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I.

From the home-land of Luther two theologians have come who have prominently aided in the building up of the Lutheran Church in America in the nineteenth century. Their work has left on the particular organization with which they cast their lot an impress that will not soon be effaced, though in the onward rush of years the memory of their names and personalities may become dimmed.

Walther's work in the Missouri Synod was nearly done when Stoeckhardt arrived. Between the landing of the Stephanists and Stoeckhardt's election to the chair of Exegesis at Concordia Seminary there lies a full half century. The Missouri Synod's battle for existence among the older Lutheran bodies in America had been fought, its *raison d'être* established.

1) Born February 17, 1842, at Chemnitz, Saxony; preparatory education in a private *Lateinschule* at Tharandt; 1857—62 at *Fuerstenschule* at Meissen; 1862—66 studies theology at universities of Erlangen and Leipzig; 1866—70 tutor at Ladies' Seminary at Tharandt; 1870—71 assistant pastor at the German Lutheran Church des Billettes at Paris, and, temporarily, at the Sedan Hospital; 1871—73 private tutor in Old and New Testament Exegesis at University of Erlangen, and instructor at Gymnasium of that city; 1873—76 pastor of a state church at Planitz, near Zwickau, Saxony; 1876—78 pastor of the independent St. John's congregation of same city; 1878—1887 pastor of Holy Cross Church, St. Louis, and lecturer on Old and New Testament Exegesis at Concordia Seminary; 1887—1913 Professor of Old and New Testament Exegesis at Concordia Seminary; 1903 created Doctor of Divinity by the theological faculty of Luther Seminary, Hamline, Minn.; died January 9, 1913.

“MECHANICAL INSPIRATION”
THE STUMBLING-BLOCK OF MODERN THEOLOGY.

(Continued.)

10.

Quenstedt speaks of an *accommodatio, attemperatio, condescensio* of the inspiring Spirit of God to the human writers of the oracles of God. This accommodation of the Holy Ghost is an essential part of Quenstedt's presentation of the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. He applies it with great force in the polemical section of his treatise, in the Fourth Question: “An etiam singula verba inspirata et dictata sint a Spiritu S. sacris scriptoribus?” Whether Scripture was inspired and dictated word for word? (pp. 72—77.) And the accommodation of the Spirit is the first of the “fontes

solutionum," *i. e.*, the sources from which he draws arguments for the solution of difficulties.

There are difficulties, then, which were recognized by the old dogmaticians who held the verbal inspiration, and even spoke of a verbatim dictation, of the Scriptures. It is a study worth the patience of any modern Bible scholar to observe the earnest efforts of a dogmatician like Quenstedt to overcome those difficulties in such a way as to do full justice to every fact recorded in Scripture that has some bearing on the character of the inspirational act.

11.

In his remarks on the "dictation-theory," which he admits to a limited extent (I, 209), Dr. Strong remarks: "It cannot account for the manifestly human element in the Scriptures. There are peculiarities of style which distinguish the productions of each writer from those of every other. . . . Notice Paul's anacoloutha and his bursts of grief and indignation (Rom. 5, 12 sq.; 2 Cor. 11, 1 sq.)." (I, 210.) "Inspiration, therefore, did not remove, but rather pressed into its own service, all the personal peculiarities of the writers, together with their defects of culture and literary style. Every imperfection not inconsistent with truth in a human composition may exist in inspired Scripture. The Bible is God's Word, in the sense that it presents to us divine truth in human forms. . . . Rightly understood, this very humanity of the Bible is a proof of its divinity. Locke: 'When God made the prophet, He did not unmake the man.' Prof. Day: 'The bush in which God appeared to Moses remained a bush, while yet burning with the brightness of God and uttering forth the majesty of the mind of God.' . . . [The Bible is not merely the Word of God; it is also the word made flesh. The Holy Spirit hides Himself, that He may show forth Christ (John 3, 8); He is known only by His effects—a pattern for preachers, who are ministers of the Spirit] (2 Cor. 3, 6). . . . Jackson, James Martineau, 255—'Paul's metaphor of the "treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. 4, 7) you cannot allow to give you guidance;

you want, not the treasure only, but the casket too, to come from above, and be of the crystal of the sky. You want the record to be divine, not only in its spirit, but also in its letter.' Charles Hodge, *Syst. Theol.* 1, 157: 'When God ordains praise out of the mouth of babes, they must speak as babes, or the whole power and beauty of the tribute will be lost.' Evans, *Bib. Scholarship and Inspiration*, 16, 25 — 'The raven that fed Elijah was nothing more than a bird. Nor does man, when supernaturally influenced, cease to be a man. An inspired man is not God, nor a divinely manipulated automaton.'" (I, 213 f.) "In inspiration God may use all right and normal methods of literary composition." (I, 214.)

These remarks of the leading dogmatician of the American Baptist Church show plainly that he regards the peculiarities of style of the various writers who composed the Scriptures as incompatible with the verbal inspiration.

12.

Summers, following Knapp, likewise, urges against the verbal inspiration of Scripture "the difference in style" of its various writers. (I, 462.)

Foster, who rejects the "mechanical theory," believes himself constrained to do so, because "the Scripture writers themselves *thought*, of course; and they thought, and therefore wrote, in harmony with their respective individualities—John as John, Paul as Paul, Isaiah as Isaiah. Each received the heavenly light, and each transmitted it, according to his own angle of vision. One, for instance, by natural endowment, could write history better than he could write meditation, or praise song, or epistle, and accordingly he wrote history. In selecting the agents, and apportioning to them their work, the Holy Spirit (if we may reverently so speak), took into consideration the natural qualification, as well as the character of the message which each was to record. But of course those who hold (as perhaps most persons do) that we cannot think without thinking in words, will see at once that this plenary in-

piration must at the same time be verbal, but not in any such sense as to override the linguistic and historical predilections and preferences of the respective writers. [If Isaiah knew only the Hebrew language, the Holy Spirit would not cause him to write in Ethiopic. If Paul's predilections were for words logical rather than for words poetical, so would he be inspired. If another knew only bad Greek, as judged by the classical standard, the Holy Spirit, in inspiring him to think, inspired him to think in the only dialect he knew. If He inspired Matthew to state a given fact, He inspired him to state it in Matthew's own words—which circumstance, of course, made Matthew's words in a sense the Holy Spirit's words. He might have inspired John to state the same fact in other words, and this circumstance would also have made John's words inspired.] (p. 124 f.)

Thus also the leading dogmaticians, in their day, of Wesleyan Arminianism and of Cumberland Presbyterianism have stumbled at "mechanical inspiration," because the style of each sacred writer seemed to them to militate against that mode of inspiration.

13.

William Adams Brown, D. D., Roosevelt Professor of Systematic Theology in Union Theological Seminary,—the chair occupied by Dr. Shedd years ago,—has designated that teaching which holds that the Bible came into existence "Spiritu Sancto dictante," as an appeal to external authority, such as the Catholic Church claims over the reason and conscience of its adherents. This teaching, upon this authority, he finds voiced in the Decrees of the Council of Trent (Schaff, *Creeds*, II, p. 78), where the very words cited before occur, and in the *Helvetic Consensus Formula* of 1675, which "makes the Bible the result of immediate divine dictation, and holds that even the Hebrew vowel points were inspired." And now he proceeds, with a caution that has struck us as singular among American dogmaticians: "In its more moderate statements a distinction is made between form and substance; and pecul-

iarities of style and expression on the part of the Biblical writers are admitted." But he shows how little he appreciates the "dictation-doctrine," even in its "moderate" form, when he goes on to say: "The arguments by which it is supported are partly theoretical and partly practical. The theoretical argument is based upon an *a priori* view of the divine perfection, which holds that the presence of error of any kind in Scripture would be inconsistent with the veracity of God. This appears most clearly in the theory of the so-called original autographs, in which all pretense of an experimental proof is abandoned, and perfection is asserted of a Bible which no man has ever seen. The practical argument takes its departure from the use of the Bible as a standard, and argues that the presence of error in any part of a book designed for such a purpose destroys its trustworthiness as a guide in all. This argument, too, proves at bottom to rest upon a theoretical assumption, namely, the inability of the human mind to recognize and respond to divine truth when presented in a human and therefore imperfect setting. Both difficulties are met by a truer conception of the nature of revelation, and a juster appreciation of those qualities in Scripture on which its significance as a guide depends."¹)

In other words, even that view of the inspirational act which regards it as a dictation by the Spirit to the sacred penmen, while, at the same time, it admits different styles of writing by different writers, is unsatisfactory, because it still magnifies unduly the divine influence upon the human mind.

14.

Quenstedt has anticipated every essential point in these objections, and this is the way he meets them: "They object that the words in which Holy Scripture was set down were taken from the daily *usus loquendi*, and were known before to the sacred writers from usage and habit, so that there was no need of inspiring the words to them. The argument is as

1) *Christian Theology in Outline*. 1908. p. 53 f.

follows: Whatever the sacred writers had acquired by daily usage and habit, before they were called to their sacred function, that they did not have by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Now, the words and style (*genus dicendi*) in which the Holy Scriptures are set down had been acquired by the sacred writers through daily use. Therefore, they did not obtain them by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. I reply by drawing a distinction between the style of the writers and their very phrases, words, and terms: the sacred penmen owed their style to daily use and habit, or even to training (*informationi*), and hence arises the diversity of style, especially of that of the prophets. For, according as the sacred writers were accustomed to a sublime or homely style of speaking and writing, the Holy Spirit would adapt Himself, and condescend, to the natural qualities of men, and thus express the same matter in a magnificent style by some, and in a humbler style by others. However, it is owing solely to the divine instinct and to inspiration that they employed just such or such phrases, and no others, just such or such terms, and no others, nor terms of equal force. For the Holy Spirit accommodated Himself to the natural capacity and quality of the sacred writers (*ad scriptorum sacrorum captum ac indolem sese attemperavit*), in order that the divine mysteries might be written down according to the accustomed manner of speech. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit inspired to the penmen such words as they would have employed, had they been left to draw upon their own resources (*si sibi fuissent relictis*).” (p. 75 f.) |

This position of Quenstedt is even in advance of his position as noted in the first installment of this article: not only is Quenstedt far from postulating the reduction to human automatons of the sacred penmen while under the inspirational impulse, not only does he admit their full human consciousness, intelligence, will, and purpose, but he also admits, without grudging, the individuality and idiosyncrasies of each and every writer. David was not only truly a human being of mature mind, and with his mental powers wide awake, and

his common human sensibilities alert and active, when he wrote his evening song of a fugitive saint (Ps. 3), but he was also David, just David, not some other personage. In similar strains he may have crooned a believer's lullaby to his trustful heart on previous occasions, and when men heard from him this particular song, they recognized in him "the sweet singer of Israel" whom they had known before.

There are in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel three sections which treat plainly cognate subjects, Is. 13—27, Jer. 46—51, and Ezek. 25—32. In each of these sections Jehovah pronounces His doom on the pagan nations which are in hostile array against the elect race. True, there is an interval of time between each of these prophetic messages. Changes in the political aspect of each pagan commonwealth have occurred between the days when Isaiah, and those when Jeremiah, and still later, when Ezekiel delivered his awful oracle. We may make full allowance for these elements of change; still there is the same *scopus generalis*, the same ultimate purpose, and the same general tenor, in the utterances of each prophet. It is plain, the invisible Speaker, whose אָמַר , *effatum*, declaration, the prophet delivers, has not changed His mind toward those nations. His verdict is a verdict of "guilty" in each case, and His verdict includes, each time, the utter discomfiture, downfall, and degradation of the pagan powers. And now note how each message is throbbing with the personal feeling, ringing with the idiomatic utterance, and fused with the peculiar imagination and imagery of each prophet. There is grandeur and almost dramatic force in Isaiah's speech as his eye sweeps over Babylon, Damascus, Tyre, Philistia, Dumah, Egypt, Ethiopia, and back to Assyria. The pathos of grief is voiced by Jeremiah as he beholds the same scenes, and the deep diapason of the dirge surges in his melancholy message. Ezekiel speaks with the stately dignity of the exalted seer. "In instrumento musico," says Quenstedt, "fistulae inaequaliter canunt, sed ab uno movente Musico." (p. 76.) What apter parallel could he have chosen to illustrate this phenomenon?

Prophecy has come to us, not in the droning monotone of the sibil, not in the booming of the fog-horn, ever the same, but in a symphony of many reeds, each attuned by a master musician to the same motif and the same theme. It is not a recitative, but a chorus, each singer singing his part in his natural voice, and each supporting, and being supported by, the rest.

"Magna est inter sacros scriptores, quoad stylum et genus dicendi, diversitas, ut supra dictum, quae ex eo esse videtur, quia Spiritus Sanctus accommodavit se ordinario dicendi modo, unicuique suum sermonis genus relinquens,"—"Among the sacred writers there is a great diversity, as regards style and mode of expression; and the reason for this seems to be, because the Holy Spirit adapted Himself to the ordinary manner of speech, leaving to each writer his peculiar style,"—without the least trace of uneasiness Quenstedt writes down this opinion. His view of the inspirational act had never found the peculiarities of each writer's style a troublesome factor, a pebble that had been dropped into the hopper of his dogmatics, and that threatened to stop his mill, if he did not succeed in crushing it. No, he passes the factor along as a most appropriate and pleasant fact, which corroborates his general view of the verbal, or plenary, inspiration, because it shows that God really caused His mind to flow (*influxit*) in channels which He did not then construct for the first time, but which were ready when He appropriated them, and which He used just as He found them. But he adds: "Propterea tamen non negandum, Spiritum Sanctum ipsa verba in individuo ipsis inspirasse," "We must not on this account" (*viz.*, on account of the difference of style) "deny that the Holy Spirit inspired the very words to each individual writer." (p. 76.) This means that the objectors to the teaching of verbal inspiration are guilty of a fallacy when they cite the diversity of style against the tenableness of that teaching: they draw a conclusion not warranted by their own premises. The divine *impulsus, instinctus, suggestio realis et verbalis*, in inspiration

can very well stand with the personal *captus et indoles* of each writer. There is a wise purpose why a master chooses a particular messenger to whom he tells the message which he wants delivered: he may know that this particular messenger is peculiarly fitted to repeat the message entrusted to him, because its very terms and style are entirely congenial to him, and its words will drop from his lips in a most natural manner.

15.

Quenstedt is aware that even among orthodox dogmaticians there may be dissent from his way of explaining the difference of style among the holy writers. The manner in which he records this dissent is a virtual reaffirmation of his own position. "Verum haec sententia, quod scil. Spiritus Sanctus sese accommodaverit ad organum suum, ejusque ingenium ac dicendi genus consuetum, non omnibus placet causamque diversi sermonis esse existimant: quia Spiritus Sanctus unicuique dat eloqui, prout ipse vult, Act. 2, 4, et quod non tam auctorum dicendi facultatem, quam materialium, de quibus dicere aut scribere voluit, indolem, respexerit. Ita Dr. D. Calovius, *System. Theol.*, Tom. I., cap. IV, quaest. V., p. 574." "This view, *viz.*, that the Holy Spirit adapted Himself to the organ which He employed, and to that organ's mind and customary manner of speaking, is not accepted by all. They believe the reason for the difference of style to be this, that the Holy Spirit gives utterance to each as He wills, and because He considered, not so much the quality of the authors' style, as the quality of the subjects on which He desired them to speak or write." (p. 76.)

The difference between his own view and that of Calov which Quenstedt seems to assume is specious. The context in Calov shows that he is replying to an opponent who claims that the Holy Spirit did not teach the prophets the exact language in which they were to publish their oracles, and who seeks to prove his claim by pointing to the accommodation of the Spirit to the style of the writer. ("Dicis, Spiritum S. accommodare se naturali procedendi modo cujuslibet prophetae,

nec iis morem variare naturalem, *nec docere eos linguam* (italics ours!), in qua prophetiam publicare debeant, ut exempla sunt Esaias et Jeremias.") In replying to this opponent, Calov argues that the Holy Spirit was never bound to use a style that would have destroyed the plainness and simplicity of the entire Scriptures, or that He must have borrowed the power of human eloquence and the impressiveness of a human author's style, in order to make God's Word powerful and impressive. Also the highly cultured speech and the ornate style of a writer like Isaiah become simple, and approach the level of the common speech and intelligence of men, by the influence which the Holy Spirit exerted in inspiration. In other words, Calov lays stress on another kind of accommodation on the part of the Holy Spirit: an accommodation to the *readers* of Holy Writ. But Calov also teaches an accommodation of the Spirit to the writers. He calls it by the Greek term *συγκατάβασις* = condescension. He concludes the very paragraph in question with these words: "Denique etiamsi accommodatius non tantum lectorum et auditorum genio dicatur et apertus Scripturae stylus, sed etiam antiquo et usitato dicendi generi scriptorum sacrorum, agnoscenda tamen in eo foret Spiritus Sancti *συγκατάβασις*, quod ipse se accommodarit quandoque ordinario dicendi modo, scriptoribus suum sermonis genus relinquens, non vero negandum, quod Spiritus Sanctus inspirarit iisdem verba: Annon enim in verborum inspiratione sese illis accommodare potuit? Jeremiae certe Jehovah ipse dixit cap. 1, 9: Ecce indo VERBA MEA ori tuo: Non ergo ipsius verba erant, sed Domini, et a Domino suggesta, atque indita."²⁾ We shall emphasize, in rendering these words, those points which Calov considers the real difference between himself and his opponent. "To conclude, even if it is said that the style of the Scriptures is plain and adapted not only to the intelligence of the readers and hearers, but also to the sacred writers' ancient and customary manner of speech, there would have to be acknowledged, with this admission (*in eo*), a conde-

2) *Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, I, 575. Ed. Witebergae 1654.

scension on the part of the Holy Spirit, *viz.*, that He accommodated Himself occasionally to the ordinary mode of speech, and left to each writer his peculiar style; *but it must not be denied that the Holy Spirit inspired to them the words. Or was He unable to accommodate Himself to them even when inspiring the words to them?*" etc. This is exactly the position which Quenstedt has defended in the citation above ("propterea tamen," etc.); only Calov is more wary in speaking of the accommodation of the Spirit, because he feels that behind that term there may be lurking a synergistic conception of the inspirational act. Quenstedt simply records Calov's statement where it seems to trench on his remarks. He feels assured, though, that nothing that he has said concerning the accommodation of the Spirit to the mind and speech of the writers can detract from, or weaken, what he has said about the word-inspiration. He, too, has cited Acts 2, 4, and that in this very chapter where he has explained the accommodation of the Holy Spirit, and has explained the purpose of the Pentecostal *πολυλωττία* to have been this "non fuit, ut apostolice divinitus revelatas verbis arbitrariis proferrent, nec prout ipsis videretur, sed *καθώς*, eo modo, ordine et verbis, quibus Spiritus S. dedit illis enuntiare et eloqui." (p. 75.) Arbitrariness, and whimsical fancies in the choice of terms were, indeed, superseded by the afflatus under which they spoke, but their personal qualities of mind and the full limit of their vocabulary were completely at the service of the Spirit, "while He gave them utterance." The inspiration and the accommodation of the Holy Ghost are perfectly synchronous and harmonious.

16.

Quenstedt is assured, however, that the best Bible scholars of antiquity and coeval writers of acknowledged eminence coincide with his explanation of the condescension of the Holy Spirit in the act of inspiring the sacred writers. He refers to remarks of Jerome, in the prefaces of that ancient writer to the books of the various prophets. Isaiah, says Jerome, was a "vir nobilis et urbanae eloquentiae"; there was nothing rustic

in his conversation; he had been brought up at the court. Accordingly, he is a very eloquent writer, "in sermone suo disertus, . . . habet sublime dicendi genus et magnificentius, nempe nobilem et urbanam eloquentiam." Jeremiah, thinks Jerome, shows by his "simplicitas eloquii" that he grew up in the small village of Anathoth, near Jerusalem, and in rural conditions. Ezekiel's style he regards as a mean between that of Isaiah and Jeremiah, "ex utraque medie temperatus." Job, who lived on the border of Arabia, shows Arabian influences in some of his idiomatic expressions, while in Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel there are Chaldaisms, indicating that the writers and readers of those days were beginning to think and speak like Chaldeans. Jerome has also recorded a remark of the teachers of the Church before his time, to the effect that Luke the Evangelist was highly skilled in the medical science, and better versed in Greek than in Hebrew literature. This is the reason why (*unde*) his style both in the Gospel and in Acts is quite polished and has the flavor of secular eloquence (*secularem redolet eloquentiam*), and why his citations are more from Greek than Hebrew sources. All these observations, Quenstedt holds, corroborate his thesis: "Quae sane styli diversitas aliunde originem habere non videntur, quam quod Spiritus S. in suggerendis Scripturae verbis, scriptoris cujusque ingenio et generi dicendi consueto sese accommodavit." (p. 76.)

(To be continued.)
