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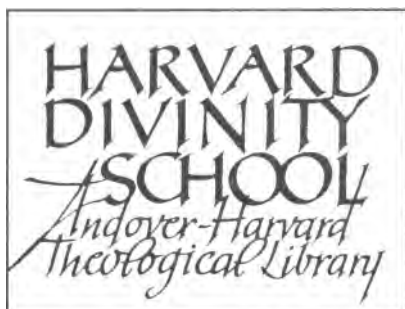
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BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

AND

INSPIRATION.



TWO PAPERS

BY

LLEWELYN J. EVANS

AND

HENRY PRESERVED SMITH.

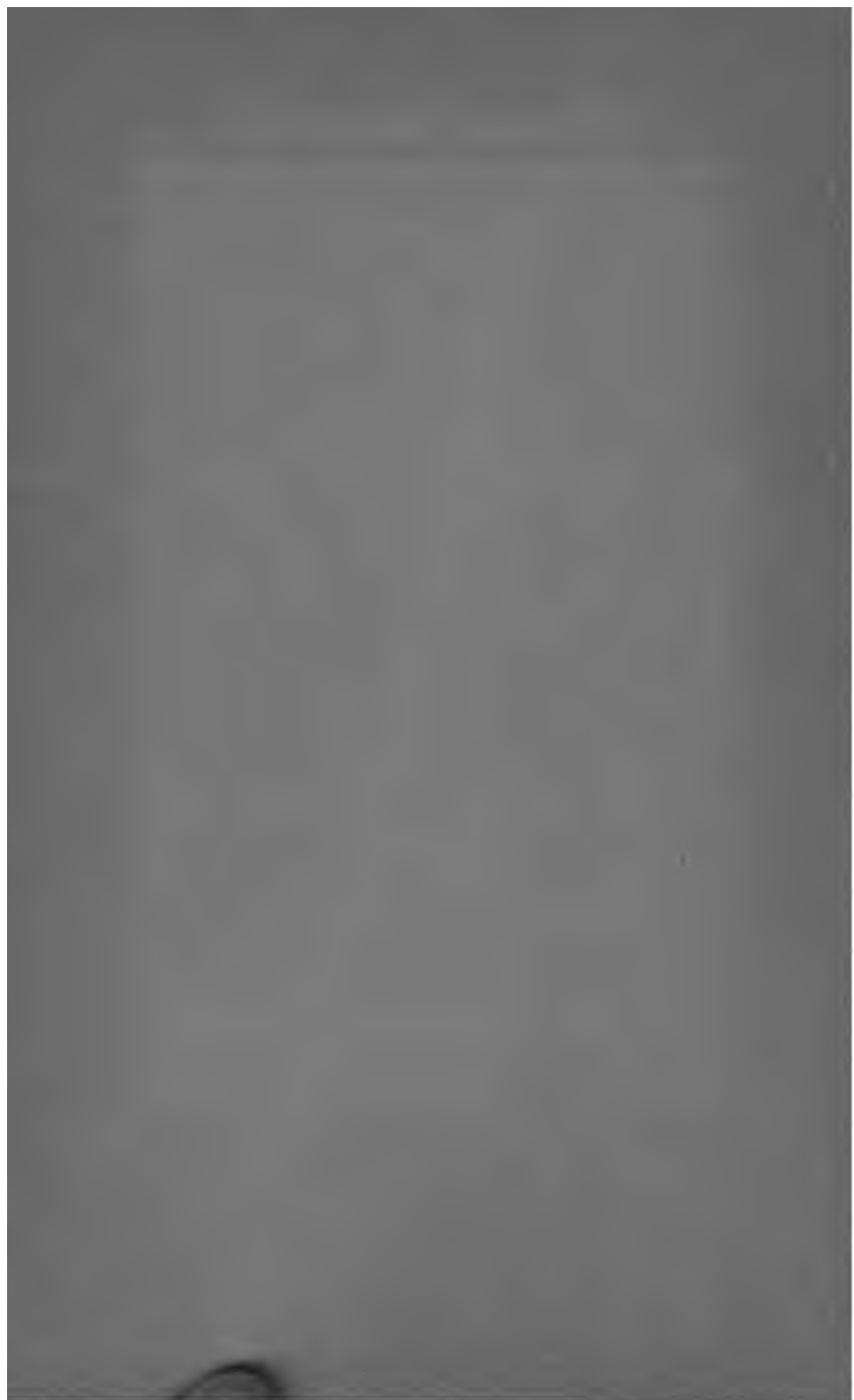


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PREFACE.

The following papers were lately read before the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of Cincinnati. The second was prepared at the special request of the Association. The first was originally prepared as part of a discussion in the Presbytery of Cincinnati of the relations of the General Assembly to the teaching of Biblical Criticism in our Theological Seminaries. By the courtesy of the Association, of which grateful acknowledgment is hereby made, it was delivered there instead of in the Presbytery. The bulk of the matter and form, however, was left unchanged; and this statement will serve to account for the literary expression of the paper as here presented.



Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration.

I.

By LLEWELYN J. EVANS.

It is the purpose of this discussion to present some of the accepted conclusions of the best Christian scholarship of the day respecting certain features of our sacred Scriptures, as these conclusions bear on the question of the inspiration, infallibility, and authority of these Scriptures, and on the rights and obligations of those who are appointed to direct the study of them in our theological schools. It is a question which, whatever we may think of the occasion or the methods which have precipitated it upon us, has been pushed to the front by tendencies and conditions the operation of which it was not within the power of man to stem or to control. Now that the issue is upon us we must meet it, in no temper of suspicion, prejudice, or partisanship, but in a frank, manly, straightforward way, and in a spirit of loyalty to the truth, to our church, and to God. As to the personal form which the issue has taken, as a movement to challenge and to invoke the formal and authoritative condemnation, by the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, of certain utterances respecting the Scriptures, and Scripture truths, recently made by a prominent theological professor in our church, I shall have very little directly to say. I am

not concerned to justify the utterances of my brother professor in detail. In that particular, my friend is abundantly able to take care of himself. If, as I confidently hope, the views which are here urged shall obtain from the Church, in its ultimate decision, the recognition which is claimed for them as scriptural, evangelical, confessional, scientific, reverent, and indispensable to the satisfactory and permanent solution of the great problems of our age, and to the harmony of religious faith with scientific and critical processes and results, I have no fear that any one will be wronged. The principles which are at stake are to my mind more vital than any personal issue. The movement of which I have spoken, and the utterances in the press and elsewhere which have accompanied and interpreted its inception and purpose, convince me that the time has come for a definite understanding respecting the rights of Christian Scholarship in the Biblical departments of our Theological Seminaries. That is a question in which I may be pardoned for feeling an intense personal interest. It is a question which affects my calling, my work, my very life. If there is any thing in which my whole being is wrapped up, it is the study and teaching of the Word of God. If there is any thing that I love with every fiber of every heart-string, it is that blessed old book. If there is any thing for which, so far as I know myself, I would gladly lay down my life, it is that this Book may be known and read throughout the length and breadth of the world as the guide of lost souls to heaven. It is because I believe in this Book with a conviction and love which grow with every year's study of it, that I take my present position. And it is because I believe that, in order the sooner and the better to accomplish its mission in the world, it must be rescued out of a false position, and be put before the world where it puts itself, that I would fain help in clearing off the stumbling-blocks which mistaken zeal has put in the way of inquiring souls, and dig down through the quick-

sands of false definitions and untenable theories to what Mr. Gladstone so truly and forcibly calls, "*The impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.*"

As I have already said, the time has come for a definite understanding in regard to what I may briefly call the Biblical situation. What have we the right to teach about the Bible? We must come to a clear and cordial understanding in respect to that question. I trust it is not vanity that prompts me to hope I may say something that will help to bring about such an understanding. I would fain believe that I am in a position to understand both sides on the question at issue. There is much in the position of the brethren whose course on the particular issue before us I feel constrained to oppose that commands my hearty assent. I honor, I hope I share in their zeal for the supreme authority of the Word of God. In their opposition to every movement of thought which tends to undermine that authority, I am with them. If I believed that the apprehensions which inspire their present action were well grounded, I would earnestly support it.

I furthermore believe that it is all-important that there should be the most thorough accord between the work that is done and the instruction that is given in our Seminaries, and the work done and the instruction given in our pulpits and parishes. There should be the most hearty unity of thought, feeling, and action, between theological professors and pastors, in our common work for the Master. I believe it is incumbent on both sides to maintain this *entente cordiale*. It is incumbent on us as professors so to carry on our work that the hands of our brethren in the field shall be strengthened. We are under obligation to do nothing that we can consistently avoid doing that will discourage, disturb, embarrass them in their great and holy mission, and so to train the young men under our care that they shall go forth equipped to reinforce them at every point. On the other hand, I claim from my brethren reciprocity in this matter. I ask

that they accord to us their confidence, that they beware of unjust suspicions, that they try to understand us in our position and work.

Good old Dr. Johnson used to say, "Clear your mind of cant." Let us try to clear our minds of cant, of mist, of prejudice in respect to the issue we are trying. I can not help the conviction that the trouble of the present situation, the ferment, the unsettlement, the alarm which prevails, is due very largely—I will not say altogether, but largely—and I must say mainly, to a vague and inadequate conception of the situation, leading to a confusion of terms and ideas, and resulting in mistaking friends for foes. In Matthew Arnold's words:

"And we are here as on a darkling plain,
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

There is a good deal of unprofitable mental gymnastics going on, such as Paul was so careful to avoid. Some of our good brethren, I fear, are "beating the air," and quite a number, I am sure, are beating the wrong man.

There is an uncomfortable lack of definiteness and precision in certain charges which are made. We are hearing much about "errors," "dangerous errors," "erroneous tendencies," matters which are "calculated to unsettle faith." What are these "errors?" I suspect, if our brethren who complain of these things should undertake to frame a declaration, after the model of the Auburn Declaration, setting forth in black and white, first in the light of Scripture, and then in the light of the Confession, on this side the Error, and over against it the True Doctrine, the case would begin to look very differently from what it does. At all events we should then know precisely where we are, and exactly what we are talking about. Differences often arise from ambiguities. We use the same word in different senses, or we convey the same thought by different phrases, and then appeal to the General

Assembly, forsooth, to decide between us! Then again the world is moving on, and it is getting more and more hard to keep up with it. We are living in an age of specialties, and of specialists. Even among experts, the ninety and nine know not what the hundredth man is up to. They know that they are liable any fine morning to wake up and to find the Babylon of their fine old-fashioned theories blown up with the dynamite of some experiment, and Number One Hundred dancing on the ruins.

Now it so happens that, in the Providence of God, for better or worse, my lot has been cast in a Theological Seminary. It has been a necessity of my position to give some attention to the leading Biblical questions of the day. For a quarter of a century this has been my business. I trust, therefore, it will not be regarded as presumption on my part if I indulge the hope that by something I may say, I may succeed in bringing some of my brethren into closer touch with the best Christian Scholarship of the day touching some of the questions which are involved in the present issue. All I claim for myself is that I think I understand both sides; and sympathizing as I do with both sides in some things, I would fain bring them nearer together. And if I make a more liberal use of the first personal pronoun than is generally deemed commendable, you will understand my motive.

Allow me, then, to premise that in the study of Biblical questions, which my vocation has made necessary, I have both striven to keep an open mind, and earnestly sought the guidance of a wisdom higher than my own. My study of the history of the interpretation and criticism of God's word has shown me, as clearly as it has taught me any thing, that God does lead his people onward in their inquiries of his holy Oracle. I know, as well as I know any thing, that progress, wonderful progress, has been made in my own day in the knowledge of the Word. I do not claim that all

movement has been progress, or that every "find" has been a gain. I am well aware that in Biblical science, as in every science, there are rash speculations, unproved hypotheses, wild and dangerous vagaries. Some corners of the field are full of will-o'-the-wisps, illusive, unsubstantial, unsafe, gleaming, I fear, with a light that is not from heaven.

But on the other hand, there are conclusions in this field which all whose judgment is worth any thing are agreed in regarding as substantially established. There are other conclusions which must fairly be conceded to have a strong balance of probability in their favor. These conclusions must be reckoned with. Whether we accept them, or reject them, the data on which they are based must be satisfactorily explained. There are certain ascertained facts—so far as any historical data can be called facts—bearing on the structure of the Bible, bearing on the historical accuracy of particular statements in the Book, bearing on the inspiration of Scripture—facts bearing, that is, on the mode in which the accuracy, the infallibility, the inspiration, the authority of Scripture must be conceived and defined—which can not be set aside by sneers at the Higher Criticism, which can not be offset by vague denunciations of Rationalism, which can not be disposed of at all without satisfying the demands of the most enlightened reason, the requirements of the most thorough scholarship, as well as the claims of the devoutest faith. We must reckon with these facts. We must take them into the account. We must assign them their true value. We must make them the basis of our judgments and our deliverances. If the theories of other days will not bear the pressure of these facts, they must go to the wall. There is no help for it. If your definition of inspiration, your definition of the infallibility of the Bible—mark what I say! not the doctrine, but *your definition* of the doctrine—if that definition will not stand the test of the established results of criti-

cism, if it will not harmonize with ascertained facts, then so much the worse for the definition.

Two years ago it was my privilege to attend the sessions of the Free Church Assembly in Edinburgh, when Dr. Dods was elected to the chair of Exegetical Theology in the New College. The candidature of Dr. Dods was strenuously resisted on the ground of his utterances respecting the Scriptures and their inspiration. The attempt was made to prove the unsoundness of his views. How? From Scripture? No! From the Confession of Faith? Not at all; but from Dr. Hodge on the Confession. At once, from all parts of the house, the cry was heard: "Dr. Hodge is not the Confession." That summed up the situation in Scotland. That sums up the situation here to-day. The Commentary is not the Confession; the Confession, let me add, is not Scripture. But Dr. Hodge is neither Confession nor Scripture. Or to state the case more broadly: the Scholastic Theology, which Dr. Hodge represents, is neither the Confession nor the Word of God. But there are dearly beloved brethren, throughout the Presbyterian Church, who are laboring under the delusion that, if Dr. Hodge is not the Confession, at least it means, or ought to mean, what Dr. Hodge says. I hope to show, before I get through, that it does mean nothing of the sort.

But what does Dr. Hodge say is the teaching of the Confession? In brief this: The books of Scripture "are one and all, in thought and verbal expression, in substance and form, wholly the Word of God, conveying with absolute accuracy and divine authority, all that God meant them to convey, without human additions or admixtures." "All written under it [the Divine influence called inspiration] is the very Word of God, of infallible truth and of divine authority; and this infallibility and authority attach as well to the verbal expression in which the revelation is conveyed as to the matter

of the revelation itself.”¹ Or still more comprehensively and explicitly, in a joint article written by Drs. A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, we are told: “The historical faith of the Church has always been that all the affirmations of Scripture of all kinds, whether of spiritual doctrine, or duty, or of physical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle, are without any error when the *ipsissima verba* of the original autographs are ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense.”²

That statement, I take it, gives us the key to the situation. It is the premise from which have proceeded all the movements in our Church which have been directed, during the past ten years, against the affirmations of modern Biblical Criticism. The critics have found that statement of inspiration impossible. Therefore their conclusions are denounced as dangerous, rationalistic, or worse. This, however, as I hope to demonstrate, is not the position of our Standards. On this point our Doctors of Divinity are not the Confession. But before coming to that point, I wish to say one or two other things about that statement.

And first I charge upon it that it is unscientific. It is an abstract, *a priori* affirmation, not resting on objective facts, but evolved out of the depths of the dogmatic consciousness. The inductive study of the Word of God was practically unknown at the time when that definition was framed, three hundred years ago. It proceeds from certain postulates respecting what God *must do* in the matter of inspiration, which are assumed at the outset, without proof, with no adequate basis in the facts of the case, with no support from any positive declaration by God himself. These postulates are the product of the

¹ Commentary on the Confession of Faith, by Dr. A. A. Hodge, p. 55.

² The Presbyterian Review, Vol. II, p. 238.

Scholasticism of the Post-Reformation age, which had inherited the methods, and followed largely in the lines of the Romish Scholasticism of the Middle Ages. Undoubtedly there was incomparably more of the material of Bible truth in the Protestant than in the Romish Scholasticism—for our Schoolmen did read their Bibles, and study their Bibles, and got their theology out of their Bibles—and for the time it was in many ways a grand and mighty theology. But their method—and it is of that I am now speaking—was seriously defective. Such definitions as I have just presented could legitimately rest only on the most exhaustive induction of all the facts and phenomena relating to the revelation of God in his Word; first collecting and collating these facts, then estimating, analyzing, classifying them, and lastly generalizing from them according to the most rigorous laws of the inductive process, omitting nothing, inventing nothing, assuming nothing, distorting nothing. Is that the case? Surely it would be a rash and unhistoric claim. The older scholastic theology, which formulated that theory, which has dominated our dogmatic definitions down to the present day, under the influence of which most of us have been trained, knew nothing of this inductive process, did nothing of it.

And now, let me ask, is that safe ground to take? Is it safe, in this inductive age, to base a scientific definition on unscientific premises, to reach a scientific result by unscientific processes, to expose the citadel of your position at a thousand points to the strategic attacks of the scientific method? Remember that weakness at any one of those points lets in the enemy. Is it safe to stake the authority of the Scriptures on the absolute infallibility of every one of a thousand particulars, every one of which is subject to the remorseless probings of a science which cares nothing for your theories, cares very little, possibly, for your beliefs, refuses to know any thing but facts? Is that safe, when, *according to your*

theory, the loss of one particular means the loss of all.”¹ Even Drs. Hodge and Warfield make this admission: “There will undoubtedly be found upon the surface [of Scripture] *many* apparent affirmations *presumably inconsistent* with the present teachings of science, with facts of history, or with other statements of the sacred books themselves.”² Surely it is not inconceivable that in a number of particulars, or say only in one particular, that presumption of unscientific, un-historic, contradictory teaching may turn out to be more than a presumption. Then what becomes of your theory? What, on your theory, becomes of the authority of Scripture?

But I have a still more serious charge to bring against this *a priori* method in theology when applied to inspiration. For inspiration is a *Divine Process*. What this process is in its interior nature we can never know. It is God that inspires, as it is God that creates, and we can no more say how God inspires than how God creates. What are the necessary, interior, Divine conditions of inspiration? What do we know about that? What *can* we know about that? All we can know about it must be derived from the terms which describe it, the characteristics which it exhibits, the concrete result which it produces, the effects which follow it. And so I charge further upon this *a priori* definition of inspiration, that it is not only unscientific, but irreverent, presumptuous, lacking in the humility with which we should approach a Divine Supernatural Fact. Of course I do not mean to charge *conscious* irreverence or presumption on those who frame or hold this theory, but remembering that unconscious faults attach to the best of men, I believe that Charles Kingsley never said a truer or a finer thing than that “there is an intimate

¹ “A proved error in Scripture contradicts not only our doctrine, but the Scripture claims, and therefore its inspiration, in making those claims.” Drs. Hodge and Warfield, *Presbyterian Review*, Vol. II, p. 245.

² *The Presbyterian Review*, Vol. II, p. 237.

connection between the health of the moral faculties and that of the inductive ones;" and that "God does in science as well as in ethics hide things from the wise and prudent, from the proud, complete, self-contained systematizer like Aristotle, . . . and reveals them to babes, to gentle, affectionate, simple-hearted men, such as we know Archimedes to have been, who do not try to give an explanation for a fact, but feel how awful and divine it is, and wrestle reverently and steadfastly with it, as Jacob with the Angel, and will not let it go until it bless them."¹

Now I claim that to say beforehand that inspiration, or any such Divine process, must be this or that, that it must have certain characteristics, is to venture beyond our limits, to step in where angels fear to tread. You may ask: Is not all that God does perfect? Most assuredly. But who are we, to define that perfection, to formulate its constituents, to legislate its conditions, to decide beforehand that it must be thus, that it can not be so, that this is indispensable, that impossible? We are told that at the end of each creative Day, God looked on what he had done, "and saw that it was good." And what does God mean by "GOOD"? Absolute, abstract perfection in every particular, flawless regularity in every line and curve, faultless fitness in every limb and joint, infallible inerrancy, no wandering stars, no jostling bodies, music of the spheres, without a jarring note? That is, no doubt, what *a priori* speculation would have affirmed. If our friend, the Dogmatist, had stepped upon the scene in time, before telescope, or microscope, or spectroscope was known, that is precisely what he would have laid down for us as the only orthodox view. He would have had his definition of perfection, turned out of his machine, square, rigid, all the sides exactly parallel, every angle ninety degrees down to the infinitesimal, every line as straight as the

¹ Alexandria and Her Schools, Lecture I.

shortest possible distance between two points could make it—an exquisite specimen of logical carpentering. “Nothing else”—he would have assured us, with that superb confidence which would be so imposing if it had not so often imposed on us—“nothing else is conceivable, or possible in the premises; nothing else would be worthy of God. What God calls good must be a perfect result, complete, flawless, faultless, infallible in every detail.” But look at the record; what do you find? Irregularities, breaks, misfits, broken joints, deformities, mutilations, abortions, collisions, discords, imperfections all the way along; and God back of it all, God over it all, God through it all, God in it all, pushing on his way, working out his will, and accomplishing—yes, a Perfect Result! Ah! brethren, God’s Thoughts are not as our thoughts, his ways are not as our ways. The designs by which he works are not patterns for patent-office purposes, not pieces of dilettante china-decoration, not æsthetic models in wax-work, “faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.” No, sirs! The Patterns of Deity are commensurate with himself, they spread over his eternity, they lose themselves in his infinitude, they are awful with the glories and glooms of his unsearchable wisdom, they are rugged and ragged and riven with the thunders and lightnings of omnipotence; they sweep on—a Flood of measureless, resistless might—from the Beginning which has no beginning to the End which has no end; and what seem to us to be flaws or fractures, miscarriages and mischances, are swallowed up and borne along in the Infinite Tide of his Purpose, the flow of which they no more arrest, or disturb, or weaken, than the shattered foam-bells, or wavering reflows of the Rapids above the Horse-shoe Falls affect the plunge of Niagara. Flaws? Yes; but look at the Plan, massive with the lines and the curves of the Infinite and the Eternal, stamped with the symmetries and the sublimities of a Divine Art, charged with the perfect purposes of the Will which never fails. Frictions? Yes;

but look at the matchless correlations of energy, the actions and interactions of endlessly articulated forces, that determine the balancings of the dew-drops, and swing Jupiters and suns and systems along their vast and mighty courses. Discords? Yes; but listen to the Eternal Anthem, the *Jubilate Deo*, that rings from star to star, and ravishes the eternities.

If now in creation God can work out a perfect result through imperfection, why not in inspiration? But here—in inspiration—there is another factor to be taken into the account, to wit, the human factor. In the production of Scripture we are concerned with two co-efficients. It is not God working alone, but God working with human instrumentalities, and using these instrumentalities, not as dead, passive things, but as free, integral, independent personalities; not as a mechanic uses his tools, not as a magician handles his puppets, but as a Living Spirit, breathing in and through living souls.

Now it is a law of the Divine Operation, that in working under finite conditions it respects those conditions; that in using created and limited agencies, it has regard for the limitations of those agencies. I am far from saying that no more is accomplished than would be accomplished if the agent were left to itself. What I do hold is that *the more* in the case, the supra-natural *plus, is* supernatural, not natural. The process here, as we are all agreed, is a supernatural process, the result is a Divine supernatural result. So much is not questioned. What now? Just this: While fully recognizing the Divine supernatural co-efficient, the Divine supernatural process, and the Divine supernatural result, we must also recognize the lower, finite co-efficient as continuing unalterably itself. Its qualities, its possibilities, its activities, its inherent limitations remain the same. There is no change of essence, of structure, of elemental potency. An inanimate agent, when supernaturally commissioned, does not be-

come animate. The fire of a miracle is never any thing but fire. The *pneuma* of a dead wind is never changed, as the Rabbis of old thought, into the *pneuma* of a living spirit. The irrational brute is not transformed into a rational being. 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. Dr. Charles Hodge says, most truly and beautifully: "When He 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."¹ Inspiration does not change the human personality, does not efface its inherent qualities, does not expunge its limitations, does not change the finite into the infinite, the human into the superhuman. That is the law, the universal law in nature and in history. If we engage in *a priori* speculation at all, it should be along the line of that law. Reasoning antecedently along that line, proceeding from the *the actual* to the probable, basing our conclusions on what we see through all the works of God, we should *expect to find*, in the human co-efficient of a supernatural revelation, the inherent limitations of that co-efficient. So far are we from being entitled to say beforehand that God *must* make his human auxiliary superhumanly infallible in every possible particular, that the very opposite is alone what analogy justifies us in affirming.

Brethren, let me give another illustration of the danger of such *a priori* speculation concerning what God must be or do in the revelation of himself; and may God help me to treat the subject with all becoming reverence. The Mystery of mysteries in God's revelation of himself to men is the Incarnation. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, . . . and the Word became flesh." That such a thing would be, that such a thing *could* be, is what no human speculation could

¹ Systematic Theology, Vol. I, page 157.

have anticipated, what no human intellect could have deemed possible. But let me suppose that in some way, by some sweet Divine intimation, the thought had come to some devout mind, as, for aught we know, it may have come to one or another, that one day God would become man. How would he have conceived it? How from his narrow premises must he have conceived it? Is it not natural to suppose that he would have formulated his conception something after this fashion: "Will God indeed come down and dwell among men as one of them? What an august spectacle will that be! What a transcendent type of manhood in all respects will the world then witness! What perfection! What dignity! What invincible strength! What unapproachable, awe-inspiring majesty! How immeasurably exalted above all his human fellows will that being be! How serenely impervious to all the disturbances and distractions of the weltering moral chaos around him! How divinely exempt from all the weaknesses, the imperfections, the stumblings and strivings of the wretched weaklings to whom he had descended! God a man! How can I believe it? But if a man, then surely man at his best!" A natural expectation, would it not be? Would the opposite picture have been anticipated, have been deemed probable, or even possible? What! an Incarnate God down in the dregs of human existence! passing through, sharing in the infantile dependence, weakness, ignorance, discipline, growth of a creature! coming up like a root out of dry ground, with no beauty or comeliness, that men should desire him! bowed to the earth with a burden of unutterable shame and anguish! and sweating great drops of blood in the throes of the conflict! trembling with fear and praying with strong cryings for delivery! touched with the feeling of our infirmities! helped by an angel! tried in all things like as we are! learning—yes, learning—obedience by his sufferings! tempted! baffled! groaning! weeping! agonizing! forsaken of the Father!

Man's feeble logic could never have grasped this tremendous mystery.¹ It could never have dreamed it. It would have protested against it. It must have pronounced it impossible. If, then, it would have been a mistake, nay, as we now see, a mistake bordering on blasphemy (see Mat. xvi: 23) to pronounce antecedently against an incarnate revelation of God, subject to the limitations of weakness, of ignorance, of bondage, to the contractions and detractions of that ineffable Kenosis of the Godhead, ought we not to be most reverently slow, most cautious, most humble, in pronouncing against an inspired revelation of God, subject to certain wisely permitted limitations of human weakness, ignorance, and fallibility?² What know we of the Divine Thought? How know we what Divine, infallible, and perfect Purpose may be served even by these limitations and fallibilities? Does not Scripture itself intimate that at least there *is* such a purpose, and that it does work through just such channels of human frailty? Is not God's strength always made perfect in man's weakness? Has not God committed his treasure to earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God? Did not God choose "the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, . . . yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to naught the things that are?" If God thus chooses to work out his problems through surds and fractions and zeros, who are we to say him nay? Brethren, this is God's way; this is the law. What right have we

¹ It is enough to refer to the Messianic hopes of the Jewish people, their rejection of Christ because his coming was so opposed to all their preconceptions, and to the painful slowness with which even the disciples became reconciled to the reality. How instructive are Peter's remonstrances and Christ's rebuke, as recorded in Mat. xvi: 21-23.

² See the extract from Mr. Gladstone below, p. 60 f.

to say where that law shall stop? to decide how much of the earthen vessel shall count as a factor? how much or how little of the human folly, weakness, nothingness, is compatible with the Divine Purpose? God is not limited as to his means and methods in communicating his will to men. Had a literal, stereotyped, incorruptible infallibility in every jot and tittle of the record been an indispensable requisite, God had a thousand resources at his command for securing such a record. That he chose men, yes, men, with all their ignorance and weakness and fallibility; that he intrusted his revelation to their stammering tongues and to their stumbling pens; that he deposited the interpretation of his eternal ways in earthen vessels, which could not escape the corruptions and mutilations of time; simply shows that a literal, particularistic infallibility is of less moment in the sight of God than some other things; of less worth, perhaps, than the thrill of a human touch, the glow of a red-hot word, the pulse of a throbbing heart, the lightning of a living eye, the flash of a soul on fire; of less worth—who knows?—than the faltering of the pilgrim's foot, dearer to heaven than the lordly step of Gabriel. If I rightly interpret Paul in the Tenth Chapter of Romans, and elsewhere, it is one chief glory of the Gospel as compared with the Law that it is not a formal, stereotyped letter, but a personal voice, a living heart, a breathing soul, the effluence of a divinely magnetized personality, an epistle written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God.¹ Calvin E. Stowe was not far from right when he said: "It is not the words of the Bible that were inspired. It is not the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired. It is the

¹ See Rom. x: 8-10, 14-18; xii: 1 f., 5 f.; I Cor. i: 4 f., 17 f. (21); ii: 1 f.; iii: 9 f.; ix: 2; xii: 4 f. (12, 13, 27); 2 Cor. ii: 14; iii: 2 f.; iv: 6 f. (13); vi: 1 f.; Gal. i: 15, 16; Eph. i: 17 f. (19, 23); ii: 10; iii: 20, 21; v: 7 f.; Phil. i: 7, 20, 27 f.; ii: 15 f.; Col. i: 3 f. (6), 9 f.; ii: 6 f.; iv: 5; I Thes. i: 8; ii: 12, 13; 2 Thes. i: 3 f., 11 f. Cf. I Pet. ii: 5 f., 9 f., 11 f., 15 f.; iii: 1 f., 15 f.; iv: 10 f.

men who wrote the Bible that were inspired.”¹ I feel constrained, accordingly, to protest against the *a priori* assumption that God can not or will not inspire men without making them infallible as himself, as unscientific, against all analogy, irreverent, and presumptuous, as well as unscriptural and contradicted by the facts.

In all humility, therefore, instead of dictating what God must do, let us inquire reverently what God has done, how God has spoken; in what form, really, actually, concretely, practically, the revelation of his will has come to men. It is a theme on which volumes might be written. I can at this time only single out a few salient points. And as my own particular field of study is the New Testament, I will limit the present discussion to that field. There is this advantage, also, in looking at this department of the subject: that if the theory I am opposing is valid anywhere, it applies to the New Testament; if it breaks down there, it will hold nowhere.

I must call attention at the outset to the disadvantage under which the defense even of the best attested conclusions of modern criticism labors from the serious lack of acquaintance with these conclusions which the attacks made upon them generally betray. Most of the discussions which have come under my notice in our religious journals and elsewhere evince a quite inadequate appreciation of the present situation as touching Biblical Science. As against the conclusions of to-day, they are for the most part as ineffectual as the guns of 1860 would be against an iron-clad ship or fort of 1890. These three decades have effected an enormous change, a revolution, in fact, in the problems to be solved, in the difficulties to be removed, in the positions to be assumed in the defense of the truth.

Let me give one illustration: These thirty years have witnessed the birth and early growth of one new and most im-

¹ History of Books of the Bible, p. 19.

portant branch of Biblical Science. I refer to Biblical Theology, the very chair out of which the utterances have proceeded which have occasioned the present agitation. Thirty years ago that science, as it is understood and prosecuted to-day, was unknown. It is a young discipline as yet, with much work before it, but entering vigorously on its career, blazing its way, proceeding on lines of its own, working by methods of its own, and elaborating results which have their distinct place and value in the science of the Bible. Young as it is, it has already accomplished marvels. It has opened up new vistas of thought, established new starting-points of inquiry. It has propounded, and is daily propounding new questions to solve. It is necessitating new solutions of old questions. It is bringing old facts into new foci, as well as bringing new facts to light. It is putting old truths under new lights, and if not discovering new truths, it is at least compelling new and larger statements of the old eternal verities. Its conclusions can not fail to have a most important and decisive bearing on the religious and theological thought of the future. And yet I have seen in our religious journals articles and paragraphs criticizing, and even resenting, the claims put forth in behalf of Biblical Theology, as though the advocates of that science were advertising some special patent of their own, or vaunting some special quality of their personal theology, to the disparagement of every other. The same sort of objection, proceeding from the same want of familiarity with the subject, has often been urged against the "Higher Criticism," as though it arrogated for itself a higher level than your criticism or mine. Those whom I am now addressing have seen and heard such complaints respecting these sciences. They have seen it argued not so very long ago that the champions of Biblical Theology were arrogating quite too much for their favorite study; that all sound theology is Biblical Theology, Hodge's Theology, Shedd's Theology, and the rest. But can this sort of thing be accepted as competent

criticism? Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology are distinct disciplines, as much so as Logic and Mathematics. Mathematics may be logical, but Mathematics is not Logic. Systematic Theology may be biblical, but it is not Biblical Theology. I beg your pardon for dealing in such truisms; I only regret that it seems to be necessary. Biblical Theology was hardly in its cradle when Dr. Charles Hodge wrote his three volumes of Systematic Theology, and I know of no dogmatic system that can be said to exhibit any distinct consciousness or trace of the influence of the sister science. The methods of the two are in fact well-nigh incompatible. Dogmatic Theology is largely deductive; Biblical Theology, inductive. The former aims to be systematic and logical; the latter critical and exegetical. The one deals with revealed truth chiefly in its abstract forms; the other, in its concrete, historic, and personal expressions.¹ Systematic Theology lumps all the books of the Bible together, arranges their miscellaneous contents around some philosophic center, or along certain logical lines, picking out one passage here, another passage there, as the exigency on the one side, and the fitness on the other, seem to justify; disregarding, or at most regarding only in a very meager way, the different connections, the variant types, the remote and often antithetic points of view, the gradual evolutions, the higher and lower planes of thought and belief. Biblical Theology studies the Bible as Astronomy studies the heavens; each star or planet—Sirius, Mars, Mercury, Venus—in its own place, orbit, life, development, movement, the minor systems, Jupiter and Saturn, with their moons, the constellations, asteroids, nebulae, and all that tells the story of the heavens. So Biblical The-

¹ See Reuss's *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, Introduction, Chap. I, "Scholastic and Biblical Theology." Weiss's *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, Introduction, § 1, "The Problem of the Science."

ology looks at and inquires into each separate star, the prophetic and apostolic clusters, the major and minor systems, the binaries, asteroids, satellites, and star-dust, uttering meanwhile the prayer of the saintly Herbert :

“ Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,
And the configuration of their glorie !
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the storie.”

Dogmatic Theology subjects Scripture to the logical categories, the metaphysical terminology, the polemic accentuations, the ecclesiastical dogmas, which eighteen centuries of uninspired reflection and speculation on the contents of Scripture have imposed on our interpretation of the same. Biblical Theology takes us direct to the fountain-head, to the original material as it is in itself, as it lies in its providential environment, as it gushes out of the living well-spring, as by the divine ordering of time and place and person it pours its living contribution into the great River of Life.

The theology of the schools is based on the principle of systematic self-consistency. It is a logical unit; and by an instinct of self-preservation it ignores it if it can, it excludes as far as it can, or if it must recognize, it belittles and attenuates all it can the antithetic truths which would imperil the unity of the system. The Arminian dogmatism does this with the Calvinistic side of the Gospel. The Calvinistic dogmatism does the same with the Arminian side. One *Dogmatik* says: “ I am of Cephas.” It fails of absorbing the best part of Peter, and leaves out Apollos altogether. Another says: “ I am of Paul.” It excludes John, and leaves out one whole side of Paul, absorbing his particularism perchance, but failing to assimilate his universalism. But the Theology of the Book and of its books is weighted with no such logical embarrassments. It aims to ascertain what *every* inspired teacher has to say, and *all* that each inspired teacher says, *all* of Peter, *all* of John, *all* of James, *all* of Paul, their

antinomies, their *ἀπαξ λεγόμενα*, and their *ἀπαξ νοούμενα*, their polarities and their paradoxes, their provincialisms, as also their large spiritual cosmopolitanisms.

It is not strange that the conclusions of Biblical Theology should at times seem suspicious to those who have read their Bibles only through the glasses of a one-sided dogmatism. There are more things in the heaven and earth of the younger science than have been dreamed of in the philosophy of the other. There are aspects of Redemption, of which Paul, for example, is full, a race-redemption,¹ cosmic reconciliation,² the re-unification of the universe,³ of which your scholastic theology knows little or nothing. Dogmatism gives us one phase of sanctification, as we find it predominantly perhaps in Paul, as a subjective, progressive process, predicated of the Christian in this life. But what of other statements in Paul, such as that, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ"?⁴ What of the objective sanctification of the Epistle to the Hebrews? What of "the purification of heaven" itself in that Epistle? What of the objective-subjective sanctification of the Apostle John, in which there is no recognition of progress even in this life, but which is presented as a single absolute fact? If now, by the study of Biblical Theology, I have been aided to the better appreciation of these many-sided representations of Divine Truth, am I to be shut up to the one-sided interpretation of a theology to which this method of studying the Word was unknown? Is *all* of Divine Truth in our systematic theology? Is it *all* in the Confession of Faith?

¹ Rom. v. 8; xi. 32; xv. 8 f.; 1 Cor. xv. 22; 2 Cor. v. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 11. And cf. Gal. iii. 8; Phil. ii. 10; 1 Tim. ii. 4-6.

² Rom. xi. 15 (cf. v. 12); 2 Cor. v. 19.

³ Eph. i. 10, 21-23; iv. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 24-28; 2 Cor. v. 17 f.; Phil. iii. 21; Col. i. 20.

⁴ Phil. i. 9; cf. 1 Cor. i. 8.

While going with these helps as far as they take us, are we never to go a step further?

Biblical Theology is of special importance in thus unfolding to us the compositeness of Bible truth, and in giving us the key to its rich and suggestive variations.¹ It puts us moreover in touch with *the man* who speaks to us in the name of God. We feel that in Peter, in John, in James, we have an inspired man, not a divinely-manipulated automaton. We come to understand why, in discussing the same subject, Paul says this, and says it thus; James says that, and says it so; why the first Evangelist gives this report of our Lord's discourses, the fourth Evangelist that report; why the second Gospel puts such a fact in this light, the third Gospel in another. This *Novum Organum* of Biblical Theology, calling to its aid Criticism, the Higher and the Lower,² puts us in possession of the human personal equation in the Inspired Word, as we had never possessed it before. It reveals to us what Farrar calls "The Messages of the Books;" nay more, the mission of each writer, known and unknown; and helps us to see how even in his idiosyncracies, even in his limitations, each is fitted for his particular place and task. Take the Apostle Jude, for example. Look at him as illuminated by Biblico-Theological lights. What an interesting picture! What a vivid personality! With his intense Hebraism, his prophetic fire, his weird imagination, his antique eloquence, the apocalyptic tinge of his representation, his mental limitations even, his inability to get entirely outside the literary environment in which his mind has always moved, with its le-

¹ See especially Weiss, *Bibl. Theol. of the N. T.*, Introduction, § 1, (c). See also the excellent remarks which follow, (d), showing how a complete Scriptural systematic theology must build on this composite basis, uniting all the variations in a larger synthesis, which shall so far as possible harmonize all, without suppressing any.

² For a list of helps (in English) to the study of New Testament Criticism and Theology, see Appendix at the end of the paper.

gendary exegesis and its apocryphal ingredients—but what of that? What is a cobweb on the mane of a lion? What is a fleck of soot, a speck of unassimilated carbon, hovering around the beacon-fire which warns the ship at sea off the rocks? What is a touch of mediævalism in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or an anachronism in Milton's *Paradise Lost*? What if one or two minor details in *Jude* are to be estimated in the light of the man's literary environment, and qualified by the clearer teaching of the larger Word? Was he any the less a prophet and an apostle? Did not the Divine Light irradiate even these minute opaquer spots? Nay, did not even the relative crudity, which a more advanced New Testament Christianity soon left behind, have its own peculiar value and force for the time being, and for those whom he was specially addressing, and even by virtue of its being no more and no other than it was?

In this connection let me note very briefly the vast gain which has accrued to the critical faculty itself by the use of the improved critical methods of the present; the deeper insight, the increased delicacy and tact, the more facile apprehension of clues and their leadings, the finer appreciation of habits and drifts of thought, of undertones of sentiment and experience, of the modulations of mood and passion, of the *nuances* of phrasing and expression, of color, atmosphere, tone, grouping, treatment;—the culture, in short, of those literary instincts and methods, the possession of which makes our age, however deficient in creative power, pre-eminent in critical skill. That there has been a palpable gain within the last half century in the application of expert tests to the criticism of the Bible on the literary side, no competent and fair-minded judge will deny.

But I pass on to consider more specifically the results obtained by the application of these tests to the Gospel record in the New Testament, and the significance of these results for our conception of the inspiration of that record. After

a century of exhaustive investigation and sharp discussion, the most sober-minded and trust-worthy critics are now rapidly reaching a consensus of judgment on this most important and vital subject. Certain conclusions may be regarded as established to the point of the highest reasonable probability. I will try to formulate these as briefly as possible, in so far as they are vital to the decision of the question before us.¹ Beginning with the Synoptic Gospels,² it is now generally admitted that in the form in which we have them, they are derived immediately from certain written sources. These are mainly two: (1) A Fact—Source, consisting chiefly of deeds, incidents in the life of our Lord, together with such conversational or other remarks as naturally accompany them, to which may be added a few short discourses, parables, and the like. In its purest form this Source is identified with the principal groundwork of our Mark. It is found also as the pragmatic groundwork of Matthew and Luke. (2) A Word—, or Logia—Source, consisting mainly, though not exclusively, of sayings and discourses of Christ, which we find in its earliest and most historic form in Luke, but in its fullest and most elaborate form in our Matthew, to whom the earliest tradition (represented by Papias) accredits it. The primary material of these Sources is unmistakably Apostolic, using the word in its broader New Testament sense.³ It proceeds from credible eye witnesses and inspired servants of the Word. This is directly asserted by Luke (i, 1 f.) and con-

¹ For the authorities see Appendix.

² The limits of the occasion for which the paper was prepared prevented the carrying out of my original purpose to compare the Synoptic form of the Gospel with the Johannean. Those who are familiar with the most decisive conclusions of criticism on this head are well aware how greatly they would have strengthened the argument.

³ For which consult Bp. Lightfoot's *Excursus* on "*The name and office of an Apostle*," in his Commentary on Galatians.

firmed throughout by the internal characteristics of all the Gospel narratives.

This Double-Source Theory is now all but universally regarded as the key to the solution of the Synoptic problem.¹

In addition to these two main Sources, there are other special documents peculiar to each Evangelist, notably Luke, as examples of which we may take the opening chapters respecting our Lord's birth and childhood, and ch. xv, with its immortal triad of parables.

These documentary sources, particularly the first two, were called forth by the inadequacy of the primitive oral tradition, for either the perpetuation or the dissemination of the Gospel record. They came to be of especial service in the instruction of catechumens; and perhaps the most satisfactory explanation of the definiteness, uniformity, and universality, which they acquired, and which made it possible for them to supersede all other like documents of that age, is to be found in the catechumenical use that was made of them.²

¹ There is still room as yet for differences of opinion respecting the precise relations to each other of the original groundworks and present canonical forms of the Gospels. These differences do not affect, however, the more essential points in respect to which substantial unanimity prevails. See Prof. Bruce on "the increasing consensus among critics of all schools and countries," and on the way in which "the question is being gradually narrowed." *The Presbyterian Review*, Vol. V, p. 630. And compare Prof. Sanday's article, "A Survey of the Synoptic Question," in *The Expositor* of February, 1891, p. 87 f., and especially his Second Article in the March number, entitled "Points Proved or Probable," p. 179 f.

² The proem of Luke's Gospel will be found especially instructive at this point. It will be noted that Luke recognized the twofold source of the record mentioned above. He accurately describes the former when he says that "Many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning *the facts*" (*περὶ τῶν πραγμάτων*), as transmitted from the original "*eye-witnesses*" (*οἱ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται*). He well describes the latter when he states his own object to be that Theophilus "might know the certainty of *the words* wherein he was catechet-

Looking at the way in which the Synoptic Evangelists have made use of these documents, we find that the versions to which they had access respectively, while substantially identical, must have varied in some details. There is internal evidence also that each adjusted and edited the material in his own way. Mark, *e. g.*, has stamped the groundwork of his Gospel with many vivid touches which may be distinctly traced to the personality of Peter. There are visible indications of Luke's own hand touching up the record in his Gospel, not seldom producing a marked variation from the more original type as exhibited in Matthew or Mark. He has a way also of supplying a "motive" for an incident or a parable, which is lacking in the other Evangelists, and which, however, it be explained, at least increases the perplexity of the harmonizer. Matthew has a way of elaborating a particular discourse, or of grouping parables or facts, on other than strict historic lines. The Sermon on the Mount, *e. g.*, as found in *Matthew*, can not be regarded as a verbatim report of a single connected discourse, but rather as in the beginning, indeed, a memorable discourse, the historic form of which has been more clearly reproduced by Luke, which Matthew has enlarged by the addition of cognate remarks made at other times and places, and systematized into a more complete ideal presentation by Christ of the principles and laws of his kingdom. So also in the report of our Lord's eschatological discourse, Matthew has, by the introduction of a single word, "*immediately* after the tribulation of those days" (xxiv, 29), foreshortened, in a material way, the perspective of the whole prophecy, putting Christ's final coming, in accordance with the expectation of the Apostolic age, in

ically instructed" (*περι ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων*). This last clause is also significant as to the catechetical function of the earlier Gospel records. Let it be noted, furthermore, that Luke's statement as to the primary sources of the material of these documentary records stamps them with the authority of credible and inspired witnesses. Ch. i, 2.

the immediate future.¹ Thus it will be seen that the editorial elaboration and adaptation of the source-material has tended in the aggregate result to multiply and intensify the individual peculiarities and divergences of the Synoptics rather than to bring them into closer correspondence.

But back of these documentary sources lies the oral traditional Gospel, the first form which the Gospel record necessarily assumed, which, of course, disappeared with the first generation of Palestinian Christians, and soon passed over into the written documentary form. The theory that our Gospel record was the direct transcription of this oral Gospel, which was for a time quite prevalent, has now been abandoned by all the leading critics as inadequate to account for the facts, although it is not denied that there are features of the record for which the recognition of its influence would still help to account.²

Once more: Back of all these sources, oral and written, lies the important fact, now unquestioned, that our Lord's discourses were spoken in Aramaic, and that to this language must be referred the great bulk of the original material of our Gospels. The first form of the oral Gospel was undoubtedly Aramaic. The first form of the Logia-Source was, according to the express testimony of Papias, Aramaic. The basis of the other main Source was Aramaic, as we may reasonably infer from the study of Mark, its purest representa-

¹ Whether, as in the text, the insertion of *ἐνθὲς* be attributed to the editorial elaboration of Matthew, or its omission to the editing of Mark and Luke, the effect in either case on the prophetic perspective can not be ignored.

² It should be noted that a single direct oral prototype of our written Gospel record is forbidden by the fact that already the New Testament record reflects three types of the tradition, to wit: the Marco-Petrine, the Matthaean (*Logia*), and the Johannean, leaving out of the account the indefinite floating mass of *Agrapha*, the study of which has at last been initiated by the recent work of Resch.

tive. The same was true, doubtless, of most of the other special documents, *e. g.*, those of Luke, to which reference has been made.¹

This is the account which the best modern criticism gives of the composition of the Synoptic Gospels. How does this account bear on the interpretation of the record, and on our conception of the mode of its inspiration?

First let us note that we have here the complex result of a complex process. Our study of the Gospels, and especially of "the Harmony of the Gospels," has made each one familiar with the lack of perfect correspondence between the Gospel narratives. The synoptic story, I need not say, is full of breaks, leaps, omissions here, additions there, transpositions all the way along,² with many variations in matters of detail, which by no means affect the substance of the record, but which are an endless and often insoluble perplexity to those who are in search of an exact literal harmony; Osiander, *e. g.*, one of the earliest of our rigid modern harmonists, finding it necessary, in order to maintain the perfect consistency of the record, to introduce Peter's wife's mother as three times falling ill of a fever, of which Christ three times healed her. We are all familiar with these characteristics. But the point I would emphasize is this: the prevalent critical view of the structure of the Gospel record puts a totally new aspect on the problem of solving the irregularities and discrepancies. So long as it was held that the "original autograph" of each Gospel was throughout the original production of the author

¹ On this feature of the case see the very interesting series of articles by Prof. Marshall, now publishing in *The Expositor* on "*The Aramaic Gospel*."

² "The Gospels, and especially the first three, can in no sense be regarded as methodical annals. It is, therefore, difficult, and perhaps impossible, so to harmonize them in respect to time as in all cases to arrive at results which shall be entirely certain and satisfactory." Robinson's *Harmony of the Four Gospels in Greek*. Introduction to the Notes.

whose name it bears, that Matthew wrote out all the Gospel under his name, as Plutarch, *e. g.*, wrote out each of his Lives; that Mark did the same, either from information supplied by Peter or by simply condensing Matthew; that Luke at least wrote out an original recast of Matthew and Mark, with additions from sources of his own—for this was substantially the old theory—it might perhaps be urged, with a show of reason, that these differences, being known to the authors, were intentional and susceptible of an explanation to their minds, if not to ours;¹ that they were in large measure only a question of order, of expansion, of condensation, of supplementation. Even then it was a serious task to reconcile these divergences in such a way as to meet the requirements of a verbal inspiration.² With the present conclusions of criticism, however, such an explanation is utterly out of the question. A recourse to the *ipsissima verba* of the original autograph fails us out and out. For the great bulk of the Gospel material there is no original autograph. There never was one. There was no *ipsissima verba* report of our Lord's words taken down on the spot. They passed into the memory of those who heard them, and that in their Aramaic form. The two basal records, the Fact-record and the Word-record, were gradually organized out of those memories. What of

¹ "Such apparent inconsistencies and collisions with other sources of information are to be expected in imperfect copies of ancient writings; from the fact that the original reading may have been lost, or that we may fail to realize the point of view of the author, or that we are destitute of the circumstantial knowledge which would fill up and harmonize the record." Drs. Hodge and Warfield: *Presbyterian Review*, Vol. II, p. 237.

² It may be well to state here once for all that in this paper the expression "verbal inspiration" is in such connections as the above used for brevity, according to a common usage, to designate the dogma of absolute verbal inerrancy. It will be seen further along that I myself hold strongly to the theopneustic quality of the words as well as thoughts of Scripture.

the *ipsissima verba* in that organizing process?¹ With the increasing demand for exactness, perpetuity, and a wider circulation, the record gradually took the written form. How about the *ipsissima verba* in that process? How close the correspondence between the oral and the written form? Who knows? What modifications may have taken place? Who knows? Soon came the need for a Greek record. Gradually the primary Aramaic material took on a secondary Greek form. How about the *ipsissima verba* in that process? Did absolutely no modification take place? How do we know that? What changes may have come into the collation, the combination, the didactic and catechetical adaptation, the dissemination of the various numerous records?² We know nothing of all this. We only know that without a standing *ipsissima verba* miracle running through every step of all these processes, an *ipsissima verba* result would have been impossible. What right have we to affirm that such a miracle was wrought? Where is the evidence? Nay! every advance which criticism has made in the examination of the Gospel record has only made it more and more certain that the varying representations of the record can be accounted for only as being the inevitable accompaniments of human fallibility in the complex processes through which the record reached its final form. It is now as certain as any thing can

¹ To relegate this traditional stage of the Gospel record to the category of "Revelation," and to limit "Inspiration" to the written formulation, would be the height of logical fatuity and self-contradiction. If an *ipsissima verba* inspiration was needed anywhere, it surely was needed in laying the foundations of the record. It was the consciousness of this, doubtless, which led Drs. Hodge and Warfield to contradict their own logic and sharp discriminations by saying of the superintendence which they identify with the essence of inspiration that it "attended the entire process of the genesis of Scripture." See below, p. 34, n. 2.

² Compare Luke, i: 1.

well be as a matter of historical record, that when one evangelist says that two blind men were healed by Christ near Jericho, while another mentions but one; when one describes the healing as taking place on the way into Jericho, the other on the way out, these variations are to be taken at their face value, as representing diversities in the sources, as the honest, but immaterial contradictions of honest human testimony, when subjected to the complicated and trying conditions through which the Gospel witness has passed, divergences, which, so far from discrediting the essential fact, the miracle, only corroborate it to every candid judgment.¹

But it is claimed that inspiration is not necessarily concerned with this process of building up the record, but with the final formulation of it.² I hope to show further along

¹ The same remark applies to the divergences found in the narratives of the healing of the centurion's servant (Mat. viii : 5 f.; Lk. vii : 1 f.), and of the demoniac of Gadara (Mat. viii : 28 f.; Mk. v : 1 f.; Lk. viii : 26 f.); the calling of the Capernaum Apostles (Mat. iv : 18 f.; Mk. i : 16 f.; Lk. v : 1 f.); the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mat. ix : 18 f.; Mk. v : 22 f.; Lk. viii : 41 f.).

² "In many cases these gifts [Revelation and Inspiration] were separated. Many of the sacred writers, although inspired, received no revelations. This was probably the fact with the historical books of the Old Testament. The evangelist Luke does not refer his knowledge of the events which he records to revelation, but says he derived it from those 'which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word.' It is immaterial to us where Moses obtained his knowledge of the events recorded in the book of Genesis; whether from early documents, from tradition, or from direct revelation. No more causes are to be assumed for any effect than are necessary. If the sacred writers had sufficient sources of knowledge in themselves, or in those about them, there is no need to assume any direct revelation. It is enough for us that they were rendered infallible as teachers." Dr. Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, p. 155. "Inspiration is that divine influence which, accompanying the sacred writers equally in all they wrote, secured the infallible truth of their writings in every part, both in idea and expression, and determined the selection and distribution

what an utterly inadequate and unscriptural view of inspiration this gives us. For the present I am concerned with the literary and critical aspect of the position.

Note to begin with how strange it is that if an *ipsissima*

of their material according to the divine purpose." [Observe that nothing is said of the inspiration of the material. That is not assumed as necessary.] By what some writers, as Doddridge, Lee, etc., have called "the inspiration of *superintendence*," is "meant *precisely* what we [Dr. A. A. Hodge] have given above as the *definition of inspiration*." Dr. A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, pp. 67, 69. Drs. A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, in their joint article, "*distinguish sharply* between Revelation, which is the *frequent* [but not constant], and Inspiration, which is the *constant* attribute of all the thoughts and statements of Scripture, and *between the problem of the genesis of Scripture* on the one hand, which includes historic processes and the concurrence of natural and supernatural forces, and must account for all the phenomena of Scripture, and *the MERE FACT OF INSPIRATION* on the other hand, or the *superintendence by God* of the writers in the entire process of their writing, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR NOTHING WHATEVER BUT THE ABSOLUTE INFALLIBILITY of the record in which the revelation, once generated, appears in THE ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPH. It will be observed that we intentionally avoid applying to this inspiration the predicate 'influence.' It summoned on occasion a great variety of influences, *but its essence was superintendence*. This superintendence attended the entire process of the genesis of Scripture, and *particularly the process of THE FINAL COMPOSITION OF THE RECORD*." *The Presbyterian Review*, Vol. II, p. 225 f. I can not resist the temptation to call attention to the extraordinary logical confusion into which our *par nobile fratrum dogmaticorum* plunge in the last sentence. After "*distinguishing sharply*" between "*the genesis of Scripture, and the mere fact of inspiration*," or its equivalent and "essence," to wit, "*superintendence*," we are gravely assured that "*this superintendence*" [which is "the essence" of inspiration] attended the *entire process of the genesis of Scripture* [which is to be "*sharply distinguished*" from inspiration]!! And strange to say this confusion comes immediately after this solemn warning: "IT IS IMPORTANT that distinguishable ideas should be connoted by distinct terms, and that the terms themselves should be fixed in a definite sense!" *Review*, p. 225.

verba infallibility, secured by a supervision which is the essence of inspiration, was essential, the record as it stands should present so many difficulties on that theory. We have heard of prohibition which does not prohibit, of protection which does not protect. Have we here an infallible supervisory inspiration which does not inspire infallibility? It looks very much like it, if we are shut up to the *ipsissima verba* theory.

Mark again that the difficulties which criticism finds are by no means explicable as lapses of the pen. They are too closely bound with the warp and woof of the record. Structural variations,¹ dislocations of the narrative,² the transposition of events,³ in some instances the duplication of the same

¹ As in the reports given respectively by Matthew and Luke of the Sermon on the Mount. Mat. v: 7; Luke vi: 20 f. Compare also the structure, introductions, contents, and forms of the discourses, etc., recorded in Mat. xii: 22 f.; Mk. iii: 20 f.; Lk. xi: 14 f.; also in Mat. x: 1 f.; Mk. vi: 7 f.; Lk. ix: 1 f.; also in Mat. xviii: 1-35; Mk. ix: 33-50; Lk. ix: 46-50.

² E. g. in Mat. (x: 1 f.) the ordination of the Twelve comes some time (cf. xi: 1 f.) *before* the events recorded in ch. xii: 1-21; whereas in Mark (ii: 23-iii: 12) and Luke (vi: 1 f.) they follow, though at no very long interval. Again the contents of ch. viii-ix come considerably before (cf. ix: 35 f.; xi: 1 f., 20 f.) the events of ch. xii; whereas in Mk. and Lk. the order is totally reversed, the events of Mat. xii being recorded in Mk. ii: 23 f.; iii: 1-35; Lk. vi: 1-19 (*p. c.* Mat. xii: 22 f. not until Lk. xi: 14 f.), and the events of Mat. viii: 18-ix: 26, in Mk. iv: 35-v: 43, and Lk. viii: 22 f. Again the calling of Matthew, which in Mark (the same order substantially in Luke) comes before the contents of ii: 23-v: 21, in Matthew comes after the parallel parts of the record.

³ Note e. g. in Mat. the position of the Galilean tour, comparing the context of Mat. iv: 23 f. with the context of Mk. i: 35 f.; Lk. iv: 42 f.; the place of the Sermon on the Mount in Mat. (v: 1 f.), as compared with its place in Lk. vi: 20 f.; the order of the three temptations in Mat. iv: 1 f., as compared with Lk. iv: 1 f.

event or saying in the same narrative,¹ these surely are not transcriptional deviations from the original autograph.

Still further, on the *ipsissima verba* original autograph theory, textual criticism, as it restores to us the purer, more original form of the text, should tend to eliminate these discrepancies, and to bring the various representations into closer harmony with each other. What is the fact? The very reverse. The more corrupt the text the smoother it is, the more in harmony with itself, the more do we find both of verbal and material assimilation in parallel passages. The older and purer the text, the rougher we find it, the more striking are its individualities, the more sharply accentuated are the differences, the less conformity do we find to a standard of infallible exactitude.

Let me give you one or two examples: In Mark, i: 2 f. we have two Old Testament citations from two prophets, the first from Malachi, and the second from Isaiah. In the received text these citations are introduced with the formula: "As it is written in the prophets." The true reading, however, is: "As it is written *in Isaiah the prophet.*"² Here the false reading gave us absolute inerrancy. The true reading gives us at least an inexactitude, which, whatever else may be said of it, is not unqualifiedly favorable to the affirmation that the name "Isaiah" in the New Testament always meant one particular man, and nobody else.

Again: in Mark ii: 26, we read in the Authorized Version (following the Received Text) that David "went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar, the high-priest." As a matter of fact, Abiathar was not the high-priest at the time, but Abimelech. The explanation which a literalistic exegesis has commonly offered of the statement is that Abiathar be-

¹ Cf. e. g. Mat. v: 29 f. with xviii: 8 f.; ix: 32 f. with xii: 22 f.; v: 24 with xxiii: 22.

² So of course the Revised Version.

came high-priest afterward, and that he is called so here by anticipation. And we may grant that, following the less authentic text, such an explanation, though not the most probable, was not impossible. But unfortunately Textual Criticism comes in, and proves that the passage should read—"when Abiathar was high-priest"¹—which puts the old explanation out of court at once. Transcription had corrected the historical inaccuracy out of the text; criticism, doing its duty honestly, has put it back.

Once more: in Matthew (xix: 17), where the ruler asked our Lord: "Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Christ answered, according to the Received Text: "Why callest thou me good?" Mark and Luke both give precisely, verbally, the same answer. So far the theory of verbal inspiration is safe. But unfortunately here again Textual Criticism finds that Matthew's text should read—"Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?"²—a difference not only in the words, but in the thought, and indeed in the point and pith of the answer. Thus we see that the tendency of a more exact knowledge of the text is to accentuate the individuality and variations of the records, so far as the nearest approach even to our original autographs enables us to judge.

And now is it supposed that we solve all the difficulties connected with the preliminary processes in the building of the record, by throwing the responsibility for inerrancy on the final revision? Shall we say that the inspiration of the Gospel of Luke, *e. g.*, is to be sought for not in the material, not in the documents which he confessedly used, but in the editorial compilation and elaboration of the material?³ Surely this is a most unsatisfactory solution. Of all the make-

¹ So the Revised Version.

² So here again the Revised Version.

³ See note 3, p. 34.

shifts to which the theory of absolute inerrancy compels its adherents, this is to my mind the weakest. Inspiration a mere matter of editing and proof-reading, of correction and revision, crossing out and touching up with the pen an uninspired record, and so making an inspired thing of it! I challenge this conception here and now as unworthy, degrading, belittling, as more hostile to a robust, living faith, than any thing I know of short of rationalism! Inspiration—what is it? THEOPNEUSTIA! *The BREATH of God! The LIFE of God!* The pulsation of God's thought and heart all the way through. If you do not give me that, you give me stone for bread. "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." The idea that inspiration resolves itself into the correction of a date, substituting one man's name for another, changing a number, inserting a caption—important as such particulars may be in their way—such an idea of inspiration is suitable only for Theology in Lilliputia.

But as a matter of fact where are we? What have we? Have we an infallible revision? Have we an inerrant result? Have we a New Testament, or an Old Testament, with absolutely no mistake, no inaccuracy, from beginning to end? I know of no respectable critic who claims that. Every body will admit that in the processes of transcription and transmission, at least, some error has crept into the book, some contradiction, some inaccuracy, which, as the matter stands, can not be accepted as the exact statement of that particular matter. But is not that virtually to give up the whole position? What is inspiration for? Surely to advantage the reader.¹ But what is the value of an infallible editorship which does not secure a permanently infallible

¹ "God gave His Word, not for the private use of the fifty or sixty chosen men to whom it was first revealed, but for the salvation of the innumerable company of the redeemed." Dr. E. P. Humphrey, Second General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, 1880, p. 109.

text? Here is an error which has been in the text for fifteen centuries, and which there can not be much doubt will stay there now for all the centuries to come. What difference does it make, so far as the readers of the past fifteen centuries and the readers of all future centuries are concerned, whether the error was in the original autograph or not? How does it affect the value of the record to-day, for you and for me, to say that the error which is there to-day was not there eighteen hundred years ago? Your inerrant autograph is an abstraction; your inerrant text is an abstraction. Does God hang his revelation on an abstraction? Does the present error destroy the inspiration of the Bible as we have it? We all say not. Then why should the original error destroy the inspiration of the Bible as it was first given? If absolute verbal infallibility was essential to inspiration, does not the loss of that infallibility imply the loss of that inspiration? If it was essential that the first copy should be inerrant in every possible particular, if without such inerrancy it could have no authority, why is not the same inerrancy essential to every copy, and where does the authority of our present copies come from? *You* say: "A single error breaks down the Bible."¹ One comes up and points out an apparent error. Drs. Hodge and Warfield are constrained to admit that it has all the appearance of an error,² but that if we only had the original autograph, etc. He is a busy man, and cares very little for hypothetical abstractions and replies: "On your own theory the Bible has all the appearance of being broken down by what has all the appearance of being an error. When you find your original autograph I shall be pleased to hear from you." You get the General Assembly to declare that unless God

¹ "A proved error in Scripture contradicts not only our doctrine, but the Scripture claims, and therefore its inspiration in making those claims." Drs. Hodge and Warfield, *The Presbyterian Review*, Vol. II, p. 245.

² See note 1, p. 32.

gave an absolutely errorless Bible, he gave no Bible at all. Your people construe that to mean that unless you have an absolutely errorless Bible, you have no Bible at all. What have you or they gained? I thank God that I am not shut up to any such conclusion; and, most of all, I thank God that when an inquiring soul comes to me with his difficulties, I do not have to shut him up to any such conclusion. There are spots on yonder sun; do they stop its being a sun? Why, science tells me that they are a part of the solar economy, and that the sun is all the more a sun for the spots. How do I know that it may not be so with the Bible?

But the theory that all the errors in the text are surreptitious, that none of them are to be referred to the original autographs, is one which honest criticism finds itself unable to accept. Some of course might be accounted for in this way, but that the vast majority, and especially that those which present the most serious difficulties are later corruptions, is utterly out of the question. I have already shown how this theory fails us in the Gospels. Let us take one example out of the Epistles. In Galatians iii: 17 Paul says that the Law came 430 years after the Covenant with Abraham. But according to three express historical statements found elsewhere, to wit, God's prediction to Abraham (Gen. xv; 13), the statement of the book of Exodus (xii: 40), and the statement of Stephen (Acts vii: 6), the sojourning of the children of Israel in Egypt, and their bondage there continued 400, or 430 (so Ex. *l. c.*) years, to which must be added the 200 years between the covenant with Abraham and Jacob's descent to Egypt, making more than 600 years from the Abrahamic covenant to the giving of the Law. According to the Hebrew Bible, and according to Stephen, Paul's chronology is at fault by about 200 years. And unfortunately we are precluded from falling back here on that convenient abstraction, the original autograph, by the unquestionable fact that, according to his customary rule, Paul is

here following the Septuagint, which has added certain words to the Hebrew text in Exodus (*l. c.*) so as to make the 430 years include the sojourning in Canaan, along with the sojourning in Egypt. Now as a question of criticism, biblical and historical, I can not help believing that the Hebrew text and Stephen are right here, and that the Septuagint and Paul are wrong. What am I to do? If I instruct my class that Paul's statement is infallibly inspired, I put Stephen in the wrong, I have the Old Testament passages to explain, and I have serious historical difficulties to remove.¹ Will you blame

¹Of these difficulties the most serious and the only one to which I will now refer, lies in the extraordinary multiplication of the children of Israel in Egypt. The facts of the case, as given in Genesis and Exodus, are the following: 1. The number of the Israelites at the beginning of the sojourn in Egypt was seventy souls. Gen. xlvi: 27.—2. The number who went forth out of Egypt is given at "six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children" (Ex. xii: 37). This would give about three millions for the entire number.—3. This remarkable increase had taken place under the most grievous oppression and bondage. Ex. i: 7-14.—4. In the face also of concerted methods of extermination. Ex. i: 15-22. Many of the negative critics of the Bible, basing their deductions on the traditional chronology represented by the Septuagint, which limits the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt to 230 years, have questioned the entire narrative. So among others Bp. Colenso, who argued the case very skillfully and forcibly from that point of view. Prof. W. H. Green, D.D., of Princeton, in his book: "The Pentateuch vindicated from the aspersions of Bp. Colenso," thus disposes of the argument. Respecting the Sept. reading of Ex. xii: 40, he says: "The gloss thus put upon this passage in Exodus, as it seemed to have the authority of an inspired apostle in its favor in Gal. iii: 17, and as the genealogy of Moses, Ex. vi: 16-20, appeared to preclude the supposition that 430 years were spent in Egypt, became the well nigh universal view of the case. It still has its advocates, though the leading Biblical scholars of Europe have abandoned it." On the passage in Galatians, Dr. Green says: "This language of the apostle, however, does not appear to us to be decisive of the point at issue. The interval of time is only incidentally mentioned. Precision of statement regarding it was of no consequence to his

me if, instead of putting an artificial forced construction on such a passage in the interests of an *a priori* theory, I prefer a straightforward, manly, sober, reverent view of the difficulty, like that which Prof. Beet has taken in his Commentary: "The above discussion warns us not to try to settle questions of Old Testament historical criticism by casual allusions in the New Testament. All such attempts are unworthy of scientific Biblical scholarship. By inweaving his words to man in historic fact, God appealed to the ordinary laws of human credibility. These laws attest with absolute certainty the great facts of Christianity. And upon these great facts, and upon these only, rest both our faith in the Gospel and in God, and the authority of the Sacred Book. Consequently . . . our faith does not require the absolute accuracy of every historical detail in the Bible, and is not disturbed by any error in detail which may be detected in its pages. At the same time our study of the Bible reveals there an historical accuracy which will make us very slow to condemn as erroneous even unimportant statements of Holy Scripture. And in spite of any possible errors in small details or allusions, the Book itself remains to us as—in a unique and infinitely glorious sense—a literary embodiment of the Voice and Word of God." I most heartily say Amen to every line of that statement. It is the only tenable position to take.

argument." And on the chronology itself Dr. Green delivers this judgment: "The *evidence is, we think, conclusive* that the *abode in Egypt lasted 430 years*. This is the *natural sense* of Ex. xii: 40, and *none would ever think of extracting a different meaning from it*, but for reasons found outside of the verse itself . . . The verse makes no allusion to Canaan, but only to Egypt." In a subsequent chapter he shows how a term of 430 years in Egypt meets all the requirements of the narrative touching the multiplication, of the nation, etc. His whole argument is a striking illustration of the fact that honest criticism yields in the end the best apologetic results. See pp. 117 f., 141 f., of "The Pentateuch Vindicated."

This illustration brings up another point of importance in Biblical criticism. I refer to the use made of the Old Testament in the New. Without going into detail, let me call attention to the fact, that almost every possible way in which an Old Testament passage can be cited, is adopted.¹ As a rule, the citations follow the Septuagint, sometimes closely, sometimes loosely. Sometimes the Seventy as cited is an exact translation of the original. Sometimes it is a free, but faithful, rendering, giving the sense rather than the words. Sometimes it is hardly a translation at all, but a paraphrase. Sometimes it gives a sense quite different from the original. In making the citation, the New Testament writer sometimes quotes the Septuagint *verbatim*. Sometimes he changes a word or two. Sometimes the change brings the passage into closer conformity to the original Hebrew. Sometimes the change introduces a variation both from the Hebrew and from the Septuagint. Sometimes the writer gives a new translation of the Hebrew, apparently his own. I appeal to every candid student of these facts, whether they comport with the notion of a rigorous verbal infallibility. To my mind they are quite conclusive of the contrary. Calvin himself, referring to the deviation of the Seventy, as cited in Heb. xi: 21 from the Massoretic Hebrew text, says of the Apostolic use of the Old Testament: "The Apostle does not hesitate to accommodate to his own purpose (*non dubitat suo instituto accomodare*) what was commonly received. He wrote, indeed, to the Jews; but to those who, being dispersed through various countries, had exchanged their national language for Greek. We know that in such a matter the Apostles were not very scrupulous (*non adeo fuisse scrupulosos*)," by which of course Calvin means that they were not careful about exacti-

¹ See D. M. Turpie's *The Old Testament in the New*, p. 266 f.

tude in all matters of detail. "In the thing itself," he adds, "there is but little difference."¹

I have thus far sought to show that the theory of an *ipsissima verba* infallibility in Scripture fails when brought to the test of the best assured conclusions of criticism. It remains to take a brief look at the positive side of the question. For, allow me to say, that to us, even as to you, nay to us even more than it can be to you, who say with Drs. Hodge and Warfield that "the es-

¹ It may be well to add here that rigid in some respects as was Calvin's dogma of inspiration as set forth in his *Institutes*, though by no means as rigid as the later dogma, his attitude became very much freer when brought face to face with the particular problems of criticism. So rationalistic, indeed, did his treatment of the Old Testament seem to the more orthodox Lutherans of his day, that they charged him with Judaizing. One of them calls him *Calvinus Judaisans* (Aeg. Hunnius, *Vit.* 1593). Another accuses him of interpreting the passages about the Messiah and the Trinity in the sense of the Jews and the Socinians (see reff. in Reuss, *History of the N. T.*, § 550). To the phrase, *iva πληρωθῆ*, in connection with O. T. citations, he gave so elastic an interpretation that this, too, was denounced as rationalistic. (See Tholuck on *Calvin as an Interpreter*, *Bibl. Repos.* ii, p. 541 ff.) He recognizes an occasional inaccuracy in the text. On Mat. xxvii: 9, he says: "The passage itself plainly shows that the name of Jeremiah has been put down by mistake instead of Zechariah." He is, at least, not anxious to trace it back to the original autograph. "How the name of Jeremiah crept in, he says, I do not know, nor do I give myself much trouble to inquire (*nec anxie laboro*)." On Luke xxiv: 36,⁶ and elsewhere, he recognizes contradictions, but uniformly dismisses them as of no importance, leaving as they do the substance of the narrative unaffected. He doubts the Petrine authorship of the Second Epistle, and can not be prevailed upon to acknowledge Paul as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (*ego ut Paulum agnoscam auctorem adduci nequeo*). "Only in his very earliest writings," says Reuss (*Hist. of the N. T.*, § 335), "does he follow tradition." He was, in fact, a pioneer of the Higher Criticism, and it is only too evident that if the question of confirming his election to one of our Biblical chairs were to come before us to-day, he would fail of getting a unanimous vote.

gence of inspiration was superintendence," inspiration has a very positive side; is a massive, all-controlling, overwhelmingly predominant fact, throughout the very warp and woof of the Bible from beginning to end. Inspiration is not to be measured by the trifles which have passed under our review. A trifle, to be sure, may be a fact; and if a fact, it is a sin to deny it, whether small as an atom or big as Jupiter. And if anywhere we are to bow before the facts, it is in the sphere of Divine truth. It is not, as Prof. Briggs says, a pleasant task to point out errors in Scripture. We do it only as the interests of truth require, because we dare not handle the word of God deceitfully. Nothing is worth saving that can not be saved honestly, not even that Book. But we are at an infinite remove from taking these as the measure of the Bible. Cromwell showed his manliness in ordering the painter to put in his portrait the wart on his face; but who would dream of judging Cromwell by his wart? What are these trifling inaccuracies in Scripture when compared with the Burden of the Book? If one of the Gospel records varies from another in respect to the *details* of a miracle, what difference does it make if the Miracle remains? If there are minor incongruities in the narratives of Christ's appearances after his resurrection, is not the *Fact* of his resurrection made all the more certain even by these incongruities? If Paul did—in very respectable company, too—make a mistake of two hundred years in stating his argument to the Galatians, what has that to do with the argument? Does it weaken in the slightest the sledge-hammer blow with which he crushes Jewish legalism dead forever? If Stephen transposes certain Old Testament incidents, or confuses certain names, does that affect the convicting power of his terrific arraignment of an apostate Israel? Was not the power of the Holy Ghost in every word that he spoke, even when least accurate?¹

¹ It is one of the pitiful subterfuges of the mechanical theory that Stephen was not, or may not have been inspired. Luke, forsooth, in

Suppose that one of his hearers had undertaken to reply to him, saying: "You have said that Abraham left Haran after the death of his father, Terah; whereas, if you study the figures in Genesis, you will find that Terah must have lived fifty years or more in Haran after Abraham left. You were mistaken also in saying that Abraham bought the sepulcher of the sons of Hamor in Shechem. If you look into the matter a little more closely, you will find that that was Jacob, and that Abraham bought his purchase at Hebron of Ephron the Hittite." But would that have silenced Stephen? Such a criticism on such a speech would have been like flinging a feather in the teeth of a cyclone.

God has not been afraid to commit the excellency of his treasure to earthen vessels. He is not alarmed lest the weakness of the vessel should be a damage to the treasure. He has not shrunk from risking his truth on the liabilities of traditions, translations, transcriptions, and their inevitable accompaniments of fallibility. He has not been concerned lest the popular misconceptions of a pre-Copernican astronomy, or of

his account of the external circumstances attending the discourse, was inspired, but Stephen not! And this in face of all that the inspired Luke says about Stephen, that he was "full of grace and power" (Ac. vi: 8); that his opponents "were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake" (vi: 10); that during this same address, "all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (vi: 15); that his unbelieving hearers were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth" (vii: 54); that at the close, Stephen himself, "being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God" (vii: 55 f). This man's inspiration, an open question at the least, to be denied if the exigencies of an infinitesimal literalistic inspiration requires it; but the words of the annalist, who thus introduces the discourse: "And the high priest said, Are these things so? And he said," potent with the essence itself of inspiration—supervision! Is not such a theory self-condemned?

a pre-Lyellian geology, or of a pre-Linnæan botany should compromise his Revelation of Himself. I thank God that it is so. I rejoice that Divine as is the Book, Divine as no other book is, it is still so thoroughly human, so beautifully threaded with the fiber of human nerve, thought, and sensibility, so sweetly veined with the crimsoned channels of the heart's blood, life, and experience. I rejoice that, supernatural as it is, supernatural as no other book is, it is still so thoroughly natural, that its literary life and growth blend so lovingly and harmoniously with the currents and processes of the world's divinely appointed life and growth. I rejoice that God when he speaks in the language of earth and by the mouth of his servants comes so low down that he is not ashamed to use bad grammar, is not afraid of a barbarism or a solecism, does not shrink from an archaism, or an anachronism, does not disdain an antediluvian setting for the doctrine of the Creation or the Fall, or what a scientist might derisively call a *Kindergarten* formula for the truth of Providence, or the Judgment. He does not hang eternal issues on details that are relatively insignificant. He has not so poised the Rock of Ages that the Higher or Lower Criticism, with pick-ax or crow-bar, digging out a chronological inaccuracy here, or prying off a historical contradiction there, is going to upset it. The critic may be all right, the crow-bar may be all right, but the Rock of Ages is all right, too, and it will stand fast forever. Do not, I beseech you, charge upon God the priggish precision which makes as much of a mole-hill as of a mountain. God does not care to be honored in that way. Do not degrade him by requiring that he should poise before his earthly children as an intolerant, if not intolerable, Pedant, who insists on his *p's* and *q's* with no less vigor and pertinacity than on his godlike SHEMA—"Hear, O Israel!" or on his everlasting AMEN—"Verily, verily, I say unto you!"

But what of the positive bearing of the conclusions of crit-

icism on our conception of inspiration? Take *e. g.* its conclusions in respect to the structure and contents of the Synoptic Gospels. What do they teach us as to the fact of inspiration? They teach us that it is a much larger fact than the scholastic notion which resolves it into mere supervision. Its scope is much wider. It is the note of a supernatural age; an age in which supernatural forces were at work on an extensive scale; in which supernatural facts had been witnessed by multitudes, and had stamped their impressions on thousands of living souls; an age when supernatural charismata abounded in the church; an age of miracles, of supernatural healings, of supernatural tongues. It was pre-eminently an age of prophetic inspiration, in which the Old Testament predictions were fulfilled: "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my spirit *upon all flesh*; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; Yea, and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit; And they shall prophesy."¹ It was an age in which there was an order of prophets in the church and a gift of prophesying in the churches. It was an age when Luke could say that "*many* have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning these matters which have been fulfilled [or fully established] among us;" an age which furnished Luke with that inimitable story of the Infancy, written nobody knows by whom, perhaps, as Alford suggests, by Mary, the mother of our Lord, but as plénarily inspired, before Luke ever got hold of it, as any thing that Peter or John ever wrote; an age which furnished the fragment at the end of Mark, written nobody knows by whom, but attesting itself to the consciousness of the Church to-day as throughout the centuries as the inspired

¹ Acts, ii: 14 f.

Word of God, as truly and as fully such as all of Mark ;¹ an age which furnished the pericope of the woman taken in adultery, written nobody knows by whom, but as full of Jesus as the diamond is full of the sun ;² an age of inspired Christian hymns, some of which have found their way into the record, sung nobody knows by whom, but sweet and grand as the apocalyptic melodies of heaven's own Alleluias ;³ an age when, as the appendix to John's Gospel declares, if all the facts known respecting Christ were written, the world itself would not contain the books that should be written ; an age when we know not how many inspired records and epistles were written and lost ;⁴ an age which built up mighty Christian traditions, not like the dead, dry petrifications of Judaism, but fresh, living, burning traditions, to which the Apostles could appeal as instinct with vital energy and authority.⁵ Think you that in such an age there would be any lack of inspiration for building up the Gospel record ? Look at the quantity and the quality of the inspiration which this view gives you ; not the pedantic, pedagogical supervision of " jots and tittles," but the grand, living expression of " the powers of the World to Come ;" not an occasional spurt or spasm, but a great dynamic, ecumenical fact ; not the flow of a few Artesian wells, but a mighty tide, surging out of the great super-

¹ See Revised Version at Mark, xvi : 9 f.

² See Revised Version at John, vii : 53-viii : 11.

³ See 1 Cor. xiv : 26 ; Col. iii : 16 ; Eph. v : 19. See *exx* in the songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon (Lk. i : 46 f., 67 f. ; ii : 29 f. in Revised Version and Westcott and Hort ; also, Eph. v : 14 ; 1 Tim. iii : 16, in Westcott and Hort. Cf. Acts, iv : 24 f. See Winer's Grammar of the N. T. Diction, § 68, 3, 4.

⁴ See 1 Cor. v : 9 ; 2 Cor. x : 10 ; xi : 28 ; 2 Thes. ii : 15 ; iii : 17 ; Phil. iii : 18 ; (Col. iv : 16 ? more probably the extant Ep. to the Ephesians) ; 3 John, iii : 9. See Salmon's Introduction to the N. T., Lecture XX.

⁵ See Luke, i : 2 ; 1 Cor. xi : 2, 23 ; 2 Thes. ii : 15 ; iii : 6 ; 2 Tim. i : 13 ; 2 Peter, ii : 21 ; iii : 2 ; Jude, 3, 17.

natural deep. What a broad, impregnable base you have here for the Gospel record! What a great cloud of witnesses! What palpable energy and vitality of conviction palpitating through every line of the manifold testimony! What overwhelming, convincing power in the consentaneous strength of the Gospel witness to its own transcendent facts, when this witness is found to rest on no artificial support, is secured by no mechanical uniformity, but comes to us through what Prof. Beet calls "the ordinary laws of human credibility," bearing these marks of honesty, independence, frankness, individuality, spontaneity, internal verisimilitude, which everywhere and always guarantee the truth of human testimony! Is it not the claim and glory of the Gospel Story that it combines the dignity and authority of a heavenly recital with the piquant frankness, the homelike *naïveté* of the conversational fireside tale, here and there, it may be, contradicting itself in small matters, breaking out into artless variations and impulsive inconsistencies, but all the more surely thereby winning its way to the faith and love of the heart?

The most important question of all still remains to be considered. What is inspiration—not in itself, but as a fact, as a characteristic of the Bible? In giving my answer to this question, I know no better course to take than to follow the line of thought in the First Chapter of our Confession of Faith, perhaps the noblest Chapter in that immortal document. Let me ask your attention to what is most essential in that magnificent statement of the truth respecting Scripture. "Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation." Let us ponder that statement a moment. Why was Scripture given? The answer of our Confession is: Because "the light of nature was not sufficient." Sufficient for what? "To give [a certain]

knowledge." Knowledge of what? Of botany? chemistry? geography? By no means. The light of nature *is* sufficient for that. It is not sufficient however "*for the knowledge of God*"—that Great Infinite Being with whom as spiritual immortal beings we have to do; "*and of HIS WILL*"—that expression of God's eternal thoughts and purpose which most essentially concerns our spiritual welfare and our eternal destiny; and still more explicitly, "not sufficient for *that* knowledge of God which is necessary"—for what? For science? for art? for civilization? necessary to fill a cyclopædia? to equip a college graduate?—nay, "but which is *necessary UNTO SALVATION.*" What is all secular knowledge compared with "that knowledge of God which is necessary unto salvation?" That was the great need of the world; it was to supply that need that when the light of nature failed man, God interposed. "*Therefore* it pleased the Lord, at sundry times,¹ and in divers manners TO REVEAL HIMSELF;" mark that! Not in the first instance to give a book, not to transmit a revelation *about* Himself, not to write, or cause to be written, a series of definitions, logical categories, abstract propositions relating to his person, his nature, his attributes; but "*to reveal HIMSELF*"—actually, factually, in living deed, as well as by the living word; by Theophanies, by Covenants, by Dispensations; by orders, institutions, structures, legislative, administrative, civil, religious; by sacrifices and sacraments, Urim and Thummim, blood and Shekinah; by mediations of grace and life most various, touching, and sublime, didactic, devotional, priestly, prophetic; by dream, vision, psalm, symbol, type, miracle—a golden chain of divine manifestations and interpositions reaching down through the centuries; every new link charged with more of God—God in it all—God Himself—God in person; the Power of God, the Heart of God, the Life of God in every thing; and ALL FOR SALVA-

¹ Rev. Version, "by divers portions."

TION! Emphasize that again! *Revelation* and *Redemption*—twin divinities, advancing together, side by side, step by step, every step ablaze with Deity! the Divine Processes widening with the suns, more, and more, and ever more of God in every thing until at last the climax is reached—the Word becomes flesh; the Son of God is born on earth, lives—suffers—dies—rises again—ascends to the right hand of the Majesty on high, to reign King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, God blessed forever. Amen!

Here in these great Facts, these great historic processes, these theophanies of glory, these miracles of power and love, these supernatural interventions of redeeming Grace, we have God revealing Himself. That precisely, as our Confession puts it, is the primal fact. Here you have the material of the Word of God, the stuff of inspiration, the substance of the Gospel. Paul's definition of the Gospel is just that: "The Power of God unto Salvation." Not a thing of power, not a mighty system, not a tremendous engine, but *Dunamis*, Power, God's Power, Personal Omnipotence, at work as Omnipotence, saving the world. "My Father *worketh* hitherto, and I *work*." That is Redemption. That is Revelation for Redemption. The life of the Revelation is there, the power of the Revelation is there, in that Divine Working; not in words, not in definitions, not in abstract statements—how much of God can you put into words? How much of the Eternal can you pack into a definition? How much of the Infinite can you squeeze into a dogma?—No, not in these, but in those stupendous supernatural forthputtings of God Himself, which blazon their way all along from Eden to Golgotha.

So much for the first step—the redemptive revelation of Himself by God. "It pleased the Lord," first of all, thus "to reveal himself, and to declare his will unto his Church." What next? "And *afterward*," mark the order, the dependence, and the purpose, "and afterward for the better preserv-

ing and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing, which maketh the holy scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased." The Bible is thus the written record of the revelation. What, then, is the object of the record? Generically and primarily the object of the record is the same with the object of the revelation, to wit: Salvation. Specifically the record is given for three purposes subordinate to the great generic purpose: (1) To interpret the revelation, or, in the language of the Confession, "to declare God's will" in the revelation. For man, alas! is ignorant, blinded, besotted by sin, and needs to have this wondrous Divine Drama of Redemption explained. (2) To perpetuate the revelation: "those former ways of God's revealing his will having now ceased." (3) To apply the revelation; or to make it effectual against the trinity of evil, the world, the flesh, and Satan.

What now is the function of inspiration? In a word, it is to mediate the revelation; to interpret, to record, to apply it; to put us, to put all generations, under the immediate power of those Divine Realities; so far as possible to bring us face to face with this incomparable drama of Power and Love Divine, *face to face with God revealing Himself*. All through the ages the Spirit of God was teaching one and another to understand, to interpret, to record, to apply that wondrous process. There, then, you have the revelation; here the inspiration. There the supernatural history; here the supernatural record. There the fact; here the story. There Sinai; here Exodus. There Bethlehem, Galilee, Calvary, Olivet; here Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. There Pentecost; here the Acts. And as the Revelation was building, so the Book was building. As that became high and broad, this became rich and full. And so the Book

became the double of the deed. By the divine correlation of energy, the life and power of the one became the life and power of the other. The Facts burn in the Words. The living History throbs in the living Record. And so to-day, and throughout all time, in all that makes the Bible the power of God unto salvation, it is the Voice of God, the Word of God, the supreme, the only, the infallible authority.¹

That is what the Bible teaches concerning itself. It is part of the supernatural, divine process of saving a lost world, of rehabilitating a ruined humanity. Inspiration is the formal factor in that process, as Revelation is the material factor. Thus regarded I have no hesitation in saying that the Bible is inspired wholly, inspired through and through. The men are inspired, as Prof. Stowe said. The thoughts are inspired, as Prof. Briggs says. The words are inspired, as Prof. Hodge has said. These are "the sacred writings which are able to *make wise* UNTO SALVATION, *through faith which is in Jesus Christ.*" "Every scripture is inspired of God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for discipline which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." That is what inspiration is for, for training and completing in the divine life. How can error in chronology, or physical science, affect that process? "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." Yes! in these inspired words there is a

¹ I take pleasure in referring to the admirable statement of this historic and literary relation of Revelation and Inspiration in Drs. Hodge and Warfield's Article on Inspiration in the *Presbyterian Review*, Vol. II. For more complete and systematic discussion of the subject, see Dr. G. P. Fisher's *Nature and Object of Revelation* (Scribner: N. York); Dr. A. B. Bruce: *The Chief End of Revelation* (Hodder & Stoughton); Dr. G. T. Ladd: *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, and *What is the Bible* (C. Scribner's Sons, N. Y.); Dr. W. Sanday: *The Oracles of God* (Longmans, Green & Co.).

divine pneumatic power such as no other words have. They are Spirit-words, Life-words. "Which things we teach, not in words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth." What things? Read the context. "Whatever things God prepared for them that love him." "The deep things of God." "The things that were freely [graciously] given to us of God." These are the things about which Inspiration concerns itself. God's things, God's deepest things, God's best things, the things which have the most, the best, the deepest of God in them. "*These things,*" says the Apostle of God in them, "we teach *in words* which the Spirit of God teacheth." Most assuredly! Who can doubt it? I believe in that declaration of Paul's with all my heart. I could not help believing it if Paul had never said it. As I read what the Bible says about God, about Christ, about the Spirit, about man, sin, salvation, about holiness, duty, life, death, eternity, I feel to the depths of my being that the very words thrill with divinity; they glow with the ardors of the heaven above me; they are instinct with the power of an endless life; the majesty of eternity is in their rhythm; deep calleth unto deep in the thunders of their diapason; the pathos of the blessed Comforter is in their stillest smallest voice; the very balm of Paradise is shed upon them; even upon their anomalies rests the glory of the Shekinah; as they pass before my eye they are radiant with the One Altogether Lovely; as they echo in my heart-strings they are vocal with God.

It is most strange to me that our theologies have not before now found the secret of inspiration in that transcendent passage of Paul from which I have just cited a few lines; the clearest, the fullest, the profoundest treatment of the subject that has ever been given. Let me give the whole passage (1 Cor. ii: 6-16): "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are fully grown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath

been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world hath known; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written: things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words [or, mg.—interpreting spiritual things to spiritual men]. Now the natural [or: unspiritual, Gr. psychical] man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he can not know them, because they are spiritually judged [or, examined]. But he that is spiritual judgeth [or, examineth] all things, and he himself is judged [or, examined] of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

That is inspiration. How then shall we characterize it? "Verbal" inspiration? "Supervisional?" "Official?" "Plenary?" "Dynamic?" Why not take Paul's word at once, which sums up what is most real in all these designations? "PNEUMATIC INSPIRATION!" There you have it all. There you have not only Paul's word, but Christ's. "The words that I have spoken unto you are *Pneuma*." Make that your watchword, and you can hold the fort against all comers.

Pneumatic Inspiration: what does it mean?

1. THE SPIRIT OF GOD is the primary, the vital, the essential factor.

2. *The spirit of man* is the coefficient; that in man which is the organ of God, and of all Divine Reality.

3. The contents of inspiration are *pneumatic realities*. And what does the Apostle say of these? i. They have their foundations in the depths of the Godhead. They are "the deep things of God." ii. They are above and beyond all secular science. "Not of this world [or, age: *αιών*, *saeculum*]." iii. They are the embodiment of a Divine Philosophy. "We speak God's Wisdom." iv. They are attained through a divine initiation. "In a mystery." v. They date from the past eternity. "Foreordained before the worlds." vi. They fill the future eternity. "Prepared for them that love him." vii. They are supra-sensual. "Eye saw not, ear heard not." viii. They are supra-psychical. "The natural [psychical] man receiveth them not." ix. They are supra-rational. "Which entered not into the heart of man." x. They are the peculiar province of the Spirit, who "explores the depths of God." "None knoweth them save the Spirit of God." xi. They are freighted with Divine Grace. "Freely given to us of God." xii. They culminate in spiritual perfection. "Unto our glory."

4. The processes by which they are apprehended are pneumatic. "They are spiritually judged."

5. The utterances, by which they are expressed, are pneumatic, theopneustic. "In words which the Spirit teacheth." "Combining spiritualities with spiritualities."

6. And to crown all this all-pervading, all-assimilating Pneuma is the Mind of the Lord. "We have the mind of Christ."

Pneumatic inspiration! Is it not just that? Do you ask for characteristics of inspiration? There they are. Tests of inspiration? What more could you wish for? Safeguards of inspiration? Are these not enough? If these will not guarantee the inspiration of the Bible, what will? According to our Confession, the inspiration of Scripture is a self-

witnessing fact. "We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and revered esteem for the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness, by and with the word, in our hearts." "The Supreme Judge, . . . in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scriptures."¹ Does not that which is of the Spirit evidence itself? With this pneumatic conception of the Book, can we be in doubt about the inspiration, about the quality, contents, scope, purpose of the inspiration? Can we have any trouble about verifying it? The Bible is a pneumatic Book. The groundwork, the substance, all that makes the Book what it is, is pneumatic.² The warp and woof of it is *pneuma*. Its fringes run off, as was inevitable, into the secular, the material, the psychic. Can we not, as persons of common intelligence even, much more with the internal witness of the Spirit to aid us, discriminate between the fringe and the warp and woof? Do not the "spiritualities" and the "heavenlinesses" of Scripture distinguish themselves from all that is lower, as the steady shining of the everlasting stars from the fitful gleaming of earth's fire-flies?

¹ The Confession of Faith, Chap. I, Secs. V, X. Compare The Larger Catechism, Qu. 2, 3, 4, and answers.

² See The Larger Catechism, Qu. 5 (The Shorter Catechism, Qu. 3) and answer. "Qu. What do the Scriptures principally teach? *Ans.* The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man."

Even if the task of discriminating were immeasurably harder than it is, we should not complain. God lays on us in many matters, in matters, too, of great practical moment, the responsibility of separating the things that differ. "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" This responsibility is a part of life's discipline. It is not God's way to do all our thinking for us. His training is not a process of cram.

Let me ask your attention to these weighty words of Mr. Gladstone: "No doubt there will be those who will resent any association between the idea of a Divine Revelation and the possibility of even the smallest intrusion of error in the vehicle. But ought they not to bear in mind that we are bound by the rule of reason to look for the same methods of procedure in this great matter of a special provision of Divine knowledge for our needs as in the other parts of the manifold dispensation under which Providence has placed us? Now, that method or principle is one of sufficiency, not perfection; of sufficiency for the attainment of practical ends, not of conformity to ideal standards. Bp. Butler, I think, would wisely tell us that we are not the judges, and that we are quite unfit to be the judges, what may be the proper amount, and the just condition of any of the aids to be afforded us in passing through the discipline of life. I will only remark that this default of ideal perfection, this use of a twilight instead of a noonday blaze, may be adapted to our weakness, and may be among the appointed means of exercising our faith. But what belongs to the present occasion is to point out that if probability and not demonstration marks the divine guidance of our paths in life as a whole, we are not entitled to require that when the Almighty in his mercy makes a special addition by revelation to what he has already given to us of knowledge in Nature and in Providence, that special gift should be unlike his other gifts, and should have

all its lines and limits drawn out with mathematical precision."¹

That is, the only rational, the only philosophic, the only Scriptural ground to take. It is the ground of our Confession. The inspiration of the Bible is pneumatic, not psychic, not secular. The infallibility of the Bible is pneumatic, not psychic, not secular. It is the infallibility of practical sufficiency, not the infallibility of absolute ideality. It is an "infallible rule," standard measure. What does that mean? I have a yard-stick, a three-foot rule. As such it is perfect, all sufficient. If I make a mistake in measuring yards or feet with it, it will be altogether my own fault. And yet, perhaps, it is notched, it is cracked, some of the inch lines are blurred; one or two may possibly be slightly inexact. If I were to apply the microscope to it, I should no doubt find flaws in it. If I were to try it for microscopic measurements, it would fail me. But, as a yard-stick, as a three-foot measure, it is infallible. So with the Bible. Its infallibility is not a microscopic infinitesimal infallibility respecting all particular things in the heavens above or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. It is an infallible *rule of faith*; *i. e.*, of Christian faith, of Gospel faith, of the faith which is necessary to salvation.

That, as I have shown, is the teaching of Scripture itself. That is plainly the teaching of our Confession. It is so interpreted by the most competent authorities. Dr. Laidlaw, Professor of Theology in the New College in Edinburgh, in a recent address on "The Westminster Confession in the light of the present desire for revision," speaking of the Chapter on the Scriptures, says that "it refrains from detailed specification as to the authorship, age, or literary character of the canonical books. Not making these matters

¹ The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture. By W. E. Gladstone. Philadelphia, J. D. Wattles, p. 11 f.

essential to faith, it thus leaves open what has been called, perhaps rather broadly, the whole field of Biblical Criticism. It deals in the same manner with all details as to mode and degree of inspiration, which could be consistently left open by those who accept the Scriptures as the infallible rule of faith and duty. Once more, while claiming for the original Scriptures such immediate inspiration and such providential care as fits them for their purpose, it has refrained from such assertion of verbal inerrancy as Biblical scholarship disallows."¹

The leaders of English and Scotch Presbyterianism are well nigh a unit on this point. Dr. Blaikie, the President of the Presbyterian Alliance, and of whom I need say no more, was solicited last year to sign a paper condemning the views of Dr. Bruce and Dr. Dods. He declined to do so on the ground that while strongly maintaining the fact of inspiration, he could not accept the rigid view which takes inspiration to mean inerrancy. "Well known facts in the actual structure and contents of Scripture seem to me to forbid it."² Dr. Rainy is well known as Principal of the Free College of Edinburgh and the leader of the Free Church. Last year, in a speech in the Free Assembly, he thus defined his personal position. I quote from an abstract in the *British Weekly* of June 6, 1890: "He started with the inerrancy of Scriptures, even in details, as that which he was inclined to hold. Only he refused to impose it on others; out and out he refused to do so, especially upon his students. He did so partly because he thought such matters despicable, but also because Scripture itself did not seem to have it much at heart to make them sure of accuracy of this kind; rather, it seemed conspicuously to refuse to do so, and any quotations to the contrary were mistakes." In the English

¹ *British Weekly*, November 13, 1890, p. 34.

² *British Weekly*, October 30, 1890, p. 3.

Presbyterian Church, during the recent discussions of the New Confession of Faith, Principal Dykes, of the Presbyterian College in London, the leading theologian of the Church, Dr. Munro Gibson, who is accepted as the incoming Moderator, and other leaders, pronounced decisively against the theory of inerrancy. Two years ago, when Dr. Dods was nominated for the Exegetical Chair of New College, Edinburgh, declarations like the following were quoted against him: "I believe the Scriptures contain an infallible rule of faith and life. I believe they are the authoritative records of the revelations which God has made, but it is impossible to affirm that all the statements contained in Scripture are strictly accurate, impossible, that is, to claim for Scripture an absolute infallibility." He was elected by an overwhelming majority. That is enough to show where the Free Church stands on this particular issue.

Brethren, our Church can not afford to go beyond Scripture, beyond our own Confession, or beyond our sister churches, on this question. We hear about "dangerous errors," views and utterances which tend to unsettle faith. Let me tell you where the danger lies, as it confronts me in my work from year to year. It lies in putting the Bible in a false position, in claiming for it what it does not claim for itself. It lies in *a priori* assumptions respecting inspiration and infallibility, which are not borne out by the facts. It lies in holding up your iron-clad dogma of verbal inspiration and literalistic infallibility against the advances made by an humble, prayerful, reverent investigation and criticism of Scripture as the Word of God. I have nothing to say in behalf of a bald agnostic, materialistic naturalism, or of an arbitrary, capricious rationalism, which, with *a priori* dogmatism, denies the supernatural, belittles or expunges sin and salvation, eliminates out of history God's Revelation of Himself, evaporates out of the Bible its pneumatic inspiration, chops up its contents into lifeless fragments, and sweeps away book after book into the

abyss of legend and myth. When the Biblical Criticism of our theological seminaries is found to be engaged in that business, when it comes in conflict with the Bible's own claims to pneumatic inspiration, then it will be time to sound the alarm, then it will be time for action. But on the other hand, a dogma of inspiration, and of the authority of Scripture, which, in its mistaken zeal, refuses to recognize accomplished results, antagonizes the most enlightened, devout, and believing Biblical scholarship of the day, puts the ban on all inquiry which will not bow to its rigid literalism and mechanicalism, such a dogma is in our day, whatever it may have been in the past, an obstruction to faith, a menace to the unity and peace of the Church, an arrest of the healthy growth of Christian science, and a serious blight on the free, robust, symmetrical development of the Christian life. You protest against the unsettling of faith. You do well. But they also do well who protest against keeping up needless barriers to faith. You condemn criticism which destroys belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God. But beware of including in your condemnation the criticism which helps to make such belief in the Scriptures possible. You may be sure that as long as you tie up faith in the Bible with faith in a secular inspiration, as long as you hang the infallible authority of Scripture as the rule of faith on the infallible accuracy of every particular word and clause in the Book, as long as you exalt the Bible to the same pinnacle of authority in matters respecting which God has given us clearer, fuller, more exact revelations elsewhere, as in matters respecting which the Bible is the only revelation, the irrepressible conflict between faith and science will go on, and the Drapers and Whites of each generation will have their new chapters to add to the record. Every new discovery in science or in archæology that seems to contradict some particular statement will produce a panic. Every advance in criticism will tend to unsettle the faith of somebody whom your teaching has led

to confound the form with the substance. Having learned from you that the shell is part of the kernel, and finding that he can not keep the shell, he will end by throwing away both shell and kernel.

For one I mean to do my part in putting an end to this mistaken defense of Divine Revelation. Shipwrecks of faith without number have been caused by it. It is the very thing, according to his own confession, that made an unbeliever of the most brilliant scholar of France, perhaps of the world today, Ernest Rénau. It is very thing that drove into infidelity the strongest champion of the popular infidelity of England, who died the other day in his unbelief, Charles Bradlaugh. So testifies his own brother, a believer. But for this the iridescent declamation of Robert Ingersoll in our own country, with his "Mistakes of Moses," would collapse like a pricked balloon. The Christianity of our day can not afford to fight the battle of the Book along that line. The Presbyterianism of our country can not afford to put itself in antagonism to the most enlightened as well as devout Christian scholarship of the day. It can not afford to put the yoke of bondage to an exploded relic of post-Reformation scholasticism on the consciences of our young men, alive as they are to the gains of reverent and careful study of the Book, and sensitive as they can not fail to be to the humiliation of such bondage. It can not afford to silence the larger, profounder, more Scriptural restatements of revealed truth made imperative by improved methods of Biblical research. Nor can it afford to precipitate any issue on our churches, the surest result of which will be to foment suspicion, to drive out the spirit of charity and of justice, to gender misunderstanding and alienation between our chairs of instruction and our pulpits and pews, and to widen the gap between honest inquiry and earnest faith.

Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration.

II.

By HENRY PRESERVED SMITH.

The natural theory concerning an inspired book is illustrated by the Mohammedans. The prophet of Mecca, in his observation of Jews and Christians (in whom he recognized worshipers of the true God, discovered their Scriptures to be the source of their religion. He classified them therefore as "book-people," and endeavored to construct a similar sacred code for his own followers. The result is the Koran, whose contrast with the Bible is in many respects remarkable. Throughout this book God appears as the speaker. Its contents are made known to the prophet by direct revelation, and it is never tired of emphasizing its own infallibility. Yet the discrepancies are so marked that they did not escape the notice of the author himself, and he propounded the theory, afterward elaborated by the commentators, that a later revelation must abrogate an earlier one. He confessed forgetfulness also,¹ and in one instance avowed that Satan had insinuated a false revelation into his mind.²

¹ "Whatever verses We cancel or cause thee to forget, We give thee better in their stead, or the like thereof."—Koran, II, 100, quoted by Sir William Muir, *The Corân*, p. 41.

² The "two Satanic verses," cf. Muir, *Life of Mahomet* (1877), p. 86 sqq.

The transmission of this book is well known. No particular care was taken of the revelations during the author's life, or for some time after his death. As the number of his "companions" was diminished by death, the danger of losing the revelations became evident, and with the lapse of time discrepancies in the various readings became marked. War threatened to break out between parties who swore allegiance to different readings.¹ One of Mohammed's amanuenses was therefore commissioned to collect the fragments "from date-leaves and tablets of white stone, and from the breasts of men," to which other traditions add from fragments of parchment or paper, pieces of leather, and the shoulder or rib-bones of camels or goats. As this standard text was corrupted by careless copyists, probably under the influence of still living tradition, the Caliph Othman had an authorized edition made by a committee of scholars. "Transcripts [of this] were multiplied and forwarded to the chief cities in the empire, and the previously existing copies were all, by the Caliph's command, committed to the flames."² The text was still unvocalized, the points not being added until about fifty years later.

Now the point I wish to make is this: We have full knowledge of these details concerning the Koran; we know its discrepancies, its careless editing, the violent means taken to secure uniformity in its text, the late origin of its vowel points; the Arab scholars know these also, for it is from them that we get the information. Yet the Arab theory maintains the following points:

1. The Koran is eternal in its original essence and a necessary attribute of God.
2. It was written down in heaven on a "treasured tablet,"

¹ Or different wordings, for the transmission was still largely oral.

² Muir, *Mahomet*, p. 557.

from which it was communicated piecemeal to Mohammed by the angel Gabriel.

3. It is written in an Arabic style which is perfect and unapproachable. "The best of Arab writers has never succeeded in producing its equal in merit."

4. Every syllable is of directly divine origin. This includes the unintelligible combinations of letters put at the head of certain Suras.

5. Its text is incorruptible, "and preserved from error and variety of reading by the miraculous interposition of God himself." To account, however, for the slight variants which actually exist, the Koran is said to have been revealed in seven dialects.

6. As being the truth of God, it is the absolute authority, not only in religion and ethics, but also in law, science, and history.¹

The point I make is: This is the kind of Bible we should like to have God give us, and when we construct for ourselves a theory of revelation we do it along these lines. Allow me to illustrate by a brief review of theories which have been held concerning the Old Testament. We naturally begin here with the Jew.

First, however, let us remark that the clear distinction which our theologians make between revelation and inspiration is a comparatively modern distinction. Inspiration naturally goes with revelation. It is the divine method of revelation. A superintendence of the record as distinct from the giving of the truth did not occur to the ancients, because they did not reflect upon the record, except as containing the truth. Revelation and inspiration then are not distinguished. The earliest Jewish testimonies concern themselves with the

¹ The authorities for these statements are, besides those already quoted, Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Qorans*; Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*; Palmer, *the Qur'ân* (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. VI).

Law as contained in the book. This law seems to be identified with the heavenly Wisdom.¹ It is, therefore, as the Mohammedan would say, one of the attributes of God. When God would build the world, he looked upon the Tora as a builder looks upon the plan of a building.² This plan was delivered into the hands of Moses at Sinai by the angels in the form of a written book. This preference of the Law to the other Scriptures is very natural to the Jew, and its consequence is the distinction of two grades of inspiration. "Holy Scripture came into being by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and is therefore derived from God, who speaks therein. Nevertheless, there are within the Scripture different grades of inspiration; in that the Law is the primary revelation, the other Scriptures are secondary."

In inquiring into the history of this doctrine of inspiration, we are struck, however, by the variety of opinion that has prevailed. Although the Jews give a higher place to the Law, yet at a later time they dignified the other books by making them also a part of the revelation to Moses. "Rabbi Isaac said: "all that the prophets were to prophesy later they received from Mt. Sinai, for so Moses declares, Deut. xxix: 15."³ On the other hand, that Ezra may not be deprived of the glory belonging to him, later opinion made him the author of the whole Hebrew Bible, it having been lost during the captivity. So the Fourth Book of Esdras declares (xiv: 19-22) that the Law has been burned, and Ezra prays that it may be restored by him. God grants his desire, ordering him to provide five amanuenses. When he goes into the open country with the amanuenses, God gives him a cup to drink. When he has drunk, he dictates to the scribes the

¹ Sirach, XXIV, 22. The reference to Baruch, IV, 1, given by⁴ Weber, does not seem to assert the existence of the Law *from* eternity, though it asserts that it will endure forever.

² Bereshith Rabba, I.

³ Shemoth Rabba, XXVIII.

twenty-four books of the Old Testament and seventy others which he is ordered to keep secret. The fact that such various views could be held shows how impossible it is to speak of any established or settled view of revelation or of inspiration at this early time.

If we come down to the later period, however, we shall discover a theory of inspiration which is definite enough, though it still refuses to distinguish inspiration from revelation. It starts with the Law as given at Mt. Sinai. It identifies this with the received text of the punctuators. It affirms that even the form of the letters (*literæ finales, beth* at the beginning of Genesis) was ordained by God. "As Moses ascended the mountain he found God making the ornamental points [Ketharim] of the letters [in the Law]." The extraordinary points, the Qeri and Kethibh, the division into paragraphs by spaces—these all were in the divine model just as in a Hebrew Bible of the present day. Some scholars, however, were more radical and affirmed that the vowel points (and, of course, with them the sacred text) were given to Adam in paradise. Others believed the points to have been added by Ezra and the so-called Great Synagogue. Mediating theologians tried to combine the different views. Azariah de Rossi supposed the points first communicated to Adam in paradise and transmitted by him to Moses, to have been "partially forgotten and their pronunciation vitiated during the Babylonian captivity; that they had been restored by Ezra, but that they had been forgotten again in the wars and struggles during and after the destruction of the sacred Temple; and that the Massorites, after the close of the Talmud, revised the system and permanently fixed the pronunciation by the contrivance of the present signs."¹

To judge of the success of this author by general experience, we may conjecture that his well-meant attempt brought

¹ Ginsburg, *The Massoreth Ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita*, p. 53.

upon him the hatred of both parties. The general opinion of later Jewish authorities is to the effect that Ezra called a convention of elders and scribes on his return from the captivity—the prototype of the later Sanhedrim. This Great Synagogue first considered the subject of the Canon—gathering the sacred text into one volume and rejecting uninspired writings. They then deliberated on the text, marking off the verses, settling on the correct reading, the use of the vowel letters and the Qeri and Kethibh. They further added the points, both the vowel points and accents. As if this were not enough, they made also the Aramaic translations called the Targums and added the Massora proper; that is to say, they counted the number of letters, words, and verses in each book, noted these figures in the margin, marked the middle word and verse in each book, and called especial attention to unusual forms, that the scribes might make no mistake. This work, we may suppose, they stamped as authentic and took measures to have it correctly transmitted.¹

The influence of this theory upon Christian thinkers will be noticed later. The theory itself is certainly rigid enough, and its method would clearly secure an authentic Scripture. The only trouble with it is that it is entirely unsupported by facts. The Great Synagogue never had any existence. It has arisen from a misunderstanding of Ezra's activity in the great popular assembly, the account of which is contained in Neh. viii. Ezra's work at that time was, no doubt, of unspeakable moment. But in the account we have, it is a thoroughly practical one, instructing the people in the Law and pledging them to its observance. Of settling the Canon we do not hear a word, and, indeed, we are tolerably certain that the whole Canon was not settled until a much later date. If Ezra (the Great Synagogue never existed, as I have said)

¹ Buxtorf, *Tiberias*, cc. X, XI. Schnedermann, *Die Controverse des L. Cappellus mit den Buxtorfen u. s. w.*, p. 27.

did not even settle the Canon, much less can we suppose that he attended to the scrupulosities of the Massora. Concerning the vowel points, we know that they were not invented until somewhere near the eighth century of our era, and that the Massora is a growth of many centuries. Finally, the surprising uniformity of the Hebrew text has been secured by the loss or destruction of all copies that differed from one authorized model. But this model was settled upon certainly after the first Christian century.

We are discussing the subject of inspiration, and it might seem at first sight as if all this Jewish theory was irrelevant. Let us notice, therefore, where we are. I suppose I am right in saying that we mean by inspiration the divine influence exerted upon the minds of the writers of the Bible, which led them to choose and shape their material so as to make the result the authoritative rule of faith and practice. The Jewish theory concerning the Great Synagogue was shaped by the same interest which leads us to formulate a doctrine of inspiration. And when Elias Levita showed the late origin of the vowel points, he was violently accused of what would be called among us "low views of inspiration."

But I wish to go further, and as some object to the assertion that such a thing as bibliolatry is possible, to call your attention to some other theories which have been held by the Jews, and have also had large influence in the Christian church. The Jews were in dead earnest when they argued that the Bible is the Word of God, and therefore every item in it is true. They went further, and concluded that every item in it is important truth and worthy of God. In applying the theory to the facts they would not be misled by appearances. It does indeed seem that some of the statements are trivial, and taken in their literal sense they make difficulties. The obvious conclusion is that they contain a deeper sense. The search for this deeper sense leads to the whole

system of allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Besides this, some things in Scripture are ambiguous or obscure. If we are to reach the truth we must have a guide. The hypothesis of an inerrant Word leads to the demand for an inerrant interpretation. The rabbinical authorities postulate both a deeper sense and an authoritative interpretation. The latter is provided in the so-called Oral Law, which, though embodied in comparatively late written documents, was held to be in fact as old as Moses, having been transmitted orally from him to the time of its written redaction, a period of about seventeen centuries. This view of the Mishna¹ (or even of the whole Talmud) has been maintained until comparatively recent times.² "We can not suppose that God would give an imperfect Law. An authorized interpretation is therefore needed, which we have in the Talmud (Oral Law). It is natural, therefore, that we [Jews] hold to this that we may not grope in darkness." This view is even now the view of orthodox Judaism, and it is in substance as old as the New Testament. For we see that at that time the "traditions of the elders" had usurped the place of the divine Law. It could hardly be otherwise. The Oral Law, as the alleged interpretation of the written command, must be immediately obeyed—it was itself the medium through which the written Law was obeyed. The simple Word was insufficient, while the traditional decision exactly met the particular need. The latter was therefore the more important. This is declared by a recent Jewish authority to be "a universally recognized principle: *the decisions of the Scribes are more weighty than those of the Law.*" The logical result, therefore, of this theory of inerrancy was to substitute for the Scripture the alleged authorized interpretation.

The decisions of the wise, however, were concerned with

¹ Gfrörer, I, 250; Weber, 87; Jost, *Geschichte des Judentums*, I, 93.

² Creizenach, quoted by Hartmann, 514.

practical matters, points of casuistry, such as always arise under a code of morals. On the other side, much even of the Tora is not embraced under the head of command or prohibition. To make use of this, the system of allegory was developed. "The fondness of the Jews for allegorical exposition found its support in the belief that the excellence of the Tora lay in the inexhaustible spring of varied interpretations indicated in the assertion that the revelation was first given in seventy languages. This variety was deduced from Jeremiah, xxiii: 29: 'My words are as a fire and as a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces.' Who can count the fragments into which the stone is shattered by a strong arm, and who can count the sparks sent forth by the fire?"¹ Besides the theory that each passage has seventy meanings, we hear that Moses himself expounded each section in forty-nine different ways. This delirium reaches its height in the later assertion which makes each verse of the Law to contain no less than six hundred thousand meanings, if we may trust the authority of Eisenmenger.² But not to insist upon this, the methods of obtaining some of the admitted seventy meanings are calculated to show the small value of such a theory. One of these methods is the so-called Gematria, based on the numerical value of the letters. This value was calculated for any word, and the resulting number was put into the place of the word, or if this gave no sense any other word whose component letters gave the same sum might be substituted in its place. The numerical value of a single letter might be significant. The large **י** (= 70) in Deut. vi: 4, is one of the arguments for the theory of seventy senses just considered. The letters might be interchanged

¹ Hartmann, 534, quoting from Rashi on Gen. xxxiii: 20, and Ex. vi: 11. The same in substance from the Talmud, Weber, 84.

² Eisenmenger, Entdecktes Judenthum, I, 458.

by Athbash or Albam.¹ A word might be taken as the basis of an acrostic, each of its letters taken as the initial of a new word, or it might be made into another by an anagram. In this way, from the first word of Genesis it was discovered that the world was created on a New Year's day,² and a word in Gen. ii, 4, shows that the earth was created *for the sake of Abraham*.

It is clear that this is simply exegetical legerdemain, and it need not detain us longer. Its main value is that it shows where a high theory of the value of revelation may land us. It is in line with the declaration of the Rabbis that God himself studies the Law three hours every day.³ It brings with it almost inevitably the magical application of Scripture exemplified in the use of its verses as charms or amulets, in regard to which we may be pardoned for asserting that they have no more real efficiency than a leaf from the mass-book. But these extravagancies aside, the more sober form of the theory carried out in the *allegorical* interpretation of Scripture has been so important in the history of the Church that we may profitably look at it a little more closely. The most prominent exponent of it among the Jews was Philo of Alexandria, and his influence in the early church can scarcely be estimated. As a devout Jew, Philo accepted the Old Testament as the Word of God, whose inspiration extended to the most minute particulars, placing the highest value upon the Law as he put Moses above the other prophets. He does not confine his theory to the Hebrew text, but extends it to the Greek translators. "He accepts the story which ascribes to the translators of the Pentateuch a miraculous concurrence in the choice of words. He speaks of the translators themselves as 'hierophants and prophets,' and maintains that the

¹ A for Z, B for Y, and so on, would represent the Athbash in English. A for N, B for O, and so on, the Albam.

² Reuss, 721; Buxtorf, Tiberias (1620), p. 163.

³ Weber, p. 17.

Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are such that they must be admired and revered 'as sisters or rather as one and the same both in the facts and in the words.' He fully acts upon this belief, and . . . accords to the Greek text as profound a veneration and faith as if it had been written by the finger of God himself."¹ On this basis Philo proceeds to discover the hidden truth by means of the allegorical method. All true wisdom is contained in this reservoir. Consequently, the Greek philosophy must have been derived from it. And the results obtained by his method are really those of Greek philosophy. His general system we may pass by for the present. What interests us is his theory of interpretation. This is that each verse of Scripture has, besides its natural grammatical or literal meaning, a secondary or higher sense.² This latter is the more important—the reality of which the literal sense is only the shadow. To show what he means, let me quote the following: "The paradise in Eden is the type of virtue. The stream which waters it is Goodness which divides into the four streams of the four cardinal virtues."³ Again, "the five cities of the Plain destroyed by the divine punishment for the abominations of their inhabitants are the five senses, the instruments of sinful pleasure." The four ingredients of the incense (Exod. xxx, 33) represent the four natural elements. The incense itself ascending to God represents the adoration of the universe made up of these elements. In the great allegorical commentary to Genesis, "the leading thought is that the history of mankind as related in Genesis is in fact an imposing psychology and ethic. The different men described (good and

¹ Drummond, Philo, I, 15.

² This theory was not, of course, original with Philo, but already in use.—Cf. Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, II, 871; Hartmann, 536.

³ Hartmann, 579.

bad) are the different conditions of the soul.”¹ Astonishing as this appears to us, there can be no doubt that it was employed in all seriousness by a devout and profound thinker, who supposed he was engaged in developing the meaning of the Word as intended by God himself. And it concerns us here to notice that this method of exegesis was compelled by the rigidity of the theory in connection with the nature of the facts of the record. The difficulty of interpreting the language of Scripture literally was such that the exegete took refuge in the higher sense. The theory of the later Rabbis, that the sacred text “could contain nothing derogatory to the Deity and that it could contain nothing contrary to sound reason,” was Philo’s also. “Adam and Eve could not have hidden themselves from God, for God has interpenetrated the universe and left nothing empty of himself; and, therefore, the account refers only to the false conception of the wicked man. . . . To suppose that God really planted fruit trees in Paradise when no one was allowed to live there, and when it would be impious to fancy that he required them for himself, is ‘a great and incurable silliness.’ The reference, therefore, must be to the paradise of virtues with their appropriate actions implanted by God in the soul.”² One is tempted to quote more at length, but these examples are sufficient to show how the allegorical sense must, under the claim of doing the highest honor to the Word of God, really nullify its natural and legitimate meaning.

From Philo the transition is natural to the Christian Church, in which, indeed, Philo was honored almost as one of the Fathers. Before, however, we inquire into methods of interpretation, let us notice the significant fact that no one of the ecumenical councils of the undivided church makes faith in the Scriptures a test of orthodoxy. Belief in the “Holy

¹ Schürer, II, 839.

² Drummond, I, 19.

Ghost who spake by the prophets" is professed in one early creed, but the indefiniteness of the expression shows how little need was felt of a definition as to the nature of the written Word. It was after the middle of the fourth century before the church felt the need of officially defining even the extent of the Canon, and this was done in provincial synods only, and the Apocrypha were included in the Old Testament. In fact, as has been said, "it did not at all seem at first as though Christ would found his church upon a Scripture, or even as though the elaboration of a sacred record were an essential feature of its foundation."¹ The church was, in fact, founded upon the spoken words of the Apostles, and after the Apostles had been removed from their earthly activity the tradition of their words was distinct enough to serve as a guide. But, of course, the Old Testament had its place as a means of instruction, and with it the method of instruction illustrated in Philo. The Epistle of Barnabas discovered in the three hundred and eighteen servants of Abraham a prediction of the crucified Jesus.² The method reminds us of the Gematria of the Jews. Clemens of Alexandria sees in the four colors of the Tabernacle, the four natural elements. Abraham's three days' journey to the place of Moriah represents the three stages of development of the human soul. This author, indeed, says in so many words that the whole Scripture has only allegorical sense.³

Origen, the most learned man of the time, perhaps the most learned man of antiquity, adopts this theory to the full. He distinguishes a twofold or threefold sense, and values the allegorical exposition because the simple grammatical meaning of many passages is incredible or unworthy of God.

¹ Thiersch quoted by Dietzsch. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1869, p. 472.

² Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 31.

³ Hartmann, p. 558.

The Latin Fathers accepted the same theory. Ambrose speaks of a threefold sense—historical (literal), mystical, and moral. If the literal sense gives us a contradiction, the solution is found in the other senses. Augustine's generally sober judgment follows the same path, though his allegories are rather types. Esau and Jacob are types of Jew and Christian. Abel represents the slain Christ, Seth the risen Christ, Joseph the ascended Christ. Ham is "the sly generation of the heretics." Isaac, blind in his old age, prefigures the blindness of the Jews. The rock twice smitten with the rod points to the cross of Christ, because two pieces of wood [rods] joined together make a cross. Even Jerome, whose work as translator made him especially sensitive to the literal meaning, follows the allegorical method in his exposition. At the same time, he confesses that many difficulties are to him insoluble. It is of no use to puzzle ourselves too much with the literal sense, for the letter killeth. In the chronology, especially, he finds such discrepancies and confusion that he leaves the subject to the dilettanti.¹

These examples will suffice to show that the Church before the Reformation had no apprehension of the problem before us. In a general way, inspiration was held as connected with revelation. But it was attributed to the Apocrypha of the Old Testament as well as to the canonical books. It was, indeed, attributed to many pseudepigrapha and even to heathen poets and philosophers. But apostolic tradition at first, and afterward the voice of the Church, was regarded as equally inspired, and this tradition furnished the authority in faith and morals upon which all men leaned. And when the difficulties of the Scripture record forced themselves upon the careful student, they were explained by a supposed mystical or spiritual sense. In the Middle Age, the line was not sharply drawn between Scripture and the Fathers. Hugo of

¹ Diestel, pp. 89 and 98.

St. Victor, who is more reserved than many others, ranks as authorities (1) the Gospels, (2) the other books of Scripture, (3) the decretals and canons of the Church, (4) the writings of the Fathers. The latter contain the same truth with the others, only more clear and more expanded.¹ The Roman Catholic Church stands on this ground to-day. The Council of Trent formally asserts that it receives and venerates with equal piety and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testaments, *as also* the traditions dictated by Christ's own word of mouth or by the Holy Ghost and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession. Recent publications show that this church also holds in substance to the allegorical method of exposition. I will simply call attention here to some examples which have fallen under my eye: Eve is a type of the Virgin Mary. Sarah is a type of wisdom and virtue, and Hagar a type of philosophy, the handmaid of theology. Keturah's descendants represent the heretical sects of New Testament times. Abraham seeking a bride for his son is a type of God the Father, who also seeks a bride (the Church) for His Son. Eliezer, who is sent on this errand, is the representative of the twelve Apostles. The well at which Rebecca is found corresponds to the water of baptism, and the presents brought by Eliezer are the divine Word and the good works of the saints. Jacob's words, "I am Esau, thy first born," can not be called a lie—they are a *mysterium*—in a tropical sense they are true. Jacob, in using them, is a type of the Gentiles, who claim and receive the adoption and blessing belonging to the Jewish people. Jacob had two wives. So Christ calls the Jew and the Gentile. Leah, the tender-eyed, is the blinded Israel. Pharaoh, who commanded the midwives to kill the Hebrew babes, is a type of Satan, who tries to destroy the virtues by means of human science and wisdom, which often lead to heresies. Deborah

¹ Diestel, p. 178.

(the Synagogue) incites Barak (Israel) to battle against Sisera (Satan) and routs his forces. Jael (the Church) meets him, stupefies him with milk (prayer), and slays him with the nail (of the Cross). Samson even is made a type of Christ. Now, these examples are taken from a book published with the approval of Roman Catholic authorities¹ within the last ten years, and written by a professor of theology in a distinguished university. They show with perfect clearness how the lofty profession of finding all truth in the Bible really unfits one to discover the real truth of the Bible. It is this virtual nullifying of Scripture by tradition against which the Protestant Church protests. To this church we now turn our attention.

The principle of the Reformation, I need not remind you, is a double one. Its two parts are Justification by faith and the Authority of Scripture alone in matters of faith and life. Of these two the former is the vital principle, the second is regulative. In Luther's own experience they developed in this order. He first experienced justification by faith. In order to maintain his Christian life, he had to defend it against the champions of the Church. At first he supposed he had also the authority of the Church on his side. But investigation showed him that this authority was at least divided. In this way he was driven back upon Scripture alone. Luther's theory was in substance this: Christ is presented to the sinner in the Gospel either as heard in the church or as read in the Bible. He is immediately recognized as the needed Savior and as the Son of God. He is appropriated by faith, and the believer is justified and adopted into the family of God. Up to this point it is clear that nothing more is claimed for the written Word than that it gives a historically credible account of the life of Christ.

¹ Zschöкке, *Biblische Frauen des Alten Testaments*. Freiburg, 1882.

The peculiar normative quality of the Word comes out in the subsequent life of the believer and the church. Questions of doctrine and of duty arise. There will be perplexities in the individual heart as well as differences between different members of the church. To settle these the appeal is to the written Word. It is clear that Luther would claim no further infallibility for the Bible than this, and, indeed, he expressly declares as much in his judgment of the Canon. He proposes this rule: What proclaims Christ is Scripture. "What does not proclaim Christ is not apostolic, though written by St. Peter or by St. Paul. What proclaims Christ is apostolic, though it were written by Judas, Annas, Pilate, or Herod." On this internal evidence he would include the first book of Maccabees in the Canon, as he would exclude the epistle of James. He can not bear the book of Esther because it judaizes so. In regard to the epistle to the Hebrews, he takes the middle ground: "Although the author does not lay the foundation of faith, which is the Apostle's work, yet he builds thereon gold, silver, and precious stones, as St. Paul says. If now some wood, hay, or stubble is intermixed, this shall not hinder our receiving the precious doctrine with all honor—nevertheless we may not make this equal to the apostolic epistles."¹ It is quite in accordance with this, that the first doctrinal treatise of the Reformation—Melancthon's *Loci*—had no section on the doctrine of Scripture at all, while even in the later editions he only treats briefly the difference between the Old Testament and the New.² The early Swiss reformers stand on the same ground. "The Word of God *in Christ* is the highest authority. Zwingli finds church councils enough in the words of Christ." Bullinger says in one instance that the writers of the Bible are sometimes led astray by defective

¹ Luther's Vorreden zur Heiligen Schrift.

² Klaiber in the *Jahrb. f. Deutsche Theol.* II, p. 3.

memory.¹ Calvin, as we might expect, is more full on the doctrine of Scripture, yet he does not give a clear statement as to the connection of inerrancy and inspiration, and, in fact, recognizes the difficulties in the case. He does not hesitate to affirm that the Scriptures are written in "a humble and contemptible style." Three Evangelists (he adds later) "recite their history in a low and mean style. Many proud men are disgusted with that simplicity, because they attend not to the principal points of doctrine."² In his commentaries he concedes minor errors and discrepancies of the writers (compare Tholuck, p. 131). What Calvin emphasizes, in full accord with Luther, is the testimony of the Holy Spirit. "The testimony of the Spirit is superior to all reason [*i. e.*, to the Evidences usually adduced for Scripture]. For as God alone is a sufficient witness of himself in his own Word, so also the Word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit. It is necessary, therefore, that the same Spirit who spake by the mouths of the prophets should penetrate into our hearts to convince us that they faithfully delivered the oracles which were divinely intrusted to them. . . . Some good men are troubled that they are not always prepared with clear proof to oppose the impious when they murmur with impunity against the divine Word, as though the Spirit were not, therefore, denominated a seal and an earnest for the confirmation of the faith of the pious; because, till He illuminate their minds, they are perpetually fluctuating amidst a multitude of doubts. Let it be considered, then, as an undeniable truth, that they who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and it ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and

¹ Quoted by Tholuck *Zeitschr. fur Christl. Wissenschaft*, I, 139.

² *Institutes*, I, VIII, X, and XI.

arguments from reason; but it obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit."¹ There can be no doubt that these words of Calvin correctly state the position of the reformers. They are the source of the statements of the Protestant creeds on this subject, nearly all of which emphasize the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and no one of which ventures to affirm the inerrancy of Scripture apart from matters of faith and doctrine, unless it be the Swiss Formula Consensus, of which I shall speak later.² If, now, we ask, what it is that we are assured of by this testimony, we shall agree that it is the articles of sin and law and grace which Melancthon makes the subjects of his *Loci*. Or, as the Heidelberg Catechism says: Three things are necessary for me to know: first, the greatness of my sin and misery; second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to be thankful to God for such redemption. These are the things which the Holy Spirit sets before us in Scripture, and moved by that same Holy Spirit, we recognize in the portraiture the divine author and accept the Word as His. "All in this book is tributary to sin and salvation; all leads up to Calvary." This I heard from one of our own pulpits recently, and this is in harmony with the voice of the Evangelical Church in her creeds and confessions.

But because we recognize the divine authorship of the doctrine set forth in the Bible, does it follow that we have a guarantee for every detail of its historical statement? Because you recognize the voice of God addressing you as a sinner, and freely inviting you to Christ, can you therefore assert, for example, that the list of Dukes of Edom, in Genesis (ch. xxxvi), is exactly and absolutely correct? This is

¹ Institutes, VII, IV and V.

² The Irish Articles which, however, were soon superseded by the Thirty-nine Articles, affirm the Canonical Books to be of "most certain credit" as well as of the highest authority.

the question which confronts us when we come to make the Bible a historical study. It is evident that the great reformers would have answered the question in the negative, and they would have declared that whether this list were correct or not made no difference as to the main question. The following generation of theologians, however, did not so answer the question. From the inspiration of the Bible they deduced its historical accuracy on every point. The reasons for this are not far to seek. After the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic polemic became sharper. It became the endeavor of the Roman Catholic party to show the necessity of tradition and the untrustworthiness of Scripture alone. This led the Protestants to defend the Bible more tenaciously than before. In addition, the scholastic philosophy, though almost contemptuously rejected by Luther, still influenced the minds of men. The thick quartos of Gerhard, as has been recently said, would lose a good part of their dimensions were they deprived of what was borrowed from Thomas Aquinas. We are here concerned simply with the effect of this movement upon the doctrine of Holy Scripture. This doctrine was of course more sharply formulated. It was extended to the style of the writers. It affirmed that each book of the Canon *must* have been formally approved and joined to the others as soon as written. It went great lengths in affirming the perspicuity of Scripture, or if it admitted the difficulty of some passages, it explained them as God's method of stimulating study by curiosity, or even as the divine arrangement for impressing upon the laity due respect for the learning of the ministry. Finally the errorless transmission was made equally a matter of logical deduction. That I may not be suspected of exaggeration, let me give you a few details. It was denied by Voetius "that any examination or reflection was necessary on the part of the inspired writer in regard to that which was written, since it was given him immediately

and in an extraordinary manner,"¹ contradicting Luke i: 1-4. Even the language and style of the Bible must be wholly faultless. Diversity of style was denied or explained as a matter of divine choice simply. "The Holy Spirit had a preference [*singularem gustum*] for the style of Polybius; therefore he chose this among all then existing Greek styles."² Quotations already made show how much more correct was Calvin's view. "Whatever is related by the Holy Scriptures is absolutely true [*verissima*], whether it pertains to doctrine, morals, history, chronology, topography, or nomenclature; and there can be, there must be, no ignorance, carelessness or forgetfulness attributed to the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit in writing the sacred books."³ The consequence is drawn with rigor—there can be no error in the transmission no more than in the original. For where would be the certainty or truth of Scripture, were there any errors of transmission? So far we have been describing the Lutheran view. The same tendency is visible in the Reformed Church. But it is worth noting that this period of stringent devotion to the infallibility of Scripture is the period of the bitterest polemic among the Protestant Churches. Calovius, the most consistent upholder of this doctrine of inspiration, was one of the bitterest enemies of the Calvinists, hated them worse than he did the Roman Catholics, used his influence to put them down by the civil power, and attacked with all the virulence of a strong and uncompromising nature Calixtus, who tried to find a *modus vivendi* with the other churches. Nor should we forget here that this was the century in which the Copernican system triumphed in astronomy, and that among its opponents were found these theologians who opposed to it

¹ Van Oosterzee, Dogmatics, I, 171.

² Calovius quoted by Klaiber, Zeitsch. Luther. Theol., 1864, 23.

³ Quenstedt quoted by Luthardt, Compendium der Dogmatik, p.

indubitable proofs from Scripture.¹ In the Reformed churches there was the same tendency to emphasize the divine factor in inspiration. The influence of the two Buxtorfs in the Swiss churches led to an especial emphasis on the Jewish theories of the Old Testament Canon. It was held that the Canon was settled by the Great Synagogue, and that the points were a part of the revelation to Ezra, from whom also the Massora was derived.

The ascription of the points to Adam even was revived by some zealous theologians. The younger Buxtorf found it difficult to decide between Adam, Moses, and Ezra as the original punctuator. The discussion of this point led to the adoption of the Swiss Formula Consensus, in 1675, which declared the vowel points to be inspired. This is the only Protestant creed, however, which took such a stand, and it was of only local importance, and even in Switzerland it had but temporary validity. It is evident then that these high and stringent theories were never the theories of the church. In fact, there never were lacking men in the Evangelical churches who protested against them or who refused to accept them. The history of the doctrine of the Hebrew vowel points is instructive in this regard, and for this reason I venture to call attention to it somewhat more at length.

As there may be some laymen interested in this matter, let me explain that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are, in their original force, all consonants. The vowels are supplied by smaller signs, called points, placed in, over or beneath the letters. The three letters ktl may represent, therefore, a number of different forms, as katal, kittel, kotel, kuttal. In practice however the context is nearly always sufficient to decide what word is intended in a particular place, and no difficulty is felt by the practiced scholar in reading unpointed texts, and these are in use in all Hebrew books except the Bible. For the sake of

¹ So Calovius and Voetius, cf. Gass, pp. 342, 461.

accuracy, however, the Bible is generally written (and printed) with the points. As we have seen, the later Jewish theory ascribes these points to Ezra, if not to Moses or Adam, and this opinion was embraced by the Buxtorfs and others, who felt that God could not have committed his Word to an uncertain script. The attack on this view was made about the same time by two men. One of them, Morinus, was a Roman Catholic, and he was (at least, partially) moved by a desire to overthrow the security of the Protestants, and to prove the necessity of the tradition of the Church, in order to a correct interpretation of the Bible. But he called attention to facts overlooked by the Protestants, and so far forth aided to a correct solution of the problem—eventually that is, for his polemic tone hindered at first a correct estimate of his arguments. The other champion of the late origin of the points was Ludovicus Cappellus, professor in the French Protestant College, at Saumur. He was at first, as he avows, of the opinion of Buxtorf. Against his will, he was forced by facts to the opposite conclusion. His observations were embodied in a treatise,¹ the MS. of which was sent to Buxtorf the elder for his opinion. As this distinguished scholar advised against the publication, Cappellus sent the manuscript to Erpenius, a distinguished Dutch orientalist, and Erpenius published it at once, with a preface of his own, but without the author's name. The history of the younger Buxtorf's attack and Cappellus's rejoinder need not be given in detail. But we may learn something from the method of argument pursued. It is, on Cappellus's side, partly a careful examination of the reasons adduced by the advocates of antiquity, partly the marshaling of facts by them overlooked or not allowed due weight. For example, it had been alleged that the points are necessary to the correct understanding of the text. But this

¹ *Arcanum Punctuationis Revelatum*. Republished in one volume, folio, with the *Notae Criticae* and the *Vindiciae Arcani*, 1689.

is by no means so. Modern Hebrew, as well as Syriac and Arabic, are constantly read and printed without points, and no difficulty is felt in reading and understanding them by those familiar with the languages. Again, the opinion of the Jews had been alleged. But this is by no means unanimous, and in fact the weight of authority is rather against the antiquity than for it. Elias Levita, himself no mean scholar, was sustained by Kimchi and other distinguished authorities. And among the authorities cited by Buxtorf some were certainly of very recent date. So far the reply to allegations; Now positive arguments are the following; first, the argument from silence. The points are not mentioned by Jerome or by the Talmud. Buxtorf might reply indeed: "They may have existed, nevertheless." And indeed the silence of an author concerning a fact may not prove the non-existence of the fact. But in some circumstances the argument from silence is very weighty indeed. Jerome had frequent occasion to discuss points of Hebrew grammar. He mentions the letters and their occasional ambiguity. Had the points existed, he would surely have mentioned them; and so of the Talmud, which often discusses the different possible meanings of Bible verses. Again, the fact that the Jews use an unpointed roll of the Law in the synagogue, shows that the points are not ancient. Ecclesiastical customs, as we know, are conservative—tenacious of old forms. Had the points been introduced by Ezra, they would have been introduced everywhere. The unpointed synagogue rolls are survivals of ancient custom. Another argument is the complication of the system itself. It is entirely too elaborate to be the invention of a single age; it bears all the marks of having grown up through several generations. To all these arguments Buxtorf can only reply by hypotheses designed to admit what he was compelled to admit, but at the same time to show how his theory might be held nevertheless. His main

argument was the danger to the Christian faith of the new hypothesis.

As I have said, it is now known as definitely as any historic facts can be known that Cappellus was right. The points were not invented until after the redaction of the Talmud, and they were then gradually developed through two or three centuries. The reasons which establish this fact are those urged by Cappellus himself. Notice, they are *critical* reasons, mainly belonging to what we now know as the lower criticism to be sure, but critical nevertheless. And, indeed, it is often difficult to draw the line between the lower criticism and the higher. Criticism is simply the careful examination of the facts to discover what they really teach. It takes no assertions without examining the grounds on which they are made. And having carefully examined the facts, it seeks for the hypothesis which will most naturally explain them all.

The point we have reached is the high water mark of the doctrine of inspiration. We have discovered that the early church had no doctrine of inspiration in our sense of the word inspiration. Its affirmations are invalidated by a theory of allegory which completely overshadows and destroys the true sense of Scripture. The reformers who swept this away were concerned with the testimony of the Holy Spirit, which assures us of matters of doctrine and duty in the Word of God, with no interest in affirming historic inerrancy. The extreme development of Protestant dogmatics in the seventeenth century, in opposition to the Roman Catholic polemic, led to unwarranted emphasis of the divine side of Scripture and an almost total ignoring of the human side. This theology, in strict logic, as it supposed, affirmed the perfection of style of the Bible, its freedom from grammatical errors, the absence from it of accommodation to human limitations, its strict accuracy even in the matter of natural science, topography, and chronology, and finally its miraculous preservation from transmissional corruption by means of the Masso-

retic system.¹ The majority of these points are now universally given up.

It is of more importance to note that this extreme theory was always the theory of some theologians only. There always were evangelical and devout men who did not accept it. But that I may not weary you with historical details, let me come down to the practical point of the teaching of to-day. I shall probably not be wrong in assuming that so much of the theory of verbal inerrancy as can be held at the present day is held, stated, and defended by Prof. Gaussen, late of Geneva, whose book on inspiration² has in our theological world almost the dignity of a classic. I will endeavor to state his theory.

Prof. Gaussen states his case in this way (p. 40): "The Scriptures are given and guaranteed by God even in their very language." As an alternate statement of the same thing he gives: "The Scriptures contain *no error*; that is, they say all they ought to say, and only what they ought to say." You will notice that the point upon which the whole theory turns is the definition of the word *error*. It is clear that the author means error of any kind, for later he admits "that if it be true that there are, as is said, erroneous statements and contradictory accounts in the Holy Scriptures, their plenary inspiration must be renounced." (P. 110.) The alleged errors which he discusses under this head, and the existence of which he denies, are discrepancies in the Gospel narrative, points of chronology, and matters of physical science. In regard to the last named he says: "We freely admit that if there are any physical errors fully proved in the Scriptures, the Scriptures could not be from God. But we mean to

¹ No one seems to have been staggered by the fact that the Old Testament alone received such a remarkable system for its preservation.

² *Theopneusty, or the Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.* Translated by E. N. Kirk. New York, 1842.

show there are none, and we shall dare to challenge the adversaries to produce one from the entire Bible." He then proceeds to show the accuracy of the expression in Joshua, "the sun stood still in the midst of heaven." There is, then, he says, "no physical error in Scripture, and this great fact, which becomes more admirable in proportion as it is more closely contemplated, is a striking proof of the inspiration which has dictated to their writers even in the choice of the least expression." There would seem to be no doubt, therefore, of the meaning of this author. I have always supposed Dr. Charles Hodge to mean the same thing when he says (Theol., I, 152) that the Scriptures are "free from all error, whether of doctrine, fact, or precept." If what the sacred writers assert, he says later (p. 163), "*God* asserts, which, as has been shown, is the Scriptural idea of inspiration, their assertions must be free from error." Again, he says, "the whole Bible was written under such an influence as preserved its human authors *from all error*, and makes it for the Church the infallible rule of faith and practice." Notice there are two statements here. Had Dr. Hodge contented himself with affirming that the whole Bible was written "under such an influence as makes it for the church the infallible rule of faith and practice," no one could have objected. The other clause is the one to which we object, and whose application to the Old Testament I affirm to be impossible. Drs. Hodge and Warfield, in their well-known article, say: "It is evident, therefore, that every supposed conclusion of critical investigation which denies the apostolic origin of a New Testament book, or the truth of any part of Christ's testimony in relation to the Old Testament and its contents, *or which is inconsistent with the absolute truthfulness of any affirmation of any book so authenticated*, must be inconsistent with the true doctrine of inspiration;" and again: "the historical faith of the Church has always been that *all affirmations of Scripture of all kinds*, whether of spiritual doctrine or duty, or of phys-

ical or historical fact, or of psychological or philosophical principle, are *without any error* when the *ipsissima verba* of the original autographs are ascertained and interpreted in their natural and intended sense.”¹ These statements are exactly in line with those of the authors quoted above, except that they make a reservation concerning the transmission of the documents. Now, these authors (p. 237) admit that this statement is to be tried by the facts, and it is to the facts of the Old Testament that I propose to go. First, however, allow me a word of personal explanation. Some years ago, when a candidate for ordination, I received as a text for my trial sermon the well-known passage of II Timothy, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” In that sermon I took the very ground of the authors I have been quoting. For more than fifteen years since that time I have been engaged in the direct daily study of the Old Testament. It has been my duty to familiarize myself with the facts of the record, and as well with the statements of scholars about those facts. I well recall the reluctance which I felt to read some books which departed from “the views commonly received among us,” and on reflection I can not convict myself of undue sympathy with German mysticism or rationalism. But I have felt it my duty to know facts, and I sincerely believe that the truth of God is evident in all the facts of his Word. But in the examination of facts to which I now proceed, remember that it is my desire to give no one pain. And I ask you not to take my statement, but to examine the record itself. Dr. Charles Hodge well says (I, p. 11): “Almost all false theories in science and false doctrines in theology are due in a great degree to mistakes as to matters of fact.” Three classes of facts seem to have been ignored by the advocates of an inerrant inspiration.

¹ Presbyterian Review, 1881, pp. 236 and 238. The italics are mine.

1. The first class is the least important and may be said not to bear upon inerrancy. It includes the cases where writings have been included in the books of those who were not their authors. I will not take up the Pentateuch which has recently been discussed at length by others. The hypothesis of a redactor there has met with so little favor that it may be well to strengthen his position by showing his activity elsewhere. Look first at the Minor Prophets. We have them, as you know, in twelve separate books. They are, however, in the Hebrew Bible one book. It is clear that an editor has gathered together what prophetic fragments were in circulation in his time and united them in one roll. His activity was confined to arranging them in order. He may have added the titles in some cases, but his knowledge of the authors was slight. That Joel was the son of Pethuel; that one fragment was a vision of Obadiah, and that one contained the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi—these are very slight additions to our knowledge. Suppose, now, he found a fragment without the author's name and inserted it in the series. It would not have been distinguished externally from the work of the author immediately preceding. This is what the critics suppose actually to have taken place. In the book assigned to Zechariah there is a sharp distinction in style and situation between the first eight chapters and the rest of the book. The second half is assigned to an older prophet. Strictly speaking the hypothesis does not contradict the doctrine of inerrancy, and I should not have alluded to it except to prepare the way for a similar case which has made no small scandal in the theological world. I allude, of course, to the book of Isaiah. Divest your mind of preconceptions now and look at this case. Let us suppose the redactor of the book of the Minor Prophets to have had a book of Isaiah which included only the first thirty-nine chapters of our book of that name. He has also in his possession the magnificent evangelical prophecy which is

more familiar to us than almost any other part of the Old Testament. He does not know the author's name, or perhaps it is not safe to have it known. What more likely than that he should make of it an appendix to the book of the kindred prophet—the two together make up a roll about the size of the book of the Twelve. This would not be out of harmony with the process of gathering the other book, and the only way in which it would violate the strictest theory of inspiration is in making appear as Isaiah's what is not his. But it will be replied, as has so often been replied, this is a merely gratuitous hypothesis, one of those wild vagaries of the German seekers after novelty of which we have had so many. Let us look, therefore, at the arguments by which the critics support their vagary.

In the first place, it is known that the earliest order of the prophetic books in the Old Testament Canon was Jeremiah, then Ezekiel, then Isaiah. The only reason for departing from the chronological order that can be suggested is that the Book of Isaiah was felt to be an anthology like that of the Minor Prophets.

Secondly, it is rather curious that a narrative piece (chapters xxxvi–xxxix) should be found in the middle of the Book of Isaiah. Such a notice would come more naturally at the close of the book. We actually find one at the end of Jeremiah. There is nothing extravagant in the supposition, therefore, that the redactor of Isaiah's works had concluded his book with this historical notice, and that the last twenty-seven chapters were added to a book already complete.

The third argument, from style, is of course less obvious to the English reader, but I think even the English reader will discover differences.

Lastly, the situation in the second part of the book is entirely different from that in the first part. Read over the first chapter of Isaiah as a characteristic sermon of the prophet. Note the commanding tone in which he calls heaven and

earth to hear his arraignment of Israel. Look at the Israel he depicts in its pride and sinfulness and hypocrisy. "Hear the word of Jehovah, rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the instruction of our God, people of Gomorrha! To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices, saith Jehovah? I am sated with holocausts of rams and the fat of fatlings; and the blood of bulls and lambs and goats I do not delight in. When ye come to see my face—who hath required this at your hands, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; new moon and Sabbath the calling of assembly—I can not abide iniquity with festive meeting." Now, after reading this chapter, turn to the fortieth: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your Lord! Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and cry unto her that her term of service is completed, that her guilt is pardoned, that she hath received of the hand of Jehovah double for all her sins. Hark! One cries in the wilderness: prepare the way of Jehovah, level in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be filled up and every mountain and hill brought low, and the steep shall be made level and the rough country a valley. And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it, for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken." Now, what I say is: Read through this whole second part. Note how God comforts his mourning people, promises to deliver them, speaks to Zion as desolate and forsaken, a captive and an outcast, promises to bring back her children, to rebuild her walls, to punish her oppressors. Read this and you will feel that the message could have come with appropriateness to the people in the captivity and not to the people of Isaiah's time whose situation was so different. This is at any rate the conclusion of the majority of the critics. No one denies the genuineness of the prophecy; no one denies that it is a genuine prophecy that is, and this being admitted, it gains in force and beauty on the critical theory.

Now, if we admit the critical conclusions in this case, the question is whether they affect the doctrine of inerrancy. I do not see that they do, that is to say, they do not show the inaccuracy of any *statement* of Scripture, though they show the inaccuracy of the arrangement of Scripture. I pass to a more serious case. As you are well aware, the book of Psalms is generally ascribed to David. The reason is that a number of individual Psalms bear his name in the title. Probably, no one now goes to the length of some of the Rabbis and Fathers in supposing that David wrote the whole book. But as in the original the titles form a part of the text, there has been a strong disposition among conservative commentators to vindicate *their* accuracy. But the critical conclusion is different in regard to a number of them. I will adduce only one, Psalm, cxxxix, which is ascribed to David both in the Hebrew and in the Seventy. But only a slight knowledge of the language is necessary to see that it is entirely different in style from any other Psalm attributed to David. The difference is not of a kind that exists between the various compositions of the same man. The language is the language of another epoch. If you were to find a poem of Burns published in Shakespeare's works, you would not suppose it Shakespeare's. Shakespeare is versatile, to be sure. He could vary his style to suit any exigency. But you know he never wrote like Burns. Now this is not an exaggerated statement of the case with this Psalm. I have one more instance under this head—the book of Ecclesiastes. As you are already familiar with the problem, I will only say that the posterilic authorship was announced by Luther, and is accepted by as orthodox scholars as Delitzsch and Ginsburg. In fact, the argument is as strong as it can possibly be from style and vocabulary. To suppose Solomon the author of the book, is about like supposing Spenser to have written *In Memoriam*. There can be no question on the other side that the author assumes the character of Solomon. So that

we have a clear case of a sacred writer writing under an assumed name. Many Bible students see nothing improper in an inspired writer using any form of literature, and after Bunyan's immortal allegory, *fiction* would seem not to be an unworthy vehicle of spiritual truth. But if we admit this, then the theory, that every statement of an inspired writer is without error in its natural and legitimate sense can not be maintained.

2. For my second class of facts, I will ask you to look at the historical books from Joshua to Kings, inclusive. We have here a series of books which give a connected narrative for the period from the conquest of Canaan to the Exile. Of course, it is conceivable that such a narrative should be made after the method of an official register. Each scribe would add to the book a sketch of his own time and pass it on to his successor. It has been supposed by some that the Hebrew records were kept in this way, but the theory is without support from the facts. The continuity of the narrative from Joshua to Zedekiah has been secured by editing. The method of the redactor is quite plain. He has made up his story by extracts from already existing documents, making very little change of himself, but inserting an occasional note which serves to make the connection clear. As he refers us to the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (or Israel as the case may be), it is clear that one of his sources was an extensive historical work bearing this title. But the fact of compilation is clear in other places than those in which he mentions his authority. Take for example the book of Judges. Chapter ii, 6, reads: "Now, when Joshua had sent the people away, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance." Then follows the mention of the death and burial of Joshua. It is clear that this was originally the beginning of the book. And the book of which this was the beginning extended through chapter xvi. It was strictly a book of the Judges. Itself, however, was a compilation as

is evident from the varying character of its parts. This book, after it was finished, received two supplements; one, the story of Micah, the other, of the war against Benjamin. These belong chronologically at the beginning of the book, for one is dated when Jonathan, the son of Gershom, and, therefore, grandson of Moses, was still a young man, which could not have been long after the death of Joshua. In the other, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, is High Priest, and this must have been about the same time. The book received also a preface, giving an account of the gradual conquest of the land. Let me call your attention to one section only of this preface. It is i, 10-15, and it contains the account of the conquest of Hebron by Caleb. The same account is contained in Joshua, xv, 13-19. In one case Joshua gave Hebron to Caleb; in the other the children of Judah went against it "after the death of Joshua." It is clear that we have here an inaccuracy in one of the narratives. The difficulties in the history of David are well known. In one chapter he is already a warrior when invited to the court to play before Saul. Saul loves him and makes him his armor bearer. In the other he is a stripling who comes providentially into camp in time to meet the giant, and appears to be wholly unknown to Saul. I know the latter account is not in the Seventy in the earliest form of that version. But this only shows the extreme freedom with which the text was treated at a very late date, and even leaving out the part not in the Seventy, we still have serious discrepancies.

It is not to emphasize these discrepancies that I call attention to these facts at this point, but to show the extreme difficulty of applying the theory of inerrancy to documents of this kind. The theory is that "all affirmations of Scripture of all kinds are without any error." Now, what are "the affirmations of Scripture" in the cases we have been considering? The theologians are careful to tell us that inerrancy does not guarantee the truthfulness of the words of Satan in

Gen iii, or of the speeches of Job's friends in their argument with him.

What shall we say of the books we have been discussing? Where is the point of inerrancy? Is it in the originals from which the narrative has been compiled? Is it in the arrangement? Is it in the notes of the redactor? Or is it in all these? Some of the advocates of inerrancy have declined to postulate inerrant transmission, because it would call for a standing miracle. The continuous influence which would secure original inerrancy for all the documents would be just such a standing miracle. The Song of Deborah was composed, let us say, 1300 years B. C. The final touches to the books we are considering were given not earlier than the Exile, which began about 600 B. C. The materials which are now in our historical books, therefore, were composed during a period of seven hundred years. Was there a standing miracle during all this time? Or shall we assume that the final redactor received the gift of inerrancy, so that he changed the language of his sources so as to leave no inaccuracies? Of this, again, there is no evidence. For, arguing on the basis of individual style, we discover that the redactor has generally left unaltered the documents he has embodied in his narrative. His supervision has generally gone only so far as to make an occasional note or insert a connecting phrase. Or does his inerrancy extend simply to the reproduction, so that our confidence extends only to the accuracy of his quotation? This, indeed, is what the critics generally accept. But it is far from what the advocates of inerrancy claim. Unless we can assume the standing miracle, the historical sources of the Old Testament need, in order to discover the truth of events, the same sort of analysis, sifting, and cross-questioning that must be given to other sources of history. And this analysis, sifting, and cross-questioning is precisely—higher criticism.

Before we leave this point, let us look at another phase of

it. Several books of the Old Testament—notably the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes—labor under the same difficulty of discovering where the statements of the author are—those statements which are free from error. Take the book of Job, for example. It presents us the picture of a grand trial. The pious sufferer has to contend with fears within as well as fightings without. It is not only the speeches of his friends which contain error, Job himself loses sight of God. He doubts His justice and His love. The author does not make his own opinion heard. He lets the situation speak to us. The value of the book lies not in any assertion even of God Himself—sublime as is the truth He speaks. No; the value of the book of Job lies in the spectacle of a human soul in the direst affliction working through its doubts and at last humbly confessing its weakness and sinfulness in the presence of its Maker. The inerrancy is in the truth of the picture presented. It can not be located in any statement of the author or of any of his characters. The same is true of the Psalms. They present us a picture of pious experience in all its phases. We see every variety of soul in every variety of emotion. The assertions of the authors can not be taken for absolute truth. Nor can the authors, though doubtless all were sincere believers in God, be taken as sinless models for the Christian. Only Christ is that. The Psalms present us a record of actual experience of believers in the past. We can study and profit by this experience all the more that it has in it human weakness. The subjects of the experience doubtless had the power of correctly expressing their feelings, but that is not the inerrancy which has been claimed for them, and which the theologians desire. The imprecations which have been such a stumbling block to some are enough to prove this point.

3. So far we have noticed the difficulty of applying the theory of inerrancy. We are in a position, however, to go further. We have, as you know, two parallel histories in the

Old Testament. One is contained in the books from Genesis to II Kings; the other is contained in the books of Chronicles. These latter, indeed, once were joined with Ezra and Nehemiah, so as to form a continuous narrative (if narrative it may be called, where so much is simply genealogical) from Adam to the Persian monarchy. But this does not now concern us. For our present inquiry, we are interested in the two forms of the history of Israel as presented on the one side in the books of Samuel and Kings and on the other in the books of Chronicles. The study of these books shows the method of the authors with a definiteness which leaves nothing to be desired. We see that the Chronicler had before him our book of Kings as one of his sources. He takes from it what suits his purpose. What he takes he generally transfers without material change. He omits a good deal which does not answer his purpose, and he inserts a good deal from other sources. He pursues exactly the plan that is, which we suppose to have been followed by the other historical writers. Now compare the following passages:

II Sam. viii: 4. And David took from him 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 footmen.

x: 16. The children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zobah 20,000 footmen, and the King of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob 1,200 men.

x: 18. David destroyed of the Syrians 700 chariots.

xxiv: 9. There were in Israel 800,000 valiant men who drew sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

xxxiv: 24. So David bought the

I Chron. xviii: 3. And David took from him 1,000 chariots, and 7,000 horsemen, and 20,000 footmen.

xxix: 6. Hanun and the children of Ammon sent 1,000 talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen. So they hired them 32,000 chariots and the King of Maacah and his men.

xix: 18. David destroyed of the Syrians 7,000 chariots.

xxi: 5. There were of all Israel 1,100,000 that drew sword and Judah was 470,000 that drew sword.

xxi: 25. So David gave to Or-

threshing floor and the oxen for 50 shekels in silver.

I Kings, iv: 26. And Solomon had 40,000 stalls for horses.

xvi: 2. The height [of the house] 30 cubits.

vii: 26. It [the brazen sea] held 2,000 baths.

nan for the place 600 shekels of gold by weight.

II Chron. ix: 25. And Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots.

iii: 4. The height [of the porch] 120 cubits.

iv: 5. It received and held 3,000 baths.

Now, it will be said at once that these are all discrepancies in numbers which are very liable to corruption, and that, therefore, these are all cases of error in transmission. But I ask you to notice that these are all but one, cases in which the larger number is in the text of the Chronicler. Where the age of a king or the length of his reign is concerned I have not taken account of the difference. But in matters of statistics it is curious that the errors should be nearly all one way. Remembering that the Chronicler was much further away in time from the events narrated, we find it natural that he should have an exaggerated idea of the resources of his country in the days of her glory. In the case of David's purchase of the field of Ornan, he finds the price a niggardly one for a prince to pay. He, therefore, does not hesitate (supposing that a mistake has been made) to put in a larger sum. Of course, we need not lay this to the charge of the final redactor of the book. He had probably before him other written elaborations of the history in which his exaggerated idea of the past was already embodied. The personal equation is as difficult to suppress in the historian as is individuality of style. Why should one be overruled any more than the other? The Chronicler lived in a time when the Mosaic Law had taken substantially the position we find it occupying in the New Testament times. Piety was to him the observance of this law. He looked back through this medium to David and Solomon and the good kings of their line. He had lost

all interest in the Israel of the Ten Tribes, because they had disappeared from his vision or lived only in the heretical Samaritans of his time. Now, we all know how difficult it is to picture to ourselves a different piety from our own. Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, we picture to ourselves as an enlightened Christian of the nineteenth century. We do not like to confess that he was guilty of deception, or that Jacob, the Prince of God, took an unfair advantage of his own brother. So with the Chronicler. He could think of David only as a saint of his own pattern. Therefore, he does not copy from the older history the shadows that rest upon David's life. His adultery, the trouble with Amnon, the usurpation of Absalom and of Adonijah, the charge of vengeance delivered to Solomon—these are left out of his history altogether. To him David is the nursing father of the legitimate priesthood and the virtual builder of the Temple. But you will say this does not give us error in the record. Let me, then, call attention to the following :

I Kings ix: 11. Solomon gave Hiram 30 cities in the land of Galilee.

xv: 14. But the *high places* were not taken away. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was perfect with the Lord all his days.

II Chron. viii: 2. The cities which Hiram gave Solomon, Solomon built them and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.

II Chron. xiv: 3. For he took away the strange altars and the *high places* (cf. v: 5: Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places).

These certainly look on their face like direct contradictions, and if we allow for the personal equation of which I have spoken we can easily explain them. It would be hard indeed for a Jew of the Persian period to imagine Solomon giving away the sacred territory of Israel to the heathen king. Rather must he suppose the mighty Solomon to be the recipient of gifts of territory. The same line of reasoning is

followed in the second quotation. The high places were the old sanctuaries of Jehovah, regarded as legitimate before the building of the Temple even by the author of the book of Kings (1 Kings iii: 2), and used without reserve by Samuel. As time went on they fell more and more into disrepute, and after the Exile the requirements of the Law were carried out, and the only sanctuary of the people was the temple at Jerusalem. The remembrance of the high places was only that of illegitimate places of worship. The Chronicler and his generation could not imagine a good king as even tolerating them. Hence the change in his account. Allow me to call your attention to one more instance. If you will compare the two accounts of the coronation of the young King Jehoshaphat, which are found in 2 Kings xi: 4-16, and 2 Chron. xxiii: 1-15, you will be struck by some remarkable differences. As you will remember, the Queen Mother had, on the death of Ahaziah, slain all the male members of the royal family except the infant Jehoshaphat, and had herself seized the kingdom. The young prince who escaped the massacre was kept in concealment until his seventh year, when, by the efforts of Jehoiada, the High Priest, he was seated upon the throne, and the usurping queen was slain. The account in the book of Kings is as follows:

“And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites and of the Runners and brought them to the House of Jehovah and made a covenant with them and made them take an oath and showed them the king's son. And he commanded them saying: This is the thing ye shall do. The third part of you that come in on the Sabbath and keep the guard of the palace . . . and the two parts of you that go forth on the Sabbath and keep the guard of the House of Jehovah [shall come] unto the king. And ye shall surround the king each with his weapons in his hand, and he that comes within the ranks shall be put to death, and ye shall be with

the king when he goes out and when he comes in. And the captains of hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the Priest commanded them. And they took each his men—those coming in on the Sabbath with those going out on the Sabbath and came to Jehoiada the Priest (and the Priest gave them David's armor of state) and the Runners stood each with his weapons in his hand from the south side of the House to the north side of the House about the House and the altar, round about the king. And he brought out the king and placed upon him the diadem and the testimony and made him king and anointed him. And they clapped their hands and said: Long live the king!"

The history here is so plain there can be no mistaking. The principal actors are the officers of the body-guard with their men. This body of soldiers is divided, as was the case also in David's time, into three companies. These take their turn in guarding the Temple and the palace, one-third being on duty at one point and two-thirds at the other. The Sabbath is the day when they exchange one post for the other, and it is probable that on that day, when the multitude at the temple is larger, two companies are on duty there and only one company at the palace, while during the week the reverse is the case. Jehoiada, after showing the three centurions that the rightful heir to the throne is still alive, agrees that the company on duty at the temple, instead of going down to the palace, shall remain. When the other two companies come up from the palace, therefore, the whole body-guard will be around the young king, and Athaliah will be left without soldiers. The plan is carried out, and Athaliah, hearing the noise, comes unattended to the temple, because she has no soldiers at her command. This account, then, makes the matter the business of the body-guard, with which (except the High Priest) priests and people have nothing to do. How now does the Chronicler see the incident? In his account the Carites and Runners disappear. Jehoiada counsels indeed with certain cap-

tains of hundreds, but who they are does not distinctly appear. Instead of collecting troops, they go about the country and gather all the *Levites* and the heads of fathers' houses. It is a matter in which the whole people therefore take part. The account goes on:

“And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them: Behold the king's son shall reign as Jehovah hath spoken concerning the sons of David. This is the thing which ye shall do. The third part of you that come in on the Sabbath of the *Priests and of the Levites* shall be at the outer gates. And a third of you shall be in the *palace*, and a third part in the gate *Jesod*, and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of Jehovah. But let them not come into the House except the priests and those ministering to the Levites—they may come in because they are holy; and let all the people keep the guard of Jehovah. And let the *Levites* surround the king each with his weapons in his hands, and he that cometh into the house shall be put to death, and let them be with the king when he cometh in and when he goeth out. And the *Levites* and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the Priest commanded.”

Now it is perfectly clear that there is a discrepancy in the two accounts. In one the main (in fact the only) actors besides Jehoiada are the royal guard. They come into the temple, they surround the king, they guard him and proclaim him king, and they kill Athaliah. In the other account the body-guard is not even mentioned. The captains of hundreds seem to be Levitical chiefs. They gather the Levites from the whole country. *These* do exactly what in the other account is attributed to the mercenaries. Yet in spite of the conspiracy being known to all the Levites and all Judah, Athaliah has no inkling of it and comes unattended into the temple. The account in Kings is the original, and the deviations are due to the point of view of the Chronicler. In the time before the exile, as we know from various sources,

there was no attempt to prohibit access against the entrance of foreigners into the temple. Eusebius distinctly denounces this as one of the customs of the time before the captivity. "Thus saith the Lord God. O ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations in that ye have brought in aliens circumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh to be in my sanctuary to profane it when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood." The earlier kings, therefore, had guarded the temple with their own troops. But the strategy with which the later Jews guarded the temple from profanation made the Chronicler unable to realize this. Especially that a High Priest should have called upon the royal troops for service in the temple seemed to him incredible. He supposed the Levites must have been called upon for this service, and hence he substituted them in the text.¹ It is clear that we can not ascribe freedom from error to the statements of a book compiled in this way. You will say then it should be cast out of the Canon. To which I reply, by no means. The book of Chronicles is invaluable to us not for what it directly teaches, but for the light it throws indirectly upon its own time. What the Jews of the Persian monarchy were thinking, how they regarded the older history, how they were preparing the way for the Scribes and Pharisees, for the crucifixion and the Roman war, for the Talmud and Barkochba—

¹ As some questions have been raised by my assertions about the Chronicler, I will add that of course I do not suppose him guilty of intentional falsification of the record. He had before him, it would appear, a considerable literature which had commented on the history in the spirit of the time—his changes are made from these documents. The ideas which govern this literature were a part of the mental furniture of the Chronicler himself. His inspiration, which made him a source of religious edification to his contemporaries, and which makes his work still a part of the infallible rule of faith, did not correct his historical point of view any more than it corrected his scientific point of view, which no doubt made the earth the center of the solar system.

this is made known to us in the book of Chronicles and by almost no other book of the Bible. But it is made known to us by reading between the lines; that is to say, by considering and weighing not what the author says of others, but by what he betrays of himself. What is the truth of history, my friends? Is it simply the narrative of events definitely defined, and labeled, and arranged in order? Is it a catalogue of kings, of each of which it records that he was born and made war and died? Is it not rather a series of pictures each of which describes an age with its thoughts, its aspirations, its ideals? If so, sacred history can not be made up by a string of inerrant statements. It must show unconsciously and by suggestion the spirit that informs the church of God and makes it live and grow. To secure us an inerrant chronicle of dates and names would not give us this history. To give us the pictures of the men drawn by themselves is to give us this history. To discover these pictures, and to locate them, and set them in their true light, is the work of Biblical Theology working by criticism.

And now I must be prepared to hear an objection urged against the view here presented. If we can not trust the Bible to be accurate in minor details we can not trust it in any thing. If we must give up one we must give up all. In reply to this I say, first, that a very large number of able and evangelical theologians do not admit this. Many of those who hold the most rigid theory of inspiration say expressly that the admission of chronological or historical errors would not invalidate the infallible authority of the Bible. To substantiate this let me name Richard Baxter who for himself says that he believes all errors now in the text to have come in by transmission. I quote from the "Reasons for the Christian Religion" the following:

"But those men who think that these human imperfections of the writers do extend further, and may appear in some by-passages of chronologies or history which are no part of the

rule of faith and life, do not hereby destroy the Christian cause. For God might enable his apostles to an infallible recording and preaching of the Gospel, even all things necessary to salvation, though he had not made them infallible in every by-passage and circumstances any more than they were indefectible in life. As for them that say, 'I can believe no man in any thing who is mistaken in one thing, at least, as infallible, they speak against common sense and reason; for a man may be infallibly acquainted with some things who is not so in all. A historian may infallibly acquaint me that there was a fight at Lepanto, . . . who can not tell me all the circumstances of it. . . . I do not believe that any man can prove the least error in the holy Scripture in any point according to its true intent and meaning; but if he could, the Gospel, as a rule of faith and life in things necessary to salvation, might be, nevertheless, proved infallible by all the evidences before given.'¹ Without investigating a large number of theologians who are quoted² as making similar concessions, I will only call your attention to the fact that Christian Apologetics declares that the great things of Scripture can be proved without assuming the inerrancy of the record at all. President Patton, of Princeton, holds this view, as is well known. "I must take exception to the disposition on the part of some (he says) to stake the fortunes of Christianity on the doctrine of inspiration. Not that I yield to

¹ The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter, London, 1830, Vol. XXI, p. 349.

² The author of the article, *Inspiration*, in McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia, says: "Others have gone so far as to avow that the value of the religious element in the revelation would not be lessened if errors were acknowledged in the scientific and miscellaneous matter which accompanies it. Among those who have held this form of the theory are Baxter, Tillotson, Doddridge, Warburton; Bishops Horsley, Randolph, and Whately, Hampden, Thirlwall, Bishop Heber, Dr. Pye Smith, Thomas Scott, and Dean Alford."

any one in profound conviction of the truth and importance of the doctrine. But it is proper for us to bear in mind the immense argumentative advantage which Christianity has aside altogether from the inspiration of the documents on which it rests."¹ According to President Patton, then, so far from its being true that, unless the Bible be inerrant in every detail, we must give up its testimony to the matters of greater weight—so far from this being true, we might give up the inspiration altogether, and still have the assurance of these greater matters.

But, when a thing is said to be unthinkable, the best way to answer the assertion is to show that it has been thought. Some say they can not conceive a Bible that can be relied on in matters of faith and morals, without making it infallibly true on points of chronology, history, and natural science. To this I reply: Many men have received the Bible, and do receive the Bible, as their infallible authority who do not actually attribute to it, and who have not actually attributed to it, inerrancy in minor matters. This is true, as I have already said, of the Reformers. It is dangerous to cite a German in this connection. But the time was when Tholuck was honored in America as a defender of the faith. Tholuck declared himself decidedly² against the absolute inerrancy of Scripture. Among living theologians, Luthardt has earned the gratitude of the Protestant Church at large by his fruitful labors in varied fields of research. Luthardt declares that the older theology "certainly went too far." Van Oosterzee was, during his life, the representative of the Orthodox party

¹ Patton, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 22.

² In the article cited above. I might add here that among those who do not assert inerrancy, "but limit inspiration to such matters as directly pertain to the proper material of revelation, *i. e.*, to strictly religious truth," are to be found (according to McClintock and Strong) John Howe, Bishop Williams, Burnet, Lowth, Bishop Watson, Law, Barrow, Conybeare, Bloomfield, and others.

in the Reformed church of Holland, yet he declares that "errors and inaccuracies in matters of subordinate importance are undoubtedly to be found in the Bible. A Luther, a Calvin, a Coccejus, among the older theologians; a Tholuck, a Neander, a Lange, a Stier, among the more modern ones, have admitted this without hesitation."¹ And in our own country there has recently been published a book, by a careful investigator, which, while an able defense of "Supernatural Revelation," declines to assert inerrancy.² The author says: "As to the meaning of *θεόπνευστος* [in 1 Tim. iii: 16], there is not, and can not be any material difference of opinion. The chief difference relates rather to the object and degree of inspiration, whether it is the writings or the writers that are inspired; *and whether the inspiration secures absolute infallibility or not.* From the word itself, however, as Ellicott, Warrington, and others properly insist, we can not infer a verbal inspiration, such as the older theologians taught" (p. 299, sq.; the italics are mine). Again, after defining the "deliverance of the Christian judgment in favor of the general and special trustworthiness of the New Testament in its descriptions [note!] of Christ and the Christian revelation," the author goes on to say: "Does this mean now that every thing, without exception, that is found in the Scripture is to be accepted as absolute, unadulterated truth? Is all critical inquiry into the historical and scientific accuracy or logical soundness of Biblical utterances to be cut off? *By no means.* The Bible was written by imperfect and fallible men; and it is only by the use of the rational and critical

¹ Van Oosterzee, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p. 205. It is worth noting that the latest defense of inerrancy comes from Germany, by Rohnert, noticed in the *Independent*, of March 5, 1891.

² *Supernatural Revelation, an Essay concerning the basis of the Christian Faith*, by C. M. Mead, Lectures on the L. P. Stone Foundation, delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary.

judgment that Christians have come to regard it of exceptional trustworthiness.

“If the same method of examination should reveal occasional instances of discrepancy and error, *this would be nothing more than* what might be expected, unless it has been demonstrated that the *writers were so inspired as to make them absolutely infallible*. But no such demonstration has ever been made” (p. 33^o sq.).

But if you still feel that the concession of minor errors endangers the spiritual truth, let me ask you to notice the similar line of argument that might have been followed in the past, but which has not actually resulted in the overthrow of the Scriptures or of the Church.

Suppose an inquirer comes to you with the question how you know the Old Testament Apocrypha not to be part of the Bible. You explain to him the history of the Jewish Canon and the testimony of the New Testament. He asks, “has the Church not actually accepted these books as Scripture at some periods of its history, and have not some eminent theologians used them as the Word of God?” You will be compelled to answer in the affirmative. If, now, your inquirer says, “well, if God can not guarantee his Word so that His Church can tell exactly what it is, then I can not be sure that any of it is His,” how will you answer him? Surely you would not admit that this uncertainty, even in a matter of such importance as the extent of the Canon, invalidates the Bible.

Or if a Bible student comes to you with the Revised Version and complains that the Bible has been mutilated by the omission of the passage concerning “three that bear witness in heaven,” what will you do? You will explain the process of transmission by manuscript. You will tell him that the verse is no part of the original Scripture, but has crept into some copies by mistake. If now he says, “if God can not secure his Word from errors of copyists, I can not rely upon

any part of it," what will you say? You will not admit this argument either, though it is precisely your own in case of admitted historical errors.

But, again, if one inquire why the Revised Version gives so many marginal renderings, some quite different from the text, you may be compelled to explain to him that the Hebrew is in some respects an imperfect language; that it has but two tenses for example, so that the time of an action is often difficult to define as exactly as we should like; that, moreover, the Hebrew script was at first very defective, and though it has been admirably supplemented by the system of points, yet there is reason to think the points sometimes in the wrong. After all this, he might take your line of argument and say: "If God could not express this revelation more accurately than that, I can not depend upon it at all." But would he be right?

Now, all these are admittedly true. The Canon had no such authentication (so far as we know), as we should have insisted upon had it been a human document to be handed down as an authority. The text has not been preserved from error in transmission, and it was committed to a language of limited powers of expression and to a script peculiarly liable to ambiguity. But we all hold that it is, nevertheless, to us the infallible rule of faith and practice. If we suppose that the human factor, even in the autographs, showed traces of human fallibility, I do not see that that invalidates the rule of faith.

But now I want to call your attention to certain grave consequences of insisting that inspiration implies absolute inerrancy. The first is that this insistence may drive some to an utter rejection of the whole revelation, because they suppose themselves to discover a single contradiction in the Scriptures themselves or a single statement that conflicts with the established facts of natural science or of profane history. Dr. Evans has already alluded to this, and I will not enlarge

upon it. Only it should be observed that the chances for error in the Old Testament are much greater than in the New Testament. The Old Testament took form in a cruder state of society and its books cover a much greater period of time than is the case in the New Testament. We should naturally expect greater difficulties in the Old Testament. The caution exercised with regard to *a priori* theories in regard to the New Testament commends itself with double force when we come to the Old.

A second danger of insisting upon the doctrine of inerrancy is that it reverses the order of the two principles of the Protestant Church. As we have seen, the vital principle of the Reformation was Justification by Faith. The formative principle was the sufficiency of Scripture as the Rule of Faith. If, now, you invert them and put the Scripture first, do you not endanger the faith in Christ? In practice I do not believe this is done. If an inquirer comes to a pastor, he is not met with the demand to believe the Scripture to be infallible in its every statement, but with the exhortation to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and this on the ground of the simple historical testimony of the Scriptures as the testimony of honest witnesses. But, is not the central point in the Christian life the central point in theology also? And I will confess here the surprise with which I discovered what I think to be a grave defect in the theology of the distinguished Dr. Hodge. If you will read that author's discussion of the subject of Faith, you will acknowledge, I think, that it suffers from just this defect. Dr. Hodge defines faith as "the persuasion of the truth founded on testimony," and then adds: "The faith of the Christian is the persuasion of the truth of the facts and doctrines recorded in the Scriptures on the testimony of God."¹ A little later he says that the faith which secures eternal life "is founded not on the external or the

¹ Systematic Theology, III, pp. 67, 68.

moral evidence of the truth, but on the testimony of the Spirit with and by the truth to the renewed soul." Further on he gives the correct definition: "To believe that Christ is God manifest in the flesh . . . is to receive Him as our God. This includes the apprehension and conviction of His divine glory and the adoring reverence, love, confidence, and submission, which are due to God alone." But how this can be reconciled with the other definition, I do not see. But suppose they mean the same thing. Dr. Hodge, as we have seen, declares all the assertions of Scripture free from error. If, now, faith is believing the facts and doctrines recorded in the Scriptures on the testimony of God, the life of faith becomes simply a mental effort to hold on to these facts. The young Christian studies his Bible and finds some things which seem to him contradictory. According to this theory, he must believe there is no error or he loses his Christian faith. He must hold on to the Bible (it will be said) no matter what science says or secular history, or the evidence of his own common sense. This is not the faith of Luther or of Paul or of the Shorter Catechism which declares that "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon *him alone* for salvation as he is offered to us in the Gospel." What the pastor in his ministrations desires to awaken and foster in his converts is *this* faith in Jesus Christ.

All Scripture is God-inspired—true! But the remarkable thing is that the text affirms more than this. All Scripture is not only God-inspired, but all Scripture is "*profitable* for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." This seems to me the hardest part of it. I find no difficulty in supposing the list of Dukes of Edom God-inspired, even though in the original autograph it had some names wrongly placed. But do you make it profitable for instruction in righteousness?

Do you make it profitable¹ to yourself for completely furnishing yourself to every good work? If not, you can not lightly condemn me for not drawing your deduction from its inspiration. Surely, you would not allow me to censure you for not practicing upon your own confession of its profit-

¹ Every one knows that the profitableness of all Scripture is not realized in ordinary Christian experience. A brilliant lecturer says that once, when eating a very fine shad, one of the company began to question him about his faith in Scripture. The questioner held up one difficulty after another and asked, "What do you do with this?" The reply was: "I treat it as I do the bones in my fish—I quietly lay it one side." In practice, this is what every one does. The soul does not *feed* on genealogical tables or lists of forgotten kings, no matter how strenuously it believes that they are all profitable for instruction in righteousness. Nor does the preacher make use of these in his work—though there is a tradition that a sermon was once preached on the "nine and twenty knives" brought up from the captivity, and another on "the night-hawk, the owl, and the cuckoo," from the list of unclean birds. In practical Christian experience and edification, some things in the Bible are quietly left at one side.

Now, if a comparative anatomist were to study the shad, the bones would become of the first importance to him. It would hardly be necessary for the bystander to remonstrate with him for spending so much time on the bones which contain no nutriment. But we, as students of the Scripture, are precisely in this condition. We suppose the very things which the ordinary Christian may quietly leave unused—we suppose these to throw light on the *structure* of Scripture. When we bring them forward with this purpose, we are met by the assertion that these can not be what they seem to be—discrepancies can not exist. In other words, it is persistently asserted that there can be no bones in the fish—that it is all good; therefore we must swallow bones and all, or at least must pound the bones fine by some reconciling hypothesis and then declare them good meat.

The Lord Jesus at one time met the disciples when they were hungry and gave them a piece of fish broiled on the coals. Were he to bring me such a gift, I should expect to find it excellent fish. Should I therefore expect to find it unlike any other fish in structure? Would it be disloyalty to him to stop and look for the bones?

ableness. How to make all Scripture profitable is at least as important a question and it is a more practical question than how to establish its absolute inerrancy.

And here is to the theological teacher the most serious question of all. To insist upon a constant assertion and defense of the inerrancy of Scripture is to turn the whole science of exegesis into a study of harmonistics. No doubt infidelity is constantly alleging contradictions and discrepancies that do not exist. For that reason, I would be slow to urge those which I suppose to exist. But to spend one's time in hypotheses designed to show how discrepancies *may* be reconciled is generally a fruitless task.

The truth frankly acknowledged is the truth's own best defense. But it is to be expected that we will discover some new truth. It is the duty of the special student to announce the discovery. That he will sometimes be hasty, sometimes will be one-sided, is to be expected. And it is to be expected that his positions will be attacked. It is desirable that they be attacked, for it is by discussion that the truth is advanced. I am sure no one in a theological chair in the Presbyterian Church could object to the sharpest discussion of his published views. Indeed, he would welcome it, as a means of clarifying his own statements. But the discussion ought to discuss statements and not persons. In this revision year, we have heard much of the liberty given by the subscription to our standards. Is this a liberty to those only who agree with us, to those only who do not believe the Pope of Rome to be Antichrist, or even to those only who investigate the problems of theology "in order to vindicate the truth as held by our Church?" These questions must be answered by our pastors and elders, for they bear rule in the House of God. For one, I can say I want to have them answered rightly, not only for my own sake and the sake of the institution I serve, but for the sake of the whole Church of God and for

the sake of His truth. And so I end where my friend began. In order to progress, there must be sympathy and confidence between pastors and professors. The work is one. Our aim is one. We must all account to the one Lord, "whose we are and whom we serve." May He help us to know His truth and to do His will!



APPENDIX.

I.

The following article from the British Weekly of April 25, 1890, has been slightly abbreviated, but without altering the substance :

THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIANS AND INSPIRATION.

We forwarded the new Article on Inspiration, which, for convenience sake, may be reprinted, to four eminent professors of theology in Scotland. They have kindly sent us the criticisms which follow the Article.

ARTICLE.

“We believe that God, Who manifests Himself in creation and providence, and especially in the spirit of man, has been pleased to reveal His mind and will for our salvation at successive periods and in various ways; and that this Revelation has been, so far as needful, committed to writing by men inspired of the Holy Spirit, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are therefore to be devoutly studied by all as God’s written Word or message to mankind; and we reverently acknowledge the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures to be the Supreme Judge in questions of faith and duty.”

CRITICISMS.

1. It seems to me to be a fair and distinct statement of the

doctrine of the Reformers, who held Scripture to be the Word of God, and of Divine authority as the rule of faith and duty, but did not hesitate to admit inaccuracies or error in it on matters not affecting these. It does not, I think, commit those who accept it to the view that there can be no error at all in Scripture, even of the most trivial kind, and, like the Westminster Confession, it makes no difference in regard to infallibility between Scripture as originally given and as we have it now. It seems compatible with any results of a reverent and believing criticism as to the authorship, date, and character of the several parts of Scripture that do not imply bad faith in the inspired writers.

2. The English article consists of four propositions. (1) It affirms that God has made a fourfold revelation of Himself, (*a*) in creation, (*b*) in providence, (*c*) in the spirit of man, and likewise, (*d*) a revelation designed for the salvation of man, implying that the other three revelations are insufficient for this purpose.

It affirms that the Scriptures are to be devoutly studied by all as "God's written Word or message to mankind. A written word or message might seem at first to exclude the idea of even a slight inaccuracy. But this could only be if the word or message was *dictated* to the writers. The article says that the writers were inspired of God, but this conveys a different idea from that of dictation. An inspired written message is not equivalent to a dictated written message. A dictated written message leaves no room for even the slightest inaccuracy; not so with an inspired written message. If the message had been dictated by the Spirit of God, it would have been blasphemy to ascribe to it the slightest vestige of inaccuracy. But seeing that the message was not dictated but inspired, the case is different. It is open to us to deduce from the record itself whether any place was left for any inaccuracies arising from such causes as imperfect human obser-

vation or imperfect human memory. It is certainly the conviction of many believing men that under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, there was left room for these. It is a conviction that harmonizes with the most profound reverence for the Spirit of truth; for it holds that it is more honorable to Him to ascribe the undoubted discrepancies of Scripture to the imperfection of human instruments than to any other cause that can be assigned.

3. I think that the careful statements, concerning Holy Scripture, in the Westminster Confession itself, can be shown to be free from the perils and difficulties of the inerrancy-theory as held by the advocates of verbal or literal inspiration. This recast paragraph, though a very general, is a fairly successful reproduction of the Westminster statement. In my view, therefore, it steers entirely clear of the dangerous position which would stake the Divine character of the Bible on literal or verbal inerrancy. It would have done so equally well, had it even laid more stress on the infallible truth and supreme authority of Scripture.

4. Another venerable and eminent theologian sends us a long letter on the Article, but it is not written with a view to publication. He warmly approves of the creed, and deprecates the raising of any question of literal infallibility, maintaining that it is not the duty of the Church to say that there are errors in Scripture, even although it knows that there are

II.

As a help to such of our readers as may desire suggestions respecting the best and most available authorities (in English) on New Testament Criticism and Theology, the following brief list is appended:

For Criticism—Bleek's Introduction to the New Testament (2 vols.: Clark); Reuss: History of the New Testament (2 vols.: Houghton); Weiss: Manual of Introduction to the New Testament (2 vols.: Hodder); Salmon: Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament (Young); Dods: Introduction to the Study of the New Testament (Hodder); *Weiss: Life of Christ (Clark); Schürer: History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ; Lightfoot: Supernatural Religion (a reply); Sanday: Gospels in the Second Century (Macmillan); Westcott: Introduction to the Study of the Four Gospels (Macmillan); A. Wright: The Composition of the Four Gospels; Rushbrooke's Synopticon (Macmillan); Schaff: Companion to the Greek Testament (Harper); Westcott and Hort: The New Test. in the Original Greek (Vol. II: Harper); Immer: Hermeneutics of the New Test. (Andover); Charteris: The N. T. Scriptures: their claims, history, and authority (Carter); Articles in Smith's Bible Dictionary, Encyclop. Britannica, Schaf-Herzog Encyclopædia, McClintock and Strong (esp. on Gospels, Acts, Apocalypse, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, Jude, Hebrews); A. B. Bruce: The Presbyterian Review, October, 1884. For German and foreign literature, see esp. Holtzmann's *Einleitung in das N. T.*

For New Test. Theology—Bernard's Progress of Doctrine in the N. T. (Macmillan); Reuss: History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age (2 vols.: Hodder); Weiss: Biblical Theology of the New Testament (2 vols.: Clark); Schmid: Biblical Theology of the N. T. (Clark); Van Oosterze: Theology of the N. T. (Dodd); J. P. Thompson: Theology of Christ (Scribner); Pfeiderer: Paulinism (2 vols.: Williams); Irons: Christianity as taught by St. Paul; Lias: Doctrinal System of John; Gebhardt: The Doctrine of the Apocalypse; Delitzsch: Biblical Psychology; Beck: Biblical Psychology; Harless: Christian Ethics; Cremer's Biblico-Theological Lex-

icon of the N. T. Greek (5th German Ed.; 2d Engl. Ed., with Supplement).

• See more fully the Catalogue of Books in Briggs's *Biblical Study*.

For the Old Testament, the following may be consulted: Isaac Taylor, *Spirit of the Hebrew Poetry*, N. Y., 1862. Stanley, *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, N. Y., 1871. Cheyne, *The Hallowing of Criticism*, 1888. Sanday, *The Oracles of God*, 1890. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, N. Y., 1883. Von Orelli, *The Old Testament Prophecy of the Consummation of God's Kingdom* (Scribner and Welford). Briggs, *Biblical Study*. Cross, *Hints to English Readers of the Old Testament*. Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*, is promised in an English translation shortly. Green, *Moses and the Prophets* (a reply to W. Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*).

On special points of Biblical Theology: Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy*, 1875. Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy*, N. Y., 1886. Laidlaw, *The Bible Doctrine of Man*, Edinburgh, 1879. Cave, *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice*, Edinburgh, 1891.

On critical problems in particular books: Murray, *Origin and Growth of the Psalms*, N. Y., 1880. Cox, *Commentary on Job*, London, 1880. Plumptre, *Ecclesiastes*, Cambridge, 1881. Wright, *The Book of Koheleth*, London, 1883. Wright, *Zechariah and His Prophecies*, London, 1879. Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, London and New York, 1881. Driver, *Isaiah and His Times*. Delitzsch, *Commentary on Isaiah* (new edition), 1891. G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, 1891. Delitzsch, *New Commentary on Genesis*, 1891.

Special problems are treated by: George Smith, *Chaldean Genesis*; and Assyrian Eponym Canon, 1875. Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, 1889,

etc. Toy, *The Quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament*.

The structure of the Pentateuch has been exhaustively discussed by Profs. Harper and Green in *Hebraica*, 1889 and 1890.



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