casuistry and fantastic insincerity which degrade many pages of exegesis, alike ancient and modern, Calvin's good sense comes refreshingly, as a breath of the spring air when we step out of a hothouse. When a

¹ As *κίσμος* in John xvi. 20; *μη γένοιτο*, Rom. vi. 2.

² See Tholuck, l.c.

conclusion seems plain to him, he expresses it without fear and without subterfuge. Speaking of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he says, "I cannot be induced to acknowledge Paul as the author." Speaking of the Epistle of Jude, he says that its canonicity was disputed, but that he is glad to number it among the rest because it is useful, and many high authorities accepted it. Speaking of the Second Epistle of Peter, he only says that "since the majesty of Christ's spirit displays itself throughout it, he feels a scruple about entirely rejecting it (*eam prorsus repudiare mihi religio est*), although he cannot acknowledge in it the genuine phraseology of Peter." He declares John viii. 1 and 1 John v. 7 to be not genuine; and calls 1 John ii. 14 a gloss. He speaks as boldly as Luther; but does not decide on canonicity by tests so purely subjective as his great forerunner.

iv. *His honesty.* Calvin abhors the notion of "lying for God." He finds a number of "proof-texts" traditionally used against Arians, Socinians, etc., or employed to support the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. It makes no difference to him that these texts had been accepted as arguments by a multitude of his predecessors. His legal education, if nothing else, had led him to see how unadvisable it is to support a good cause by bad reasoning. But far more than this, his faith in a God of truth makes him feel that to offer a hollow argument to the cause of God is as vile a desecration as to burn swine's flesh upon the altar. Too clear-headed to be content with what is forced and uncertain, he was too sincere to accept what was fantastic. He held it immoral to defend any special *dictum probans*, because it was polemically useful. He was so far from holding the theory of verbal dictation, that he admitted the possibility of oversights or trivial errors in the sacred writers.¹ Even in such a verse as John i. 1, he will not

¹ See his notes on Matt. xxvii. 9; Acts vii. 16.

admit that the word "was" is a sufficient proof of the Divinity of the Word. "We must," he says, "argue more firmly in matters of such great moment." In the Old Testament he again and again rejects orthodox arguments for truths which no man held more firmly than himself. In Genesis iii. 15 he says that "seed" is a collective word meaning "posterity," and only interpreted of Christ by subsequent experience. On verse 22 he will not allow the word "us" to be used in any argument for the Trinity, nor yet will he admit the arguments for the Trinity drawn from Genesis xviii. 2, or Isaiah vi. 3. In Exodus iii. 2 he rejects Luther's allegorising, which saw Christ in the burning bush. He prefers, he says, to use stronger arguments. He will not argue from Isaiah iv. 2 for the Divinity of Christ, for to do so is to make ourselves laughable to the Jews. In Isaiah xlvi. 16 he says that it is not Christ but the Prophet who is speaking, and that we ought to be on our guard against violent and forced arguments. On Psalm xxxiii. 6; Isaiah xi. 4, he makes "the breath of his mouth" mean *sermo*, and says that he should not dare to press a Sabellian with such an expression. These are but specimens of many passages in which Calvin shews his noble honesty and masculine sense. They drew on him such attacks as the *Calvinus Judaisans* of Hunnius¹; and the remarks of Montacute,² that he wrested out of their hands the weapons of Christian athletes; and of Walch,³ that "Calvin expounded oracles about the Trinity and the Messiah in accordance with Jewish and Socinian views."

Nor was Calvin less independent in his handling of the

¹ A. D. 1593. For the full long title of this book, which complains that Calvin "illustriora Scripturæ loca de Trinitate, etc., *detestandum in modum corrumpere non abhorruit.*" It was answered by Pareus in his *Orthodoxus Calvinus*. Hunnius said that Calvin ought to have been burnt as he burnt Servetus; and Pareus, with equal amenity, assigns the work of Hunnius to the authorship of the devil. See Budæus, *Isagoge*, pp. 1062-1495.

² *Orig. Eccl.*, i. 310.

³ *Bibl. Theol.*, iv. 413.

New Testament. The vast majority of Reformation critics referred "he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven" (*ὁ μικρότερος*) in Matthew xi. 11, to Christ¹; Calvin anticipated most recent critics in applying it to all Christians. In Matthew xvi. 18, he will not accept Luther's view that Christ pointed to himself as the Rock (*δειακτικῶς*)² but that he referred to Peter, not in his own person, but as the representative of all believers. In John x. 30 he sees not the *Homoousion*, but the oneness of will between Christ and the Father. Other examples may be found in his notes on John i. 52, v. 31, 32; 2 Cor. xii. 7; and 1 Pet. iii. 19.

v. Undoubtedly one of the most characteristic features in the Exegesis of Calvin is the bold attitude which he adopted on the subject of those Messianic prophecies which are quoted in the New Testament. This may best be illustrated by a few examples, which it will be fair to quote in his own exact words.

On Micah v. 2 (Bethlehem Ephratah) as quoted in Matthew ii. 6, he says:—

"Quid opus est torquere prophetæ verba quum Evangelistæ non fuerit propositum referre quod apud Prophetam loquitur, sed notare locum duntaxat."

On Matthew ii. 15 ("out of Egypt I have called my son") he writes:—"Locum non debere ad Christum restringi. Neque tamen a Matthæo torquetur, sed scite aptatur ad præsentem causam."

On Matthew viii. 17:—"Quod apud Jesaiam de animæ vitiis dici certum est, Matthæus ad corporales morbos transfert."

On John xix. 37 ("They shall look on him whom they pierced"):—"Locum hunc qui secundum litteram de Christo exponere conantur, nimis violenter torquent. Nec vero in

¹ Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Pellicanus.

² So †Luther, Calovius, Lange, &c. Tholuck quotes the keen remark of Michaelis, that "the pointing finger was not that of Christ, but of the polemical commentator."

hunc finem ab Evangelista citatur; sed potius ut ostendat Christum esse Deum illum qui olim conquestus fuit per Zachariam sibi pectus a Judæis transfodi.”

On Hebrews iv. 4: “Alludit magis ad verba Davidis quam interpretatur. . . . Ejusmodi ἐπεξεργασία est apud Paulum ad Rom. x. 6.”

Hebrews xi. 21 (“Leaning upon the top of his staff”):—
“Quod vulgo receptum erat Apostolus non dubitat suo instituto accommodare. . . . Scimus hac in parte Apostolos non adeo fuisse scrupulosos.”

Other examples of the same views may be found in his notes on Matthew i. 23, ii. 15; John ii. 17, etc. Such passages not only illustrate his robust originality, but shew that while he retained all the noble and intense reality of Messianic prophecy, he was strong enough and honest enough to throw off the trammels of such previous methods of exegesis as are entirely untenable, and that he had the insight to take up a position nearly three centuries in advance of his own age. He recognized the principle which is now universally admitted, that the words of Psalmists and Prophets, while they not only admit of but demand “germinant and springing developments,” were yet primarily applicable to the events and circumstances of their own days.

Such then are some of the characteristics of Calvin as an expositor. Of course neither he nor any other writer was free from some counterbalancing defects, which are often due as much to the age as to the man. Thus Calvin, like all the Reformers, laid down in the strongest manner the supreme and final authority of Scripture, and yet never enters into any decisive argument on which his position can be based. He speaks indeed of the inherent power and beauty of Scripture, and of the inward testimony of the Holy Ghost;¹ but neither he nor any writer of his

age clearly explained whether they attributed to all and every part of Scripture the supreme dignity and absolute authority which they assign to it as a whole ; nor did they lay down any philosophic limits of the relation between the Old and the New Testament ; nor did they ever explain how their own free handling of certain verses and passages accorded with their general theory. Luther indeed shews by his repeated language that he did not hold the two phrases " Scripture " and " the Word of God " to be identical and coextensive, but he throws no other light on the distinction between the two beyond such light as we may derive from the remark that we must consider whether in any particular passage God's word be such *to us* or not. In this respect the views of Calvin seem to have been more rigid. They were distinctly retrogressive, and they led him into strange quagmires. They are also very difficult to reconcile with his almost contemptuous rejection of the whole sacrificial system, and his statement that the notion of God making his throne on the Mercy-seat was " a crass figment," from which even a David and a Hezekiah were not free. Thus when René, Duchess of Ferrara, daughter of Louis XII., remarked in a letter that David's example in hating his enemies is not applicable to us, he curtly and sternly answered that " such a gloss would upset all Scripture "; that even in his hatred David is an example to us and a type of Christ ; and should we presume to set ourselves up as superior to Him in sweetness and humanity ? It is strange that he should never have thought of the verse in the sermon on the Mount, " It was said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy ; but I say unto you, Love your enemies." No doubt Calvin would have writhed out of the plain meaning by some of those subterfuges and distinctions which again and again have let in by the postern gate of a text the evil notions which are kept out by the whole defences of Christianity.

In the acerbities of Puritanism, in the severity of Rome, in the ruthlessness of the Pilgrim Fathers towards Quakers, in the perennial bitterness of sects, in the constant recrudescences of intolerance and persecution, and in the deadly injuries thus inflicted on the cause of religion, we see the consequence of these confused notions which drew no distinction between the relative authority of different parts of Scripture. The worst blot on Calvin's name, the burning of Servetus, probably had its root in the inability to distinguish between the Elijah spirit and the Christ spirit.¹ A much humbler person than Calvin, even the Rev. Mr. Poundtext, showed much deeper insight than the illustrious theologian. "By what law," says Henry Morton to Balfour of Burley, "would you justify the atrocity you would commit?" "If thou art ignorant of it," replied Burley, "thy companion is well aware of the law which gave the men of Jericho to the sword of Joshua the son of Nun." "Yes; but we," answered the divine, "live under a better dispensation, which instructeth us to return good for evil, and to pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us."²

It must be further admitted that Calvin not unfrequently drags in, without any warrant, his distinctive dogma.³ He finds predestination, reprobation, election, and the secret counsel of God in passages which are in no way germane to the inculcation of such views. In John i. 12 ("To them gave he the right (*ἐξουσίαν*) to become children of God") he

¹ If the execution of Servetus was approved by Melancthon, even Beza (*Vita Calvini*, A.D. 1550) tells us that it was widely and severely condemned. See too Waller, *Diary*, 1553. Martinus Bellius, in his *Farrago* (of which some attributed the authorship to Castellio and Laelius Socinus), shewed that not only the 16th century Reformers, but even the Fathers, held that heretics ought not to be capitally punished.

² *Old Mortality*.

³ The reader will find Calvinism dragged into notes on Genesis xv. 6 (*gratuita fidei electio*), iv. 25, xxv. 23; Numbers iv. 21; and indeed *passim*. In the New Testament these views will be specially found in notes on Matthew vii. 13; John vi. 44; Romans i. 24, ix. 11; Ephesians i. 4; 2 Timothy ii. 4, etc.

tells us that instead of "power" or "right," he (like Beza) should have preferred the rendering "dignity," because out of the word ἐξουσίαν Papias elicits "free will," like fire out of water. On Luke xi. 4 ("Lead us not into temptation") he most unwarrantably remarks that God used Satan as his minister to thrust men into perdition, "not as though God is the author of evil, since, by sending men into a reprobate sense, he exercises not a confused tyranny, but carries out his just, though secret, judgment." Could any comment be more alien from the spirit of the Lord's prayer? It is not without reason that Richard Simon complains of his "*expressions dures*" and "*declamations injurieuses.*" When in a commentary on St. John we come very early on such a harshness as "Servetus superbissimus ex gente Hispanicâ nebulo," it gives us a shock of displeasure as being completely out of place. Schröckh justly blames the injurious expressions—too common among theologians even in these days—with which Calvin assails all who do not accept his views. He is often needlessly dialectical, so that we seem to be dealing rather with the jurist who was the pupil of Alciati than with the Expositor. He is sometimes guilty of forced and untenable renderings and explanations, as when he explains "that wicked person" (τὸν πονηρὸν) in 1 Corinthians v. 13, of the devil; and takes the "of the glory" (τῆς δόξης) in James ii. 1, in the sense of "*ex opinione.*" It is painful to watch his efforts to explain away "it repenteth him of the evil," in Joel ii. 13. It conflicts with his favourite idol of "irreversible decrees," and he is driven to the view which Archbishop Tillotson adopted, that God's threats are conditional, and that the condition may be understood even when it is not expressed. In this and other passages we feel that the Dogmatist gets the better of the Exegete, because the Exegete, like his contemporaries, had failed to grasp the progressiveness of Revelation, and the external circumstances of age and re-

lative knowledge by which it is conditioned. Still, after every one of his faults and limitations as an Expositor has been catalogued, it remains undeniable that Calvin is the greatest Expositor of the Reformation era, and that his commentaries have a higher and more permanent value than those of any other writer from the days of Nicolas of Lyra down to modern times.

F. W. FARRAR.

THE MORAL ASPECTS OF THE MOSAIC NARRATIVE OF THE CREATION.

GENESIS I.

In an article entitled "And God created Great Whales," which I contributed to this Magazine for 1882 (see Vol. iv. *Second Series*, pp. 191 ff.) there was one section which attracted an unusual amount of attention. It was that in which I gave my recollection of a discourse which I heard from the lips of Rev. T. T. Lynch some five and twenty years ago. Many of his friends—and no man ever had more devoted friends—wrote to thank me for the pleasure I had given them, to remind me that there was a second part to that Discourse, better even than the first, of which I had given no account; and to beg me, if I could, to complete my report of it. One or two of them even sent me "notes," which they had taken at the time, and placed them at my service. These, however, I found to be too fragmentary and imperfect to be of real use. But twenty-five years ago I had a singularly retentive memory; and, if I sat down to the work within a few hours, could generally so report any speech or discourse in which I had been deeply interested as to retain its main substance, and even something of its form, though I never could take "notes" while listening to the speaker without forgetting all that I had heard except