

DISCUSSIONS

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Robert Lewis Dabney

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

by

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In introducing these volumes to the reading world, it is proper that something should be said in reference to the character and the points of view of the man to whose abilities and untiring energy they owe their origin. Student, teacher, farmer, mechanic, author, soldier, financier, theologian, philosopher, and preacher of the gospel, his varied gifts have spread themselves over such a variety of employments and displayed such efficiency in everything he touched, that it will be impossible to form a just judgment of the works now collected together, or of the genius and character of the author, without some brief notice of his life and the principles which have regulated his energies.

Robert Lewis Dabney was born in the county of Louisa, in Virginia, on the 5th day of March, 1820. He was the son of Charles Dabney, a native of Louisa county, though of an old Hanover lineage, and Elizabeth Price, daughter of Captain Thomas Randolph Price, and Barbara Winston, his wife. The family of Charles Dabney consisted of himself, his wife, and their eight children, four boys and four girls. Robert was the sixth in this scale. His early education was conducted in country day-schools, created by the joint efforts of his father and some of his neighbors. These schools, in plain log cabins, were common at that day, and were often very efficient instruments of education. All three of the early teachers of Robert Dabney—Caleb Burnley, Thomas Meredith, and Charles Burnley—were faithful and capable men. Under them in succession he was trained in the rudiments of English, in geometry, and pursued quite an extended course in Latin and Greek. This training brought him to the close of the year 1835. From the beginning to the middle of 1836 he pursued his studies under the direction of Rev. James Wharey, the pastor of the church. During these six months he rode a colt seven miles once a week to recite. In the month of June of that year he entered Hampden-Sidney College as a sophomore, half advanced, passed through the junior course, and left in September, 1837, without graduating. He then returned home to his mother, now a widow, and for two years taught a country school in the neighborhood, similar to the schools in which he had been taught as a boy. In December, 1839, he entered the University of Virginia, and in 1842 retired with the degree of A. M. In July, 1812, he again returned

to his paternal home, and spent more than two years in managing the affairs of his mother and teaching a select private school, with the view of educating her younger children. He entered Union Seminary in October, 1844, took the full three years' course in two years, and was licensed to preach in May, 1846. His health at this time was nearly ruined. He spent one year as a missionary in his native county, and at the beginning of July, 1847, became pastor of Tinkling Spring Church, in the county of Augusta, where he remained six years and two months. At that period he was elected to the chair of Ecclesiastical History in Union Seminary, which he held until 1869. In that year, after serving as Adjunct-Professor of Theology in addition to discharging the duties of his own chair, he was made full Professor of Theology. He discharged the duties of this position until 1883, when, warned by his physician of the necessity of a change of climate, he accepted an invitation to take charge of the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Texas, the duties of which he still discharges with characteristic energy, in spite of a blindness now become total, and of general health giving way. The only interruption to the long term of his services in the Seminary was occasioned by the war, and for sixteen years of his stay in the school of theology he served as copastor of the College Church along with his colleague and brother-in-law, Dr. B. M. Smith. This regular parochial work he was at length constrained by bronchitis to resign. Discharging this accumulation of duties, interspersed with various literary labors and the management of the little farm attached to his professional residence, some conception may be formed of the immense labor which for many years taxed all the resources of his energetic mind.

The war between the States began in April, 1861. When the Seminary session closed in May, Dr. Dabney proposed to the session of the College Church that Dr. Smith should solely occupy the pulpit during the summer, and he himself should be allowed to follow the young men who, in considerable numbers, had left the congregation to go into the army, and serve as chaplain. But the directors of the Seminary had expressly ordered the faculty to keep the Seminary open. This compelled Dr. Dabney to take only a temporary position as chaplain, and return to the Seminary in October, 1861. This was always a matter of regret to him, as it broke up the chaplain's work, which he felt he ought to have done during the whole war. Early in 1862 the conscription law emptied the Seminary, as he had foreseen. The wife of Gen. Stonewall Jackson, then living in Dr. Dabney's family, being related to Dr. Dabney's wife, reported to Gen. Jackson that he was virtually out of all obligations to the school. Jackson promptly offered him the post of chief of staff to his corps, with the privilege of doing missionary work in the army every Sunday. Dabney had no military education, and the offer seemed to him at first to be unreasonable. But the patriots and divines of his acquaintance urged him to accept, and with many misgivings he did so. After fully

justifying the singular but shrewd judgment of his chief, in the latter part of the campaign of 1862 his health broke down, in accordance with his own misgivings, and, resigning his post, he returned home. As soon as the fatal termination of the war allowed the Seminary to resume its work he resumed the duties of his chair.

Such is a brief outline of the history of the author of these volumes. They are the result of his systematic labor in the intervals of a time devoted mainly to the business of his professorship and pastoral charge. They are not the only results of it; other volumes, consisting in part of his own original work and in part of an editorial arrangement of the works of other men, which involved about as much labor, in one instance at least, as if the work was his own, give equal testimony to the energy of his will. The valuable Commentary of Dr. Francis S. Sampson on the Hebrews is an instance of one of these labors; his own *Life of Gen. Stonewall Jackson* is an instance of another.

These remarkable results of a busy life were due to the systematic habits of a judicious student, combined with the extraordinary talents and energy of the man. His habits were simple, and brought under a systematic control. His time was regulated, and everything to be done was assigned to its own period. He secured for himself a full allowance of healthful sleep. His hour for retiring would have seemed to many students absurdly early. At ten o'clock he was in bed, and always allowed himself eight hours for repose. He thought it no economy of time or energy to cheat nature of the full amount of rest which was necessary to keep up his strength to its full vigor. He had time allotted to all his employments, and had it in sufficiency for his outdoor business, for the close inspection of his affairs, and for the entertainment of his friends. When the period for study came, he worked with the speed and power of an engine, and accomplished results which would have done credit to a student who never left his study. This systematic arrangement of his time, and the energy with which he turned it to account, allowed play for faculties not usually conceived as part of the furniture of a man of letters. Trained in the management of his mother's affairs, he was skilled in the arts of the planter, and made an excellent farmer of the little tract of land which he owned, adjoining the official residence allotted to him as professor. He was a capital mechanic, skilled in the use of tools, making no little of the furniture of his house and the tools of his farm. Without any instruction in the arts of the architect and the map-drawer, he drew plans for churches and private dwellings with all the elaborate detail of a professional artist, and the wall of his class-room was adorned with a map of his own drawing. He was a close economist on a principle of Christian obligation, early adopted and carried out with characteristic steadiness; a financier whose judgment had the testimony of a steady success in the increase of his property; and he was at the same time a generous patron of every Christian interest, the ready helper of kindred and friend

in time of need. His powers of observation were close and keen, and his interest in topographical matters, and his habit of close questioning the chance acquaintances he made about the soil, climate, productions, and modes of management of the sections where they lived, made him the most minutely and widely informed man of his time touching all parts of his own State and of many of the surrounding States. His studies were not confined to the lines of his own profession. He was a student of nature, a student of law, a student of philosophy, and a student of politics on the highest range of statesmanlike investigation. He was a political economist of a high order, and studied the bearings of progress in the development of society, in the growth of towns, in the increased facilities of transportation, in the multiplication of employments, in all the physical changes of the age, as few professional statesmen studied them. He was wide awake to the effects of such things on the political and social, as well as on the moral and religious, interests of society. He had the prophetic forecast of the true thinker, as well as the practical judgment of the man of business. When the war for Southern independence broke out, he threw himself into it on the side of his own people with characteristic energy, and the peculiar traits of his practical and strong understanding came out on a theatre altogether foreign to the habits of a man of his profession. He joined the army as chief of staff to Gen. Stonewall Jackson. It is a strong tribute to the sagacious and energetic qualities of the man that that cautious and keen soldier should have selected a teacher in a theological school as the chief of his own military family. The two men were congenial spirits, and on the strong common sense and keen habit of observation of his clerical officer Jackson placed more reliance than he did on others far more thoroughly drilled in military technics.

The characteristics of his mental and moral nature appear in strongly marked forms in these volumes now given to the world. He will here be seen, as he was, a force at once independent and intensely conservative, thrown into the great battle-field of the period in which he lived. One of the leading traits of his mind—its inflexible conservatism—brought him into resolute opposition to many of the results of the progressive spirit of the times. This trait was the fountain of much that was valuable in his labors, and of much that brought on him the censure of more adventurous and less cautious minds. He may have yielded too much occasionally to this conservative tendency, for it is human to err, and all virtues in fallible human nature may pass into evil by excess. But it can be said, without fear of contradiction, that in the vast bulk of Dr. Dabney's labors his conservative tendencies were the ministers of truth and righteousness. There is always need for a restraining as well as a progressive force in the onward movement of society, and the one is as wise and useful as the other. In an age like the present, where the progressive tendencies have been stimulated to the highest degree, and have

passed into excesses as obviously dangerous as some of its results have proved beneficial, the rise of a restraining influence, confronting the excesses and exposing the evil impulses from which they have flowed, is unquestionably a thing which wisdom will approve. In no age of the world's history has there been more need for a wise and resolute conservatism than in the present era. This century will stand preeminent in history for the great movements which, for good and evil, have exerted, and will continue to exert, an unparalleled influence on the destinies of the human race. Distinguished for great activity of thought, for the extension of popular intelligence, for the infinite development of the communication of information, for inventiveness, for scientific discoveries, for advanced scholarship, for a widespread and audacious skepticism, for vast development of transportation, commerce and manufactures, this remarkable age has accomplished results, both for good and evil, which will qualify the current of affairs for centuries to come.

The progress of speculation has assailed the Christian faith and the foundations of moral obligation, with the undisguised intent of overthrowing both as forces in society. During the active period of our author's life, the most sustained and determined conflict with infidelity the gospel has ever waged has prevailed. The struggles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were child's play compared with it. The battle has raged along the whole line of literary, scientific, philosophic, and even religious investigation. The assault has been met with corresponding ardor and ability wherever it has been made. The Christian response, too, has come in wonderful forms, not only in the field of argument, but in the field of action. Never before have the propagandist powers of the church been so greatly displayed, at least since the age of the apostles. If the age is the age of skepticism, it is also the age of missions. If it is the age of unbelief, it is also the age of faith. Never has the power of the gospel preached in its simplicity been more conspicuously displayed than in the work of Moody the evangelist, and Spurgeon the pastor. Never has the power of prayer been more scornfully assailed than by the rationalism of Tyndall and Huxley, and never more gloriously vindicated than in the work of George Muller. Never has the influence of a refusal to abide by the moral precepts of the Tables of Stone, and the moral teachings of the New Testament, been followed by results so vast and openly ruinous. The exaggerated construction of the theories of civil freedom, and the repudiation of the voice of the Holy Ghost touching the relation of master and slave, have issued in the blood of hundreds of thousands of the human race, in the desolation of eleven States of the American Union, in the overthrow of the fundamental principle of the Constitution of the United States government—government based upon consent—in the loss of millions of treasure, in the misery of millions of a once free and happy people, and in raising issues which overhang the future with the impenetrable and menacing

darkness of a midnight tempest. The same causes have unsettled the securities of society, the stability of governments, the safety of property, and the immunities of a refined civilization over all Europe. The vast, vague menace of socialism and communism. rises in every enlightened nation like a ghost in Ossian. The same causes have introduced the reign of vast social corruption, the disturbance of the comforts of domestic life, the decay of commercial integrity, the disgrace of political faithlessness, and the tyrannies of democratic communities as ruthless and bloody as the despotism of an Oriental despot, on a scale larger than the despotism of an individual ever reached. It has produced not only the liberation of millions of half-civilized slaves, but the tremendous peril of their enfranchisement. It has shaken the securities of every nation of Christendom.

Among that noble host of Christian champions who have met the assaults of infidels, the author of these volumes has made a noble record. Differing radically in some things from many of his fellow-soldiers in the sacred warfare, he has proved equal to the foremost of them, if not in the learning peculiar to their separate departments, certainly in independence and energy of thought, superior to them all in the staunch conservatism of his principles, and, above all in the uniform subjection of his bold intellect to the word of God. Conservative to the core, he has stood in the old paths, and confronted the audacious novelties of modern speculation with consummate tenacity. His work on the *Sensualistic Philosophy*, steeped in the essence of common sense, is the most overwhelming demonstration the age has produced of the unsoundness of the positive and relative speculations of the age. His mind, in its great leading characteristic, has shown itself eminently realistic and practical. Philosophical speculations, no matter how acute or profound, were to him nothing worth if they brought out conclusions at war with common sense. He was a truer disciple of the great Scottish school than Sir William Hamilton himself. An enthusiastic believer in the possibility and the value of a real philosophy, he repudiated every theory which discounted its conformity with the primitive intuitions of the human understanding. Reverencing the Bible as the word of Almighty God, he had no patience with processes or conclusions which insulted its supreme claim to absolute authority. He abhorred especially the saintly villainy which, dressed in gown and bands, and standing demure as the wolf in sheep's clothing in the pulpits of the Christian church, assailed the teachings of the sacred Scriptures in doctrine or morals. The intellectual as well as the moral qualities of the man bound him to this species of open and unsparing war on all the heresies which sprang up in the course of the so-called advanced thought of the age. These qualities explain, not only the positions which he took, but the method of his defense and assault; not only the matter of his thought, but the mode of its expression. The matter was always grounded on the intuitions of common

sense or the lessons of experience, on the examples of history or on the teachings of the Bible. The mode of its expression was determined by his intense convictions, his indignation against every moral obliquity, his full recognition of the authority of truth, and his fearless spirit. His power of analysis was wide and keen; his judgment sound; his capacity of observation close and vigilant; his temper hot, eager and resolute; his sensibilities just and tender; his powers of sarcasm and invective extraordinary; his mastery of language rich and fertile, fully equal to all the demands of his thoughts; his fancy pregnant with poetic beauty; his capacity of moral indignation, tender feeling, sympathy with suffering, and deep convictions of truth, unusually great; his sense of justice keen; his hatred of all tergiversation, fraud and faithlessness to covenants passionately vehement; and his courage, both moral and physical, of the truest temper. All these qualities are impressed upon his work. Such a mental and moral structure, ruled by such absolute reliance on the authority of common sense and the word of God, might have been expected to wage war with error as Coeur de Lion waged among the ranks of the Saracens.

This keen expression of moral indignation sometimes jarred on the nerves of timid persons, and the writer was accused of indulging in unlawful passion. But this is a false judgment. There is such a thing as just anger. Our Lord himself grew angry at the desecration of the temple and the bottomless hypocrisies of the Pharisees. It is wrong to deal with dangerous error and want of candor in its propagation, as if it were empty of all moral significance. That Dr. Dabney made no mistakes in this direction is obviously improbable. That his generous and ardent temper never passed over into some excess, none of his most loyal friends—a host among his own people—are disposed to deny. But his keenest assaults never bore the least taint of malice towards persons. His faults were the excess of noble impulse in every case, and no one was ever more ready to confess them, no one ever more gentle in receiving the admonition of those who were entitled to admonish him. All the defects, however, which may be found in the large products of his long and energetic labors are literally nothing in comparison with their value. All the peculiarities of his mental and moral nature are impressed upon them, and give a charm to the appreciative reader. His approach to a subject was always direct and straightforward. He evaded no difficulty; he bent to no complication; he yielded to no evasion. He seized at once on the heart of the matter, and moved straight on the lines of discrimination which led to the true evolution of its substance. His style was after the model of Swift, in the main character plain, didactic, seeking the most direct and clear expression, flexible to every shade of his thought, energetic, free of flow, and, unlike that of the cynic of St. Patrick, not disdaining to rise occasionally into rich poetic beauty. His taste in letters, as in all his general habits of mind, was at once

simple and poetic, clinging to the old simplicities of life in which he was bred, and yet keen in the appreciation of all beauty in nature and in art. Patient and painstaking in all he undertook, the energy of his nature drove him to incessant and varied labors. His strong conservatism led him to the full conviction that the haughty, progressive spirit of the age often left behind the valuable achievements of the past, and as often abandoned old truth as it discovered new. To him truth was truth, no matter how old, and he revered the grand intellects of an earlier day and their approved work more than the untested pretenders of the modern world. He believed in the crucible of time.

Hating injustice with intense feeling, he scorned the self seeking which truckles to triumphant and unjust power for mere advantage. Believing utterly in the word of God, he never flinched from denouncing the errors which flowed, with all their desolating effects, from a refusal to abide by the teachings of the Scriptures. He spoke out boldly in defense of revealed moral truth repudiated by angry millions, and fearlessly uttered his sympathies with half a continent overwhelmed by a triumphant fanaticism. Reverencing truth—the truth of the past not less than the truth of the present—nothing could persuade him that past evils could change their nature into good, or had any claim to be delineated in any other colors than their own; a spade was a spade, and it was a lie to say it was not. His bold and uncompromising convictions never brooked the timid prudence of concealment in deference to the passions of hostile multitudes. Hence he often came in collision with that apprehensive expediency which could see no recourse but in silent submission, leaving truth to pass out of view, and lawful self-protection to cower under the dread of fanaticism armed with power and insolent with victory. Hence he often encountered the censure of those whose rights, honor and interests he defended with the most intense sympathy.

The brave and unfortunate people of his own section never had a truer or more faithful friend than the author of these volumes. His active fancy and tender sensibilities never lost sight of the miseries of his countrymen in his own comparatively complete exemption from poverty and want. If any one is disposed to deprecate the fearless assertion of the truth, which vindicates the scriptural authority of the social institutions which provoked the hostility of a fanaticism essentially infidel, we would ask such a one if the moral teachings of the word of God are to be suppressed or buried out of sight just because they convict that fanaticism of its guilt? Are the old and glorious annals of the Southern States to be allowed no vindication before the bar of history? Are they to relinquish that defense thrown over them by the word of God himself? Are the countrymen of Washington and Henry to allow the slander to go down unresisted to posterity that they were criminals of the deepest dye because they stood in a relation which is warranted by the finger

of God on the granite record of the moral law? Shall they submit to have a record of untainted fidelity to all their obligations under the constitution covered with oblivion, while the record of their antagonists is blazoned in the heavens, although it is blotted with breach after breach of their constitutional obligations? Rest assured, this cannot be; and if so, let the voice of this true servant of God and his country be heard; let his vindication of the moral and political principles of his people be admitted to an impartial judgment. Nothing is to be gained by the attempt to send the truth into perpetual exile. It must prevail at last.

While these volumes will contain a defense of the substantial rights of the Southern people, they will also contain the most abundant evidence that the most ultra friends of Southern independence after the struggle commenced were passionately imbued with the hope that the issue might not be raised, and that the conflict might be averted. More than one paper in these collections will show with what intense Christian solicitude Dr. Dabney, always a type of the most decided Southern feeling, endeavored to avert the calamity. That testimony will appear in that section of the publication which comes out under the auspices of the Committee of Publication. It will also appear in the fourth volume, for which the church assumes no responsibility. Another gratifying element in these volumes, strongly marked, is the type of religious feeling and principle in the character of the author. His whole religious frame of thought and feeling was molded by that form of Christian truth called Calvinistic. He accepted the Bible as the absolute word of God, after the old model of faith in the church. He received it as not only inspired in its matter, but inspired in its expression, not only as knowledge given of the Holy Ghost, but as given in words taught of that divine agent. He accepted all its humiliating lessons of human guilt and depravity as a true diagnosis and exposure of the moral condition of the human soul. He accepted the sovereign grace and power of God as the only source of hope to man, considered as an individual or considered as a race. He accepted the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the only purchase of redemption—his positive righteousness as the only ground of title to eternal life. He accepted the offices of the Holy Spirit as the only deliverance from the unholiness of the human heart, and the deadly habit growing out of personal sin. These truths he received from the word of God, and saw them reproduced in his own consciousness more and more as his own intuitions were more and more purged into clear vision under the power of grace in his own soul. His view of the sanctity and authority of the law of God, and the righteousness of its prescriptions, was peculiarly strong. His personal religious character was molded by these strong truths, and partook of their strength. His intuitions were vigorous and steady, his principle of obedience was staunch, his affections undemonstrative, but intense. His apprehension of sin was in proportion

to his apprehension of the excellence of divine law; and with all the manifestations of his energy and courage, his personal humility, his sense of his own faults, were both deep and tender. His piety, modified by the habit of reflection in his professional employments, was profoundly reflective; he studied constantly the phenomena of his own soul under the various phases of his religious experience. Relying on the truth as the sole instrument of sanctification, he learned much of the false phases of religious feeling bred by error, as well as of the true effects on the moral nature of the truth as it is in Jesus. Relying on the truth, he approved all the legitimate activities of the Christian work growing out of it, and had but small regard for so-called Christian activities growing out of human devices appended to the divine system of ordinances and instrumental means. The thoughtful paper in these volumes on admitting persons to the communion of the church is a fair example of this wise reverence for the truth.

His religious character was eminently one of principle, and when clear in his own consciousness of acting under a motive drawn from the teachings of the word of God, he submitted quietly to misconstructions which, in the censures of good men, touched him to the quick.. An example of this is found in the discussion on Christian Economy, which formulated the principle in his heart that regulated the management of his property all his life. He was censured as unduly rigid in his economical measures; but he was only obedient to the law of the Master under whom he was a steward; and when the time came for the outgo of these carefully husbanded resources, they flowed as freely under the same wise regulation. This reign of steadfast principle gave a force and struggle to Dabney's religious life which can never be imitated without eminent advantage to the cause of religion. His ardent, deep-toned, reflective piety gives many an invaluable lesson in these pages. At once steadfast and adventurous for the truth, bowing his ear to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, while his eyes fixed on the written word as the guiding lines to correct any misapprehension of what was coming to his own intuitions, the author has given many a lesson of such value to his brethren in the ministry, and to the church at large, that it is to be hoped they will not willingly let them die.

The deep and staunch texture of Dr. Dabney's piety is receiving a noble test in his last years. Stone-blind, and frequently suffering intense pain as his health gives way, he is still doing the full work of the chair of Philosophy in the University of Texas, and of the chair of Theology in the nascent Theological School in Austin, and doing all with such happy cheerfulness as vindicates the grace of God and the trust of his servant in a way to touch the very heart of all who see the noble proof of both.

In his person Dr. Dabney was about six feet high, originally slender, in his middle manhood stalwart and powerful. His complexion was dark, his

hair a dark, silky brown, his brow broad, under the large sockets of which a pair of keen black eyes gazed out, his gait without grace, but strong and steady, his lips thin, his nose large and well-formed, the whole face comely and striking to the most casual looker. For many years a flowing brown beard fell from lip, chin and cheek. As a speaker he was direct, plain, clear in thought, and always moved by strong convictions, and frequently eloquent in a high degree. As a preacher his sermons were crammed full of thought, and frequently moving from the deep and sometimes unmastered sensibility they contained. He had but few peers in the pulpit of his day. His speeches in the courts of the church were always weighty in their logic, and on occasions when he deemed the truth or the church to be in danger from the policy or intrigue of mistaken men, the torrent of argument and passion flowed, fused like the iron and the white heat from the crucible of a furnace. His great work, however, was done with his pen, and a material part of it is now presented to the public in these collections. The number of his publications was very large; the present series is far from exhausting the catalogue. In the latter part of his life a talent for poetical composition and a disposition to indulge it, of which no suspicion existed before, has made its appearance. Several of these pieces have been printed in the last few years, exhibiting the characteristic marks of strong conception and deep feeling under poetical forms, which have illustrated his mastery of English phrase in a direction entirely new. But the most valuable of his numerous and diligently elaborated works are to be found in his defenses of evangelical truth, and his expositions of the philosophy underlying the gospel system. In these the church is left heir to expositions which will never cease to be of value in its long, stern conflict with the powers of darkness.

The part borne by the nominal editor of these volumes is intentionally reduced to a mere supervision. Dr. Dabney speaks for himself. His life-long friend, whose name appears in a nominal relation to the work, will not qualify the utterances of a mind so independent and so fully entitled to speak out its own convictions. He will only say to a certain class of readers, who are not accustomed to a rigid construction of positive argument, that they are following the thought of a thinker so trained to exact discrimination that he does not always explain the exact purpose of his distinctions, and sometimes leaves his reader to discover it for himself. An example will be found in the discussion on the "Various Readings of the New Testament Versions." He has been charged with upholding as certain truth the authority of the disputed passage in 1 John v. 7, against the general consent of scholars that it is spurious. He expressly disclaims doing more than keeping this an open question; but the disclaimer is overlooked in the mass of reasoning which is gathered around the assertion of its probable genuineness. But that powerful argument is explicitly designed to keep the question open, and not to affirm the positive

canonicity of the disputed paragraph. He does develop the force of the claim to genuineness, so as to justify his purpose to keep the question open until it is more satisfactorily settled. It is easier to sneer at the “antiquated scholarship” of the plea than to set it aside. Yet nothing but a want of attention could fail to see that the author does not claim for it a decisive overthrow of the strong external evidence as now arrayed against it; he only proves that, in spite of the external evidence, the internal evidence is so strong as to enforce the propriety of its being kept an open question until final research has settled it by an external evidence sufficiently powerful to overcome the powerful internal evidence in its favor. Dr. Dabney always has a definite object in view in his discussions, and he seldom misses his mark.

Hoping that a spirit of impartial candor in those whose views are combated in these able papers may give fair play to their power for good, they are now committed to the world to run their course, and commended to acceptance of that Divine Master whose glory they seek in a world full of error.