

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

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## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—THE INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE.

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“FOR when it became plain to me,” writes Augustine in his *Confessions*, “that (Faustus) was ignorant of those arts in which I had believed him to excel, I began to despair of his clearing up and explaining all the perplexities which harassed me.” Young Augustine, that is to say, painfully feeling his way to truth, came to distrust the religious teaching of Manichæism, because he had first come to distrust its physical teaching. For how, Augustine argued, could sacred books, which contained demonstrably fabulous accounts “concerning the heaven and stars, the sun and moon,” the movements of which were open to all, be regarded as worthy of credit when they spake of spiritual things, the laws and movements of which were as manifestly beyond human ken? Could a would-be prophet, who claimed to be the organ of express revelation, and who erred in matters verifiable, be regarded as trustworthy in matters incapable of verification? Must not errancy in earthly things argue uncertainty in heavenly things?

Clearly Augustine was right in his argument, on one proviso. That a man whose judgments were often fallible, might nevertheless become at times the infallible agent of Divine revelation, was not impossible, and in such a case fallibility of some judgments would not have argued fallibility of all. But if these fallible physical opinions of Faustus were expressly stated by him to be Divine revelation, surely Augustine was right; for revelations which contained error in things verifiable, could scarcely be intelligently regarded as free from error in things extra-verifiable.

Such an instance may not be without its value when considering the inerrancy of Scripture; for there are really two questions which should be carefully distinguished when dealing with this knotty subject. One question is, whether the reliability of revelation is, or is not, affected by