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DR. KEYSER'S "CONSENTING FREEDOM" OF THE HOMO CONVERTENDUS.

"Apaga tragicas accusationes ecclesiis nostris a Bellarmino in *Praefat. libror. de lib. arb.* intentatas, quasi arbitrii libertatem tollamus, ipsam naturam tollamus, ipsam naturam violamus et nos ipsos non beluarum similes, sed omnino beluas rationis expertes profiteamur,"—these words of Gerhard¹⁾ come to mind as we glance over the numerous protests contained in Dr. Keyser's review of Dr. Pieper's book against the teaching of "a forced conversion." Dr. Keyser regards the teaching of the Missouri Synod on the origin of saving faith in man as imperiling, yea, destroying, the essential freedom which enters necessarily into every act of human volition; and this constitutes Dr. Keyser's second objection to Dr. Pieper's treatise. This objection is voiced throughout the book in ever varying terms and in ever new connections. A few selections may suffice to show what Dr. Keyser believes to be our teaching:—

How do our Missouri brethren preach to unconverted sinners? As if they were logs and stones, or as if they were men capable of receiving, through God's enabling grace, an ethical salvation? God never works on man, a personality, in a mechanical way; always in a vital and ethical way. The fact is, man, even in his sinful state, still has ears and eyes and self-consciousness, through which God, by the Gospel, is able to reach that dead spiritual corpse within him and bring it back to life. (p. 75 f.)

1) *L. de lib. arbitr.*, § 8.

MATERIALS FOR THE CATECHIST.

SECOND OUTLINE.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Qu. 4 and 5.

Luther could not have written the Small Catechism, had he not known another book, the Bible. What the spring is to the brook or river, that the Bible is to Luther's Catechism: its source, fountain-head, and origin. What sunlight does for all created things, that the Bible does for the contents of Luther's Catechism: it causes them to be seen as objects that really exist, and shows them in their true outlines and relations. What the heart, blood-vessels, arteries are to the body, that the Bible is to Luther's Catechism: the life-element, the animating, pulsating power. The dignity, authority, and value of Luther's Catechism are all borrowed: they stand, or fall, with the dignity, authority, and value of the Bible. No Bible, no Catechism. If the Bible is true, the Catechism is; if the Bible is false, the Catechism is.

Hence, working our way up-stream, as it were, to the primary source of all knowledge in regard to matters which we are to believe, we must now seek information about that book in which all this knowledge has been laid up for us, the Holy Scriptures.

*I. What Are They? Qu. 4. 5 a.**A. Various Names for This Book: Qu. 4. 5 a.*

1. "The Holy Scriptures," *ἐπὶ γράμματα*, 2 Tim. 3, 15; "the Scriptures," *τὰς γραφάς*, John 5, 39; "Scripture," *γραφή*, 2 Tim. 3, 16.

a. These names state the form in which the information that we need has been conveyed to us: a record, in written characters (*γράμματα* = letters) and written compositions (*γραφαί* = documents), has been made of it. God has many means and can adopt diverse ways of communicating with men: by oral address and audible speech, by dreams, visions, signs. None of these communications concern us now. Our business is exclusively with the record of the divine revelation, with what has been put on paper, black on white, in legible characters, and intelligible words and statements.

b. The plural "Scriptures" indicates the component parts of the divine revelation, written at various times, by various authors, for various purposes, and under various circumstances. These component parts have individual characteristics: some are history, some poetry, some prophecy, some wise sayings, etc. On the other hand, the

singular "Scripture" expresses the essential unity of all the component parts. Despite the variety of its contents the written revelation of God is a unit. The waves in the ocean, the peaks in a mountain range, the trees in a forest and garden, are all different, yet all alike. So God has had the record of His revelation written down *πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως*, in many parts and in many forms, Hebr. 1, 1; but it is all one record.

c. The term "holy" is applied to this entire record. (*Ἱερός*, "heilig, hehr, was in irgendeiner Beziehung zur Gottheit steht, irgendeine Verbindung mit dem Goettlichen beansprucht, Bezeichnung der aeusseren Erscheinung goettlicher Erhabenheit." *Cremer*.) All the contents of Scripture command the reverence of men. God is in all this book, and calls to every reader of this book as He called to Moses out of the burning bush: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground," Ex. 3, 5. Nothing in this book is trivial, frivolous, useless; and although this book tells of many wicked things, the telling itself is done holily. As we proceed, we shall learn much of the holiness of this book: its holy author, holy agents, holy contents, holy uscs, and holy ends.

2. "The Bible."

a. This is the Anglicized form of the Greek *ἡ βιβλος*, the book, or *τὰ βιβλία*, the booklets. It is a human appellation which has been affixed to the collection of the sacred writings. However, the idea of such a book is not foreign to Scripture: Job desired his famous prophecy of the Redeemer to be "printed in a book," Job 19, 23; Isaiah challenges men to study the truth of his prophecy "out of the book of the Lord," chap. 34, 16; Jesus preached a sermon from "the book" of this prophet, Luke 4, 17; and the last writer in the Bible, John, repeats a sentiment which the first writer, Moses, had spoken, when he warns men to take nothing away from "the book of this prophecy," Rev. 22, 19; comp. Deut. 4, 2.

b. Remembering the origin of this name, we may claim that the article before Bible always carries emphasis, whether we express the emphasis audibly or not. The Bible always is *the* book, the only book of its kind. Though "of making of books there is no end," no book like this has ever been produced on this earth, nor ever will be; though the study of most books is "a weariness of the flesh," Eccl. 12, 12, out of this book comes health, strength, life. Much more might have been written about the matters which this book contains; *e. g.*, if all the things which Jesus did were written every one, "the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," John 21, 25. God has here given us the very cream of information, instruction, comfort. The Bible is the best book on earth and the only

necessary book; it is the book of books. ("The Bible, the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible, is the religion of Protestants." *William Chillingworth.*)

3. "The Word of God," *λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*, Luke 11, 28. This is the greatest name that can be applied to this book. This name deserves special study, for it expresses plainly

B. *The Origin of This Book.* Qu. 5 a.

1. The Bible is the Word of God, because it was "written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost." All Scripture is "given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. 3, 16. *θεόπνευστος*, *lit.*, "God-breathed," expresses how the writings known as Scripture came into existence: God breathed them forth out of His own mind. What has been written down in the Bible came to be written down just so and not otherwise, because God caused it to be so written. Not only the thoughts expressed in the Bible, but the words in which the thoughts were written down, the writing itself, is God-breathed, inspired.¹⁾

2. However, God did not perform the act of writing in the same manner as He had written the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone. God employed human agents for writing the Bible. How these men became affected by the breath of God which produced the Scriptures is shown a) by 2 Pet. 1, 21: "they were moved by the Holy Ghost," *ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι*. They were carried forward to and onward in their task by the Holy Spirit, somewhat like a ship is started on a voyage and propelled in its course by the wind which inflates its sails. The impulse to write and the effort of writing were furnished these men from without; they did not arise in them. The Holy Spirit told them: Write! They felt themselves summoned to this task. The Holy Spirit, too, made them understand what they must write. *E. g.*, John relates: "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," Rev. 14, 13. In a similar manner—though no outsider knows exactly how, for no outsider was present to watch the process and report it to others—all Scripture was written.

1) Luther treats *θεόπνευστος* as in apposition to *γραφή*; it is really the predicate complement, as the connection by *καί* with the other complement *ὀφέλιμος* shows. The verb *ἔστιν* has been omitted, a common Greek usage. The Authorized Version translates the text as it should be translated. There is no warrant, however, for understanding Luther's appositive adjective as equivalent to a conditional clause = "provided it is inspired." If the apposition is to be dissolved at all agreeably to what Luther believed the Bible to be, it must be resolved into a causal clause, = "because it is inspired."

b. 2 Pet. 1, 21 refers to what had happened in olden times, when the Word of God came to the prophets. In 1 Cor. 2, 13 the Apostle Paul, who is one of the last writers of Scripture, tells us what was happening to him and other apostles. He declared: "The Holy Spirit teacheth" what we speak. This teaching of the Holy Spirit is the same as the moving of the Holy Ghost in the preceding text: it is the act of inspiration.

c. But do these two texts, 2 Pet. 1, 21 and 1 Cor. 2, 13, say anything about writing? Do they not rather refer to speaking? Yes; but if we note the circumstances attending these texts, we shall see that in these texts speaking refers to written speech. Peter's "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" were men by whom "the prophecy came in old time." This prophecy, he tells us in v. 20, is the "prophecy of the Scripture," which he has, in v. 19, called "a sure word of prophecy." Peter had not heard those holy men speak, but he had read their writings, and through them they spoke. Dead persons still speak through their published writings. In the New Testament the ancient prophets are not infrequently cited thus: "as Esaias saith," etc. This usage is common in all languages. We often quote Luther by this formula: "Dr. Luther says." As to the other text, Paul calls the attention of the Corinthians, not to what he or John are preaching in other places, in Asia Minor or in Greece, for the Corinthians could not hear that, but he wants them to observe what he is saying to them in this very epistle which he is sending them. The things which he speaks in this epistle he has spoken by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Bible, then, is a collection of writings that has God for its author, and that has been produced by various men as God's agents, or clerks. These men added nothing out of themselves to what they wrote; they spake as from God, ἀπὸ θεοῦ,²⁾ as the Holy Ghost moved them, "gave them utterance," Acts 2, 4. Each spoke in his own language, and as it was customary for him to speak; but each uttered not his own thought in his own words, but God's thoughts in such words as God supplied. We should note that Peter does not

2) The force of this prepositional phrase disappears utterly in Luther's and the Authorized Version, where ἀπὸ θεοῦ has been rendered by the simple genitive, and made a qualifier of the noun ἀνθρώποι, while in reality it qualifies the verb ἐλάλησαν. Also the beautiful emphasis which the order of the words yields in the Greek text has been reproduced neither in the Authorized nor in Luther's Version. Even the Revised Version, which brings out the force of ἀπὸ θεοῦ, does not exhibit the full emphasis of the text. What Peter says is this: "But because they were moved by the Holy Ghost, holy men spake from God."

say, the holy men thought, but “spake,” ἐλάλησαν, “as they were moved by the Spirit.” The divine impulse controlled not only their thinking, but their speaking faculty. And Paul informed the Corinthians that he and the other apostles had two things which they had received from the Spirit: 1. “that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us by God,” 2 Cor. 2, 12; 2. “which things also we *speak*.” His information regarding the things which he was teaching, and his expression of that information, were both from the Holy Spirit. Hence he can say that in their ministrations, as agents of the Holy Spirit, he and the other holy writers were πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες, matching (“comparing”) things spiritual with things spiritual, viz., spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. All of the Bible is inspired, πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, 2 Tim. 3, 16, and is therefore, sure, trustworthy, reliable information, which every person will do well to heed, 2 Pet. 1, 19. It derives no authority from a human source, from no “private interpretation” of men, 2 Pet. 1, 20, and from no “man’s wisdom,” 1 Cor. 2, 13.

C. The Divisions of This Book. All the writings contained in the Bible are divided into two great parts: the Old and the New Testament.

1. The word “testament” or “covenant” expresses a certain way which God has adopted for dealing with men, making them know His will, teaching them how to serve Him; a dispensation. The Old Testament contains writings that God gave men before Christ was born; the New Testament writings God gave after the birth of Christ. We may say, in a general way, that the Old Testament contains prophecy, the New Testament the fulfillment of the prophecy. The whole Bible declares a twofold will of God that concerns us, and that we shall study throughout our Catechism: the holy and righteous will, or the Law, and the good and gracious will, or the Gospel. Both are declared in either Testament, but the Law may be said to predominate in the Old, the Gospel in the New Testament. When Christ instituted the Lord’s Supper, He spoke of “the cup of the New Testament,” *i. e.*, of the new dispensation that had commenced with His coming into the world.

2. The writers of the various parts of the Old Testament are called “the holy prophets.” Though they did not all utter prophecies, their writings pointed to the future Redeemer. (Here the writers of the Old Testament and their writings should be named in their order.) Those of the New Testament are called “the apostles and evangelists.” The apostles, except Paul, who received a special revelation concerning our Lord, were companions of our Lord during His

public ministry on earth, and eye- and ear-witnesses of His acts. The evangelists who wrote accounts of the life of our Lord on earth were either apostles (Matthew and John), or companions of apostles (Mark and Luke). (Writers and writings of the New Testament to be named here.)

3. Other divisions of the writings of the Bible have been devised by men. *E. g.*, the writings of the Old Testament are distinguished by the general character of their contents as historical, poetical, and prophetic writings; those of the New Testament as historical, doctrinal, and prophetic writings. To facilitate our finding any statement in our Bible, the Bible has also been divided into chapters and verses. (It is necessary to teach catechumens the common abbreviations for Bible quotations.)

4. There are sixty-six different writings in the Bible, thirty-nine in the Old and twenty-seven in the New Testament. Those in the Old were originally written in the Hebrew, those in the New Testament in the Greek language. Our English Bible has been "translated out of the original tongues."

5. About a thousand years (1400—400 B. C.) were required for the writing of the Old, about fifty years (50—100 A. D.) for the writing of the New Testament.

6. In some Bibles a number of writings are inserted between the Old and the New Testament which are no part of the Bible, because they were not inspired by God, and contain error. Some of them are good to read because of the history in them; others are pious meditations of devout men of God. These books are called "apocryphal," that is, "hidden" books, because their origin and authorship are hidden.³⁾

II. What Are They For? Qu. 5 b.

A. God has made the Holy Scriptures "able" (*δυνάμενα*) writings, 2 Tim. 3, 15. The Scriptures are a divine dynamic, a powerful instrument, by which God effects certain purposes.

1. The grand purpose which the Scriptures are to serve is *expressed* in two ways:—

a. "To make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. 3, 15. The Bible was written for sinners, whom God had to curse and cast out to eternal damnation. For these sinners God in His great mercy prepared a Savior, which is Christ, His Son, and a way of salvation, which is by faith, *i. e.*, by believing

3) The American Bible Society has ceased publishing Bibles containing the Apocrypha. However, it publishes the Apocrypha separately.

in Christ. Of this salvation men know nothing by themselves. God had to tell them of it. He has done so in the Bible. The Bible is the book that has the power to save men.

b. The whole Bible is full of Christ; the "Scriptures testify of Him," John 5, 39. The Old Testament tells what men were to expect Him to do; the New, what He has done and is still doing for them. The Jews had only the Old Testament, but that was sufficient to save them. Christ chides them for not finding Him in the Old Testament. The Bible is the book in which God everywhere has shown men their Redeemer and Savior.

c. In the Bible we "have eternal life." This is the other way to express the grand purpose of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible fits sinful men so that they can live a life without end in heaven after they leave this world. The Jews knew this. Christ tells them: "Ye think ye have external life in the Scriptures." He does not say that they had a wrong opinion, but approves their thinking thus of the Scriptures. He only warns them not to imagine they could have eternal life without accepting Christ. The Bible is a book of which we can say it came from heaven, and of which we must say it leads to heaven.

2. The grand purpose of the Scriptures is *attained* in four ways. The Bible is "profitable," 2 Tim. 3, 16:—

a. "For doctrine," *πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, i. e.*, for training a person in knowledge, like a teacher conveying knowledge to a pupil. It teaches men to know Christ and believe in Him, and thus makes them "wise unto salvation." Whoever learned the way to heaven learned it from the Bible. There is no other book in the world that is useful for such teaching.

b. "For reproof," *πρὸς ἔλεγγον, i. e.*, for convincing men that they are wrong when they think they need no Savior. The Bible makes men know their sin and the terrible consequences of sinning. It is only through telling sinners what God says about them that they are convicted, have a sense of guilt visited upon them, and are made to seek the Savior.

c. "For correction," *πρὸς ἐπαρόρθωσιν, i. e.*, for straightening what is crooked, and for making to stand upright what is stooping or fallen. The Bible speaks to men who daily sin much, and are often overcome with sorrow. It shows them how to avoid going out of the right way, and raises them out of despondency. It teaches men to walk in the footsteps of the Savior, and take courage at His presence with them in every danger.

d. "For instruction in righteousness," *πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, i. e.*, for an education in a pious life. The Bible leads a person

from lesson to lesson, advances its scholar from grade to grade, according to his growing strength, until he attains his full manhood in Christ.

3. That all these things were intended by God when He gave the Holy Scriptures, is thus expressed: "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. 3, 17. "*Iva* declares the purpose which Scripture is to serve." (*Meyer.*) By applying the Scriptures in all the aforementioned uses to a person, we make him an *ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ*, a man who has become God's, and lives in a divine life with God. Such a person is in a suitable condition (*ἄρτιος*), and fully equipped (*ἐξηρτισμένος*) for any work that is good (*πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν*). He understands what work is good; he has the willingness to undertake, and the ability to execute it. All this he has obtained from the Scriptures, thus proving them to be what the apostle says: *δυνάμενα*, authoritative, powerful, efficient, clear, and *ὀφέλιμα*, sufficient for every need. The Bible does not only speak about these things, but produces them as effects.

4. These purposes of the Scriptures we might also call their properties, or attributes. All these properties rest on the fact that the Bible is inspired by God. They are the plain evidence of the divine origin of the Bible. By manifesting its glorious power and its manifold usefulness, the Bible, God's work, praises its Maker.

B. This useful book must be used; otherwise it will be a useless book despite its splendid qualities. Many people do not know, others forget, what the Scriptures are for. Still others will not admit that the Bible possesses the qualities which we named. Therefore God has commanded:

1. "Search the Scriptures,"⁴⁾ John 5, 39. "Hear the Word of God," Luke 11, 28. We are to read the Bible, and have it read to us. Moreover, we are to be, not superficial readers or hearers, but people who investigate all its contents in an effort to find out its true and full meaning. No person exhausts all the treasures of knowledge in the Bible at one reading. Parts of the Scriptures are better understood when we have somewhat advanced in life and become more experienced. Some parts are not grasped completely until a person is dying. Therefore our use of the Bible must be unceasing, uninterrupted, thorough.

4) It makes little difference whether *ἐρευνᾶτε* is parsed as the indicative, as in the Norwegian translation, or as the imperative mood. In the former case, the Savior would give His sanction to an existing practice; in the latter, He enjoins that practice.

2. "And keep it," Luke 11, 28. *φυλάσσειν* really means "to guard" as something precious. When the truth of what the Bible says about our sins and our Savior, about our life and conduct here and the life hereafter, has entered our hearts, we should never let that truth pass out of our hearts. We should not let it lie dormant in us, but make it a live fact in our thinking and acting; nor should we listen to men who would make us disbelieve what the Bible has taught us.

3. If we thus use our Bible, we shall be "blessed," *μακάριοι*, Luke 11, 29, *i. e.*, happy. Our hearing and keeping God's Word shall be our greatest distinction among men and render us truly enviable,⁵⁾ and it shall also be a hidden spring of strength and comfort in us, rendering us contented and happy at every stage, in every condition of this life.⁶⁾

D.

5) Luke 11, 28, is the Lord's reply to the woman from the multitude who had extolled the mother of Jesus for having born such a son. The Lord virtually declares him worthy of greater praise who receives His Word into a faithful heart than the one female who gave Him birth and suckled Him. This latter distinction no one can share with Mary, but the other, in which she, too, excelled, for she kept all words concerning Him and pondered them in her heart, every believer shares with Mary.

6) Various false notions are fostered and propagated by certain religious societies. — 1. Some say the Bible is not the only revelation of God which teaches men how to be saved. The Roman Catholics add to the Bible the apocryphal books; the Swedenborgians, the writings of Swedenborg; the Mormons, the Book of Mormon; the Christian Scientists, the book of Mrs. Eddy, "Science and Health"; the Roman Catholic and the Greek Church, traditions, *i. e.*, teachings that have been handed down orally from generation to generation; the Irvingians and the Salvation Army, new revelations, which they claim to be constantly receiving from God. — 2. Others substitute something for the Bible: the Quakers and Shakers, the "inner light" or the revelations which the Spirit of God makes to them; the Spiritualists, communications which they claim to receive from the spirits of departed persons; the Unitarians and Universalists, the natural reason of men. — 3. All these people charge the Bible with being a faulty book, being only in part correct and good, and, hence, possessing only a partial authority, or none at all, for determining what men must believe and do to please God. They deny that the Scriptures are clear in their teaching, and that they have divine power. The Roman Catholics and the Greek Church forbid laymen to read the Bible, except by permission of their bishops. Pope Pius VII cursed Bible Societies in 1816, and called them a pest in Christendom; he also forbade translations of the Bible. Pope Leo XIII renewed these declarations of his predecessor in 1878.