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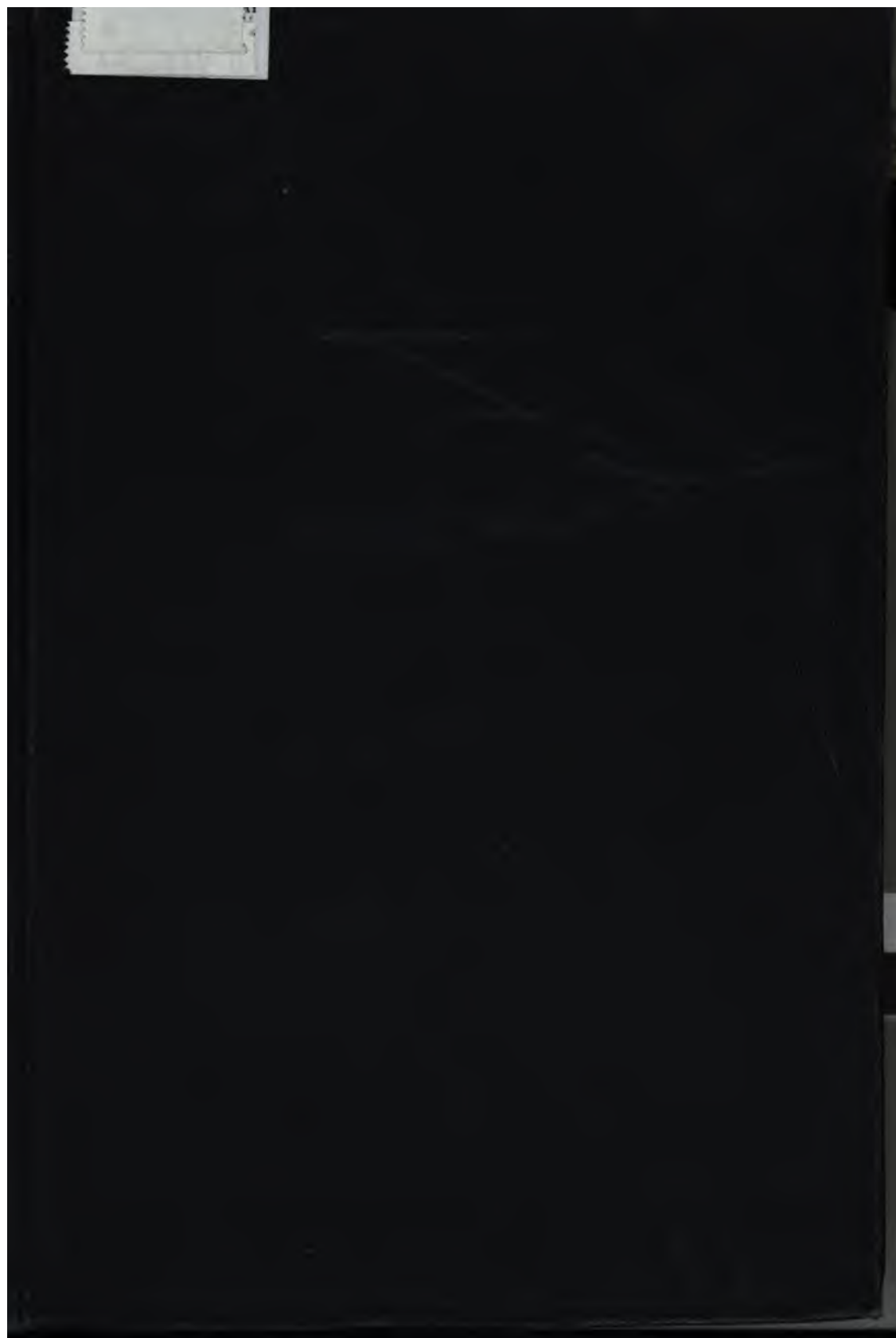
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# INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY

## A HISTORY AND A DEFENSE

BY

HENRY PRESERVED SMITH

PROFESSOR IN LANE SEMINARY

CONTAINING THE ORIGINAL PAPERS ON BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP  
AND INSPIRATION.



CINCINNATI  
ROBERT CLARKE & CO  
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# INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SITUATION.

“If two say the same thing, it is not the same.” The truth of this saying has been repeatedly verified in the history of the Church. The effort to secure exact doctrinal uniformity has invariably led to schism. Every society or association develops two tendencies, and divides itself more or less distinctly into two parties. It is likely that any denomination of Christians will always show the same phenomenon—so long, that is, as outward conformity is not secured by ecclesiastical pains and penalties. Progressives and conservatives will continue so long as thought continues. The American Presbyterian Church has not been able to exempt itself from the operation of this law of nature. The endeavor to resist it has twice resulted in division. Twice the division has been healed in an apparent willingness to submit to the law. The reunion of the Synods of New York and Philadelphia in 1758 was prefaced by the following noble declaration:

“The Synods of New York and Philadelphia, taking into serious consideration the present divided state of the Presbyterian Church in this land, and being deeply sensible that the division of the Church tends to weaken its interests; to dishonor religion, and consequently its glorious Author; to render government and discipline ineffectual; and finally to

dissolve its very frame; and being desirous to pursue such measures as may most tend to the glory of God and the establishment and edification of his people, do judge it to be our indispensable duty to study the things that make for peace, and to endeavor the healing of that breach which has for some time subsisted among us, that so its hurtful consequences may not extend to posterity; that all occasion of reproach upon our society may be removed; and that we may carry on the great designs of religion to better advantage than we can do in a divided state; and since both Synods continue to profess the same principles of faith, and adhere to the same form of worship, government, and discipline, there is the greater reason to endeavor the compromising those differences *which were agitated* many years ago *with too great warmth and animosity*, and unite in one body." (Presbyterian Digest of 1886, pp. 47, 48.)

In a body like the Presbyterian Church, whose Confession is an elaborate one, doctrinal differences are likely to be agitated "with too great warmth and animosity." Such agitation leads to schism, and the result of schism is to produce the evil results described in the above quoted declaration. The language used at this reunion is really a confession that the division had wrought great harm. This confession again is a confession that the Church had sinned in lack of breadth and charity. For, if these had been more conspicuously present, the division need not have occurred. This is further indicated by the fifth article of this same "Plan of Union:"

"It shall be esteemed as a censurable evil to accuse any member of *heterodoxy*, insufficiency, or immorality in a calumniating manner, or otherwise than by private brotherly admonition, or by a regular process according to our known rules of judicial trial in cases of scandal."

It requires very little skill to read between the lines here. There had been too much accusing each other of heterodoxy in the time before the division. Pains must be taken in the future to avoid such expressions of distrust. In short, the whole tenor of this document is to show that the mistake of the Church had been on the side of too rigid an insistence upon doctrinal conformity.

The second division of the Church is often said to have arisen more from differences of polity than from differences of doctrine. But the distinction can not be maintained. The reason why the Plan of Union was abrogated by the assembly of 1837 was that it was contrary to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church; that is, it admitted to a part in the government of the Church men not regularly ordained as ruling elders. The real reason is seen to be the theory of a *jure-divino* Presbyterianism, and this is a doctrinal reason. But it is notorious further that doctrinal reasons, properly so called, largely influenced the excinding Assembly. The circular letter sent by that Assembly "to all the churches of Jesus Christ," sets these reasons forth in the following words: "As the great truths of the Gospel lie at the foundation of all Christian hope, as well as of the purity and prosperity of the Church, we feel ourselves bound to direct early and solemn attention to those doctrinal errors which, there was but too much evidence, had gained an alarming prevalence in some of our judicatories. The advocates of these errors on their first appearance were cautious and reserved, alleging that they differed in words only from the doctrines as stated in our public standards. Very soon, however, they began to contend that their opinions were really new, and were a substantial and important improvement on the old creed of the Church; and at length, that revivals of religion could not be hoped for, and that the souls of men must be



destroyed if the old doctrines continued to be preached. The errors thus promulgated were by no means of that doubtful or unimportant character which seems to be assigned to them even by some of the professed friends of orthodoxy. You will see by our published acts that some of them affect the very foundation of the system of Gospel truth, and that they all bear relations to the Gospel plan of very serious and ominous import. Surely doctrines which go to the formal or virtual denial of our covenant relation to Adam; the native and total depravity of man; the entire inability of the sinner to recover himself from rebellion and corruption; the nature and source of regeneration; and our justification solely on account of the imputed righteousness of the Redeemer, can not upon any just principle be regarded as 'minor errors.' They form in fact 'another Gospel;' and it is impossible for those who faithfully adhere to our public standards to walk with those who adopt such opinions with either comfort or confidence."

It is quite in accordance with this language that Baird's Digest speaks of the New School movement as the "Pelagian controversy," and of the testimony just quoted as a testimony against Pelagian errors. In truth, the Old School party were thoroughly convinced that the New School opinions struck at the vitals of religion. The reason is not to be sought in misapprehension of the opinions themselves. For when the misapprehensions were removed by the carefully considered declaration of the New School men, the Assembly resolved to send certified copies of the paper "to the respective presbyteries to which the signers of the protest belong, calling their attention to the developments of the theological views contained in it, and enjoining on them to inquire into the soundness of the faith of those who have ventured to make so strange avowals as some of these are."

But it is worth noting that this very paper was the one which quieted the fears of conservative men touching the reunion of the two branches of the Church. A protest was made in the Old School Assembly of 1869 against the terms of reunion, because they allowed "various methods of viewing, stating, explaining, and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession" in the united Church, as they had been allowed in the separate Churches. The ground of the protest was the doctrinal errors of the New School. The answer of the Assembly to the protest pointed to the paper just cited as justifying their confidence in the soundness of the New School party. What had happened to make that a guaranty of soundness which had thirty years before created such suspicion? All that had happened was, that time had allowed passion to cool, and in consequence a juster view was taken of the variety of opinion that might be held within one system of doctrine.

The reunion was characterized by those who took part in it as marking an "era most memorable and hopeful; memorable, as it signalizes the *triumph of faith and love over the strifes and jealousies* of more than a quarter of a century; hopeful, since it is not the result of decadence and torpor, but of progress and augmented strength. It buries the suspicions and the rivalries of the past, with the sad necessity of magnifying our differences, in order to justify our separation. *It banishes the spirit of division*, the natural foe of true progress." Those who used such language must have felt that the Church in the past had been moved too much by the spirit of division. But this being so, had they no lesson to learn for the future? It is hardly possible that those who advocated the reunion supposed theological investigation to have reached its goal. In confessing that the spirit of the Church had been too narrow in producing the division of 1837, they implicitly

affirmed that it might be too narrow in the next theological conflict. It was wise not to forestall differences that had not yet arisen. But the whole lesson of the reunion was that the Church must learn to treat new theological issues in a spirit different from that which had allowed strifes and jealousies to triumph, for the time being, over faith and love. It would have been almost ludicrous to maintain that the divisive spirit of 1837 was wrong, but that it would be right to treat the new doctrinal differences in the same spirit.

It can hardly be wondered at that the first impulse of the united Church was to magnify its own orthodoxy. Those who had belonged to the conservative branch had every reason to show that they had not compromised themselves by the reunion. Those who came from the more progressive body, felt it incumbent upon them to justify the confidence placed in them by the terms of reunion. It can scarcely be denied by those familiar with the history of the last twenty years, that the note of "soundness" has been more conspicuous than the note of "breadth." Yet, on the most elementary principle of mechanics, it must be evident that the Church which is nearly four times as large as was either body at the reunion, has so much larger need of breadth. For the larger the body, the greater the number of opinions represented in its constituency. Historically, our Church has every reason to encourage a generous comprehensiveness. The fact that twice after division we have come together again, contains a very plain lesson. More than this, the Westminster doctrine of the Church makes us comprehensive. So far from this doctrine authorizing us to set up terms of communion and of ministerial standing by the mere will of the majority, it distinctly limits these rights by the will of Christ. "We must not make terms of communion which Christ has not made, and we are convinced that He hath not made every truth and

every duty a term." This is the language of the Synod of New York, in 1753, and entirely in accord with the Westminster position.

When the Suffolk Presbytery threatened to secede, and communicated their purpose to the Synod in 1787, the latter body addressed them a letter entreating them to reconsider their resolution, and adding: "You well know that it is not a small thing to rend the seamless coat of Christ, or be disjoined parts of that one body, his Church. We are all members one of another; there should be no schisms in the body, but we should comfort, encourage and strengthen one another by the firmest union in our common Lord. We are Presbyterians and we firmly believe the Presbyterian system of doctrine, discipline and church government to be nearer to the word of God than that of any other sect or denomination of Christians. Shall all other sects and parties be united among themselves for their support and increase, and *Presbyterians divided and subdivided, so as to be the scorn of some and the prey of others?*" This sentiment is in entire accord with the Westminster doctrine of the Church. None of the Protestant creeds can claim more truly to stand for the unity of the body of Christ. "The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to *one nation* as before under the law), consists of *all those* that profess the true religion together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." (Conf. of Faith, xxv, II.) It was the expectation of the Westminster divines to unite all English Christians in one national Church. The Presbyterian Church in this country declared so early as 1729 its willingness to admit to fellowship in sacred ordinances all such as it has grounds to believe that Christ will at last admit to the kingdom of heaven. And even before the strong excite-

ment of the division of 1837 had passed away, the Old School Assembly used the following language: "The terms of Christian communion adopted by our Church have been in accordance with the divine command that we should receive one another as Christ has received us. We have ever admitted to our communion all those who in the judgment of charity were the sincere disciples of Jesus Christ. If in some instances stricter terms have been insisted upon, if candidates for sealing ordinances have been required to sign pledges, to make profession of any thing more than faith, love and obedience to Jesus Christ, these instances have been few and unauthorized, and therefore do not affect the general character of the Church." Should all professing Christians now enrolled in the Methodist, Congregational, Baptist and other evangelical bodies apply for membership in the Presbyterian Church, that Church would be bound in consistency with its own principles to receive them. Should this come to pass, however, the mind of the Church would no doubt favor a broader interpretation of the system of doctrine to which its officers subscribe.

The two points to which this chapter calls attention are these :

1. By its history the Presbyterian Church is taught the lesson of toleration toward supposed new views.
2. By its growth in numbers the Presbyterian Church will be compelled to the same toleration. A continental church will necessarily contain a greater variety of opinion than an insular church.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE OCCASION.

So far from the twenty years since the reunion being years of theological rest or stagnation, they have been years of remarkable progress. This is especially true of Biblical science. Biblical Archæology, Biblical History, and especially the new science called Biblical Theology, have been almost reconstructed within this period. That the American churches should be untouched by this progress was not to be expected. The late Professor Christlieb, indeed, thought that the Germans had worked out the problems in Biblical science so well that we might take from them the conservative results, and escape the conflict by which they were reached. But it is doubtful whether in the field of knowledge results can be really appropriated without going through the processes by which they were reached. Our exegetes were willing enough to rest for a time in the arguments of Hengstenberg and Keil. But when they felt conscientiously bound to investigate the arguments of other men in the same field, it was seen that not all truth was in the possession of these defenders of the faith. Such men as Tholuck, Dorner, Kahnis, and especially Delitzsch, were known to be earnest evangelical Christians. But they were compelled to make concessions on Biblical questions, and if they why not we? On the positive side it became increasingly evident also that the historical critics and Biblical theologians discovered new and valuable truth. The appropriation of new truth is generally accompanied by the recasting of dogmatic formulas. Fortunately the Presbyterian

Church has a Confession that is peculiarly adapted to assimilate new truth in regard to the Bible. That Confession, as will be shown in the sequel, states no doctrine of inspiration. While affirming that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, it does not conclude that it is therefore inerrant. Emphasizing the sufficiency of Scripture as a source of faith and morals, and its infallibility in this regard, it nowhere extends this infallibility to any thing else than faith and morals.

New views of truth, however, are judged not by the natural meaning of the creeds with which they are supposed to conflict, but by the doctrinal systems which have grown up about those creeds. When it is pointed out that these are not the creeds, they are asserted to be logically contained in the creeds, or to underlie them, or to have been the views of the makers of the creeds. It is not surprising therefore that the advance of Biblical theology created some uneasiness in so conservative a body as the Presbyterian Church. The assembly in 1882, and again in 1883, passed resolutions concerning certain supposed errors on the subject of the Bible and its inspiration. The errors are in one of these utterances said to result from the "introduction and prevalence of German mysticism and higher criticism, and of philosophic speculation and so-called scientific evolution." The sweeping character of these assertions is such as to deprive them of any force. For they mean every thing or nothing, according to the interpretation put upon them. Their immediate occasion, however, is supposed to have been a series of papers in the *Presbyterian Review* designed to show the present state of inquiry in regard to the Old Testament. The papers represented both the conservative and the critical views—the latter, however, in strictly evangelical form. Of German mysticism, philosophic speculation or evolutionary hypotheses they presented not a trace. Their only fault

was that they vindicated the right of critical methods of study within the limits of the Presbyterian Church.

As all the world knows, the Rev. C. A. Briggs was inaugurated Edward Robinson Professor of Biblical Theology in the Union Theological Seminary, January 20, 1891. His inaugural address was on the subject of the Authority of Holy Scripture. It was regarded by many who heard him as a vindication of that authority, and such it is in reality and in the intention of the author. Two of the opening paragraphs make this plain :

“ Human nature is so constituted that, when self-consciousness and reflection rise into activity, there is an irresistible impulse to seek authority for the relations in which we find ourselves, the knowledge that is taught us, and the conduct prescribed for us in life. We may be content as children with the authority of our parents, as young men and maidens with the authority of masters and teachers, but sooner or later, the responsibility is thrown upon ourselves, and we alone must bear the strain of life, incur its obligations, and earn its rewards and penalties for time and for eternity. What authority shall be our guide and comfort in life is a fundamental question for man at all times, but never has it been so urged upon our race as in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

“ If we undertake to search the forms of authority that exist about us, they all alike disclose themselves as human and imperfect, and we feel at times as if we were upon an unknown sea, with pilots and officers in whom we have no confidence. The earnest spirit presses back of all these human authorities in quest of an infallible guide, and of an eternal and immutable certainty. Probability might be the guide of life in the superficial eighteenth century, and for those who have inherited its traditions, but the men of the present times are in



quest of certainty. Divine authority is the only authority to which man can yield implicit obedience, on which he can rest in loving certainty, and build with joyous confidence."

Reading these words dispassionately, we must find them to be words of truth and soberness. The cry of the heart for light and leading was never more distinctly heard than it is to-day. The reason for agnosticism is not self-sufficiency. Men are agnostics not because they are impatient of authority, but because they can not find the authority they would be glad to find.

Dr. Briggs proceeds to discuss the various sources of divine authority. "There are historically three great fountains of divine authority, the Bible, the Church, and the Reason." He contends that each of these has actually revealed God to men. The position is at least intelligible and defensible. As the author nowhere characterizes either Reason or the Church as an infallible rule of faith and practice, he can not be said to contradict the common Protestant doctrine concerning the Scriptures. He says, indeed: "If God really speaks to men in these three centers, there ought to be no contradiction between them. They ought to be complementary, and they should combine in a higher unity for the guidance and comfort of men. It is my profound conviction that we are on the threshold of just such a happy reconciliation." While such a hope is sanguine, perhaps over-sanguine, it can hardly be called unorthodox.

Before discussing the Bible, the highest of these sources of divine authority, the author speaks of the barriers of divine authority in Holy Scripture. By these he means barriers thrown up by men. "The Bible," he says, "is the book of God, the greatest treasure of the Church. Its ministry are messengers to preach the Word of God and to invite men to His presence and government. It is pharisaic to obstruct their way by any fences or stumbling-blocks whatever. It is

a sin against the divine majesty to prop up divine authority by human authority however great or extensive." Yet he says men have been "shutting out the light of God, obstructing the life of God, and fencing in the authority of God." Such barriers he holds to be: (1) Superstition; (2) Verbal Inspiration; (3) Authenticity; (4) Inerrancy; (5) Violation of the Laws of Nature; and (6) Minute Prediction. Here again it can hardly be doubted that historically such barriers have existed. The Bible has sometimes been treated as a talisman, and this is superstition. Verbal inspiration and inerrancy have sometimes obscured the historical sense, as where the harmonists made Peter's wife's mother miraculously healed three times, to conserve the exact truth of all the Gospel accounts. Extravagant emphasis upon authenticity and the fulfillment of prophecy have sometimes diverted attention from the spiritual teaching of the Scriptures. The Church is not exempt from danger on this side any more than on any other, and it is the duty of the exegete who thinks he sees danger on this side to give the warning just as he would on any other. The somewhat rhetorical form of the predication that these breastworks of traditionalism are undermined and soon to be blown to atoms may be criticized, but it may be justified by the enthusiasm of the occasion in which no doubt the orator saw a fulfillment of long cherished hopes.

The main theme is now reached in the theology of the Bible. This is treated under the three heads of Religion, Doctrines of Faith, and Morals. A supplementary topic is the Messiah. The conclusion of the address treats of the harmony of the three sources of divine authority.

It should be noted that Dr. Briggs had already been a professor in Union Seminary for seventeen years, and that for ten years of that time he had been one of the editors of the *Presbyterian Review*, and a frequent contributor to its pages.

He had published several extended articles or addresses on Biblical Theology, besides a volume on Biblical Study (1884), in which his critical views were distinctly stated. Theologically his divergence from the prevailing Presbyterian school of thought was set forth in a volume entitled "Whither," published in 1889. But up to the delivery of the inaugural address he was *rectus in ecclesia*, as is indicated by the fact that the chairman of the committee which recommended the veto of his election in the General Assembly stated that he himself would have been present to hear the address had he not mistaken the date. Yet, as has been pointed out by Dr. Briggs himself, all the views which were so criticised in the address were advocated in his earlier publications. Why they should have been passed by, while the address was at once made the object of the attack, is difficult to see. Doubtless the fact that the address was first known in a newspaper report had something to do with it. The "Authorized Syllabus" gave the most startling expressions of the address apart from the context, which might have thrown a different light on them, but this is no more than is generally true of a newspaper report.

For whatever reason—perhaps because now was seen to be a good time to strike—the question of a veto by the General Assembly was agitated before the full text of the address was published. The New York Independent of February 5 called attention to the power of the Assembly in the case, and said: "The question then arises whether the Assembly, in the light of the views stated by Dr. Briggs in his recent inaugural address, will deem it wise and just to the interests of the Presbyterian Church, and those of sound doctrine, to confirm this appointment. This question has already been asked, and we should not be at all surprised if it were to come up for grave consideration at the next meeting of the General Assembly. The fact that Dr. Briggs has subscribed

to the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church does not supersede this question, especially if it be true that his own formal utterances *virtually contradict and invalidate that subscription*. We do not see how the General Assembly, when called to act upon his appointment, can ignore these utterances, or fail gravely to consider their import, and the question of their consistency with the standards of the Presbyterian Church and the teaching of the Bible. The matter involved is one of the most serious character." The Presbyterian of the next week, in an article entitled "Pledge and Performance," says: "In view of the contradiction that is apparent between Dr. Briggs' own statements, and their *entire divergence* from the teachings of the standards of the Church, does not the imposing pageant of that inauguration look very much like an absolute farce?" This article concludes with urging a most emphatic veto by the Assembly.

It is evident from these early utterances (the full text of the inaugural was not published) that in influential quarters Dr. Briggs was already pronounced guilty of heresy. Looking back on the history of the case, one marvels at the readiness with which this judgment was formed and uttered. According to Presbyterian law, the only judge authorized to pronounce on a man's "entire divergence" from the Confession is the presbytery of which he is a member. The Presbytery of New York has now (January, 1893) pronounced upon this alleged divergence, after examination of the full text of the inaugural as well as other utterances of the author, and has declared it not to exist. But on the basis of an outline report one religious newspaper announces the contrary verdict, and another at least intimates that Dr. Briggs' utterances *virtually contradict and invalidate* his subscription to the Confession. The whole agitation for the veto was based

upon such prejudgments, and the veto itself had no other reason.

On the 16th day of February, an adjourned meeting of the Presbytery of Cincinnati was held, at which an overture to the General Assembly was offered, calling attention to the inaugural, and asking the Assembly (in effect) to veto the election. Some of the members present at this meeting objecting to the overture, it was referred to a committee, which reported at another meeting held March 2. The overture had been somewhat modified in form, and was as follows:

“ *Whereas*, in 1882, the General Assembly, ‘in view of the introduction and prevalence of German mysticism and higher criticism, and of philosophic speculation, did in the name of the great Head of the Church, solemnly warn all who give instruction in our theological seminaries against inculcating any views or adopting any methods which may tend to unsettle faith in the doctrine of the Divine origin and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, or in our Presbyterian system of doctrine, by ignoring or depreciating the supernatural element in Divine revelation, or by exalting human conjecture and speculation above historical and Divine facts and truths;’ and,

“ *Whereas*, The General Assembly, in 1883, did again declare ‘itself clearly and decidedly on the rationalistic treatment of the Holy Scriptures;’ and,

“ *Whereas*, quite recently, in connection with the public inauguration of a professor in one of our theological seminaries, the Church has been disturbed, and apprehension excited by utterances as given in what is declared to be an authorized syllabus of the professor’s address, apparently rash and unguarded and erroneous in their tendency, as calculated to unsettle faith in the inspiration, genuineness, and infallibility of the Scriptures; therefore,

*"Resolved, That while we recognize the importance of full and free critical study of the Scriptures and kindred subjects, provided it be made in a reverential spirit, and with the purpose of vindicating the true nature of the Scriptures as held by our Church, we, nevertheless, deem such utterances worthy of the attention of the General Assembly; and furthermore, we would petition the General Assembly, which is to meet the third Thursday of May, 1891, at Detroit, to take such action as shall in its judgment be best adapted to preserve the peace, purity, and prosperity of the Church."*

Examination of this paper shows that it was in fact a condemnation of Dr. Briggs as heretical. The citation of the action of the Assembly of 1882 was irrelevant unless Dr. Briggs were supposed to be under the influence of German mysticism or philosophic speculation. The citation equally implied that he was inculcating views tending to unsettle faith in our Presbyterian system of doctrine. The action of the Assembly of 1883 also could be of no force unless Dr. Briggs were adjudged guilty of rationalistic treatment of the Holy Scriptures. The resolution was an unconstitutional measure because it pronounced on the ministerial fitness of a member of another body. Almost equally objectionable is the positive principle of Biblical inquiry announced. The Presbytery recognized the importance of full and free critical study of the Scriptures and kindred subjects, provided it be made in a reverential spirit, and with the purpose of *vindicating the true nature of the Scriptures as held by our Church*. The assumption is worthy of the Roman Catholic Church. It asserts that our Church already holds the true nature of the Scriptures. So long as critical investigation does not disturb the established belief of the Church, but confirms it, it may be encouraged. But one can not help raising the question: How,

if the Church has been mistaken in some respects as to this true nature of the Scriptures? The answer to this is in the mind of the movers of the resolution, that so soon as inquiry unsettles faith in a single statement of the Confession, it must be condemned by the General Assembly; rather let us say (for there is no attempt to quote definite and specific statements of the Confession) that so soon as critical inquiry shall unsettle faith in the dogmatic system which is generally taught in our church, critical inquiry must go outside the Church. A more glaring claim of infallibility in doctrine was never made by any Church.

The question raised by this resolution concerned every member of the Presbytery. It was evident from the first that the party in favor was very strong. But those of us who were of another way of thinking felt that it was not a case where a silent vote in the negative was sufficient to satisfy conscience. As we looked at it, the Presbytery were about to commit a rash and unwise act. The act was rash because based on a newspaper report. It was unwise because calculated to increase prejudice already strong enough. It was besides unconstitutional, in that it was in fact a judgment on the soundness of a man not under our jurisdiction. So much as Presbyters we were bound to say. And this was all that we did say at this meeting of Presbytery. By *we* I mean Professor Evans and myself, though there were not wanting others to stand by us in the minority.

Professor Llewelyn J. Evans was at this time in charge of the department of New Testament Greek and Exegesis in Lane Seminary. He had been engaged in teaching in the Biblical department twenty-four years, having been earlier professor of church history. In his own department he ranked among the first scholars and teachers of the

country. Against his orthodoxy there had never been a breath of suspicion. Of late years, owing to the state of his health, he had not spoken much in public, and in this exigency he might have excused himself from speaking. But he felt that it was a time to speak, no matter what it might cost the individual. On the questions before Presbytery he was easily one of the first authorities in the country. He saw the danger of drawing dogmatic lines so rigidly as to shut out well established conclusions, and so of forcing the Church into an untenable position. For this reason he opposed the overture in the Presbytery, though at the meeting of March 2 he confined himself to the grounds already stated. He felt, however, that the time had come for a discussion of the merits of the question. He believed that the positions of Dr. Briggs in the inaugural (as well as in his books) were not in conflict with the system of doctrine adopted by the Presbyterian minister at his ordination. As an exegete he felt that not to say this (or simply to say it and not show it in detail) would cause himself to be misunderstood.

Dr. Evans therefore, in spite of his physical infirmity, and in fact at great risk to his health, made up his mind to go into the merits of the question, and to ask Presbytery to hear him at some length. Our position at the March meeting was already criticized. One of the daily papers pronounced our views virtual infidelity. At the Ministerial Association I was asked to read a paper on the subject of inspiration—with the evident purpose of getting me to “explain my intentions.” There was every reason why the question thus forced upon us should be discussed fully and frankly. In this conviction I arranged with the Ministerial Association that Dr. Evans should read his paper before that body, and that I should follow. As the matter was of interest to others than



Presbyterians, I suggested also that the meeting be thrown open to the public. After the papers were read, many requests were made that they be printed, and they were consequently published. They are here given (in the next two chapters) as originally read.

## CHAPTER III.

## 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> Commentary on the Confession of Faith, by Dr. A. A. Hodge, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup> Surely it is not inconceivable that in a number of particulars, or say only in one particular, that presumption of unscientific, unhistoric, 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

<sup>1</sup> “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.

<sup>2</sup> *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."<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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?<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> See Rom. x: 8-10, 14-18; xii: 1 f., 5 f.; 1 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; 1 Thes. i: 8; ii: 12, 13; 2 Thes. i: 3 f., 11 f. Cf. 1 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.”<sup>1</sup> 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-

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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-

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<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> cosmic reconciliation,<sup>2</sup> the re-unification of the universe,<sup>3</sup> 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"?<sup>4</sup> 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?

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xi. 15 (cf. v. 12); 2 Cor. v. 19.

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

<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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-

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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



gendarry 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.<sup>1</sup> Beginning with the Synoptic Gospels,<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> It proceeds from credible eye witnesses and inspired servants of the Word. This is directly asserted by Luke (i, 1 f.) and con-

<sup>1</sup> For the authorities see Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> 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 Johannine. 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 closely 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" (*περὶ ὧν κατηχήθη 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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-

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<sup>1</sup> Whether, as in the text, the insertion of *ἐνθὺς* 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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,<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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*."

<sup>2</sup> "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;<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> "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.

<sup>2</sup> 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, and 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?<sup>1</sup> 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?<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 indentify with the essence of inspiration that it "attended the entire process of the genesis of Scripture." See below, p. 34, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> I hope to show further along

<sup>1</sup> 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.).

<sup>2</sup> "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. I, 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,<sup>1</sup> dislocations of the narrative,<sup>2</sup> the transposition of events,<sup>3</sup> in some instances the duplication of the same

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> 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*."<sup>2</sup> 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 means 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-

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

<sup>2</sup> 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"<sup>1</sup>—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?"<sup>2</sup>—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?<sup>3</sup> Surely this is a most unsatisfactory solution. Of all the make

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<sup>1</sup> So the Revised Version.

<sup>2</sup> So here again the Revised Version.

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> But what is the value of an infallible editorship which does not secure a permanently infallible

<sup>1</sup> "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."<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> "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.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 12, and 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.<sup>1</sup> Will you blame

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<sup>1</sup> Of 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. xlv: 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.

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*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.<sup>1</sup> 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-

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<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup>

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-

<sup>1</sup> 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 Judaizans* (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, *ἵνα πληρωθῇ*, 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 keep it out of 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, 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.

sence 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?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 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

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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."<sup>1</sup> 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 plenary 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

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<sup>1</sup> Acts, ii: 14 f.



Word of God, as truly and as fully such as all of Mark ;<sup>1</sup> 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 ;<sup>2</sup> 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 ;<sup>3</sup> 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 ;<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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-

<sup>1</sup> See Revised Version at Mark, xvi : 9 f.

<sup>2</sup> See Revised Version at John, vii : 53-viii : 11.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> 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-

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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: *αἰών, sæculum*]." 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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?

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

<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup>

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."<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> *British Weekly*, November 13, 1890, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> *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 to-day, Ernest Renan. 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.



## CHAPTER IV.

## 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,<sup>1</sup> and in one instance avowed that Satan had insinuated a false revelation into his mind.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> 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,"

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<sup>1</sup> Or different wordings, for the transmission was still largely oral.

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

*Law* as contained in the book. This law seems to be identified with the heavenly Wisdom.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.'"<sup>3</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> Bereshith Rabba, I.

<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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)

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Mishna<sup>1</sup> (or even of the whole Talmud) has been maintained until comparatively recent times.<sup>2</sup> "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

<sup>1</sup> Gfrörer, I, 250; Weber, 87; Jost, Geschichte des Judentums, I, 93.

<sup>2</sup> 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?"<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 **y** (= 70) in Deut. vi: 4, is one of the arguments for the theory of seventy senses just considered. The letters might be interchanged

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

<sup>2</sup> Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, I, 458.

by Athbash or Albam.<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Reuss, 721; Buxtorf, Tiberias (1620), p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>3</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> Drummond, Philo, I, 15.

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

<sup>3</sup> Hartmann, 579.

bad) are the different conditions of the soul.”<sup>1</sup> 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.”<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> Schürer, II, 839.

<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> Thiersch quoted by Dietzsch. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1869, p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der Christlichen Kirche*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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 authorities<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Zschokke, *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."<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> Luther's Vorreden zur Heiligen Schrift.

<sup>2</sup> Klaiber in the *Jahrb. f. Deutsche Theol.* II, p. 3.

memory.<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Tholuck *Zeitschr. für Christl. Wissenschaft*, I, 139.

<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Institutes, VII, IV and V.

<sup>2</sup> 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,"<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>3</sup> The consequence is drawn with rigor—there can be 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

<sup>1</sup> Van Oosterzee, Dogmatics, I, 171.

<sup>2</sup> Calovius quoted by Klaiber, Zeitsch. Luther. Theol., 1864, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Quenstedt quoted by Luthardt, Compendium der Dogmatik, p. 294.

indubitable proofs from Scripture.<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> *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.<sup>1</sup> 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 inspiration<sup>2</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 postexilic 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: 6. 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.

xxiv: 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.

xix: 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.	nan for the place 600 shekels of gold by weight.
I Kings, iv: 26. And Solomon had 40,000 stalls for horses.	II Chron. ix: 25. And Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots.
vi: 2. The height [of the house] 30 cubits.	iii: 4. The height [of the porch] 120 cubits.
vii: 26. It [the brazen sea] held 2,000 baths.	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 Jehoash, 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 Jehoash, 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 scruple (in practice at least) against the entrance of foreigners into the temple. Ezekiel 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 uncircumcised 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 stringency 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.<sup>1</sup> 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—

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<sup>1</sup> 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.'<sup>1</sup> Without investigating a large number of theologians who are quoted<sup>2</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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 decidedly<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> Patton, *The Inspiration of the Scriptures*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> *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. 330 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."<sup>1</sup> A little later he says that the faith which secures eternal life "is founded not on the external or the

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<sup>1</sup> 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 profitable<sup>1</sup> 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-

<sup>1</sup> 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 shall 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!

## CHAPTER V.

## THE DEBATE.

The question at issue is the doctrine of *inspiration*. This doctrine endeavors to explain the genesis of Scripture from the divine side. The formal principle of the Reformation, that the Bible is the norm of Christian belief, is asserted in all the Protestant Confessions. It is such a norm because God speaks through it to the believer. Faith apprehends the voice of God in Scripture without the mediation of Church or priest. Affirmations of this fact are frequent in the works of the Reformers. But in the century after the Reformation a great development of dogmatic and polemic theology took place. The doctrine of the *Word of God written* was carried to its utmost extreme. Logically of course it is easy to argue:

The whole Bible is the Word of God.

Therefore it can contain no error.

On this ground the theory of verbal dictation became a prominent theory with the dogmatic theologians. It is an attractive theory because it gives (in appearance) so firm a basis for revealed theology. Verbal inspiration, as it is called, is still the favorite with a few theologians. But it is so glaringly opposed by the facts that it is not held as confidently as it once was. On this theory it would be logically impossible to account for differences of style in the different books of the Bible. If the Holy Spirit suggested not only the truths but the words to be uttered, all alike should be in the one style of the Holy Spirit. The tendency of late

years therefore has been to modify the doctrine into plenary inspiration. This word has been claimed by some who limit inspiration to those matters which concern faith and morals. But it is with more propriety taken by those who, while allowing such differences of style as show themselves on the surface of Scripture, yet claim that entire truthfulness or accuracy is preserved in every assertion made by the authors of Scripture. The theory allows of some variety. It is by some reduced in parts of Scripture to a simple superintendence of the record. By others it is still held that whatever the Scripture contains was directly revealed to the authors even where it was already known to them by their own experience. The distinction, says a standard writer on this subject, "attempted to be drawn between what in Scripture was previously known to the writers of Scripture and those portions of its contents which previously were either unknown to them or undiscoverable by them has been very extensively accepted, and used freely to discriminate between what is a revelation and what is not, in the volume of the Bible." But he adds after a discussion: "A very slight consideration is sufficient to show that, so far as regards the sacred volume, and the question of its character as a supernatural communication from God, such distinctions have no real existence, and can not be applied except by an arbitrary and entirely hypothetical method of criticism, which would constitute each man's religious instincts the arbiter." Later he adds: "The divine authority and ability to write which were given them of God, cover every thing that they have recorded in Scripture, and cover it equally with the sanction of the Most High; and therefore constitute not particular passages, or a certain class of truths to the exclusion of others, a revelation, but constitute them a revelation all alike."\* The arti-

\* Bannerman on Inspiration, pp. 175, 176, 179.



ficial nature of such a hypothesis is seen at a glance, and its contradiction of the facts that lie on the surface of Scripture. For it is evident that the authors of the Bible often assert the activity of their own memories, relate events as eye-witnesses, or claim to have them on the testimony of others. Hence, the attempt to modify the theory so as to admit these facts while preserving entire historic truthfulness—an unique historical truthfulness—for every assertion of the Bible. In this form the doctrine has been asserted since the reunion of the Presbyterian churches by Professors Hodge and Warfield in an article in the *Presbyterian Review*. As stated in this article the doctrine is not concerned with the accuracy of our present Bible, but interests itself in affirming a perfection of the original autographs which has in some cases at least been lost in transmission. The reason for this shifting of ground is two-fold. First is the advance of textual criticism and the evidence of its progress in the Revised New Testament. It is now patent even to the English reader that the text of the Bible has not been preserved so absolutely pure as we are inclined to expect in so precious a document. In the second place, it is convenient to seek in possible textual corruption an explanation for those troublesome discrepancies and inaccuracies which are “every where apparent on the surface” of Scripture.

None the less does the new theory depart widely from the Confessional doctrine. That the Word of God as we now have it in Scripture is *infallible* for the purposes for which it is given—this is the affirmation of the Confession. Its interest is in the present Bible for present purposes, and those purposes are practical purposes. That an inerrant autograph once existed is a speculative assertion, interested in establishing a supposed perfection which no longer exists, and which may conceivably (and even probably) never be recovered.

This speculative assertion of original inerrancy is therefore a new doctrine though claiming to be the doctrine of the universal Church. That it is not affirmed in the Confession is implicitly affirmed by the Committee on Revision of the Confession. For this committee proposes to amend the Confession by inserting a clause which will affirm "the truthfulness of the history" contained in the Scriptures. This proposal is worthy of notice. It is to insert two clauses in the first chapter (Section V), making it read: "And *the truthfulness of the history, the faithful witness of prophecy and miracle*, the heavenliness of the matter . . . and the entire perfection thereof are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God." The new words (which are here in italics) are designed to affirm the historic trustworthiness of Scripture, and the actual fulfillment of prophecy. As a matter of fact, they only affirm such historic trustworthiness as will evidence the Scriptures to be the Word of God. One who accepts them does not thereby affirm absolute inerrancy, unless he takes absolute inerrancy to be necessary to give such evidence. It is doubtful also whether such phrases can be made a part of the system of doctrine. The majesty of the style which is made another of those evidences could not be so enforced. The remarkable thing therefore is not so much that we have this confession on the part of an able and conservative committee—the confession that the doctrine of inerrancy is not in the present standards of the Church; but that they were willing to supply the lack by so mild an *obiter dictum* as the one proposed.

But we have no evidence that the new doctrine of inerrant autographs has ever been enforced as a test of doctrinal soundness. And this is significant in view of the attitude of former New School men. The leading theologian of that branch of the Church—Dr. Henry B. Smith—while himself

holding to a high doctrine of inspiration, nowhere intimates that such a doctrine is essential to the Evangelical faith or to the system of doctrine subscribed by our ministers. He is fully conscious of the difficulties in the theory of verbal inspiration. In an article in the American Presbyterian Review (April, 1864), he gives the following note: "Carson on Inspiration, p. 132, says in reference to the inscription on the cross differently given by each evangelist: 'If the four accounts are all substantially true and would not discredit any four uninspired men, they may, without any disparagement to God be all the language of the Holy Spirit.' *But did not the Holy Spirit know exactly just how the words read?*" The question of Dr. Smith, which I have italicized, gives the insuperable objection to the theory of verbal inspiration. And it is so forcibly put that it shows the author's perception of the difficulty. Toward the close of the article he says: "For the last fifty years or more, the effort has rather been to accommodate the theory of inspiration to what is called the human side, the individuality of the writers, the diversities of narratives, the critical difficulties disclosed by the processes of Biblical criticism. The divine authority and unity, the inspiring life of the Bible, have been comparatively neglected. There is at present little danger of the prevalence of any too strict view of inspiration: the tendency is rather to an increased laxity of thought and statement. The whole subject needs to be discussed anew and afresh." We see that the leading New School theologian craved a new discussion of the subject. In his familiarity with German theology he saw the tendency to too lax a view. He adds: "A profounder study of the subject *may lead* to the conclusion that the older theory has elements of simplicity, unity, and adaptation to man's permanent religious wants which are not found in most of the modern treatises." What he would have said

to the effort to rehabilitate the older theory by ecclesiastical process we can hardly doubt.

In the year of the reunion the *New School Review*, edited by Henry B. Smith, contained an article by the Rev. C. A. Briggs on Biblical Theology. This article contains the following language: "Biblical Theology has entirely modified the doctrine of the nature and use of the Scriptures; in estimating the human element and individual peculiarities it has shown that the *old idea of inspiration is untenable*. We can *no longer believe* in an inspiration of the very words, letters, and signs of Scripture, or that the Biblical writers were merely passive instruments of the Holy Spirit, scribes writing from dictation." (April, 1870, p. 304.) It is inconceivable that at such a time Henry B. Smith would admit such language into his review if he supposed that the Confessional doctrine was already fixed, and that to tamper with it was to interfere with the system of doctrine to which Presbyterian ministers subscribe. The article of Prof. Bascom, on "Inspiration and the Historic Element in the Scriptures," in the January number of the same review, is much stronger evidence in the same direction. This vigorous plea for a recasting of the doctrine of inspiration was indeed written by a Congregationalist; but it could hardly have been admitted with propriety to the pages of a review which was supposed to represent Presbyterian thought, had it been subversive of Presbyterian doctrine. We are authorized to conclude, therefore, that the New School Church came into its new relations without any such idea of the fundamental importance of inerrancy as has lately been claimed for it. And even pronounced conservatives admit that the doctrinal lines must not be *more* closely drawn in the reunited Church than in either half before the reunion.

If Dr. Evans were alive, he would be able to give some

testimony as to what was allowed in the New School branch, for he was ordained in that body, and was an honored professor in one of its seminaries some years before the reunion. It is known to his friends that at his ordination he declined to accept verbal inspiration. In fact, there is every evidence that his views were always those which he announced in his essay. I myself remember his saying, more than ten years ago, that he accepted the Scriptures as an infallible *rule* of faith and practice, and not as infallible in their every statement. This case is noteworthy, because it shows how high an idea of inspiration may be held by one who distinctly rejects inerrancy. To affirm "that there must be inerrancy or there is no inspiration," seemed to him the height of absurdity. If not made evident from the essay itself, this would be clear from his previous paper on the "Doctrinal Significance of the Revision." (Presb. Review, April, 1883.) In this essay he maintains that the revised translation of 2 Tim. iii, 16, does not favor a limitation of inspiration. "An *uninspired Scripture* would have been, to a Jew of the Christian era, a phrase no less self-contradictory than an uncircumcised Pharisee. Every Scripture is *ipso facto* inspired, God-breathed." Later he says: "Elsewhere the Revision brings into clearer prominence the theopneustic agency of the Divine Spirit in Scripture. The more distinct personification of Scripture also can not fail to indicate more clearly the Divine Personality which Scripture represents. The substitution of *through the prophet* for *by the prophet* tends to emphasize the *medial* character of the prophetic function, representing the prophet as the mouthpiece of God. In like manner, the substitution of *in* for *by* indicates still more vividly the vital internal possession of the human agency by the Divine, whether on the one side the Divine Agent is located in the man, or on the other side, the human agent in the Divine.

In 1 Cor. ii. 11, we have, according to the preference of the American Revisers, a striking recognition of the influence of the Spirit upon the very words of the Apostles: 'Combining spiritual things with spiritual words,' where the whole context defines *spiritual* as, *proceeding from the Spirit*. . . . In these and parallel directions there is a marked enlargement of Scripture's own testimony to its own real, vital, all-pervasive inspiration."

To those who hold that inspiration must secure inerrancy this language is incomprehensible as coming from one who declines to draw that conclusion. But that the language can be used by one who declines to affirm inerrancy is evident from the same paper. For the very next paragraph goes on to say "On the other hand, there are features of the Revision which lead as decidedly to a fuller recognition of the freedom of the human agency in inspiration. Of special importance in this connection is the restoration of original discrepancies or inexactnesses in passages in which corrections have been made in the text in order to secure closer verbal harmony in parallel passages or in order to secure more exact statement. By these features of the Revision a larger measure of individuality and independence is accorded to each inspired reporter of Gospel facts and words than the exigencies of a harmonistic rigor would allow." And again: "Still more important as affecting the doctrine of Inspiration is the influence proceeding from the treatment of disputed passages, notably the closing section of Mark, and the pericope of the woman taken in adultery. . . . The omission or the segregating, or the bracketing as doubtful of passages so extended and conspicuous, can not fail to start queries respecting the historical elements in the composition of New Testament books (particularly the Gospels) and the *applicability of current theories of inspiration*. Assuming that the conclusions

of criticism respecting these passages are probably correct, the readers will be led to inquire: What was the measure of their original inspiration? If inspired before their incorporation in the text, what does the existence of such inspired fragments suggest respecting the extent and immediate purpose of inspiration? If uninspired at first, did they gain any thing by their adoption into the sacred record? If so, what? Is that gain the equivalent of an original inspiration? Is there an atmosphere of inspiration which suffuses all that is brought into the record from without? Or must every thing for which the claim of an original inspiration can not be established be rejected *in toto*? How do the conclusions of criticism, and the queries which they suggest, affect all *a priori* and *ipsissima verba* theories of inspiration? Such questions are inevitable. It may be too early to forecast the final replies to them. It is safe to assume, however, that any theory of the subject which is not elastic enough to touch *all the facts* in the case is liable to break."

I have quoted thus at length for two reasons. On the one hand, it has been said by some of the most conservative that Dr. Evans's affirmations in this article are among the best and most satisfactory on the subject. But the quotations given show that he did not make those affirmations as affirmations of inerrancy. It is possible, therefore, for one to hold a very high doctrine of inspiration without holding to inerrancy. This is one point. The other is the use of these affirmative declarations by some men to insinuate that since the writing of this article Dr. Evans had suffered a defection from his former faith. The quotations given show that ten years ago he was thoroughly convinced of the inadequacy of all current theories of inspiration in view of the established conclusions of criticism. In fact the questions he raises in the above given paragraph are just the questions which the

theory of a verbal or an inerrant inspiration finds itself unable to answer. The position of Dr. Evans, therefore, was consistent throughout. So convinced was he, moreover, that his own position was thoroughly in accord with the Confession, that when ecclesiastical process was suggested to him as a possible result of the papers on Biblical Scholarship he replied: "I can not think it."

The point of this whole contention is, that of late years, we have learned some things from the critical study of the Scriptures, some things with which we must reckon. It seems to be useless to say that Presbyterians do not enter upon the study of the Word with a prepossession against miracle, or with a bias in favor of the doctrine of development. There is no determination to make the Scriptures fit some previously adopted philosophy of history. I say it seems to be useless to say this because it has been so often said, and yet the party opposed to criticism persist in making all critics responsible for the most radical conclusions of the most radical school. The only principle which Presbyterian critics have, is that we must recognize facts when they are pointed out. And when we examine the reasonings of all critics, we find some common facts that are too patent to be denied. One class of these bears upon the authorship of Scripture in such a way as to show that the problems before us are much more complex than the theologians have heretofore been willing to admit. Up to this time the idea of authorship which has been taken for granted in the theory of inspiration is the modern idea of authorship. When one of our theologians writes a book, he first gathers and elaborates his material, and then casts it into a single mold, all of which is his own, and bears the impress of his individuality. So to his mind the authors of Scripture. Each wrote his book as all his own. He was fitted to do it by inspiration.



which gave him the impulse and furnished the material. "The Apostles were to be the historians of our Lord's life. Two out of the four Evangelical narratives are actually written by their pens, and the other two are written by men, themselves prophets and taught by apostles; the one being the convert of Peter and his son in the faith, and the other the companion and fellow-laborer of Paul."\* We see the simplicity of the hypothesis. These four men write their books as other men might write, only under inspiration. But when we examine the phenomena of the Synoptic Gospels, we find many things irreconcilable with such an origin. The verbal correspondences are such as to show previously existing written sources, large parts of which have been taken up unchanged into our present books. The theory of inspiration does not take these facts into consideration. In the Old Testament we find the same complication more marked. "The authors of Hebrew historical books do not as a modern historian would do, *rewrite* the matter in their own language; they excerpt from the sources at their disposal such passages as are suitable to their purpose, and incorporate them in their work, sometimes adding matter of their own, but often (as it seems) introducing only such modifications of form as are necessary for the purpose of fitting them together, or accommodating them to their plan. The Hebrew historiographer as we know him is essentially a *compiler* of pre-existing documents. He is not himself an original author."† This language correctly states facts established by historical evidence, evidence as strong as we can have for any thing of this nature. And these facts are precisely the facts for which the old theory does not account. That God should "reveal"

\* Bannerman on Inspiration, p. 391.

† Driver. Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 3.

things which the writers already knew, seems superfluous. That he revealed things already written down in other books in just the words in which they were already contained in those other books seems incredible. But this is the position of such writers as Bannerman, to whom, as we have seen, the whole Bible is a revelation.

I need not show in detail that this is the class of facts which the two papers on Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration were intended to bring out. The object of bringing them out was to show the complexity of the problem of inspiration, and to guard against a hasty condemnation of one who, in view of this complexity, could not take the oath of allegiance to the rigid dogma still held so largely in our Church. To say that the papers succeeded in their purpose would be wide of the mark. They seemed, for the time being, to have made no impression whatever. Not only was there no one to advocate the view of the papers. The three papers written on the other side showed no adequate appreciation of the problem as we had tried to present it.\* The first of these papers was entitled "The Down Grade Theology." Its title shows the position of its author, which will be made clearer by one or two extracts :

"Cincinnati has suffered at different times from financial panics, riots, pestilences and floods. Now she is called upon to endure an avowal of sympathy with Briggsism by four of our Lane Seminary professors. When we remember that confidence in the Bible as the Word of God is one of the conservative influences keeping society in order, a valuable aid, indeed, to the constabulary, we may find reason to conclude that this last named calamity may not be the least in the list. The Church was filled with joy to know that Saul of

\* Three papers were written. Only two of them were read. The other was printed in the Cincinnati Commercial Gazette.

Tarsus, once a persecutor, was preaching the faith he had before sought to destroy. The Church mourns to-day because some, whom she has delighted to honor, now seek to make havoc of the faith they undertook faithfully to preach."

"In his second paper Professor Evans gave us some alleged errors in the New Testament. . . . All of them, I believe, were presented by Strauss forty years ago, and all have been answered over and over again to the satisfaction of the great mass of intelligent and reverent students of the Scriptures. Weightier reasons than these, they have said, must be presented before the strictest statement of the doctrine of verbal inspiration must be given up. But upon our Professor's faith they have had the most disastrous effect. He is induced thereby not only to surrender the truth of plenary inspiration but to propound to account for them a most deadly theory concerning the origin and composition of the Gospel narratives. It is the story over again of the destructive critics concerning the books of the Pentateuch. Original documents, gathered scraps, a reducing to present form by some unknown *redacteur*—originally in the Aramaic, then into the Greek—the idea of inspiration controlling in collating, translating, re-writing, an absurdity: the Gospels a complex result of a complex process. So the doleful stream of eloquence ran on."

"What else follows? This: That the able and scholarly among the children of God must follow the example of the little ones who believe Jesus and believe whatever he says, whether they understand it or not. They must not think of themselves more highly than they ought to think; nor think themselves exempt from the obligation to be poor in spirit. The babes in Christ, when they meet with insoluble difficulties, pray about them, if they be troubled, and then leave them with their Lord without concern until He shall see fit

to give them light. The critic, however prodigious he may be, must do the same or go on into ever deepening darkness."

These, which I think fair samples of the paper, show that the author follows a train of reasoning something like this: (1) To disbelieve the doctrine of verbal or plenary inspiration is to assume an attitude hostile to Christianity; (2) This doctrine is indubitably the doctrine of Christ himself; (3) Supposed results of criticism such as the composite nature of the Gospels, are contrary to this theory of inspiration and therefore must be rejected as "deadly;" (4) The root evil is the self-sufficiency or arrogance of the critics, who are not content to sit as little children at the feet of Jesus. Every step in this train is an assumption except the third. In regard to this, there is not the slightest indication that the author conceived of the nature of historic evidence, or the possibility of criticism establishing any facts whatever. The fourth assertion was so wide of the mark, when applied to Dr. Evans, as to be both painful and ludicrous. The community in which he moved has probably never known a more truly childlike follower of the Master than was he. Modest and unassuming to a fault, he was always ready to learn from others. In his social life he was delightfully simple and unaffected to all. His religious life was pervaded by that faith of a little child given us as an example in the Gospels. His intellectual life and its productions showed no taint of the arrogance sometimes charged upon scholars as a class. To attribute the well considered opinions of such a man to the pride of scholarship, to the tendency to think of oneself more highly than one ought to think, was to commit a grave breach of Christian courtesy, as well as to show culpable ignorance of what Christian scholarship and Christian character are.

The second reply with which we were honored purported

only to correct one of Dr. Evans's statements—the one concerning Paul's chronological *datum* in Gal. iii, 17. It treated incidentally one of my own examples adduced to show bias in the Chronicler. It is evident that these errors might be accounted for by ingenious conjecture, and yet the main argument in both papers be left untouched. Harmonistic treatment of single discrepancies does not touch the evidence concerning the complex nature of many books in the Old Testament and of some in the New, which evidence renders the old theories of inspiration inadequate. A few quotations from this paper may not be out of place.

“I have dealt thus far with two of the examples furnished by my brethren in proof of the errancy of the Scriptures. Concerning the other examples furnished by them, I have to state that they are part of the shelf-worn stock in trade of the rationalistic enemies of the Word of God, and that critical scholars, who are at least the equals of my colleagues, and who understand all the questions at issue, do not hesitate to part company with these brethren and to regard their positions and conclusions as unwarranted. Yesterday a lady met me with tears in her eyes and asked me if the Lane Seminary professors were about to take the Bible away from her. I replied that she had no need for alarm, that the objections and difficulties raised by my colleagues in the majority of cases had been answered satisfactorily, and that those which seemed insuperable were either the errors of copyists or the results of an ignorance which God would remove in due time. In the faith thus expressed I abide.”

“The tide seems to be turning against the negative school. One of the latest works in the Old Testament department issued in Germany is ‘Zahn's Deuteronomy,’ dedicated to the ‘eminent American apologist, Dr. Wm. Henry Greene in Princeton with sincere esteem.’ This treatise is one of great

ability, and resolutely maintains the traditional views of the Mosaic authorship, historical accuracy and inspiration of Deuteronomy. (See the Presbyterian and Reformed Review, April, 1891.) The writer recommends Germans to read Dr. Green's works. I modestly advise Americans in Cincinnati and elsewhere to do the same. Again, in England the present trend of thought is unfavorable to the negative school. I have seen the statement that recently Prof. Margoliouth, Arabic Professor in Oxford University, has vindicated the integrity and authenticity of Daniel; and has compelled the acquiescence in his views of Profs. Driver and Cheyne, the foremost champions in Great Britain of the negative criticism. If this be true, then so far as that particular book is concerned, Prof. Briggs's inaugural is already a back number. To put this third point briefly: For fifty years the advocates of negation have brought charge after charge against the integrity of Biblical books and the accuracy of Biblical history, only to go down to defeat before the advance of knowledge in ancient Oriental history and Biblical philology. The past unites with the present in evidencing that the Bible is an anvil which has worn out every hammer lifted upon it."

The train of argument of this paper also may be summarized: (1) Two out of the many examples of discrepancy in Scripture may be harmonized by assuming errors in transmission; (2) The examples of discrepancy in general are a "part of the shelf-worn stock in trade of rationalistic enemies of the Word of God;" (3) Some critical scholars who are fully acquainted with the questions at issue do not draw the conclusions set forth in the papers; (4) The admission of these conclusions destroys the Word of God; (5) Some of the difficulties and objections have been answered satisfactorily and the rest will be some time; (6) The tide is turning in England and Germany as the author "has seen it stated."

It is needless to point out that calling names (*rationalists* and *destructive critics*) does not prove any thing, and that in our Church the authority of critical scholars on either side is not conclusive. The assertion that many of our arguments have been long ago refuted is true so far—that harmonistic efforts have been repeatedly made. The trouble is that they have to be made again, for the refutations do not seem permanently to refute the arguments. The allusion to Zahn and Margoliouth as having turned the tide is calculated only to provoke a smile in any who know the real impression made by these men.

A third paper read before the Association was a review of Dr. Briggs's Inaugural, and touched upon our positions only incidentally. In regard to the doctrine of inspiration, the author said: "If I must make either affirmation, I deliberately prefer the position of inerrancy, however serious the difficulties that confront me from the second quarter. But have I a right to require that other Christian minds shall take the same position at the peril of being counted disloyal to Holy Writ if they refuse? On the other hand, have they any right to enforce their presumption of errancy upon me?" It is not necessary to point out that all the authors of the papers on Biblical Scholarship ever asked was that both views of inspiration might co-exist in the one Church. The doctrine of the errancy of Scripture which is often spoken of is not a formulated dogma of any school. It is only when the theory of inerrancy is asserted to be the only "sound," or "orthodox," or "Confessional" doctrine, that it becomes necessary in the interest of truth and sound learning to show now irreconcilable with such a theory are the facts of Scripture. The judgment of this conservative authority on one point alluded to above may be given here. It is to the effect that inerrancy is not affirmed in the Westminster Confession.

"It seems to be supposed by the advocates of the absolute inerrancy of the original Scriptures in every minute detail, that their view is sustained in some way by the creed of our Church. The plain fact is that there is not a single sentence or phrase in our Confession (or, indeed in any Protestant symbol) by which a man could be convicted of heresy who should affirm that in his judgment there were errors of this class in some of the books of Scripture as originally written. Our creed is much less specific on this point than is commonly supposed—much less in fact than is the general belief of the Church itself in our time. The doctrine of inspiration, as most of us hold it, is an historic growth, subsequent to the Westminster Assembly, and indeed chiefly in this century. In condemning departures from that doctrine, it is well to remember that we as Presbyterians can go no farther ecclesiastically than our own Confession warrants; later opinion, however current, is not a constitutional basis for discipline."

With every desire to be fair to these papers, then, I can not discover that they appreciate the problem, much less do they solve it. The alternative is with them either the old view (in substance) or rationalism. The last one of the three was grateful as showing that conservative New School men did not believe in settling the questions by ecclesiastical process. But even it protested against the critical views rather than attempted to discuss the real problem they present. The action of Presbytery was equally discouraging. The overture was passed by a majority of fifty-four to seventeen.



## CHAPTER VI.

## ACTION PROPOSED.

As this is in some sense an *apologia pro vitâ meâ*, I shall not apologize for the frequent use of the pronoun of the first person. I will try, however, to confine myself to the main question. The overtures to the Detroit Assembly were referred to the committee on theological seminaries, and on its recommendation the election of Dr. Briggs was disapproved. The Moderator of the Assembly was Professor William Henry Green. The chairman of the committee was President Francis L. Patton. The vote was 449 to 60. The action was at once interpreted as a condemnation of the view of inspiration held by Dr. Evans and myself. It is, however, worth noticing that the General Assembly can not decide the doctrine of the Church except by judicial process. Besides this, the Assembly, in disapproving the election of Dr. Briggs, was ostentatiously careful to give no reasons. The fact that charges were pending against Dr. Briggs in the Presbytery of New York was sufficient reason why this reticence should be observed. Even if the reasons in the mind of the Assembly were doctrinal ones, there was no method of discovering what they were. Several things had been objected to in Dr. Briggs which Dr. Evans and I did not hold. We had said nothing about the three fountains of divine authority, or about progressive sanctification. These might be the determining factors in the mind of the Assembly, and in that case we could not be involved, even constructively. The action might be a judgment that Dr. Briggs was too sanguine in

temper, or too indefinite in the use of language to be a good teacher; or it might be the expression of a vague prejudice against him in the mind of the Assembly. All that it was, in fact, was a disapproval without reasons. It was, however, taken as an evidence of the mind of the Church on the subject of inerrancy. "It means that men *holding the views* of Dr. Briggs, and seminaries indorsing or employing such men, cut themselves off from the sympathy and patronage of the Presbyterian Church"—such was the expression of one of the Presbyterian organs, and it doubtless represents the general conservative view.

Be it remembered that there is yet no authoritative decision that the "views" of Dr. Briggs are contrary to the Confession which is the Presbyterian standard of doctrine. This fact makes the declaration just quoted mean in effect this: "A party in the Church holds Dr. Briggs and those who agree with him to be unorthodox. Without waiting for the judicial decision which alone can decide this point, we disapprove his election as professor. Those who hold with him, and who do not hold our doctrine of inspiration, we would remove from their chairs if it were practicable. As this is not practicable, we will withhold the patronage and sympathy of the Church from the institutions which employ them." A more barefaced demand of a single party to rule the institutions of the Church under a threat to ruin them by creating suspicion against them, was probably never made.

What private attempts were made to bring the Trustees of Lane Seminary into line with this policy need not here be rehearsed. The influence of the Presbytery was brought to bear upon them in action taken December 21, 1891, as follows:

"Whereas, The Presbytery of Cincinnati and many others memorialized the late General Assembly to take some notice

of the peculiar views and teachings of the Rev. C. A. Briggs, D.D., of Union Theological Seminary; and in view of the Assembly's action and the continued agitation and discussion thereupon, Presbytery deems it proper to take the following action:

"1. *Resolved*, That this Presbytery is in hearty sympathy and accord with the action taken by the late General Assembly in the case of the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D.D., in declining to approve his appointment to the chair of Biblical Theology in Union Theological Seminary, in New York. And we also most cordially approve the action of the late Assembly in its reaffirmation of the deliverances of the Assemblies of 1882 and 1888, respectively, in which they solemnly warn all who give instruction in our theological seminaries against inculcating any views or adopting any methods which may tend to unsettle faith in the divine origin and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures as held by our Church, and which would preclude the teaching of the dangerous doctrine of errancy in the original manuscripts of the Bible.

"2. *Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to have this subject under consideration, and report at the next stated meeting what further action, if any, should be taken by this Presbytery."

This action upon the face of it only approved the action of the General Assembly; first, in disapproving the appointment of Professor Briggs, and secondly, in passing certain resolutions which the Presbytery construed as precluding "the teaching of the dangerous doctrine of errancy in the original manuscripts of the Bible." A committee of five, the mover of the resolution (the Rev. R. H. Leonard, D.D.) being chairman, was appointed "to have this subject under consideration." The natural interpretation of this language is to the effect that the committee should consider especially Dr.

Briggs and report what further action was practicable in his case. Furthermore, they were to consider the teaching of the dangerous doctrine spoken of, and report what might be done in regard to that. Exactly what the movers of the resolution had in mind is difficult to make out. One would think the committee were commissioned to discover first what the dangerous doctrine of errancy is, and to what extent it was taught in our seminaries. In the second place, they might be supposed to draft some more ringing resolutions on the subject. Again, they might be expected to report some plan by which the seminaries might be brought more distinctly under the control of the presbyteries. But the resolution under which the committee was appointed could not contemplate more than this, unless, indeed, it was designed to secure a pledge from particular professors as to what they would teach.

One thing seemed quite clear at the time the resolutions were passed. They were not intended (unless in the minds of very few) to initiate judicial process against any one. I pointed out at the time they were under discussion that they *would be construed* as a reflection upon my orthodoxy, and that the legitimate way to pronounce upon a minister's orthodoxy, is to bring charges against him. The fact that these resolutions did not propose an inquiry into the necessity of discipline was the very point I urged against them. Their adoption in the face of this protest only showed that the majority were willing to pass such reflections on my soundness, *without* judicial process. No one intimated that the "Committee on Erroneous Teaching" had power to consider the subject of process. The chairman himself said that it was not a question of ministerial standing. He said in substance that if the suspected professors were occupying pulpits, they would not be disturbed, but that it was time that presbytery should

take a stand against our continuance in our position as professors.

Now if there is one thing carefully guarded by the constitution of the Church it is the standing of the individual minister. That standing can be impeached only by way of regular process. Presbytery is warned against receiving accusations against a minister on slight grounds. Judicatories are instructed to "take into consideration all the circumstances which may give a different character to conduct." They are not to commence process unless they find it "necessary for the ends of discipline to investigate the alleged offense," and they are told that in all cases "effort should be made by private conference with the accused, to avoid, if possible, the necessity of actual process." In view of these provisions of the Book of Discipline, it is not too much to say that in case discipline is contemplated, care should be taken to secure these ends. The straightforward way is to bring the alleged offense before Presbytery in a motion. This motion should secure an impartial committee to investigate the alleged facts. The committee should be empowered specifically to invite the suspected person to a conference. It should, moreover, be directed to consider the question whether it be necessary for the ends of discipline to enter upon process. As already pointed out, nothing of this was included in the motion on errors in the Church. So far as I knew, nothing of this was in the mind of the Presbytery in appointing the committee.

That the committee wished to get from me some pledge concerning my teaching in the seminary (Dr. Evans had already announced his acceptance of an invitation to Wales), I could very well believe. Some letters received about this time looked in the same direction, though the writers did not

indicate that they spoke for the committee. One of them wrote (in part) as follows:

"While I am in sympathy with the Detroit Assembly, I do not think that it is true that you are teaching in Lane any thing contrary to what even the most conservative would [desire]. Moreover, since the view of our Church is so generally in sympathy with the conservative teachings, I do not myself believe you would 'unteach the teachings' expected by our Church. In all frankness I do not regard your *essay* as either timely or conciliatory, but that is of little importance. 'Forgetting the things which are behind.' My object in writing is to speak of the future, and to speak as one of your best friends. Another attempt will probably be made either by a committee or through the Trustees to get you to state what you feel you *must teach* in Lane. Many of your friends will favor this, prompted, as they claim, by love to Lane and yourself. The intention is, if a favorable result is obtained, to 'boom Lane' in Presbytery. Now my point is this: Can you not *anticipate* all this? Can you not write an article for one of our papers, in which, while not sacrificing your right to investigate, you can remove any uncertainty in regard to what you will teach your pupils?"

This letter is interesting as showing what the writer supposed the Committee on Erroneous Teaching was appointed to do. It was to get me to state what I would teach, or to get the Trustses to state what I must (or must not) teach. My reply to the letter was as follows:

"I have repeatedly pondered the contents of your letter (received last week) with a desire to meet your frank and friendly suggestions. I thank you for your expressions concerning myself, and for writing as you did. . . . But frankly I do not see my way clear to write such an article as you suggest. While in fact I have been perhaps overscrupu-

lous in regard to teaching the higher criticism (out of regard to the feelings of conservative ministers), I can not in principle limit myself beyond the lines already laid down by the Church. In other words, I claim the liberty of teaching whatever I believe, subject to these two limitations, viz.: (1) If I teach any thing (in any place, seminary, or outside) contrary to the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster standards, I am subject to judicial process by the Presbytery. (2) If I teach any thing contrary to sound doctrine in the judgment of our Board of Trustees, they have a right to call me before them to give account. It seems to me the error is on the side of those who, after having known me nearly twenty years, refuse me their confidence on account of views which are contrary to their interpretation of the Confession. But there is another objection to any publication on my part. Any such publication would be construed as a retraction—or as disingenuous. It takes very little observation to discover what misunderstandings are possible in an excited state of party feeling like the present.”

In my view, the effort of the writers of this and other letters was to apply a *private* standard of doctrine to the teachers in our seminaries. It can easily be seen how intolerable the position of such a teacher would become, if wherever a considerable party in Presbytery suspected him of dissent from their views of doctrine, they could demand an explanation of what he proposed to teach, under the threat of keeping students from the seminary should he not give them satisfaction. A similar letter to the above, received not long after from another minister, puts the proposition clearly before us. After reciting the efforts of the writer to secure a paper in Presbytery that would be acceptable to all, he adds:

“Since then I thought I would make another effort to save trouble in Presbytery by getting up a petition to the Semi-

nary Board to take such action as it may deem wise to secure the indorsement of Presbytery for the Seminary, which indorsement can be secured on the assurance that the doctrine of the errancy of the original manuscripts of Scripture shall not be taught in it. We ask no change of professors. We ask nothing that would render a change necessary. Indeed it is my desire, and so far as I know, the desire of all the brethren, that there should be no change in the faculty except, of course, the filling of Professor Evans' chair. We do not know that you have ever taught this doctrine to your classes and we do not think you wish to teach it. We want to recommend Lane to the Church at large 'as an orthodox school of the prophets,' and all that we ask is a basis on which to do it."

The concession in the words, "We do not know that you have ever taught this doctrine to your classes," is deserving of note. On the basis of a supposition that the offensive doctrine might be taught, but without evidence that it ever had been taught, a pledge was asked. My reply here still seems to me all that I could say in the circumstances:

"No apology was necessary for your letter of last week. I have left it unanswered so long that I might consider its contents carefully. I am not quite certain as to what you would like to have me do. Of course I can not advise the trustees unless they ask my advice.

"In regard to the paper submitted to . . . and shown to me, my position is that Presbytery can not, by resolution, settle the doctrine of the Church or the interpretation of the standards. Am I not right in this? You will understand that it is with no disrespect to the majority that I feel I must stand upon the liberty accorded by the Constitution of the Church. You say the indorsement of Presbytery can be secured for the Seminary on the assurance that the doc-



trine of the errancy of the original Scripture MSS shall not be taught in it. I can truly say that I have never taught such a doctrine, if by doctrine is meant a definite theory. You know the expressions I have given were called out by assertions or implications on the other side. When the Briggs resolutions were introduced in Presbytery I saw (as I supposed) that they were based on a theory of *inerrancy* which can not be maintained in face of the facts. Before I give assurance that I will not teach errancy, ought I not to have assurance that I shall not be called upon by resolutions in Presbytery to commit myself to what I can not assert? But it is clear that a long discussion is upon us. Suppose now my students have their attention called to this matter by the discussion. Suppose one of them calls upon me in class to explain an apparent discrepancy. You wish the assurance that in such a case I will tell him the discrepancy *must* have come in by transmission. Unfortunately I have given enough attention to text criticism to know that not all the discrepancies can be accounted for in this way. You will see, I think, that this is a case where the student has a right to know just what I think, and where I can not bind myself to be silent."

Latterly a conservative organ has accused me of inconsistency in declaring that I do not believe my doctrine of inspiration contrary to the Confession while saying, as I say above, that I have not taught any doctrine of "errancy of the original manuscripts" in my classes. It is worth while giving a word of explanation to this point just here. We teachers of exegesis busy ourselves with the text of the Scriptures as we find it. We have no need to teach any doctrine of inspiration, for that belongs in the department of Systematic Theology. Our effort is to lay before the student the facts of the present text—in its best available form of course. The existence of original manuscripts in which no

discrepancies or errors of statement were found, is a speculative hypothesis. We have no interest in affirming or denying it. I have never had occasion in my classes to consider it in any form. As a teacher of exegesis I want to get as pure a text as is within our reach, to develop the truth affirmed in that text, to remove (as far as possible) obscurities in the language, to point out the authoritative teaching of the text—in general to qualify the student to search the Scriptures for himself. The only way in which I could come in contact with errorless autographs is when they are held up by a dogmatic affirmation. That dogmatic affirmation is nowhere contained in our Confession. To insist upon it as a test of orthodoxy is to go beyond the constitution of the Church. Nevertheless, as it is a favorite speculation in the Church, I have *as a matter of expediency* let it alone, so far as it lay in the mind of my students. In fact, I believe myself to have been too careful in regard to it. The position may not be defensible; I believe it to be at least excusable.

The Committee on Erroneous Teaching sent a communication to the Lane Seminary Board, in which it recited its appointment by the Presbytery. It declares that the Presbytery understands the deliverances of the Detroit Assembly “as precluding the teaching of the doctrine of errancy in the original manuscripts of the Bible.” The members of the committee were “surprised and pained by the avowal on the part of certain professors of sympathy with Dr. Briggs in the views expressed in his inaugural.” The Presbytery is declared to “oppose vehemently some of the results of what is popularly known as the Higher Criticism. It can not accept them nor tolerate them, but must oppose them until they are trampled under foot of all Christian men.” The communication is remarkable in that it makes no request or suggestion. With it was a memorial reciting the action of

Presbytery, in December, and declaring the belief of the memorialists that the Seminary can not receive the recommendation of the Presbytery "unless Presbytery is assured that its teachings will be in accord with the deliverances of the Assembly at Detroit." They therefore "memorialize" the Board to take such action as they may deem wise in the premises. What form such action might take is not suggested. The Chairman of the Committee is reported to have said that the Committee did not ask the removal of any professor. It would seem, moreover, as if the Committee should have stated what results of the so-called Higher Criticism Presbytery vehemently opposes, so that the Board might be able at least to inquire whether they were taught in the Seminary.

At the meeting at which this communication was presented, the Board, after calling attention to the Professors' subscription to the Confession, declared: "That the Board is fully assured that the obligations expressed in the 'Formula of Inauguration' are and will be faithfully recognized by the members of the Faculty, and that nothing is now taught in the Faculty or will be taught in the future that would tend to impair the faith of the students in the Scriptures as the Word of God, or to lessen their loyalty to the system of doctrine and duty embodied in the standards of the Church." This assurance would seem to be all that the Presbytery could fairly require. It did not specifically assert that the teachings of the Seminary should be in accord with the deliverances of the Detroit Assembly. But it gave distinct utterance to the conviction of the Board that that teaching was in harmony with the faith of the Church. If it was the belief of the petitioners that such was not the case, they had a perfect right to bring evidence before the Board to that effect. The fact that this assurance did not satisfy the dissatisfied

party shows either that they did not know what they wanted, or that they did not have the courage to formulate their real desires. What those desires were is probably indicated by the paper recommended to the Board by its Executive Committee, and widely published, soon after the meeting just alluded to. This paper interprets the inauguration pledge "as precluding the teaching or publishing by them [the professors] of the doctrine of the errancy of the Holy Scriptures as given by the Holy Ghost." It requires the pledge to be taken *ex animo* and every three years, or oftener if required by the Board, and ends by indorsing the compact of the Assembly with its seminaries, and pledging the Board to adhere to it. As no judicatory of the Church had yet decided the "doctrine of errancy" to be contrary to the Confession, this was a recommendation to the Board to subject its professors to an extra confessional test, and this would make the Seminary something else than Presbyterian. The Board at its next meeting therefore declined to pass the resolutions and reiterated its confidence in the genuineness of the professors' subscription.

Before this, however, the Committee on Erroneous Teaching had determined to report, recommending ecclesiastical process. This came to me by hearsay. The only communication I received from the Committee was the following letter, signed by the Chairman (dated April 2, 1892):

"*My dear Dr. Smith*—It has been suggested to me that the Committee of Presbytery who have the subject of Bible instruction in the Theological Seminary under consideration ought to have an interview with you on the matter. If you desire to confer with the Committee, or to see any of them, one or more, I am sure we will be most happy to arrange for such a meeting."

As the Committee had already done all they could do

about teaching in the Seminary by their conference with the Board of Trustees; as they were not appointed to confer with me; as they were going beyond their powers if they were considering my ministerial standing; as finally they only asked if *I desired to confer with the Committee*, it will not be thought strange that I replied that I on my part had no desire to meet with the Committee. The Committee came to the April meeting of Presbytery with a report, which, however, owing to circumstances personal to myself, was postponed until a later date.

## CHAPTER VII.

## A SIDE ISSUE.

The difficulty of a historian is mainly chronological. Even in a "foot-note" like this, the stream of time has to be interrupted in order to clearness in the narrative. The meeting of Presbytery was held in April. In March, however, I had unwittingly complicated the issue, and (as it appears) given rise to new misunderstandings, by two articles contributed to the New York Evangelist. The articles were written some time before, and were in fact written without special reference to my own case. The sharp debate about Dr. Briggs, Dr. Evans and myself, had developed a considerable degree of irritation in the minds of some who took part in it. This irritation sometimes showed itself in a demand that those not in harmony with the Church should leave her bounds. In some cases it had produced unkind reflections on the honesty of those who, holding certain views, persisted in holding on to their Church relations. On the other hand, I had reason to know that some sensitive minds were rendered unhappy by the assumed verdict on Dr. Briggs. Men who had followed the Master's call into the Presbyterian ministry, and were useful there, felt that they ought to go out if the ultra Presbyterians were right in their definition of Presbyterian doctrine. In these circumstances, I felt it would not be out of place to show the broader side of our ordination obligations—a side which had latterly been too much neglected.

Examples of the way in which supposed errorists are read out of the Church may be found in the two papers prepared for the Ministerial Association, and entitled the "Down Grade Theology," and the "Destructive Critics." The plain intimation of these papers is that those who hold any except the "inerrant" view of inspiration do not belong in the Presbyterian Church, or indeed in any Evangelical denomination. The weight of Dr. Shedd's great name was given to an article entitled "Denominational Honesty," which, as its title indicates, emphasized strict subscription. The following quotation may not be out of place:

"A part of the public press is conniving at denominational dishonesty. It would permit Church officers to subscribe to a creed and derive the benefit of subscription in the form of reputation or emolument, while working against it. The creed of a Church is a solemn contract between Church members; even more so than the platform of a political party is between politicians. The immorality of violating a contract, a portion of the press does not seem to perceive when a religious denomination is concerned; but when a political party is the body to be affected by the breach of a pledge, none are sharper to see, and none are more vehement to denounce the double dealing. Should a faction arise within the Republican party, for example, and endeavor to alter the platform while still retaining the offices and salaries which they had secured by professing entire allegiance to the party, and promising to adopt the fundamental principles upon which it was founded, and by which it is distinguished from the Democratic and other political parties, the charge of political dishonesty would ring through the rank and file of Republicanism."

The wholly misleading character of the parallel here drawn between a Church and a party, and the endeavor to justify

rigid Church discipline by the rule of the "machine" in party politics seemed to me to show a strange misapprehension. On this account I thought a discussion of what is really involved in the Presbyterian minister's subscription to his creed a desideratum. With the hope to start such a discussion, I wrote the two papers in question. I supposed myself to be calling to mind principles admitted by every one. In order to determine the force of a contract, the first thing is to examine the language of the contract. As Dr. Charles Hodge had long ago pointed out, the subscription to our creed as containing a certain "system of doctrine," is not a subscription to every proposition in the creed. As Dr. Hodge also pointed out, it is necessary to examine the *animus imponentis*. These two things I had especially in mind. The inquiry seemed to me, and still seems to me, legitimate and timely.

None the less have I had occasion to regret the publication of the articles. They were at once seized upon as an attempt on my part to justify myself for remaining in the Church after I had consciously departed from its system of doctrine. That they were such an attempt is in no sense true, as I hope I have made evident. They were made the occasion of throwing doubt upon my subscription (soon after made) to the seminary obligation. They gave impetus in fact to the movement in Presbytery, and gave occasion to what was to me the most painful of the charges brought afterward by the prosecution. They are here submitted to the judgment of the reader with the request that he remember that they are newspaper articles, and that they profess to give only one side of the question.



[From the New York Evangelist, March 17, 1892.]

## HOW MUCH IS IMPLIED IN ORDINATION VOWS?

BY HENRY PRESERVED SMITH,

Professor in Lane Theological Seminary.

It is a good time to consider the question: How broad is the Presbyterian Church? The question concerns doctrinal belief, and it refers to officers of the Church. For it is clear that our Standards are not intended for laymen and are not applied to them. Any man who "professes the religion of Christ," can become a Church member.

The question then is: What latitude of belief is allowed to *officers* of the Presbyterian Church? The answer must be sought in what are called the *vows* taken at ordination. These obligations are set forth in a series of questions to which affirmative answers are required. It is worth noticing, however, that these questions do not all require vows. And the only one which is a vow concerning doctrine, is the one in which the ministers promise "to be zealous in maintaining the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church." The form of this vow is significant. The candidate does not engage to be zealous in maintaining the doctrines of the Confession or of the Westminster system, but to be zealous in maintaining *the truths of the Gospel*. Clearly the interest of the Church is a practical one. She specifies the great practical truths which the minister must preach in order to save men. Had the framers of the Form of Government intended our ministers to be zealous in maintaining the distinctive doctrines of Presbyterianism, they had sufficient command of language to say so in plain terms. It is supposed by many strangers to our polity, as well as some brought up within the Church, that the Presbyterian Church is organized to propagate our dis-

tinative doctrinal system. The Church is compared to a political party, and we are shown how quickly those leaders are read out of the party who refuse to advocate party measures. The inference is drawn that the Church has the same right and the same intention to dismiss *its* Mugwumps, and severe reflections are cast upon those who having [presumably] sworn to advocate every statement of the Confession, prove unfaithful to their "vows." But this comparison totally misconceives the situation. The Presbyterian Church exists to bring men to Christ, and the minister vows to preach the truths which will under the blessing of God accomplish this result.

But while, properly speaking, the Church imposes no doctrinal vows beyond the one just stated, she does, no doubt, feel it her duty to apply a doctrinal standard to her officers. This she does in the first two questions which are assented to by ministers and elders alike. They are:

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

That these affirmations constitute a broad rather than a narrow basis of fellowship, will be evident from a few considerations. The first requirement (which makes the Scriptures the foundation of doctrine and morals) is the common principle of Protestantism. It took shape in the conflict with the Roman Catholic claim that the Church, *i. e.*, her tradition, is equally authoritative with Scripture. Any one can make the affirmation of our Church who rejects the Roman Catholic doctrine, while recognizing that "the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures . . . is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him."

The second question is equally the result of historic conflicts. Because Anabaptists and Socinians claim the Word of God as their authority, it becomes necessary that we define more nearly our understanding of that Word. Hence the Confession. But as has frequently been pointed out of late, the candidate accepts the Confession as containing a system of doctrine. That he does not avow his belief in its every statement is admitted on all hands. How to determine whether a minister accepts the Confession as containing the system taught in the Scriptures will be seen later.

Light is thrown on the general question by the solemn avowal of the Church itself that its acts are only ministerial and declarative. This means that in examining a man for ordination, the Presbytery is seeking to ascertain only whether, in fact, he is called to the ministry by Christ. In ordination the Presbytery acts only as the agent of its Lord, putting upon record His decision. The examination and the questions asked are only to throw light upon the mind of Christ. The logical conclusion is that the Church has no right to shut out from the ministry any whom Christ has called. The intention of the Church can not then be to interpret rigidly the doctrinal test it imposes. For notoriously, Presbyterians acknowledge Congregational and Baptist and Methodist ministers as actually called by Christ into the sacred office. It is clear that tests that exclude Arminians in doctrine and Independents in polity, can be justified only as matters of expediency. In the interests of harmony within the Church, it may not be deemed wise to ordain men who differ so widely from our views. Yet even in these cases one would think a Presbytery would hesitate long before refusing ordination to those who show the spirit of Christ.

But it is worth remarking further, that this doctrinal quali-

fication is required only at ordination. That men's views may change after ordination was as true in the last century as it is now. Had it been the intention of the Church to secure strict doctrinal uniformity, it would have required frequent subscription if not frequent examination. Not only is no provision made for this, but the candidate for ordination is nowhere warned that if his doctrinal views should change, he must acquaint his Presbytery with the fact. Even in the present doctrinal alarm, but one man has proposed repeated subscription, and even he limited his proposition to professors of theology. It is clearly the theory of the Church that a minister once inducted into the sacred office may be safely left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By his success in the ministry he acquires a right not to be disturbed, except in cases of exceptional gravity, and even here the presumption may be said to be in his favor.

To provide for cases that may arise, the decision as to whether a minister accepts the Confession as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures is left with the Presbytery. But to guard the decision, it must be by way of judicial process. This clearly lays the burden upon the prosecution, who must moreover prove the views held by the accused to be contrary to Scripture. The accused is allowed every opportunity for defense. The judicatory is solemnly charged as to the responsibility of deciding, and is warned to consider whether the errors proven "strike at the vitals of religion." As if this were not enough, the Church has declared that the most favorable construction should be placed on ambiguous language, and that the accused should not be held to the logical consequences of his affirmations.

Practically, the answer to our question is this: The Presbyterian Church is broad enough to retain in its offices any man who has once sincerely received and adopted the Con-

fession as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures, until by judicial process the courts of the Church have deposed him from office. In the best sense, this is not High nor Low, but Broad.

[From the New York Evangelist, April 7, 1892.]

### THE SIN OF SCHISM.

BY PROFESSOR HENRY PRESERVED SMITH.

Some people within and without the Presbyterian Church seem to have been surprised and shocked that that Church should be discovered to have any breadth or liberality. So far, however, no one has been able to show that the fact is otherwise, and it is much to be desired that those who think it otherwise should give us a plain exposition of what the ordination "vows" do imply. This is very much better than to call my recent article *arrant Jesuitry*, or class the author with embezzlers and forgers. Of course many are not pleased with a liberal subscription, such as ours really is. These friends realize the difficulty of ecclesiastical trials. They themselves would hesitate under the solemn charge of the moderator to depose an earnest and useful minister on doctrinal grounds. They therefore try to purge the denomination by indirection. They make an ado over unfaithfulness to ordination vows, and declare that any man *not in harmony with the Presbyterian Church* (note the assumption), if an honest man, will voluntarily leave her communion and go "where he belongs."

Now we all understand perfectly how pleasant it is to be in a nice little company of congenial spirits. It is delightful to live in a world where every one thinks as we think. But the craving for such a world is a sort of selfishness after all. It is at bottom the same principle which makes society exclusive, and families and clubs. It is pleasant to associate with pleasant people. But when this principle comes into the Church,

it is in the wrong place. We all acknowledge this when the individual Church is conducted on lines of social exclusiveness. It is much the same when the denomination is conducted on lines of doctrinal exclusiveness. How often do we hear ministers characterize their fellows as sound in the faith, meaning sound to a particular type of Presbyterian theology, much as a lady describes another as "received in the best society," from her own point of view, of course.

The mischief in drawing these lines is in the unhappiness it causes in many useful and devoted servants of Christ. Loyal to the truth of Scripture and of the Confession, efficient in the service of the Church, the tender-hearted minister may yet be of less robust dogmatic constitution than was Francis Turretin (for example), and be conscious that he does not accept every single assertion of the Confession. He fears he is out of place and feels that perhaps he ought in deference to the feelings of the majority to find another Church in which to labor. Yet he loves the Presbyterian Church in which he was brought up and which he has served hitherto with joy. He has no especial leanings toward Congregationalism. He is not an Arminian or a shouter. He has no desire for the grace of orders. He is not a Unitarian, but a Trinitarian. Where shall he go? The logic of the situation as announced by those who declare he ought to go, is that he ought to found a new denomination.

Now here we draw the line. There are denominations enough. The Protestant world begins to realize that there are too many, and to hope that by the grace of God they may be reduced in number, if they are not to disappear altogether. But there need not have been half so many had there been in the older denominations a comprehensive toleration toward all their members. We believe, with the Roman Catholics, that schism is a sin, and beyond the Roman Catholics, we believe that the sin rests on the excising church. Luther

would never have left the Church had he not been excommunicated.

But if it is a sin for a Church to exscind its members (except for the gravest cause), it is also a sin for a member lightly to leave a Church in which he is useful. His usefulness is *prima facie* evidence that he is where God intends him to be. But he thinks he is not in harmony with "the views commonly received among us." How does he know he is not? Nothing is more difficult to define than the views commonly received. Besides, he is not required to conform to these views, or to the views of the majority of the Assembly. How absurd it would be to require a minister periodically to accept the views of the majority of the General Assembly, or the system of doctrine *commonly held* by Presbyterian ministers.

So much of this article was already in type before I saw Dr. Ecob's article in *The Evangelist* of March 31st. That article leads me to review the ground. It is unnecessary to protest that I would not intentionally "offer a premium to intellectual dishonesty."

We find ourselves confronted by a "condition, not a theory," and probably many Church officers have had occasion latterly to inquire what obligations they have actually taken upon themselves. My contention is simply that a contract is to be interpreted according to the fair and natural meaning of the language. When one has avowed his belief in the Scriptures as an infallible *rule* and is accused of inconsistency because he does not accept their every statement as inerrant, he has a right to say the two things do not necessarily go together. The subscriber can not be held to more than the language he has used fairly means.

So far I suppose every one will agree with me. But one thing more must be said: language does not mean the same thing to-day that it did two hundred years ago. It may be

true that the Church of the seventeenth century believed the doctrine of the Confession to be in every point identical with that of the Scriptures, and tried to have its officers affirm this at ordination though I doubt both propositions. Nevertheless, the Church of to-day does not read this identity of doctrine in the formula of ordination; is not this admitted on all hands? What else does the Revision movement mean? The Church of to-day still requires assent to the proposition that the Standards contain the *system of doctrine* taught in the Scriptures, yet it does not understand the words in the strict sense I have described above. Now, when I am asked to assent to these words, I ask myself again, What do they fairly mean? Verbal legerdemain and logical contortion are as distasteful to me as to any one. But when I ask myself in all seriousness this question, it seems to me quite clear that the words, as construed by the Church to-day, allow a considerable difference of doctrinal opinion. My only desire is to understand the construction now put upon them by the Church.

We must draw the line somewhere, as the man said who refused to invite his father and mother to his wedding. My contention is that in this difficult and delicate matter the Church has herself undertaken to draw the line, and that she has undertaken to draw it by judicial process. "An offence is any thing in the *doctrine* . . . of a church member, officer, or judicatory, which is contrary to the Word of God"—this is the way the line is drawn. And where an alleged error is not treated by the Church as an offense (either in that process is not instituted or in that conviction does not result), then the Church broadens her interpretation of the "system of doctrine." Not long ago I was told sharply that the Church refuses to answer questions *in thesi*. How, then, we can know what is included in the system of doctrine, except by judicial process, does not appear.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## CHARGES BROUGHT.

The Committee on Erroneous Teaching had no doubts as to its own mission. The purpose in the minds of the members was probably strengthened by the action of the General Assembly (May, 1892), at Portland, Oregon. This Assembly sustained the appeal of the Prosecuting Committee of the Presbytery of New York from the action of that body in dismissing the case against Dr. Briggs, and the Presbytery was ordered to permit amendment of the charges, "so that the case may be brought to issue and tried on the merits thereof, as speedily as may be practicable." The Assembly also adopted the following deliverance:

"The General Assembly would remind all under its care that it is a fundamental doctrine that the Old and New Testaments are the inspired and infallible Word of God. Our Church holds that the inspired Word as it came from God is without error. The assertion of the contrary can not but shake the confidence of the people in the sacred books. All who enter office in our Church solemnly profess to receive them as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. If they change their belief on this point, Christian honor demands that they should withdraw from our ministry. They have no right to use the pulpit or the chair of the professor for the dissemination of their errors until they are dealt with by the slow process of discipline. But if any do so act, their Presbyteries should speedily interpose, and deal with them for violation of ordination vows. The vow taken at the

beginning is obligatory until the party taking it is honorably and properly released. The General Assembly enjoins upon all ministers, elders and Presbyteries, to be faithful to the duty here imposed."

The "duty here imposed" is evidently the duty of disciplining those who are unfaithful to their ordination vows in using the pulpit or the professor's chair for the dissemination of their errors. Inasmuch as there has never been any proof offered that I have used either the pulpit or the professor's chair for the dissemination of any errors whatever, the warning of the Assembly could not rightfully be applied to me. The particular doctrine on which the Assembly supposed some to have changed their belief, is the doctrine that the Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Here, too, I must consider myself untouched by the charge. The fundamental and unique character of the Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice, I have repeatedly affirmed during this debate. If, now the Assembly meant to amend the Confession of the Church by its affirmation that our Church holds that the "inspired Word, as it came from God, is without error," then the Assembly transcended its power. The affirmation is itself ambiguous. If it means to assert the inerrancy of the original autographs, it should say the inspired Word *was* without error. If it means to assert that our present texts are inerrant, it goes against the consensus of scholars and the common sense of Christendom. As a historical statement, it can bring no evidence for its support. Such a resolution can not legitimately be taken as defining the doctrine of the Church, and, as we have seen, its exhortation to Presbyteries to be faithful has no reference to my case.

But, as I have said, the Committee seem to have been, if any thing, strengthened in their purpose by this action. In

fact, they cite it at length in their report. This report, presented in June, was acted upon in September. It begins by enlarging its own commission. As we have seen, the Committee was appointed to consider the subject of the disapproval of Dr. Briggs, and the action of former Assemblies "which would preclude the teaching of the dangerous doctrine of errancy." The Committee now call themselves a committee "to take under consideration and investigation the matter of erroneous *views and teachings within our bounds* regarding the Scriptures and the standards of the Church." The ground has been wholly shifted. The Committee as originally appointed was to consider erroneous teaching in our theological seminaries. One would think they would take pains to present some evidence on the existence of such teaching. But the whole of the first part of their report entirely ignores this question and devotes itself to views and teachings outside the seminary altogether. With the second part of the report, which severely attacked the Trustees of the Seminary, we are not here concerned. One assertion in it may be noticed: "In the meantime, your Committee endeavored in various ways, and especially by a courteous written proposition sent by its Chairman to Professor Smith, to secure a personal conference with him, *with a view to a satisfactory adjustment* of existing difficulties, which Dr. Smith declined." As the letter of the Chairman has been given in full in Chapter VI, the reader can judge how nearly it answers this description.

In regard to myself, the Committee call attention to the address on Biblical Scholarship, to my speech in the Detroit Assembly, and my two Evangelist articles. They affirm that they "have endeavored to obtain from Prof. Smith some expression concerning his purpose, and have no reason to believe that he intends to withdraw the statement made by him and published in said pamphlet." As no one ever pointed out any

statement that I was desired to withdraw or asked any expression concerning my purpose in any way, it is difficult to make out what the Committee mean. They further say: "Prof. Smith seems to teach the doctrine that an officer in the Presbyterian Church who has once received and adopted the Confession, *no matter what changes of opinion may have taken place*, may properly continue in his position until by judicial process the courts of the Church have deposed him from office. But your Committee earnestly seeking to avoid such judicial issue, made an effort to secure such action on the part of the Trustees of Lane Seminary as might remove the urgency for such measures on the part of Presbytery. In this, however, we failed. Instead of such action, the Board not only continued him in the chair of Hebrew, but added thereto New Testament Literature and Greek Exegesis."

The Committee insert the clause "*no matter what changes of opinion may have taken place*," without warrant from my article. It then finds fault with my doctrine that an officer may remain in his office (as minister, for example) in certain circumstances. It then recites its effort to secure "such action on the part of the Lane Seminary Board as might remove the urgency" for judicial process. But the Committee knew that the Seminary Board have no power over my office as minister. Besides, they had nowhere asked that I be relieved from office even as an instructor. Now they complain that the Board not only continued me in the Chair of Hebrew, but added thereto (a part of) the Greek. The impression made by this part of the report is like that made by the interview with the Board; either the Committee did not clearly know what they wanted, or else they did not unambiguously ask it of the Board. When they imply that action of the Board would have removed the necessity for judicial process, they show that their object was not to suspend or depose me from the ministry, but

to remove me from my professorship. In order to do this they were willing to suspend me from the ministry, in which I need not otherwise have been disturbed. The conclusion of the report is in the following language :

“ We yield to none in our ardent desire for peace, but peace is sometimes too dearly bought. War is upon us, but not by our own act. As in the days of April, 1861, our brethren have fired upon our Fort Sumter; and their cry, like that of the seceding states, is ‘let us alone.’ If it were only secession we should be happy to let them alone. But remaining with us and insisting upon their right to revolutionize and dominate our Church we have no alternative but to surrender or to fight the good fight for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. The line of battle extends from New York City to San Francisco. And in the great metropolis, in Albany and in Cleveland as well as in Cincinnati, we hear the reverberations of the assaults (so Dr. Briggs declares) of hosts of victorious critics upon the detested bulwarks of traditionalism. Our Lord declared that he came not to send peace, but a sword. The great peacemaker himself must wage unceasing war with all that is evil either in conduct or belief until the cause of righteousness and truth shall triumph.”

This eloquent peroration shows the far from judicial frame of mind of the Committee which had been conducting a judicial inquiry. It sets forth the state of passion into which the Committee had worked itself. It is difficult to see how the paper on Biblical Scholarship could be construed as “firing upon Sumter.” That in claiming my right to remain in the Church (until I should be conscious of having departed from her doctrines), I was insisting upon my right to dominate and revolutionize the Church would not occur to any one not blinded by prejudice. My sober argument against iner-

rancy was never intended as a demand to any one to surrender any cherished belief, not to speak of the fact that it was prepared by invitation of the Ministerial Association. I at least had never pictured the assault of victorious critics upon the bulwarks of traditionalism. One would think the Committee had no conception of the possibility of brethren holding different views of the same doctrine dwelling together in the same Church. Their only view of doctrinal differences is that the doctrine of one party must be evil, and therefore that it must be exterminated by judicial process.

The recommendation of the Committee was that a Committee of Prosecution should be appointed to formulate charges and report the same to a meeting to be held October 17, 1892. The recommendation was adopted, and the Committee appointed, consisting of the Rev. Dr. Wm. McKibbin, the Rev. T. O. Lowe, and D. H. Shields, Esq. At the meeting named the Committee read the Charges and Specifications, and put them into my hands with four weeks in which to prepare my answer. The Charges and Specifications are as follows:

#### CHARGE I.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., a minister in said Church, and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching (in two articles in the New York Evangelist, dated respectively March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892) "contrary to the regulations and practice of the Church founded" on the Holy Scriptures, and set forth in the Constitution of said Church, that a minister in said Church may abandon the essential features of the system of doctrine held by said Church, and which he received and adopted at his

ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said Church.

SPECIFICATION 1.

He teaches erroneously in the *New York Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, that a doctrinal qualification is only required in the officers of the Church at the time of ordination.

SPECIFICATION 2.

He teaches erroneously in the *New York Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892, that whether in any individual case the Church requires continued adherence to the doctrinal standard received and adopted at ordination, is only to be made known by judicial process.

CHARGE II.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., being a minister in said Church and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching, in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," contrary to a fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful; *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense.

SPECIFICATION 1.

He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has been guilty of asserting sundry errors of historic fact.

SPECIFICATION 2.

He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has been

guilty of suppressing sundry historic truths, owing to inability or unwillingness to believe them.

SPECIFICATION 3.

He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles incorporated into his narrative and indorsed by his authority material drawn from unreliable sources.

SPECIFICATION 4.

He teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles was so great, that the truth of history therein contained can only be discovered by such investigation, discrimination and sifting as is necessary to the discovery of the truth in histories by uninspired and fallible men.

SPECIFICATION 5.

He teaches the historic unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles to have been such that "the truth of events" can not be ascertained from what he actually asserts, but from what he unwittingly reveals.

SPECIFICATION 6.

He teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles extended to other inspired historic writers of the Old Testament.

SPECIFICATION 7.

He teaches that the historic unreliability charged by him upon the inspired historical writers of the Old Testament is chargeable, though in a less degree, upon the inspired writers of the New Testament.



## SPECIFICATION 8.

He teaches that the disclosures of religious experience given by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit, and free from moral defect, but are simply the experiences of imperfect and fallible, though pious men.

## SPECIFICATION 9.

He teaches that the assertions made by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not to be relied upon as absolutely true.

## SPECIFICATION 10.

He teaches that the last twenty-seven chapters of the Book of Isaiah are not correctly ascribed to him.

## SPECIFICATION 11.

He specifically affirms the impossibility of the Old Testament Scriptures being free from all error, whether of doctrine, fact or precept.

## CHARGE III.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., a minister in said Church, a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," while alleging that the Holy Scriptures are inspired, and an infallible rule of faith and practice, with denying in fact their inspiration in the sense in which inspiration is attributed to the Holy Scriptures, by the Holy Scriptures themselves and by the Confession of Faith.

## SPECIFICATION 1.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with the unprofitableness of portions of the sacred writings.

## SPECIFICATION 2.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with error of fact in their affirmations.

## SPECIFICATION 3.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with such unreliability in their utterances that the truth of events can not be ascertained from their utterances themselves.

## SPECIFICATION 4.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with a bias in the inspired writers, rendering them incapable of recording the truth of events because incapable of believing it.

At the meeting, November 14th, I first objected to three members of Presbytery sitting in judgment on the case, because they had given public utterance to their judgment on the merits of the case. One of them had used the following language:

“We of the majority believe that the views promulgated by Prof. Smith are widely at variance with the standards of the Church. We believe the utterance of them to be a violation of his subscription to the standards of our Church. We believe it is clearly contrary to the constitution of the Church for any minister to preach or any professor to teach such doctrines.”

Another had written as follows:

"Is it right or honorable that any one who has taken a solemn vow to maintain and teach the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church should continue to hold a high office of trust in that Church, not only as a preacher but as a theological professor, when he has *abandoned the faith of the Church* as defined clearly by the highest court of the Church, and is teaching either in the professor's chair or out of it doctrines which, according to the decisions of the supreme court of the Church, are contrary to its very constitution and subversive of its fundamental law?"

The third had sent a communication to one of the newspapers stating that I had "steadily invited judicial process and forced the Presbytery to institute it." All three of these gentlemen, after stating that they would be able to render an impartial verdict on the argument and evidence, were allowed to sit in the trial. It may be interesting to note that all three voted to sustain every charge and also to impose the penalty of suspension.

## CHAPTER IX.

## RESPONSE TO THE CHARGES.

MR. MODERATOR:—In compliance with your citation, I appear to respond to the charges and specifications drawn up by your committee. The Book of Discipline (§ 22) allows me at this time to “file objections to the regularity of your organization, or to the jurisdiction of the judiciary, or to the sufficiency of the charges in form or in legal effect, or any other substantial objection affecting the order or regularity of the proceeding.” I know of no objection to the regularity of your organization, and I have always recognized the jurisdiction of this Presbytery as the body to which I have promised subjection according to my ordination engagements. I have objections, however, to the regularity of its proceedings, as I made known at the meeting in September. These objections lie against the action of Presbytery in appointing a committee of prosecution, and are as follows:

1. I object to the regularity of this action, in that it was taken in pursuance of the report of a committee called the “Committee on Erroneous Teaching.” This committee was appointed to take into consideration the subject of alleged erroneous teaching in theological seminaries, and had no authority to consider the ministerial standing of individual

members of Presbytery. If this committee were appointed to consider the subject of judicial process, this subject should have been distinctly specified in the act creating the committee.

2. I object further to the regularity of this action, that the Committee on Erroneous Teaching, on whose report the action was taken, was a prejudiced and partisan committee, appointed to represent one opinion and one only. This was avowed in open Presbytery by the Moderator who appointed the committee, and it is further evident from the form of the report itself. Additional evidence of prejudice is found in the fact that this report was given to the public prints before it was even read in Presbytery—thus circulating grave accusations against me at a time when the committee knew I could not be present to reply.

3. I object further to the regularity of this action, that it was taken without the distinct inquiry on the part of Presbytery, whether it be necessary for the ends of discipline to investigate the alleged offense. This is contrary to the Book of Discipline (§ 6).

4. The Book of Discipline further declares that "effort should be made by private conference with the accused to avoid, if possible, the necessity of actual process (§ 9)." I object to the regularity of the proceeding of Presbytery, that no such effort has been made. The representation on the part of the Committee on Erroneous Teaching that they had made such an effort was a misrepresentation, as the terms of their own letter show.

I respectfully repeat these objections here because I think them sufficient to vitiate the regularity of the proceeding. They have virtually been overruled by the action of Presbytery in appointing a committee of prosecution. I file them here, that they may be made a part of the record of the case.

Before considering the charges let me remind you again, in the words of the Moderator, that we are engaged in judicial business, and that you are to be mindful of your high office as judges in a court of Jesus Christ. As judges it is necessary, first of all, that you dismiss all prejudgment. In a civil court pains are taken to rule out from judicial functions, whether exercised on the bench or in the jury-box, all those who have previously expressed or even formed an opinion on the case. The accused has the right of challenge, and freely exercises it, and where he has reason to suspect a prejudice in the community at large that will endanger the fairness of his trial he has a right to apply for change of venue, so that the cause may be removed to a community which has not yet formed an opinion. The reason that we have no such provision in ecclesiastical courts is probably the impression that Christian ministers and officers of the Church can be trusted to rise above prejudice and render in every case a verdict according to the law and to the evidence. Occasionally, however, the best founded expectations are disappointed, and those familiar with the recent history of our Church must realize that just now we are in the midst of influences unfriendly to calm and unbiased consideration of doctrinal issues. The very fact that we are revising our Confession of Faith seems to make some minds more sensitive than usual to doctrinal differences. The long discussion of the case of Dr. Briggs has not always been free from party feeling, and the complexity of the issues involved has certainly not made it easier to discuss dispassionately any related question. I might easily show by quotations that the minds of some of the jurors on this case are already made up. Resolutions virtually pronouncing upon me have been passed by the Presbytery. The weekly paper most influential in Presbyterian circles in this region has declared unmistakably the

opinion of its editors and others unfavorable to my cause. It has even insinuated recently that those who think as I do are guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost.\* The Committee on Erroneous Teaching has published its virtual condemnation of me without rebuke. And the Chairman of the Committee of Prosecution has since his appointment accused the higher critics (of whom he supposes me to be one) of holding grave errors concerning the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this was done not simply by way of debate in a public assembly, but also in at least two Presbyterian newspapers which circulate in this region. Even the Synod of Ohio, before which this case may come by appeal, has gone out of its way to commend the zeal of this Presbytery for entering upon judicial process against one of its members. This state of things is without parallel in civil process. Did it exist there it would be met by the devices and safeguards I have already mentioned. We have no such safeguards in ecclesiastical courts. There is all the more reason why you, the judges and jurors here, should use your most strenuous endeavors to rise above prejudice and dismiss opinions already formed.

For I do not mention these things as bringing a railing accusation. I do not suppose that any one here would *set about* poisoning your minds by newspaper articles and alarmist speeches against heresy. I mention these things as showing the state of a certain section of the public mind and as emphasizing the difficulties in the way of impartial consideration of this case. For after months of discussion and invective the issue has been brought down to something definite. Your able committee have put on paper the particular things which they suppose can be established against me. These

\* Herald and Presbyter, Oct. 12, 1892.

particular charges are now the object of discussion. It is no longer a question whether you agree with me or whether my views are distasteful to you. Many things may make views distasteful which yet have a right within the Church. The question before you is not whether I am wrong in something else than what the committee has charged, or whether my views are dangerous in their tendency—a thing so easy to assert and so difficult to prove. The question is not whether I have a logical mind, or have theological attainments, or even whether I am fit to teach the Hebrew alphabet. The sole question now before us is the sufficiency of the charges and specifications presented by your committee. Except this, every thing bearing on the case or supposed to bear on it should be resolutely shut out of your minds.

Now, if you fix your minds on the direct issue here raised, you will see that it divides itself into two parts. The charges of the committee allege certain facts; they allege further that these facts constitute an offense against the Presbyterian Church. Whether the alleged facts are true, is a question of evidence to be proved in the trial itself. Whether *even if they be as alleged*, they constitute an offense, is a question not of testimony, but of law. In other words, an indictment must be sufficient in law before it can be pleaded to and tried upon the evidence. It is upon the question whether the charges are sufficient in law that I now propose to speak. And the General Assembly has given us some suggestions to guide us. It has ruled first that the charges must be *definite*, i. e., not vague or ambiguous.

“All charges for heresy should be as definite as possible. The article or articles of faith impugned should be specified, and the words supposed to be heretical shown to be in repugnance to these articles.” Digest, p. 616.



Again, the charge, to be sufficient in legal effect, must charge a real offense, that is, something against which a statute can be shown to be in force. Wearing a yellow garment is said to be a penal offense in China, and the charge of wearing a yellow garment would in that country subject the wearer to a severe penalty if proved in fact. In this country the fact, no matter how fully proved by testimony, will not, if charged in the indictment, secure conviction, simply because the indictment can not point to a statute making the wearing of such a garment a crime or misdemeanor. Once more, the charges and specifications must not only be definite and allege a real offense. They must further be based *not on some one's deductions* from language of the accused. Hear the General Assembly:

"Here it will be important to remark that a man can not fairly be convicted of heresy for using expressions which may be so interpreted as to involve heretical doctrines, if they may also admit a more favorable construction; because no one can tell in what sense an ambiguous expression is used, but the speaker or writer, and he has a right to explain himself; and in such cases candor requires that a court should favor the accused, by putting on his words the more favorable rather than the less favorable construction.

Another principle is that no man can rightly be convicted of heresy by inference or implication, that is, we must not charge an accused person with holding those consequences which may legitimately flow from his assertions. Many men are grossly inconsistent with themselves; and while it is right *in argument* to overthrow false opinions by tracing them in their connections and consequences, it is not right to charge any man with an opinion which he disavows." Digest, p. 224.

One thing more: the specifications must be *relevant* to the charge. The specifications "set forth the facts relied upon

to sustain the charge." If it is clear that they do not sustain the charge actually made, they must be ruled out before the trial can proceed. For example: if a person be charged with absenting himself from the communion, and the specifications recite only cases of absence from the Sabbath service on other than communion days, the charge must be dismissed, however true the facts alleged may be. For the specifications would not sustain *that charge*, however clearly they might establish another charge, as of sinful negligence of the preaching of the Word. And it should be borne in mind that if all the specifications under a given charge are shown to be irrelevant or otherwise insufficient, the charge can not be sustained. For the issue raised here is the particular issue as to these charges and specifications.

I have been careful to define these points because I fear unless they be clearly before us we may consume time and confuse the issue by not doing at this time what this particular stage of proceedings requires. What this particular stage of proceedings requires is an inquiry into the definiteness, the legality, and the relevancy of the charges and specifications. I will take up first Charge I, and then for reasons which will appear, Charge III, and finally Charge II.

#### CHARGE I.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., a minister in said Church, and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching (in two articles in the New York *Evangelist*, dated respectively March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892) "contrary to the regulations and practice of the Church founded" on the Holy Scriptures, and set forth in the Constitution of said Church, that a minister in said Church may abandon the essential features of the system of doctrine held by said Church, and which he re-

ceived and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said Church.

1. I object to this charge that it is *insufficient in form* in that it is not definite and specific. It states no article or articles of faith that have been impugned. The committee mention, indeed, "the regulations and practice of the Church." But it can not be all the regulations or the whole practice of the Church that I have impugned. It is clear that the charge is one of heresy, because false *teaching* is alleged. But false teaching must be against doctrines distinctly taught in the Confession of Faith. If the charge is to stand it should at least be made specific.

2. But a second objection against this charge is equally valid. The charge is *insufficient in legal effect* in that it alleges as an offense something which is not contrary to the doctrine of the Church. The charge is of teaching that a minister "may abandon the essential features of the system of doctrine held by said Church, and which he received and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister of said Church." It is implied here, though not distinctly asserted, that it is a doctrine of our Church that a minister may not so abandon essential features of doctrine and rightfully remain a minister. But this is not a question of doctrine at all. It is a question of history. What, actually, does the Church require in subscription to its creed? It is conceivable that subscription to a creed may vary from the most rigid acceptance of every article to an acceptance which is merely nominal. Does this committee propose to discipline for inquiry into the actual practice of the Church? If so, they should be prepared to formulate this charge in these words: "We charge the accused with *heresy* in that he inquired into the history of creed subscription in the Presby-

terian Church." The absurdity of such a charge is evident on the face of it. And it is further evident if the citations from the Book of Discipline and the Form of Government are examined. For these establish no more than that the Church has the right of discipline, and that it has adopted the standards. Neither of these is contradicted by what I am alleged to have taught.

3. I object to this charge as *insufficient in legal effect* in that the specifications do not sustain the charge. The specifications are:

SPECIFICATION I.

He teaches erroneously in the New York *Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, that a doctrinal qualification is only required in the officers of the Church at the time of ordination.

SPECIFICATION II.

He teaches erroneously in the New York *Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892, that whether in any individual case the Church requires continued adherence to the doctrinal standard received and adopted at ordination is only to be made known by judicial process.

Now, suppose these propositions to be established? Do they establish the charge? Certainly not. For granting that Church requires a doctrinal qualification only at ordination, and that the opinion of a Church as to this qualification is made known only by judicial process, it does not follow that a minister may abandon essential features of the doctrinal system and rightfully remain a minister in that Church. This whole matter is a question of fact. I may be mistaken in the facts. If so, I should be glad to be instructed. The quotations of the committee show that a doctrinal qualification is required at licensure as well as at ordination. They establish the further fact that a minister, when installed

in a new charge, "promises to discharge the duties of a pastor, and to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the Gospel according to his ordination engagements." This might be interpreted as a renewal of his ordination adoption of the Confession. In that case, my statement would have to be modified according to these additional facts. But two errors in the statement of facts can not establish a charge of error in doctrine.

4. But I object further to this charge that it is *insufficient in legal effect* because charge and specifications are unwarranted by the language cited by the committee from my article. If you will notice the language, you will easily discover that the committee charge me with an inference not in my mind at all. The point which I had in mind was that it is not the mind of the Church to secure absolute doctrinal uniformity, else she would require frequent subscription or frequent examination or both. It was simply as evidence regarding the mind of the Church that I referred to the infrequency of subscription. Neither in this article, nor anywhere else, do I assert that a minister may "abandon essential features of the system of doctrine held by said Church, and which he received and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said Church." Nor do I believe it.

And here let me call your attention to the last citation from my pamphlet, cited under Charge III. In that citation you will find a statement concerning my own change of view upon the point under discussion. The quotation has no evident bearing on the charge under which it is given or on any other, unless it be this first one. I can not explain its appearance at all, except as an indication that the committee wish to insinuate a charge which they were not willing to make openly. Having charged that I believe a minister may abandon essen-

tial features of the system of doctrine he has once accepted, they wish you to conclude that I am conscious of having myself abandoned one of these essential features, and yet claim (dishonestly as they suppose) to retain my position as a minister. Now, if the committee want to charge me with dishonesty they ought to do it openly. Now is their opportunity; for they can certainly frame a charge of immorality as easily as a charge of heresy. The disadvantage of such a course is that I would have an opportunity to reply to a charge directly made, while the insinuation is more difficult to meet. Allow me to meet this one by a denial. I have never said that a minister may abandon essential features of our system, and yet rightfully remain a minister in our Church. In the matter of subscription, I believe with Dr. Charles Hodge,\* that the Church can not "demand perfect knowledge or perfect freedom from error as evidence of a call to the ministry;" and, therefore, a subscription to a system of doctrine means, as the original adopting act expressly says, that the Confession and Catechisms are "in all the *essential and necessary articles* good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine." And for myself I may add that I never supposed the doctrine of inerrancy, even at the time when I held it myself, was a doctrine of the Confession, much less an *essential feature* of our system. The language of the pamphlet does not imply that I so held at any time. I hope this plain statement may contribute to the removal of prejudice, which might be excited by the skillful implications of the committee, and may enable you more impartially to consider what I have to say. Your judgment that I have acted in good faith is as much to be prized as your judgment that I am orthodox.

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\*Hodge; Church Polity, p. 332. Cf. Digest, p. 45.

The sum of what I have said about Charge I is therefore : (1) The charge is *insufficient in form*, in that it does not define the article of faith impugned ; (2) the charge is *insufficient in legal effect*, in that it alleges as an offense what is not contrary to the Standards of the Church ; (3) the charge is *insufficient in legal effect*, in that it is not sustained by the specifications ; (4) the charge and specifications are *insufficient in legal effect*, in that both are based not on language which I have actually used, but on the committee's inferences from that language ; (5) the charge is so framed that in connection with a quotation under another charge it makes an unwarranted insinuation against my good faith, and is calculated to prejudice the court against me.

On these grounds I request that Charge I be stricken out, and also that the last quotation under Charge III be canceled.

#### CHARGE III.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charge the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., a minister in said Church, a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," while alleging that the Holy Scriptures are inspired, and an infallible rule of faith and practice, with denying in fact their inspiration in the sense in which inspiration is attributed to the Holy Scriptures, by the Holy Scriptures themselves and by the Confession of Faith:

1. I object to this charge that it is *insufficient in form*, in that it is not definite and specific. It specifies an article of faith which I am alleged to impugn, namely: the doctrine of inspiration. But the charge is that I impugn it *in the sense in which* it is affirmed in the Confession and in the Scriptures. Now, the charge to be definite should state explicitly *what is the sense* in which it is affirmed in the Scriptures and Confession, and which I deny. How else could I plead to the

charge? Do the committee expect me to plead that I am guilty of denying inspiration in the sense in which *they suppose* it to be affirmed in the confession, when they have not defined what that sense is?

2. But I object further to this charge that it is in substance the same as Charge II. One or the other is therefore *insufficient* in legal effect, unless I am twice to be tried on the same charge. This is evident in the first place from the fact that the citations from Scripture and from the Confession, and the evidence from my pamphlet are identical under the two charges. It is further evident if the two charges are placed side by side and compared :

## CHARGE II.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., being a minister in said Church, and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," contrary to a fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense.

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Now, if the committee had taken pains to define the doctrine of inspiration in the sense in which it is affirmed by the



Scriptures, they would have defined it as the doctrine that inspiration secured in the writers of the Scriptures *absolute truthfulness* when their words are interpreted in the natural and intended sense. But this is exactly what I am charged with impugning in the other charge. The two charges ~~are~~ therefore identical, and one or the other should be stricken out.

3. I object to the first specification under this charge that it is insufficient in legal effect, because it is founded upon the committee's inference from the language cited by them.

#### SPECIFICATION I.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with the unprofitableness of portions of the sacred writings.

Now, it would be easy to challenge the committee to show from the passage cited, or any other, that I teach an inspiration consistent with unprofitableness. The passage cited is an *argumentum ad hominem*. It simply points out that the emphasis of a verse of Scripture often urged against my view is not on *inspiration* but on *profitableness*. It then asks those who insist on a thoroughly verbal inspiration if they are consistent in equally urging the profitableness of every jot and tittle of Scripture. It is in effect saying, "let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." Whether this was a legitimate argument or not, is not here in point. It was simply an argument from premises admitted by my opponents (at that time, I mean), and contains no assertion of any kind on my part. Now, it is impossible to suppose the committee really supposed such an argument to contain an assertion. Is it possible that they were willing to make this as a plausible charge, with the idea that the greater the number of offenses

they could *allege* the better the chances of conviction? It concerns the committee to explain themselves. Surely ministerial standing and reputation ought not to be attacked by illegitimate inference.

4. I object further to this charge, that Specification 2 is identical in substance with Charge II.

## CHARGE II.

Teaching that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful.

## CHARGE III, SPEC. 2.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with error of fact in their affirmations.

The substantial identity is so plain that I need not dwell upon it. Either this specification is superfluous or Charge II should be made a specification under Charge III.

5. I object to Specification 3 under this charge, that it is superfluous, being the same in substance with Specification 4 of Charge II.

## CHARGE III, SPEC. 3.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with such unreliability in their utterances that the truth of events can not be ascertained from their utterances themselves.

## CHARGE II, SPEC. 4.

He teaches that the historical unreliability of the author of Chronicles was so great that the truth of history therein contained can only be discovered by such investigation, discrimination, and sifting as is necessary to the discovery of the truth in histories by uninspired and fallible men.

Here, again, the substance is the same, being somewhat more definitely stated in Charge II, Specification 4.

6. I object to Specification 4 under Charge III, that it is the same in substance with Specification 2 of Charge II.

CHARGE III, SPEC. 4.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with a bias in the inspired writers, rendering them incapable of recording the truth of events because incapable of believing them.

CHARGE II, SPEC. 2.

He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has been guilty of suppressing sundry historic truths, owing to inability or unwillingness to believe them.

The two specifications are the same, the one under Charge II being again a little more definite in statement. Careful comparison of the specifications I have put together shows that the same thing is repeated in different forms.

I object, therefore, to Charge III and its specifications—(1) the charge is insufficient in form, in that it does not *define* the article of faith impugned; (2) the charge is insufficient in legal effect, in that it simply repeats Charge II; (3) Specification 1 is founded on an unwarranted inference from my language; (4) the specifications are insufficient in legal effect, in that they simply repeat the facts already alleged in Charge II or its specifications, Specification 2 being the same as Charge II; Specification 3 being the same with Charge II, Specification 4; and Specification 4 being the same with Charge II, Specification 2.

On these grounds, I request that Charge III be stricken out.

## CHARGE II.

As the gravamen of the indictment is evidently in this charge, I shall venture to ask your close attention to a somewhat extended discussion of it, first noticing some of the specifications.

1. I object to Specifications 1 and 2, that they are ambiguous in language.

## SPECIFICATION 1.

He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has been guilty of asserting sundry errors of historic fact.

## SPECIFICATION 2.

He teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has been guilty of suppressing sundry historic truths, owing to inability or unwillingness to believe them.

The ambiguity is in the use of the word guilty. I have expressly disclaimed attributing to the author of Chronicles intentional falsification. But the language used by the committee is likely to be construed as though I accused him of just this. In his work as compiler, I suppose him to have chosen the more congenial materials. To assert that the Holy Spirit did not overrule his natural bias, is very different from asserting that the Chronicler was guilty of asserting what he knew to be false or of suppressing what he knew to be true.

2. Specification 4 is based on the committee's inference only.

## SPECIFICATION 4.

He teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles was so great that the truth of history therein

contained can only be discovered by such investigation, discrimination, and sifting as is necessary to the discovery of the truth in histories by uninspired and fallible men.

Now that such investigation, discrimination, and sifting does not imply historical unreliability as that word is ordinarily used, is evident on the slightest reflection. For such investigation is used by all historical writers on the Old or New Testament. It is indispensable to all Histories of Israel, Lives of Christ, Histories of the Apostolic Church. Do the authors of such works, even the most orthodox, imply the unreliability of their sources when they apply to them the same methods as are applied to other historical documents even of assured reliability? No more than this is fairly contained in my language, and the committee are, as we have seen, bound to put the more favorable construction on language adduced in evidence rather than the less favorable.

3. Specification 7 is a still more distinct example of an inference not warranted by the language quoted as evidence.

#### SPECIFICATION 7.

He teaches that the historic unreliability charged by him upon the inspired historical writers of the Old Testament is chargeable, though in a less degree, upon the inspired writers of the New Testament.

If you will read carefully the citation from the pamphlet, you will see that it only assumes that caution should be exercised in regard to *a priori* theories concerning the New Testament. No assertion is made about the New Testament writers, and the assumption "that caution should be exercised with regard to *a priori* theories" might be used by any one on any subject without implying even that he had errors or unreliability in mind. As we have already seen, an infer-

ence of the committee (in this case an illogical one) can form no basis for a charge.

4. I object to Specification 8, that it is insufficient both in form and legal effect, in that its language is ambiguous, and that its substance is irrelevant to the charge.

#### SPECIFICATION 8.

He teaches that the disclosures of religious experience given by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit, and free from moral defect, but are simply the experiences of imperfect and fallible though pious men.—Page 101, cited below.

The charge is defective in language, as you will see if you ask what it affirms: "He teaches that the *disclosures* of religious experience given by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit, and free from moral defect, but are simply the *experiences* of imperfect and fallible though pious men." What does this mean? The subject of the sentence is evidently "the *disclosures* of religious experience." These the committee suppose to be *in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit*. Does this mean that it was in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit to make such disclosures of religious experience? This is the natural supposition. But this I have never denied. This is the very point common to all believers in inspiration—it was the mind of the Spirit to give us disclosures of religious experience in the old dispensation. One result of this mind of the Spirit is the Book of Psalms. But the committee probably mean not that the *disclosures* were in accord with the mind of the Spirit, but that the disclosures were disclosures of *experiences* in accord with the mind of the Spirit, and, therefore, free from moral defect. For the specification adds at the end, by way

of contrast, "but are simply the experiences of imperfect and fallible though pious men." Now, look at this. The committee wish me to affirm that the experiences of the inspired authors of the Psalms are the experiences of *perfect and infallible* men—this is the logical inference from their specification. I do not believe they really think I should affirm this, and, therefore, I say their specification is badly drawn and misleading. It confounds disclosures of religious experience with the experience itself, and charges me with denying that these disclosures are free from moral defect in affirming that the *experiences* are those of imperfect and fallible men. But if, as is possible, the committee mean to affirm the absolute truthfulness of every sentence in the Book of Psalms when they say the disclosures of religious experience are "free from moral defect," then the specification is the same as Specification 9, which charges me with teaching that "the assertions made by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not to be relied upon as absolutely truthful."

But granting that Specification 8 can be understood to mean that the experiences of the authors of the Psalms are experiences free from moral defect, then it becomes clear that the specification has no place under the charge. The charge is that of teaching "that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful." Here it is charged that I teach that certain disclosures are not disclosures of experience free from moral defect. The two things do not belong together. It would be possible to affirm the moral perfection while denying the inerrancy, or to affirm the inerrancy while denying the moral perfection. Let us take another example:

The disclosures of Jacob's experience in the book of Genesis are absolutely truthful.

The disclosures of Jacob's experience in the book of Genesis are disclosures of an experience free from moral defect.

This case is precisely parallel to the one formulated by the committee. And if the committee were called upon to affirm the moral perfection of Jacob's experiences, and were not able to do so, they would not thereby deny the inerrancy of the record. In fact, the committee have introduced here an entirely new charge, namely, that of teaching that the experiences of the authors of the Book of Psalms are not *free from moral defect*. This charge has nothing to do with the other one, which is concerned with the inerrancy of the Scripture record. This specification is, therefore, not only ambiguous and obscure, but entirely irrelevant to the charge.

5. Specification 11 is *insufficient in form and in legal effect* in that it is ambiguous and misleading in language, and in that it is not borne out by the citation brought to support it.

#### SPECIFICATION 11.

He specifically affirms the impossibility of the Old Testament Scriptures being free from all error, whether of doctrine, fact, or precept.

What is meant by my specifically affirming the impossibility of the Old Testament being free from all error? Not to dwell upon the word *specifically*, which seems designed to lay an unwarranted emphasis on this affirmation above other affirmations in the pamphlet, I ask now for the committee's meaning of the word *impossibility*. The committee leave you to infer, if they do not intend you to infer that I teach—what? Why, that an errorless revelation is an impossibility for God to make! Of course, I never had any such notion. It seems to me absurd to limit God's power in relation to his



word any more than in relation to his works. What I affirm, as any one can see who will look impartially at the language cited from any pamphlet, is the impossibility of *concluding from the facts as they are*, that God *has actually given* such a revelation as some suppose.

The impossibility I have in mind is a *logical* impossibility. Concerning that the prosecution will admit (I suppose) there is room for argument. What they seem to attribute to me I brand as an impious absurdity. But whatever the committee suppose me to affirm, they suppose me to affirm concerning *doctrine* and *precept*, as well as *fact*. I know not how else to interpret the language "he affirms the impossibility of the Old Testament Scriptures being free from all error, *whether of doctrine, fact, or precept*." Now I suppose it to be generally understood—the committee certainly have no reason to be ignorant of it—that we stand on the common ground of the infallibility of the Scriptures as the Church's rule of faith and practice. There is no difference between us therefore, as to *doctrine* or *precept*. The sole question at issue is whether every statement on matters of fact *outside the sphere* of doctrine and precept is without error. And if you will look at the language cited from the pamphlet under this specification, you will be very clear that the committee have entirely misrepresented my position. I say: "Notice there are two statements here [namely in Dr. Hodge's sentence]. 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 [namely that the 'whole Bible was written under such an influence as preserved its human authors *from all error*'], is the one to which we object, and whose application to the Old Testament I affirm to be impossible." This language is certainly clear enough.

Yet the committee wish you to apply my reference to 'the other clause,' to the clause concerning "doctrine, fact, and precept." Now I suppose the committee itself will agree that they are appointed to convict me of error in what I have actually said, and not to accuse me by misrepresentation of saying what I have not said. But if so, this specification is ambiguous, misleading, and unwarranted, and the committee have laid themselves open to the charge of being willing by misrepresentation to raise a prejudice in the mind of the court—such a prejudice as nothing I can say will be sufficient to overcome.

Up to this point, therefore, I object to Specifications 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, and 11, under this charge. 1 and 2 are insufficient in form because ambiguous; 4 and 7 are based on inferences only; 8 is ambiguous in form, and of no legal effect because irrelevant to the charge; 11 is ambiguous in its language, misrepresents my position in two important respects, and is unwarranted by the language cited in its support.

6. This leaves the charge supported by the remaining specifications, and I now call your attention to the charge itself. I object to Charge II as *insufficient in legal effect* in two respects: (A) Charge II, although it declares that I have taught contrary to a *fundamental* doctrine of the Confession and of the Scriptures, brings no evidence to show that the doctrine alleged by them is fundamental. (B) Charge II alleges as the doctrine against which I have taught, a doctrine which is not contained in the quotations from the Confession and from Scripture which they have adduced under the charge; in other words, the doctrine of the committee is a doctrine neither of the Scriptures nor of the Confession. First let me ask your attention to the language of the charge:

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., being a minister in said Church and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching, in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," contrary to a fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense.

It is plainly the intention of the Committee to assert that the Holy Spirit *did* so "control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense." Now I ask why "the natural *and intended* sense?" Is not the natural sense the intended sense? Or is the intended sense something different from the natural sense? I can not help seeing in this phrase an obscurity that seriously mars the force of the proposition. The *intended* sense—intended by whom? If by the Divine Author, we shall agree. If by the human author, I doubt whether any will affirm it in the face of Peter's assertion that the "prophets sought and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace which should come unto you, searching what time or what manner the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto." Or if any assert that the intention of the Divine Author is necessarily the *intention* of the human author, this proposition also is at least debatable. For in the first chapter of Genesis, for example, it can hardly be doubted that the intention of the human author was to describe a natural week of six natural days. Probably the majority of those who hear me hold that the intention of the Holy Spirit was to describe a geologic week of six "creative days." So

the question *whose* intention the committee means in their phrase is not superfluous. And in that view alone the language is ambiguous, and should be amended. For be it remembered that the more distinctly we state the point between us, the less likely we shall be to argue to no purpose.

The case before us is more serious than it appears at first sight, because there is reason to think that the phrase is purposely framed as it is, in order to allow the advocates of the doctrine of inerrancy (so called) to escape from the rigor of their own position. It has always been supposed, for example, that the genealogy in the fifth chapter of Genesis gives us a Scripture basis for a chronology of the period from the Creation to the Flood. Any one who reads the chapter will find this to be a natural deduction: "Adam lived a hundred and thirty years and begat a son, and called his name Seth; and the days of Adam after he begat Seth were eight hundred years . . . and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died." Similar statements are given for each member of the line down to Noah. You will notice that this is no ordinary genealogy, as: "Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son." In the latter case, it is not a violent supposition that some names are omitted. But the table in Genesis is *precise*. It gives in each case the year in the father's life in which a particular son was born. Then, as if to prevent our supposing any omission, gives us the remaining years of the father's life, summing up also the total length of his life. It then gives for that son the age in which *his* son was born, with equally precise details of his life. Finally, we are told that the Flood came in the six hundredth year of the life of Noah, the last in this series. If these statements are true in their *natural* sense, we can not help deducing from them the length of time from the Creation to the Flood.

There is no escape from it, for the logic of arithmetic is an iron logic.

But as it happens, the chronology based on these figures is becoming inconvenient because of geological science, which now affirms with confidence the existence of man upon the earth at a date much earlier than the Creation can be placed by the most liberal system of Biblical Chronology. In this exigency the advocates of inerrancy take refuge in the very clause used by the committee: "*the intended sense.*" Dr. Green and Dr. Warfield now say it is not the *intention* of the Biblical writers to give us the basis for a chronology.\* What light they have on the intention of the author more than we have they do not tell us. Their rule would seem to be: Where we can not suppose a statement true in the natural sense, we must suppose the author to have intended something different. Let me ask you to look at this. For if ministerial standing is to depend on a juggle with a word, the sooner we know it the better. For this is a clear case of keeping the word of promise to our ear and breaking it to our hope. It would be quite possible to learn from the advocates of this sort of inerrancy to accept the phrase of the committee. What I have denied is, that we can suppose certain statements of fact in the Book of Chronicles to be true in their *natural* sense. Instructed by the advocates of inerrancy, I now say: Probably the natural sense is not the intended sense in these passages. And supposing that the truth is always intended (however far the intention is from realizing itself in the natural sense), I consent to affirm that every statement of the Chronicler is true in the intended sense. Why, if I were to do this, this very committee would

\* Bibliotheca Sacra, April, 1890. Presbyterian and Reformed Review, 1891, p. 366.

rise and accuse me of *paltering in a double sense*. They would affirm, truthfully, that my inerrancy is no inerrancy, and add to their charges one of dishonesty, in that I seem to affirm what in fact I deny. Yet I have simply met them on their own ground, and availed myself of their own carefully framed phrase.

We are examining a sentence which is not only a charge against the teaching of a minister, but which is also a scientific statement of theologic truth. For both these reasons it should be purged from vagueness or ambiguity, and for both reasons the phrase I have criticised should have no place in it. But we have now to look at the doctrine itself.

A. I object to the charge of the committee that it is *insufficient in legal effect*, in that while it affirms a certain doctrine to be fundamental, it brings no evidence that it is fundamental. The committee are no doubt right in supposing that they must convict me of contradicting a fundamental doctrine of the Confession, if they are to convict me at all. For Dr. Charles Hodge long ago pointed out that any one subscribing to a system of doctrine subscribes to the essential and necessary articles of the system. There have always been those in our ministry, as Dr. Hodge points out, who did not assent to all the propositions of the Confession. Dr. Hodge himself was understood not to affirm with the Confession that the Pope of Rome is the Man of Sin. It is of the first importance, therefore, to decide whether we are dealing with an essential and necessary article of our system. Is it an essential article of our system that the writers of the Scriptures were so controlled in their composition of these books as to make their utterances absolutely truthful? The presumption at least is against it. For one thing, the committee have not been able to state the doctrine of the charge in words of the Confession itself. They have been obliged

to introduce a new set of phrases quite apart from the general straightforward language of the Confession, and distinguished rather by a studied ambiguity, or at least a careful balancing of limitations. In fact, we are inclined to think their doctrine a refinement of theological speculation, rather than one of the foundations on which the faith of the Church is built. And if we discover (as I think we shall) that the committee must put in still another limitation to make their statement adequately express even their own doctrine, then we shall be more than ever convinced that a doctrine which requires such careful guarding is not fundamental. And I may take it as an axiom that the Confession would not leave its fundamental doctrines to be expressed by inference only. I know of no other fundamental doctrine which is not expressed in so many words. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the fundamental doctrines of our faith have whole chapters devoted to them in the Confession. And where a doctrine has not even a section of a chapter, or a sentence of a section to express it, we are at full liberty to conclude that it is not fundamental. Now the doctrine of the charge, if expressed at all, is expressed by implication only. I hope to show that it is not expressed even by implication. But for the present I content myself with showing that it is contrary to all analogy to express a fundamental doctrine by implication. That the Word of God in Scripture is the rule of faith and life, that as opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrine it is the *only* infallible rule of faith and life; that it contains what is necessary for salvation; that its authority depends upon God, its Author—these *are* fundamental doctrines, and they are plainly set down in the Confession. Not so the doctrine of the committee. Therefore I conclude that it is not fundamental; and if not fundamental, then it is no part of the

system of doctrine to which a Presbyterian minister subscribes.

There is another way of looking at this. As Dr. Hodge plainly points out in his book on Church Polity, the system to which we subscribed is the Reformed or Calvinistic system. This means the doctrines common to the Reformed, as distinguished on one hand from the Lutheran, on the other from the Arminian churches. And it is a significant fact that, while the Reformed Confessions in general affirm with distinctness the fundamental doctrines of the sufficiency of Scripture, its independence of the Church, its divine authority, no one of them unequivocally states the doctrine of the committee. A seeming exception in the Irish articles is only enough to prove the rule. The doctrine of this charge is, therefore, not a doctrine of the Reformed or Calvinistic system, and certainly not a fundamental doctrine of our own Confession. And, if not fundamental, this charge is insufficient in legal effect.

B. But, so far from the doctrine in question (for brevity, I may call it the doctrine of *inerrancy*) being a fundamental doctrine of our Confession, I believe it can be shown not to be a doctrine of the Confession at all. And I object to Charge II, that it is *insufficient in legal effect*, because it makes that to be a doctrine of the Confession and of the Scriptures which is contained neither in the Scriptures nor in the Confession. In order to show this, I must more nearly define the doctrine in question, and I will begin with the points of agreement. For the points of agreement are more numerous and important than the points of difference. The basis of faith common to us all is the idea of *revelation*. And by revelation we mean God's disclosure of Himself and of his will. True religion, which is the relation between God and man, exists only as God condescends to make Himself known to man.



This revelation begins with individual men. Each revelation is made at a particular time and to a particular person. But it is communicable by human language, and is actually transmitted from the first recipients to other men by language either spoken or written. Whether spoken or written, it is the word of God to whosoever shall receive it. A mother's message to her son by post is as truly her word as that which she speaks into his ear when they meet face to face.

The Scriptures contain revelations so clothed in written language. But it requires little knowledge of the Scriptures to discover that they contain more than direct revelations. A considerable part of the contents of these books is derived from the personal observation of the writers or from other sources. I may quote here Drs. Hodge and Warfield, to whom the committee of prosecution owe the formula in Charge II, and whose orthodoxy, therefore, they will not question. "The human agency, both in the histories out of which the Scriptures sprang and in their immediate composition and inspiration, is every-where apparent, and gives substance and form to the entire collection of writings. It is not merely in the matter of verbal expression or literary composition that the personal idiosyncrasies of each author are freely manifested by the untrammelled play of all his faculties, but the very *substance of what they write* is for the most part the product of *their own mental and spiritual activities*. . . . Each drew from the stores of his own original information, from the contributions of other men, and from all other *natural sources*."

Again, "the natural knowledge came from all sources; as, traditions, documents, testimonies, personal observations, and recollections."\* This language expresses only what is a

\* Presbyterian Review, 1881, pp. 229, 231.

matter of common observation. It is entirely legitimate, therefore, to distinguish between two elements in Scripture: what was the subject of revelation, and what was not the subject of revelation. But it is easy to see further that these two parts have a close connection. What is drawn from tradition, written documents, or the observation of the writer, has a distinct bearing upon that which is directly revealed. It furnishes a comment upon it, shows the setting, the time, and circumstances in which the revelation was given. It shows the progress of revelation, the difficulties it met, the manner in which it was received, and the experiences of those who received it. These two parts in this way make up a homogeneous book. It consists of a revelation with illustrative material, and the latter is of course subordinate in importance to the revelation. Precision of language would require us to say the Bible *contains* a revelation. In common language, however, we say not only that it contains a revelation, but that it *is* a *revelation*. This is speaking *a parte potiori*, and not with scientific exactness.

Now, theology as a philosophic science is called upon to account for the *unity* of this composite book. Theology asks itself how this book made up of such diverse materials becomes one homogeneous whole. The answer to this question is given by the word inspiration in its theological sense. Inspiration as defined by the theologians is the activity of the Holy Spirit exerted on the minds of the *writers* of the Bible, which not only led them to commit the revelation to writing, but also led them to select this illustrative material and arrange it in proper shape.

Now, up to this point we are all agreed. All parties here acknowledge the following points: (a) The Bible contains a revelation from God. (b) It contains other material not in the proper sense revealed. (c) This material is of importance

to us because of its bearing on the history of revelation. (d) This material was chosen and arranged by men acting under a distinct influence of the Holy Spirit, which influence we call technically *inspiration*; and (e) the result is a book which in its totality is the Church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life. I say, all parties agree up to this point. The point on which they differ is an inference concerning the *extent* of this activity of the Holy Spirit which we call inspiration. The claim of your committee is that the Holy Spirit could not have made use of a quotation (for example) without correcting every error in it, no matter how indifferent to his main purpose. Inspiration as they conceive it is such a superintendence over the mind of the writers of the whole Bible as made their every statement free from error. The design of God is inspiration, we are told, "is a record without error of the facts and doctrines he had commissioned his servants to teach."\* This includes, according to the theory, every fact stated in Scripture. Others of us hold that the design of God to make the record (in matters outside the sphere of doctrine and morals) absolutely errorless is not affirmed by Scripture itself, and is opposed to the facts as we have them.

Now, which is right and which is wrong, does not concern us here. The question is: is the doctrine of the committee the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith?

In answering this question, I might content myself with quoting the accomplished historian of the Westminster Assembly, Dr. Mitchell, who speaks as follows: "If any chapter in the Confession was more carefully framed than another, it was this: 'Of the Holy Scripture.' It formed the subject of repeated and earnest debate in the House of Commons, as well as in the Assembly, and I think it requires only to be fairly examined to make it appear that its framers were so

\* Hodge and Warfield, *Presb. Rev.*, p. 228

far from desiring to go beyond their predecessors in rigor, that they were at more special pains than the authors of any other confession, 1. To avoid mixing up the question of the canonicity of particular books with the question of their authorship where any doubt at all existed on the latter point. 2. To leave open all reasonable questions as to the *mode and degree of inspiration*, which could consistently be left open by those who accepted the Scriptures as the infallible *rule* of faith and duty. 3. To refrain from claiming for the text such absolute purity, and for the Hebrew vowel points such antiquity as was claimed by the Swiss *Formula Concordiæ*, while asserting that the originals of Scripture are, after the lapse of ages still pure and perfect for all those purposes for which they are given.\* This is the opinion of a very high authority, and ought to be kept in mind in examining the citations given by the committee to establish their view. To these I now invite your attention. The first is the opening section of the Confession.

Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so 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; therefore it pleased the *Lord* at sundry times, and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church, and afterward for the better preserving and propagation 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.

Now look carefully and candidly at that section and define

\* Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, edited by the Rev. Alex. F. Mitchell, D.D., pp. xlix and l.

precisely what it asserts. The main fact is that it pleased the Lord to reveal himself and to declare his will unto his Church, and that that revelation *has come to us* because committed wholly to writing. That the revelation was committed *wholly* to writing does not prove that nothing else was committed to writing along with it. The Westminster divines knew as well as we do that not all in the Bible belongs strictly to God's revelation—not every sentence has its origin in the revealing action of God. A part of the contents of Scripture is derived from other sources than direct revelation, and this the Assembly must have known. But for them, engaged as they were, in defining the faith of the Church, this other and subordinate part of Scripture was left out of view, as of less importance. Their main interest was in the Word of God *contained in* Scripture, and their affirmations are made concerning this. Had you pointed out to them that the catalogue of David's heroes for example as given in II Sam. xxiii, is evidently derived from the roster of the army, and not from direct revelation, they would have admitted it at once. But that would not have changed their language, because it was not their purpose to make any affirmation concerning *such* portions of the Scriptures.

But it will be said that in the next section they identify the Scripture with the Word of God written. So they do. But it was in the sense in which I identify my copy of Shakespeare with "the Works of Shakespeare," although it contains notes by Hudson, or Valpy, or Farness. The use of such language decides nothing as to the minor and less essential parts of the book which we agree in calling the Word of God. And it is noticeable that this section which enumerates the canonical books and adds, "all which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life," defines the main

object so clearly as to show where the interest of the Confession lies. And as if to convince us that the Westminster Divines did not mean to take a rigid position on this question they modified their language in this section very significantly. The Westminster Confession as we know is framed to a considerable extent on the so-called Irish articles, probably drawn up by the celebrated Archbishop Ussher. These Articles now in their second section enumerate the books of Scripture just as our Confession does, and adds: "All which we acknowledge to be given by the inspiration of God, and in that regard to be of *most certain credit* and highest authority." Now, as it is certain that the Westminster Assembly had these articles before them, we ask the reason for this change. Had it been their mind to assert the doctrine of inerrancy this was the time to do it. Instead of doing it they turned deliberately away from it and contented themselves with affirming again the main object for which the Scriptures are given. This looks like intention, and in the absence of other evidence we are authorized in concluding that the Confession was purposely framed so as not to assert that the Scripture writers were so controlled as to make their every utterance absolutely truthful.

Next, let me call your attention to the strongest citation adduced by the committee, the one given by them last. It is:

Chap. XIV., Sec. 2. "By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true *whatsoever* is revealed in the word, for the authority of *God himself speaking* therein; and acteth differently, upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting

upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

This is seemingly a very strong passage, and we may well say that if the doctrine of the charge is not asserted here it is not asserted anywhere in the Confession. Nevertheless it is not asserted here, as a little examination will convince you. By our faith as Christians we believe to be true " whatsoever is revealed in the Word for the authority of God himself speaking therein." This has reference to the revelation of God in Scripture, however, not to the Scripture as a whole, as is shown by the following sentence. For we are told that the Christian acts differently upon that *which each particular passage* thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the *commands*, trembling at the *threatenings* and embracing the *promises* of God. This is a catalogue of what those passages contain which are to be believed for the authority of God himself speaking therein. Now, will this committee or any one else in this house say that the Bible contains nothing but commands, threatenings, and promises? But if it is impossible to assert this, it is impossible to assert that the Confession makes it a Christian grace to believe those statements of Scripture which contain neither command, threatening, nor promise.

For it is noticeable here that this apparently most decisive of the committee's proofs is taken, not from the chapter on the Scriptures, but from the chapter on Saving Faith. If the Confession asserts the truthfulness of every statement of Scriptures, it also makes the grace of Saving Faith to consist in believing every statement of the Scriptures. We ought, then, to make new terms of communion, and examine every applicant for admission to the Lord's table, not on his reception of Christ as his Savior, but on his accepting every state-

ment of the inspired writers as "absolutely true, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in its natural and intended sense." This is the only logical position, and its very absurdity shows what I am trying to establish, namely: that the interest of the Westminster Divines was centered in the Word of God *in* Scripture. In common with all Protestants, they were desirous to vindicate *this* as the supreme rule of faith and life. As against the Roman Catholics, they defended it as the only rule of faith and life. But they did not concern themselves with an inerrancy that extends to every assertion of the Bible, no matter how unessential to faith or morals. And if this is all we can establish upon these, which are the most decisive passages in the Confession, we certainly can not establish it upon the others cited by the committee. Section IV indicates the authority of Scripture as independent of the testimony of the Church. Section V emphasizes the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Section VIII opposes the Roman Catholic exaltation of the Vulgate version. Section IX asserts the sufficient clearness of Scripture and the so-called Analogy of Faith. Section X is directed against the Roman Catholic claim of infallible councils. No one of them affirms or implies more than we have found in the sections above discussed. Strictly in the same line is the question from the Larger Catechism:

Q. 157. How is the Word of God to be read?

A. The Holy Scriptures are to be read with an high and reverent esteem of them; with a firm persuasion that they are the *very word of God*, and that he only can enable us to understand them; with desire to know, believe and obey the will of God revealed in them, etc.

This question and answer are intended to guide us in the reading of the Word as a means of grace. The emphasis is



evidently upon the *will of God revealed* in the Scriptures. Do the committee mean that the answer of the Catechism can be applied literally to every text of the Bible? Must we read the genealogy of Esau with a high and reverent esteem, and with the desire to know, believe and obey the will of God revealed in it? The argument of the committee proves too much. Look at Question 186, the answer to which affirms the *whole word* of God to be of use to direct us in the duty of praying. It is evident, I think, that what the Catechism affirms of the Word of God in this passage can not be applied to each particular proposition contained in the Bible. And if not in this passage, then not in the other: and the position of the committee falls to the ground.

The other citations made by the committee from the catechisms are no more decisive than those I have examined. In fact, they are in substance the same as the sections of the Confession already discussed. I should like, however to notice one question not adduced by the committee. It is Question 5 of the Larger Catechism (Q. 3 of the Shorter):

Q. 5. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Now, if we are to construe rigidly, here is the place to do it. When the Catechism specifies what the Scriptures *principally* teach, it is fair to presume that the authors have in mind the fact that they also teach *subordinately*. Their infallibility in what they *principally* teach is abundantly asserted in the Confession. No distinct assertions of inerrancy in what is subordinate is any-where found. I conclude that the Westminster Assembly did not choose to make any assertion regarding it. Probably the majority of the Assembly believed in this inerrancy. But they were mindful of the fact

that it was not accepted by all Evangelical men. Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin had indicated the existence of errors in non-essentials. The Westminster Divines did not care to frame a statement of doctrines to which those heroes of the Reformation could not have subscribed. Hence the reticence of the Confession on the point affirmed in Charge II.

But we are not yet through with this matter, for it is clear that some amongst us are willing to press the language of the Confession to its extremest limit. It is only fair to show that this process proves more than they themselves can soberly maintain. I will illustrate their position by an article of the Rev. Dr. W. H. Roberts which has appeared opportunely for the present discussion.\* This article states as the doctrine of the Confession, "not only that God is the witness whose authority and truthfulness can not be disputed," but also "that the facts of Scripture, the great doctrines of Scripture, *all the statements* of Scripture, are so connected with the divine Being, that he is author of all." The Confession, therefore, "makes belief in the *historical accuracy* of the word of God, as well as a belief in the truth of its spiritual teachings, dependent wholly upon the authority of God, the truthfulness of God, and the actual divine authorship. It makes the *inerrancy of God* the basis for the inerrancy of his Word." Now let us be consistent and apply this strict construction to the Bible. Let us ask the advocates of this doctrine to explain those discrepancies which they themselves acknowledge to be apparent upon the surface of Scripture.† If we do this, we shall find that they apply their apparently rigid theory, not to the Scriptures we now have, but to certain "original autographs" which no one has yet recovered. They maintain not

\* Herald and Presbyter, Oct. 19, 1892.

† So Hodge & Warfield, p. 237.

that the Scriptures *are* inerrant but that "the *original* Scriptures *were* inerrant."\* Now this is a very different proposition, and one entirely unknown to the Westminster Assembly. For it must be evident to the most careless reader that the Scriptures of the Confession are the Scriptures we now have. Or, rather, what the Confession affirms, it affirms of the seventeenth century Hebrew and Greek editions which are more imperfect than our own. If in ours we can not establish the desired inerrancy without assuming unknown original autographs, much less can we adopt the language of the Confession in the sense of the Confession itself. In other words, to save the alleged Confessional doctrine of inspiration, we must go directly counter to the Confessional doctrine of the purity of the text. For on this point we have a clear affirmation of the Confession itself, to the effect that the Hebrew and Greek texts have been "by God's singular care and providence kept pure in all ages," and that they are, *therefore*, authentic. Now the attempt has been made to show that the Confession is less strenuous on this point than on inerrancy. But the language is stronger on this point than on the other. It is not that the texts have been kept *singularly* pure, but that they have been kept pure. If the affirmation of truth means absolute truth, certainly the affirmation of purity means absolute purity. That one was attained by inspiration, the other by singular care and providence, does not affect the result, which is stated as strongly in one case as in the other. Now it follows from this that every affirmation of the Confession, if meant to apply to the whole of Scripture, is meant to apply to the whole of Scripture as we now have it. With this in mind, review Section V of the Confession, quoted by the committee, and see whether they or any one else can force

\* So Dr. Roberts, in the article just quoted.

strict compliance with its doctrine as a text of ministerial fitness.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent 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*.

What I say is: force the literal acceptance of these propositions as describing our present Scriptures and we should vacate every seat in the Presbytery. For here is no "original autograph" in which we can take refuge. The Scripture *doth* evidence itself by these perfections. For example, no Greek scholar will now affirm the majesty of the style of all parts of the New Testament. Calvin emphasizes the low and mean style of the Gospels. Drs. Hodge and Warfield say: "No one claims that inspiration secured the use of good Greek."\* The "consent of all the parts" is notoriously interfered with by discrepancies apparent on the surface of our present texts. The "entire perfection" is expressly limited by those who most strenuously affirm it to the original autographs.

Now, remember I am not arguing for the intrinsic excellence of any theory. We are concerned with the specific question: Is it a doctrine of the Westminster Confession that the Holy Spirit so controlled the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error, when interpreted in their natural and intended sense? The answer to

\* Pres. Rev., p. 246.

this question is a dilemma. Either the authors of the Confession did not assert this and meant their expressions to apply to their main subject—the Word of God in Scripture that is; *or else* they affirmed of our present Bible such inerrancy as no one at the present day can accept. To escape from this alternative is impossible. And whichever position you take you can not sustain this charge. Or, rather, if you take one position you can not sustain it, because it then charges nothing contrary to the Confession. If you take the other position you raise a test of ministerial standing which will shut out every one of our own number. Not that I think the latter equally probable with the former. Instead of supposing that the Confession states a doctrine which no intelligent Christian of this century can adopt, and which many intelligent Christians of other centuries have not adopted, I believe its natural intent and meaning is to state what we all believe—that the Word of God *contained in the Scriptures* of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

But a further inquiry awaits us. It has always been the practice of our Church to derive its doctrine from the Scriptures. “The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, *doctrines of men* and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the *Holy Spirit* speaking in the Scripture.” Bear in mind the exact point which is to be tested by Scripture. It is not whether the Bible contains a revelation—this is admitted on all hands. It is not whether the recipients of the revelation were fitted by inspiration both to receive and communicate it—this is equally admitted. It is not whether the writers of the books were divinely guided in choice of material from whatever source, for this is not con-

tested by any. The only issue is the further one: whether they were also divinely guided to remove from previously existing literary material every error of fact, no matter *how indifferent in its bearing on faith and morals*; and, whether in giving their own observation and experience they were so far lifted above the universal liability to error that they never *made a mistake*, even in the sphere of secular science or history. For this is the doctrine of the committee, and this they affirm to be a fundamental doctrine of the Scripture. They claim it is so fundamental that no one accepts the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures who does not accept this doctrine. Now, I hope to show you not only that this doctrine is not a fundamental doctrine of Scripture, but also that it is not a doctrine of Scripture at all. The only way to do this is to examine the texts adduced by the committee, for it is clear that they have cited every thing that bears on the subject. In fact they might have made their case just as strong, and have saved a good deal of time for all of us, by bringing forward a tithe of the number. Perhaps the great number of texts makes a stronger impression at first, and we must be on our guard against such an impression, for it is clear that a hundred texts that have no bearing on the subject do not add a particle to the proof. That the committee are able to find so many texts that they can allege to bear on the subject need not lead us to the foregone conclusion that some of them *must* bear on it. It is very possible that we shall discover not one of them to affirm what the committee uphold. Besides this, we must remember that we are to search for the sense of Scripture itself without dogmatic prepossessions. When we have been accustomed to use a word like inspiration in a distinct technical sense, we attach that sense to it wherever we meet it. But as we have seen the technical sense of inspiration which makes it result in absolute freedom from error is a

theological refinement based rather on supposed logical necessities than on direct and positive affirmations of the creeds. Did time allow, I should be glad to show that the Biblical usage is something very different from theological usage. For the present we may note the suggestive fact that the word inspiration occurs but twice in our Authorized Version, and in one of these the Revised Version replaces it by the more accurate rendering *breath*.

As proof that the writers of the Holy Scriptures were so controlled in their composition of these books as to make all their utterances "absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense," your committee cite seventy-one passages, some of them consisting of several verses, besides referring to eight others. In order to facilitate the handling of so much material, I will classify these texts and indicate briefly what bearing (if any) they have on the subject. It will be seen that on any theory only a very few of them bear on the subject. I make the following classes:

(a) Those which have no bearing on the subject whatever. Such are—Is. viii, 20: "To the Law and to the Testimony If they speak not according to this word it is because they have no light in them." This is a palpable mistranslation. The prophet has no reference to the Scriptures. He is denouncing the folly of Israel in seeking light as to their future from the wizards and necromancers instead of from their God. He says, therefore: "And when they say unto you: inquire of the mediums and of the wizards who chirp and mutter—should not a people inquire of its God? Should the living seek unto the dead *for instruction and for testimony?* Surely they who have no dawn speak according to this word." Here is no reference to Scripture, inspiration or inerrancy. Daniel x, 21: "But I will show thee that which is noted in the

Scripture of truth." The committee seem to have been misled by the word *scripture*, which they begin with a capital letter, contrary to the best editions of the Authorized Version. The Revised Version renders correctly the "writing of truth." Reference to the context shows that the Scriptures can not be intended. For the angel who is speaking with Daniel promises to reveal the future. This promise he carries out in the next chapter, *not on the basis of any earlier revelation*, but in an entirely new prediction. The *writing of truth*, in which finds this written, is probably the heavenly book of God's decree, to which the angel had access, as yet unseen by mortal eye.

Ps. cxix, 160: "Thy Word is true from the beginning." The correct translation is "the sum of thy word is truth," and the context shows that the Psalmist has reference not to the Scriptures, but to the commands of God therein contained. "Many are my persecutors and mine adversaries; Yet have I not *swerved* from thy testimonies. I beheld the treacherous dealers and loathed them; Because they *observe not* thy word." These verses (157, 158) show what he had at heart. 2 Pet. iii, 15, 16: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction."

The committee ought to indicate what they wish to prove by this text. I can find in it only that the Epistles of Paul were already reckoned as Scripture. There is no illusion to inspiration or inerrancy. Rev. xxii, 18, 19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book:



and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." This anathema on whoever shall add to or take away from *this book* is often quoted as though it referred to the New Testament or the whole Bible. Even if it did it would not strike me, for I have not proposed to take any thing away from the Scriptures, nor to add any thing to them. You hardly need to be reminded, however, that the author refers only to his own book of Revelation, which he forbids to interpolate or abridge. It can not refer to the New Testament, for confessedly the Revelation was written before several of the books of the New Testament. The Apostle John himself would fall under his own anathema because he added his Gospel and Epistles to the New Testament after the Book of Revelation was completed. It is a question whether the committee of prosecution wish or expect to be taken seriously when they allege such a text as proof of inerrancy.

Matt. x, 19, 20, with the parallel, Luke xii, 11, 12: "But when they deliver you up take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

These passages are specific promises to the disciples for the time of persecution. It has no reference to any written word of theirs. It might be quoted as an excuse for not making adequate pulpit preparation much more appropriately than as a proof of superintending inspiration in the New Testament writers.

Duet. iv, 2, and xviii, 1, 15: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye

may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.

"But it shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee."

These texts enforce the observance of God's commands. This is clear from the emphasis laid in the second passage on *observing to do* all his commandments. And chapter iv, the first verse, emphasizes the same theme: "And now Israel *hearken* unto the *statutes* and the judgments [*or customs*] which I am teaching you *to do*."

Acts, xxiv, 14: "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets." Why did not the committee quote the next verse? "Having hope towards God which they themselves also look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust." This evidently defines the *belief* which Paul has in mind. That is to say, he here affirms that his faith as a Christian accepts the *religious* contents of the Old Testament. That he should affirm more than this in the present passage would introduce matter entirely irrelevant to his purpose. Even if we could suppose the Apostle here to affirm belief in every scientific and historical assertion in the Old Testament, this would be no argument for us, unless he were expressly made our example, which is not the case. Gal. iii, 8. "And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel

unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." The Scripture is here personified, and made not only to foresee the future, but also to "Preach the Gospel" unto Abraham. But this bold figure of speech can not be made to yield a doctrine of inerrancy. In fact it creates a difficulty to literal inerrancy, for it makes the Scriptures preach the Gospel to Abraham, when the Scripture was not in existence in Abraham's time.

(b) Two passages may here be discussed together, which promise to the disciples guidance in the spiritual life. They are John xiv, 26, xvi, 13-15.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come.

He shall glorify me; for he shall receive mine, and shall shew it unto you.

All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine. and shall shew it unto you."

It is perfectly clear that these are promises to the disciples that the Spirit should enlighten them concerning the teachings of Christ; for the things to be brought to their remembrance are whatsoever Christ has said to them. To take the passage (as is sometimes done) to be a promise to the "College of the Apostles," that they should be infallibly guided in writing the New Testament is impossible. First, because New Testament books were written by others than the College of the Apostles; and secondly, because the discourse of our Lord from which the passage is taken, is addressed to the disciples *as disciples*. This is clear from the context. For the discourse begins with

the word of consolation: "Let not your heart be troubled," intended for the disciples through all time. This surely was not limited to the College of the Apostles, nor was the verse following the committee's citation (xiv, 27): "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you." The whole discourse is addressed to the Church of all time. It promises the guidance of the Spirit to all believers. But how far this guidance is from securing inerrancy, the unhappy divisions of the Church testify.

(c) Next we have texts which affirm that the *preached word* is a source of spiritual life. This is the doctrine of our Church, for "the Spirit of God maketh the reading, but *especially the preaching of the word*, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation."\* They are: I Peter i, 23, 25. "Being begotten not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the *word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever. . . . But the word of Lord abideth forever. And this is the word that *was preached as good tidings* unto you." The uniform doctrine of the Scriptures is that *faith cometh by hearing*. So true is this that not once so far as I know, is the reading of the written Word mentioned in the New Testament as a source of conversion. In the single apparent exception (the Ethiopian Eunuch) the written Word had to be expounded by the living preacher to be effective. In fact, it is doubtful if the phrase *word of God* (λόγος Θεοῦ) is ever used in the New Testament of the written, rather than the preached Word. In the overwhelming majority of cases certainly it is used of the preached Word.

I Thess. ii, 13, quoted by the committee, is a case in point: "And for this cause we thank God without ceasing, that when

\* Shorter Catechism, Qu. 89.

ye received from *us* the *word of hearing*, even the word of God, ye, accepted it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe." Paul did not bring them the written Word in any shape, for they had the New Testament already, and there was no written New Testament—apparently not a single book. What he brought them was the preached Word. We have no reason to depart from this analogy, therefore, in John, xvii, 16, 17, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth." Indeed, it is *certain* that our Lord has no reference to the Scriptures, for in verse 14 he says: "I have given them *thy word*." He gave them not the Scriptures, for they had the Old Testament before he came. He gave them the Gospel, and that not a written, but an oral Gospel.

Now see the position in which we are placed. Your committee affirm it as the doctrine (and a fundamental doctrine) of Scripture that the writers of the Holy Scriptures were so controlled in their composition as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense. They have adduced as proof a large number of texts, a considerable portion of which we have examined, and we have found not only that they contain no affirmation of the committee's doctrine, but that they do not bear on the Scriptures as distinguished from the preached word at all. We shall now, however, take up some texts which do bear more or less directly on the Scriptures.

(d) A few of them affirm the value of the Old Testament as a source of admonition or example. I Co. x, 11: "Now these things happened unto them by way of example, and they were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world have come." The Apostle means the history of the Exodus—especially the sins and punishments of the people.

And when he says the things happened unto them *typically* (Greek: *τυπικῶς*), he means that the Old Testament history contains types of the Christian life. He sees in the passing of the Red Sea a type of baptism, in the "rock that followed the people," a type of Christ. It is clear that this no more asserts inerrancy than the use of any other history for instruction asserts inerrancy. Can nothing be written for our admonition unless it is "absolutely truthful, i. e., free from error when interpreted in the natural and intended sense"? I believe heartily that the Old Testament history was written for our admonition, but I can not see that this requires inerrancy in every statement of the writers. No more decisive than this passage is the account of our Lord's conflict with the tempter, Matt. iv, 4, 7, 10:

"But he answered, and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

"Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

"Then said Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

The Savior made good use of the Old Testament Scriptures. He made them *profitable for correction*, and in this he was our example. But it is noticeable that in doing this he chose invariably from the *Word of God in Scripture*. For every one of his citations is made from a direct command of God himself. Whatever his use of them proves, it proves only for the revelation of God in Scripture, which, as I have abundantly shown, is not in question here, and of inerrancy of the record we hear not a word. Seemingly stronger, but in reality not so, is Psalm xix, 7: "The law or (*instruction*) of Jehovah

is perfect, converting (or better, *refreshing*) the soul; the testimony of Jehovah is faithful, making wise the simple." The "testimonies of Jehovah" describes God's revelation of his will. The "instruction of Jehovah" is frequently used of the word spoken by the prophets. Its application to the written Law (the Pentateuch) is later. And if any one wishes to make the text attribute inerrancy to the Scripture because it speaks of the Law as *perfect*, he may be reminded that perfection is attributed to Noah (Gen. vi, 9), Jacob (Gen. xxx, 27), and Job (Job, i, 1). The Hebrew root used is the same in all these cases with the one used in the Psalm. It can not, therefore, signify an errorless perfection. Similar in import is Proverbs, xxx, 5, 6: "Every word of God is pure;" or as it ought to be, "Every word of God is *tried*." The author has in mind his experience of the comforting and helping power of God's *revelation*. This is evident from verse 6: "Do not add unto his words lest he rebuke thee." If the author had the Scriptures in mind, all who wrote later than he, and whose books were added to the canon, would fall under his condemnation. Not to add to the *commands* of God would be of force against the Jewish tendency to multiply traditions, and it is perhaps this which he has in mind.

(e) We come now to a series of texts which bear on the general subject before us so far as to assert the *reality of a revelation*, but which do not necessarily affirm more than this. One of the most familiar of these is Ex. iv, 14-16: "And thou shalt speak to him *and shalt place the words in his mouth*; and I will be with thy mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what ye shall do; and he shall speak for thee to the people and he shall be to thee a mouth and thou shalt be God to him." A parallel passage is Ex. vii, 1, 2: "And Jehovah said unto Moses: see I have made thee God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be *thy prophet*. Thou

shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak with Pharaoh, and he will send away the sons of Israel from his land.” The two passages taken together show the method of revelation—God speaks his message to the prophet, and he delivers it to the people; just as Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron spoke for him to Pharaoh. The prophet is God’s herald, and has the divine assistance in his work. There is not a word about a subsequent record even of the revelation, much less about the record of matters not directly revealed. There is no promise of an inspiration “the essence of which is superintendence.” Nor can we find more in Num. xii, 6-8:

“And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

“My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

“With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

By the utmost pressure, you can get no more out of this than that Moses was pre-eminent among the prophets. The other passage in Numbers, on the rebellion of Korah, does not even affirm this. Num. xvi, 28-30, 33:

“And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do *all these works*; for I have not done them of my own mind.

“If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me.

“But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them,



and they go down quick into the pit; then shall ye understand that these men have provoked the Lord. . . .

"They and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation."

Here is nothing concerning Moses's prophetic office. The rebellion was against Moses's authority as leader., "Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness, but thou *must needs make thyself a prince over us?*" (verse 13). And to this agree Moses's own words: "Hereby shall ye know that the Lord *hath sent me to do all these works*" (verse 28).

The quotations from Balaam's prophecies are no more decisive of the point at issue.

"And he took up his parable, and said, Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

"How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?" (Num. xxiii, 7. 8.)

"And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.

"And he answered, and said, Must I not take heed, to speak that which the Lord hath put into my mouth?" (Num. xxiii, 12, 13.)

"And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.

"But Balaam answered, and said unto Balak, Told I not thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do?" (Num. xxiii, 25, 26.)

"And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers, which thou sentest unto me, saying,

"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I can not go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do good or bad

of mine own mind; but what the Lord sayeth, that will I speak." (Num. xxiv, 12, 13.)

Here is Biblical inspiration. When God sends a man to deliver his message, it is in vain for the man to try to change it. The divine *afflatus* carries him along so that he can not resist. But this is evidently true only of direct revelations of God's will. No such inspiration is anywhere intimated concerning the writers of the record. And this passage is the key to 2 Pet. i, 20, 21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [or "men spake from God," R. V.] as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter i, 20, 21.)

The committee need not have confined themselves to the two versions, for the Greek is even more expressive: "Men spake from God *being borne along* by the Holy Ghost." This affirmation is identical with Balaam's words concerning himself. It describes the Spirit's possession of the organ of revelation. It is besides limited, by explicit declaration, to the prophetic element in Scripture. The Scriptures are no doubt mentioned, but it is only as containing the prophecy—"no *prophecy* of Scriptures is of private suggestion." There is nothing about an inspiration of writers, about superintendence or inerrancy. There is a passage, however, in which Paul refers to things written, 1 Cor. xix, 37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." The Greek is significant here. Paul really says: "If any man thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual among you, let him *consider* the things that I write unto you, that they are *a commandment* of the Lord." This language limits his claim to the one thing under consideration—

namely, the regulation of spiritual exercises in the Corinthian Church. He was confident that on this he had the divine direction. But he does not speak as though he based any claim on his inspiration, but emphasizes the internal evidence—saying, in effect: "If any one claiming to be spiritual among you will examine what I have said, he will recognize in it a revelation from the Lord." The authority of an Apostle was, of course, the same to command by letter as to command by word of mouth. But he does not even appeal to his authority here, only to the intrinsic reasonableness of what he writes. And the fact that he emphasizes *certain* utterances as a commandment of the Lord demanding special attention, shows that he does not make the same claim for *all* he writes. In this very epistle (vii, 40), he gives his judgment in a matter, and adds, in strange contrast to the passage just quoted: "*I think* I have also the Spirit of God." Strange contrast, I say, because the language is inconceivable, if all Paul wrote was given by an inspiration that made it all alike the "commandment of the Lord." These passages, therefore, instead of proving what the committee is trying to establish, argue just the other way.

As we might expect, the prophets often speak of receiving the word of the Lord, and this is described as having the words put into their mouth. Is. li, 9; Jer. i, 9, and ii, 1: "I have put my words into thy mouth," or "the word of the Lord came unto me." The cases are exactly like the passage in Exodus already discussed. Only it should be remarked that Moses, in speaking to Aaron, is described as putting "the words into his mouth." The texts, therefore, need not mean more than that God spoke to the prophets. So Heb. i, 1: "God spoke to the fathers in the prophets." The same epistle also quotes Old Testament texts as "spoken by the Holy Ghost."

"To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart."  
(Psa. xcv. 7, 8.)

"Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." (Heb. iii, 7, 8.)

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." (Jer. xxxi, 33.)

"And the Holy Ghost also beareth witness to us: for after he hath said,

"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord I will put my law on their hearts, and upon their mind also will I write them." (Heb. x, 15, 16, R. V.)

But you will notice that this speaking of the Holy Ghost is affirmed not of the Old Testament *as a whole*, but of two passages which are direct revelations from God to his people; one a threat, the other a promise. Now that the Holy Spirit not only spoke in the prophets, but that He still speaks to us in their recorded words, is our *common faith*. I know of no Christian who denies it. I myself affirm it most decidedly. But the question before us is a different one, namely: whether the Holy Spirit so controlled the *writers* of the Scriptures as to make their every utterance, whether distinctly revealed or not, "absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in its natural and intended sense." To prove that this is the teaching of the Scriptures themselves we have not had a single text. Let me add the following, which are no more conclusive:

"The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. xxiii, 2.)

"Thou art God, who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" (Acts iv, 24, 25.)

"Which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets, since the world began." (Acts iii, 21.)

"Men and brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus." (Acts i, 16.)

That David received the word of God by revelation, that he spoke a prophecy by the Holy Spirit, that God spoke by the mouth of David or of the prophets; all this adds no light to what we already know. For we now see the analogy of faith, and are able to weigh the exact force of these texts.

(f) A considerable number of texts among those quoted by the committee affirm the *fulfillment* of prophecy—another point not called in question.

"And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures *the things concerning himself*." (Luke xxiv, 27.)

"And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.

"Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." (Luke xxiv, 44, 45.)

Now, why did not the committee add what follows without a break? "and said to them: thus it is written that *the Christ* should suffer and rise the third day from the dead, and that repentance unto remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations." This verse is important, because it tells us *what* things in all the Scriptures he expounded to the disciples. The utmost that we can conclude from the passage is that the Law, Prophets and Psalms (for the reference is evidently to the threefold division of the Old Testament) *contain* prophecies of the sufferings and resurrection of Christ and of the universal preaching of the Gospel. Now,

I ask: who has denied it? Is the time of this body to be taken up and the whole judicial machinery of the church to be put in motion that we should argue points on which we are all agreed?

Under this same head, of the fulfillment of the prophecy we may arrange the following:

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet [or "spoken by the Lord through the prophets," R. V.] (Matt. i, 22.)

"They said, therefore, among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things, therefore, the soldiers did." (John xix, 24.)

"For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

"And again another Scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced." John xix, 36, 37.)

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." (John, xvii, 12.)

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

"Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Peter i, 10, 11.)

These call for no remark. The following differs from them only in asserting that Moses *wrote* some prophecies of Christ:

"For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for *he wrote of me.*

"But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John v, 46, 47.)

Jesus also claims that his own prophecy shall be fulfilled: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but *my words* shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv, 35.) The immediate reference is to the prophecy of the end of the world. Add to these Matt. v, 17, 18: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The *fulfillment* here spoken of must be the fulfillment of prophecy. It is clear that our Lord is describing the relation of the New Dispensation to the Old. This relation is one of fulfillment, and so complete is to be this fulfillment that no single minute particular shall be an exception. But it means no minute particulars of *prophecy* not of the Scriptures as a whole. If the verse has reference to a verbal (or rather literal) inerrancy, it must affirm the absolutely correct *transmission* of the text. It was used by some in the seventeenth century as an argument against textual criticism.

(g) The committee have given us a group of passages bearing on Specification 10. The fact common to them all is that they cite under Isaiah verses which I suppose to have been written by another prophet. The argument here is that no portion of a book cited under Isaiah's name in the New Testament can have been written by any one but that author. This is a question of usage. It is conceivable that the New Testament writers quote by the known title of a work, without thereby affirming actual authorship. The Psalms, for example, are commonly called the Psalms of David, though evidently not all written by him. Those by David are so designated in the Hebrew text. Should the New Testament

quote as David's one of those not so designated, are we obliged to infer that that particular Psalm was written by him? Psalm xcv is once so quoted (Heb. iv, 7); but the Hebrew text gives no author's name, and some of the best commentators do not believe it to be by David—Calvin and Alexander may be mentioned. Many authorities suppose a similar use of language in Matt. xxvii, 9. Here the author seems to attribute to Jeremiah a verse actually found in the prophecies of Zechariah. The only way in which we can avoid attributing a mistake to the Evangelist is to suppose that he quoted from a roll of the Prophets in which Jeremiah came first. He therefore called the whole collection "Jeremiah," and cited Zechariah's prophecy under this name. The most strenuous advocates of inerrancy accept this explanation. On their own theory the citation under the name of Jeremiah does not prove any thing concerning the real author. Now the purpose of the New Testament writers by their reference to Isaiah is to enable their readers to identify the passage. The only way to do this is to name the book by its current title. When I quote from Shakespeare and give his name my aim is to point out the book in which the quotation is found. Such a reference does not contain an affirmation that the passage in question may not possibly be by some other poet. The inference from the allusions in the New Testament can not be pressed beyond the *intention* of the author, even on the committee's own principles.

Thus far we have sought in vain for proof of the position of the committee amongst the texts adduced in its support. We have found that several have no bearing on the subject even of revelation. A considerable number affirm the reality of a revelation, another large number assert the fulfillment of prophecy. A few, when examined, promise guidance to the preacher of the word, and another group makes the



preached word efficacious in the salvation of souls. Not one of the many passages examined refers to the Scripture as Scripture. They refer (if to any part of it) to God's revelation therein contained. They prove only the doctrine common to us all, and not one even implies that the writers of the Books were so controlled as to render "their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense."

I have left myself a few passages which seem more distinct than any yet examined. Two of them throw light on the New Testament use of the Old :

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.

"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Matt. xxii, 29, 32.)

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Gal. iii, 16.)

Now, I will not dwell upon the difficulties of these texts when compared with the Hebrew originals, which make them the despair of the inerrancist. All we need note is, that minutely as they argue from the Old Testament letter, they both argue on a direct word from God Himself. For it is clear that both the passages quoted are revelations. The two citations, therefore, add nothing to the force of those we have already discussed, nor do they go beyond them in affirming any thing of the Scripture as Scripture. Look next at the following :

"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures can not be broken; say ye of him, whom

the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John x, 34-36.)

The first thing we notice in this passage is that our Lord bases his argument on a direct word of God Himself. But he seems to make a more definite affirmation in that he distinctly mentions the Scripture, and does not specify the Word of God or the Word of Prophecy. But what is it that he affirms of Scripture? That "it can not be *broken*." The word is, literally, *loosed*, and is used elsewhere of commandments. It has reference to authority, not to veracity and inerrancy. It would have been entirely irrelevant for Christ to say: "God Himself calls the Old Testament judges Gods, and we can not doubt this, because every assertion of the Scripture is absolutely true." What he really says is: "God Himself calls the Old Testament judges *Gods*. Now, the Scripture, as we all admit, is *authoritative*; what it records of God here is an example for us. Therefore, you Pharisees can not object to my using similar language of him whom the Father hath called." Only thus is the argument of force, and we see from it only what is so plentifully illustrated elsewhere, that our Lord emphasizes the Old Testament as a rule of faith and life, *at least for the Jews*, for he says, *your law*. And it is evident that he uses the argument for confuting his adversaries. It would be entirely legitimate to regard it as an *argumentum ad hominem* simply. But you will notice I have not so used it, but have given its full force. Certainly, no Kenotist theory is necessary in dealing with it, nor have I ever seen it advanced in favor of that theory. And if this passage does not contain what we seek, no more does James iv, 5:

"Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain [or "think ye that

the Scripture speaketh in vain?" R. V.J. The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"

I will not dwell on the difficulty of this passage to the advocate of an inspiration without error. For it can hardly be denied that James here gives us a Scripture quotation which we seek in vain in our Old Testament. The R. V. renders against Greek usage apparently to avoid the difficulty. But aside from this, the passage says nothing about inerrancy. *In vain* is not the same as *inaccurately*, but is here equivalent to *unprofitably*. What James asks is: do you not suppose the Scripture has a *purpose* in speaking?

Now at last we seem to have reached something, for the two texts we have left certainly bear on their face a reference to the Scriptures. One of them from the Old Testament gives us some insight into the making of an Old Testament book. It is Jer. xxxvi, 1-6. And in the first place the committee has garbled the passage. By omitting the third, fourth, and fifth verses they make it appear that God commands Jeremiah to read in the roll which he (Jeremiah) has written from God's mouth. In fact, it is Jeremiah who commands Baruch to read what he has written from Jeremiah's mouth. Let me read the whole passage: "And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah King of Judah that this word came unto Jeremiah from Jehovah, saying: take thee a book-roll and write in it all the words which I have spoken unto thee concerning Israel and concerning Judah and concerning all the nations, from the day I spoke unto thee, from the days of Josiah and unto this day. Perchance the house of Judah may hear all the evil which I am purposing to do them; that they may return each from his evil way and I may forgive their guilt and their sin. Then Jeremiah *called Baruch* son of Neriah

and *Baruch* wrote from the mouth of *Jeremiah* all the words of *Jehovah* which he spoke to him in the roll of the book. Then *Jeremiah* commanded *Baruch* saying: I am restrained, I can not go to the house of *Jehovah*; But *thou* shalt go and read in the roll which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of *Jehovah* in the ears of the people in the house of *Jehovah* on the fast day." Now, here is the way of editing *Jeremiah's* book. *Jeremiah* is commanded to write down his prophecies. He calls his friend *Baruch*, and dictates them, and *Baruch* writes "from the mouth of *Jeremiah* all the words of the Lord which he (*Jeremiah* evidently) had spoken to him." Now, where was the inspiration? Evidently in *Jeremiah*. But *Baruch* was the scribe, and we are looking for the inspiration of the scribe. Had it been the mind of God to make it a doctrine of our religion, is it conceivable that he would not in this, the only passage which describes the origin of an Old Testament book, have told us plainly that *Baruch* was assisted by such a superintendence that he made no mistake in writing down the words of *Jeremiah*? I can not think it. As it happens we have an early textual error in the twenty-seventh chapter of *Jeremiah*, where for *Jehoiakim* we should read *Zedekiah*. I see nothing absurd in supposing *Baruch* to be responsible for that very mistake. But *Baruch's* copy was certainly as near the original autograph as we can get. This copy (or rather another copy for this was burned) the disciple afterward enlarged, it would seem, by adding later prophecies, and published after his master's death. Have we any evidence that he was supernaturally preserved from error in the later work any more than the earlier? Certainly not. And what is true of *Jeremiah* is true of the other books of the Old Testament. In the silence of the Word of God itself I think it the part of wisdom and modesty not to make any assertions. Not that

I blame those who find the theory of inerrancy a logical necessity. Only when they insist upon it as the criterion of confessional soundness, and proceed to make it a test of ministerial fitness—then I think we should *prove all things*.

But you will have discovered that I have not yet touched upon one text, the most important of all. And I recognize that one clear affirmation of Scripture is enough to form a basis for doctrinal certainty—though the consent of Scripture is so great that I doubt if any *fundamental* doctrine is attested by only a single text. The passage on which the current use of the word inspiration is based is 2 Tim. iii, 16. The fact that current usage is based on it, is possibly an obstacle to our correct understanding of it. For, when a word has been adopted by us in a particular sense, we too easily read that sense into it whenever we meet it. The tendency of systematic theology is like that of every other science—to affix to each word its exact technical usage. Theological usage thus tends to become more precise than Biblical usage. This word inspiration is an example. It occurs in two passages in the authorized Version. In the Old Testament, it represents a Hebrew word more correctly rendered by the Revised Version *breath* (Job xxxii, 8):

“But there is a spirit in man,  
And the *breath of the Almighty* giveth them understanding.”

You will recognize the idea as the same we find in the second chapter of Genesis, where God breathes into man the breath of life. This activity of the Spirit of God is nowhere connected with the writing of a book—certainly not in the Old Testament. But it is prominent in connection with the prophetic work of receiving a revelation. Old Testament inspiration is the inspiration of the prophet, not of the scribe.

As I have said, the word occurs in the New Testament but once, and, with these facts before us, we can approach the passage without dogmatic prepossessions.

But, why did not the committee favor us here with the Revised Version, at least along with the Authorized Version? For this is a case where our dependence is reduced to a single text out of nearly a hundred, and if the Hebrew and Greek texts are authentic, it is especially incumbent upon us in a case of so much importance to get as near these originals as possible. And the difference between the two indicates that there is some obscurity in the original. The consensus of scholars, however, is on the side of the Revisers, whose known conservatism makes it pretty certain that they would not have changed the rendering without good reason. They are favored, moreover, by such conservative scholars as Ellicott. The Revised Version now gives: "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, etc." And before we understand the text so translated we must inquire for the meaning of the Greek word translated *inspired of God*. For in the Greek, as probably the most of you know, they are represented by one word—*θεόπνευστος*. Unfortunately this word is not found anywhere else in the New Testament, and is rare in other Greek writers. So the word on which our whole fundamental doctrine hangs must remain obscure simply because usage is not sufficient to establish its meaning. That it means *God-breathed* we may see at a glance from its composition. But as we have seen, many things are God-breathed in the Bible. It may mean "endued with life," for life is the result of the breath of God. It may mean *breathing out* the Divine, redolent (as I might say) of the Divine. But one thing is tolerably certain, that the word is intended to describe a *quality*, not the origin of Scripture. It is similar to our own usage where we speak of an orator as *inspired*. Now the Scriptures

possess this quality, they are full of deity, they communicate to us something of God. So far, then, from this being a definite doctrinal statement concerning what we call inspiration, "the essence of which is superintendence," it is a pauegyric of the saving and enlightening *power* of the Scriptures, which is due to their containing a revelation of God, and not to any supposed historical or scientific inerrancy whatever. Its nearest parallel is the declaration of another New Testament writer: "The word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword." Listen to the whole of our passage, and judge: "But abide thou in the things thou hast learned and been persuaded of, knowing of whom thou didst learn them, and that from a babe thou hast known the Sacred Writings that are able to make thee *wise unto salvation* through faith in Jesus Christ. Every writing breathing the Spirit of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness." Instead of having here the single dogmatic statement concerning an inspiration that superintends, we have a testimony in full harmony with the other passages we have studied, concerning the Word of God in Scripture, the rule of faith and life to the Church the source of salvation and edification to the individual Christian.

Now, Moderator and Gentlemen of the Presbytery, I have examined every text quoted by your committee in defense of their doctrine. I have done it, as I believe, candidly and with an open mind. For I would rather be convinced of error than not, if I am in error. The result of the examination is to show not one text that makes for the doctrine of the committee as formulated in their charge. It must be plain to you that, so far from departing from the Confession and the Scriptures, I am in the fullest harmony both with the Scriptures and the Confession. It is the committee which is

trying to read into both a theory which is an extraconfessional refinement of the theologians. The Roman Catholics are right in maintaining that the doctrine of the Church grows. In every Church there is a *tradition*. At first, it assumes to explain or harmonize the Scriptures. It grows by logical and metaphysical refinements on the plain doctrine which the Church deduces from the Scriptures. It then arrogates something of the authority which belongs of right first to the Scriptures, in the second place to the Confession. This is true in the case before us. The doctrine of inerrancy is a dogmatic refinement on the statements of the Confession. I have no quarrel with any who find it a help to their faith or a logical necessity to their system. But, when it pushes itself forward as *the* doctrine of the Confession and of the Scriptures, when it sits on the bench as judge and dictates terms of ministerial standing—then is the time to test it by the facts and declarations of Scripture. For the Protestant Church is witness that all doctrine and all theology needs perennially to be brought back to the fountain head of Scripture. "The Supreme Judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, *doctrines of men* and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture." There spoke Protestantism!

What now does your committee of prosecution propose? They propose to set up an unscriptural and extraconfessional test of doctrine. They propose to set up a doctrinal formula drawn from a review article about ten years old. They tell the student of the Bible that his results are in conflict with a theory of inspiration contained in the Confession (if there at all) only by a precarious inference, and for which they have been able to bring not even a single text of Scripture. On



this unstable basis a minister is to be censured, perhaps deposed, and that at a time when the Church is engaged in revising her Confession, and when this very presbytery has proposed amendments that go against the letter of the standards as they are now received.

Moderator: I ask no charity, no indulgence. The proposition before us is one of law. Under the solemn responsibility that rests upon you as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, you are to decide whether the committee have charged me with an offense against the fundamental doctrine of the Church. The statute book of the Church and her ultimate Code have been examined. I believe it has been fully shown that the doctrine alleged by the committee is not found there. On the ground, therefore, that the second charge is *insufficient in legal effect*, I respectfully ask that it be dismissed.

## CHAPTER X.

## REPLY AND REJOINDER.

The reader will have discovered that the decision hinges upon the relation of inerrancy to inspiration. The charges and specifications may have been open to objection in form. But whether they were faulty in form or not, they did express the point at issue. One party held to the necessary connection of inerrancy and inspiration—the other party refused to affirm it. In order to conviction by process, however, it is necessary to show that the doctrine impugned is (1) contained in the Confession of Faith; (2) also clearly taught in the Scriptures; and (3) an essential article of the Scriptural and Confessional system. In order to prove these points, the Committee of Prosecution in their reply laid stress (first) on the Calvinistic system of doctrine as the great treasure upon which the Presbyterian Church had fixed its heart. It was, indeed, in connection with the first charge that this emphasis was laid. But the principle is the same. The distinctive principles of the Presbyterian Church were affirmed to be the especial care of the Church. It is a question, however, whether this is the theory of the Church itself. The first chapter of the Form of Government lays down the principle “that truth is in order to goodness, and the great touchstone of truth is its tendency to promote holiness.” One would think the consequence of this principle to be the emphasizing of those doctrines as essential and necessary which in all communions have had the greatest influence in developing holiness. The speculative doctrine of iner-

rancy could have little prominence judged by such a rule, both because it is speculative and because it has not been held by many men of large attainments in piety.

The attempt was made by one of the prosecutors to show the evil results of denying the doctrine of inerrancy. These were in brief the following:

1. If inspiration does not secure inerrancy, the Bible must be defective in both the embodied facts and opinions, because of the infirmity of human memory. Even where there is perfect honesty, errors are likely to result from imperfect memory.

2. Such a record of a revelation would be liable to error from the author's misapprehension of the revelation which he had received.

3. Such a record would be marred by unconscious defects of expression. Nothing is more common than for perfectly truthful men to utter not merely equivocal statements but actual misstatements, because the speakers are not masters of language.

4. If the writings be not inspired, every reader must be permitted to except to any statement, and accept only those of which he may approve.

5. In making a choice of the true and the false there is no definite principle by which one can be guided.

6. Only an inerrant record can have the power to accomplish in the human soul the work for which the revelation has been given. Man is to be subdued, to be made at once God's servant and God's son. Infallible truth and absolute authority alone can produce these necessary results. If the Scriptures contain mingled truth and error, they can not do more than develop in man their counterpart; the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, can never be produced.

7. Confusion and perplexity must be perpetual where men

believe the Bible to be partly human and partly divine. If one sit at the feet of Jesus ready to receive and live by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God, he inherits and obtains promises, is lifted out of the horrible pit, has a new song put into his mouth—but only as he thus sits.

8. If we have only a record partially human and partially divine, our study of it must be in a critical and doubting spirit, which is the very opposite of faith. Unless we be content to allow the Bible to judge and control us we will be led inevitably away from God.

These objections (in connection with which the speaker referred to Bannerman) can not be said to be conclusive. To a considerable number of them it is sufficient to reply that it may have pleased God to give us a record of practical sufficiency rather than of absolute perfection. The answer to the objections that every reader must be permitted to make his own selection, and that there is no definite principle to guide him, is, that by common agreement there is infallibility as to faith and life, and that the testimony of the Holy Spirit sufficiently guides the Christian in his study of the Word. In regard to the objection that only an inerrant record can produce results, the answer must be a flat denial. It outrages one's sense of Christian honesty to read in Bannerman: "The faith that finds in the divine truth its encouragement from the beginning, and its warrant ever afterward, is the *only faith* that will bring a sinner either to reconciliation or to rest with God; and that faith can be generated and sustained in peace by *nothing but* the infallible word of God made ours in a way and form that *guarantee it* against the uncertainties and short comings of human thought and speech." I say it outrages one's sense of honesty because it is a matter of common observation that many souls are brought to reconciliation by the preaching of the Gospel. This mode of reasoning

would deny all power to the preached Word, because it is mixed with the shortcomings and uncertainties of human speech. More than this; this line of reasoning would lead us to adopt the theory of infallible transmission, or else to confess that the inerrant record having been corrupted has lost its power to save. Neither alternative can be entertained for a moment.

But even if it were all true, this line of argument is beside the mark. The question in ecclesiastical process is not whether the denial of a certain doctrine is disastrous to faith in general. It is the more definite question—whether the doctrine impugned is actually contained in Confession and Scripture, and so contained as to show its own fundamental character. There is a possibility that the Confession has neglected to state the whole truth of Scripture. In this case the Confession would need to be amended, but one could not be convicted of heresy (on the particular point on which it was defective) until the amendment had been made.

The method by which the prosecution tried to show their doctrine to be stated in the Confession was by *definition*. The word *inspiration* occurs once in the New Testament, and once in the Confession. It is nowhere defined in either one. Of course, if allowed to give one's own definition of the word, one can find his own doctrine in the passages cited. The committee followed this course in taking the position that "inspiration gives infallibility, or there is no inspiration." They quoted from Dr. Charles Hodge the *dictum* that the Scriptures can not have divine authority without being infallible in all they teach. The formal definition given by one member of the Committee was in substance this: "Inspiration is a work of God's free Spirit, whereby he *inerrantly* reveals supernatural truth to the souls of men, and assures them of its truth by his own inward witness, and, moreover, persuades and enables

them *inerrantly* to choose such material or historic truth as his wisdom needs in the composition of the Holy Scriptures, and controls them so that they *inerrantly* record the whole for the good of man and the glory of God." To give this modern and complicated definition of inspiration as in the mind of the Apostle Paul when he spoke of Scripture as "God-breathed," or in the mind of the Westminster divines when they declared the books of the Bible to be "given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life," is a clear *petitio principii*.

This assumption of the point at issue vitiated the prosecution's whole case. It was reading into the Scriptural language what was needed, in order to get out of it the doctrine of the Committee. Their exegesis in general suffered from this fault. The emphasis laid upon such a phrase as *it is written* so often used in the New Testament, as though it in itself implied inerrancy is a case in point. A single example will make this clear. The language of the Chairman of the Committee is: "Take your concordances and see the absolute supremacy of the declaration *it is written*. Christ announces His advent, His mission, His person, His work, His sufferings, His death and resurrection, as predetermined thereby—because *written*, it must be fulfilled. Satan himself, after the curse pronounced upon him for having persuaded the first Adam to deny the absolute truthfulness of the words of God, does not seem to have been willing to repeat the attempt in his assault upon the Second Adam. *It is written* is not only asserted by our Lord as a final authority, but admitted to be so by the tempter himself. He had found the best method of assault was to assert the truth and then wrest its meaning. How any one who will compare the passages in which these words occur can doubt that Scripture declares Scripture to be infallible in all its utterances, I can not see." The reader

will see the argument. It is that the use of the formula, *it is written*, declares the passages of which it is used to be not only authoritative but inerrant—infallible in all their utterances. Now, turning to the First Epistle to the Corinthians (iii, 19), we read: “*For it is written*, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness.” The quotation from the Old Testament is found in Job iv, 13, in a speech of Eliphaz the Temanite. But the speeches of Eliphaz are not accepted by the most stringent inerrancist as “infallible in all their utterances.” Bannerman was quoted with approval by one member of the Committee on this very point: “A great part of book of Job is a report of opinions and sentiments expressed by his friends, not only without any warrant from God but in direct opposition to his mind. ‘Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that, is right as My servant Job has,’ was the rebuke pronounced by God Himself upon the broachers of these views. They were contrary to His mind and truth and yet they were committed to writing by His Spirit.” We have the prosecution, then, conceding that the speeches of Eliphaz, as recorded for us by inspiration, are not guaranteed as infallible. Yet one of these speeches is quoted by the very formula which, as the prosecution assert, declares Scripture to be infallible in all its utterances. The inconsistency is apparent. The phrase *it is written* is in one case, at least, not an assertion of infallibility, and of course it can not be made such an assertion anywhere else.

What further was alleged by the Committee will appear by a perusal of my rejoinder, which is here given in its main points. The great mass of Scripture proofs adduced by them in the indictment they left unused, which I take as an acknowledgment that my exegesis was correct.

REJOINDER TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPLY.

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MODERATOR:—When we adjourned last Thursday\* I had called your attention to the objections against Charge I and its specifications. So far as I can see the committee have not answered them and in fact some of them they scarcely noticed.

Let us now look at the objections to Charge III. I objected to Charge III that it is the same as Charge II and therefore one or the other should be stricken out. Which one is stricken out makes little difference. I supposed Charge II would be preferred by the committee as being the one which they had most distinctly worked out, both in the charge and specifications, and that therefore they would rather dismiss Charge III. But they (the committee) reply that the two charges are not the same. They did not make it clear to us wherein the two charges differ. One member of the committee argued at length under Charge II to prove what is the correct doctrine of inspiration. The other member argued the same point under Charge III. The latter gentleman indeed affirmed that Charge II makes the offense denial of truthfulness to the Biblical writers, while Charge III makes it the denial of the doctrine of inspiration. But this is not borne out by the language of

\*The committee of prosecution replied as to the sufficiency of the charges on Wednesday, November 16 and the day following closing about half an hour before the adjournment on Thursday. The rejoinder began on that day was continued Monday, November 21. Only those points in it are given which differ from those already made in the response.



Charge II. which distinctly emphasizes the Holy Spirit's *control* of the *inspired* writers. It does not say that I deny truthfulness, but that I teach "that the Holy Spirit did not *so* control the inspired writers *as to make* their utterances absolutely truthful." Now, this is the very point for which both gentlemen have argued in their discussion of the doctrine of inspiration. Inspiration is to them the influence which secures truthfulness. So that when they say I deny truthfulness they mean I deny their doctrine of inspiration, and when they say I deny the doctrine of inspiration they mean a doctrine of inspiration which makes it the source of inerrant statement. I can not see therefore that there is any difference in the two charges. The committee wish to state charges so that we can intelligently plead to them and vote upon them. We can fairly claim so much of the committee. But if they can not make us see what the difference is between two charges which they think different, we can hardly hope to discuss either one intelligently. Now Mr. Lowe argues the doctrine of inspiration under Charge III. But he does not notice the first objection to the charge—that it is not *definite* and *specific* (Response p. 12). It specifies an article of faith which I am alleged to impugn, namely: the doctrine of inspiration. But it alleges that I impugn this doctrine *in the sense* in which it is affirmed in the Confession and the Scriptures. The charge to be definite should state explicitly what is the sense in which [this doctrine] is affirmed in the Confession and in the Scriptures—"which sense the committee suppose me to deny." To this objection the committee only reply that "Dr. Smith extracts from the doctrine of inspiration all that *in our view* and the view of the Church it contains." This shows what they meant in the charge. They meant to charge me with denying "what in their view the doctrine of inspiration contains." But this does not help the charge nor answer my objection. For my objec-

tion was that the committee should state *their view* in the charge definitely. Otherwise I do not see how we can plead to it or vote upon it.

On the ground that the members of the committee are not themselves agreed therefore as to the meaning of these charges and the difference between the two charges, I must maintain both objections: (1) that Charge III is not definite and specific; and (2) that the two charges are the same in substance. Now look at the next objection (p. 14): "I object to the first specification under this charge [Charge III] that it is insufficient in legal effect because it is founded upon the committee's inference from the language cited by them." Now the committee assume that this is a question of evidence and therefore decline to notice this objection with some other similar ones. But the committee are wrong. There is no question of evidence here. It is a universal principle of law that where an offense is committed by words written, the very words used must be included in the indictment, and the court will pass upon them *without calling witnesses* at all; and if *prima facie* they do not establish the accusation, the case will be dismissed. For example, if a man sues a newspaper for libel, he must quote the article or passage of which he complains *verbatim*. If on examination the court finds that the words cited do not when fairly interpreted sustain the charge, the suit is dismissed without calling witnesses at all. The practice of courts martial bears striking analogy to that of ecclesiastical courts in that the indictment consists of charges and specifications. It is imperative in order to a valid indictment in such a court that "written instruments where they form a part of the gist of the offense charged must be set out *verbatim*, or where part only of the written instrument is included in the offense, that part alone is necessary to

be set out; and great care must be taken to set them out correctly."\*

Now, I do not quote this as a precedent having binding force for us. But it is manifestly according to justice that the same principle should apply in a trial for heresy. For in this case also the offense is committed by writing or publishing. And the prosecution are expressly warned by the General Assembly that a man can not be convicted of heresy on the supposed logical consequences of his views. My contention, therefore, is this: the specifications should have consisted of quotations from the pamphlet, with allegations of time and place of their utterance or publication. The specifications under Charges II and III are all defective in regard to time and place. But I have not urged this objection as not being material, and I have no wish to stand on mere technicalities. But the other objection is more serious. For on the face of them these specifications are simply the committee's inferences from my language. Let us look at the one now before us. The specification reads:

SPECIFICATION I.

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with the unprofitableness of portions of the sacred writings. Page 116, cited below.

My objection is, first, that the specification should have included the citation from p. 116 of the pamphlet. Dr. McKibbin practically admitted this when he said the committee did not care to repeat the citations with each specification. This virtually concedes that they ought to have been so repeated. The reason why they were not so repeated is that it was less convenient for the writer or printer. Now, on the committee's own theory, we are engaged in a case which in-

\* De Hart on Courts Martial, p. 293.

volves vital interests for the Church at large, as well as for the individual under trial. In such a case it is of the utmost importance that every thing should be so clear and regular that no one could mistake the issue. Substantial justice is, indeed, what we seek, as was intimated by one member of the committee. But substantial justice, if secured by an irregularity, loses half its force. Suppose I should be acquitted by a technicality. The committee would lay it upon the technicality and feel that the technicality had become of sudden importance. Suppose, on the other hand, I should be convicted by irregular action of the court. The court itself would suffer in that case in the eyes both of the Church and of the world, because apparently willing to take advantage of the irregularity. A thing is not settled until it is *rightly* settled. Pardon my digression. I only wish to show you that I do not stand upon technicalities for the sake of the technicalities.

Let us now construct this specification as it ought to be constructed, by putting together the present specification and the citation which supports it:

He teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with the unprofitableness of portions of the sacred writings, in the following words: "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 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 autographs it had some names wrongly placed, but do you make it profitable for instruction in righteousness? Do you make it profitable 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."

Now, were the specification so printed, its inconsistency with itself would be evident at a glance. For it must be clear to any one examining its two parts that the committee's statement in the first part is an inference from the language cited in the second part. And it is an unwarranted inference at that. For as I stated in my response, I make no affirmation of unprofitableness at all.

The remaining objections to this charge are that the Specifications 2, 3 and 4 are identical with Charge II or its specifications. To this Dr. McKibbin replies that it is quite legitimate to prove two charges by the same specification. So it is *when two different crimes are committed at once*. A man might be guilty of lying and slander in one utterance, and in that case the same utterance would prove both crimes. But the very point here urged is that the specifications, being identical, are used to prove the *same offense twice over*.

We come now to Charge II, and my first objection is that Specifications 1 and 2 are ambiguous in language. Both assert as the error on which the accusation is based, teaching that the inspired author of Chronicles is *guilty* of certain things. Dr. McKibbin answers that the word means no more than it does when we say a man was guilty of a misstatement, though this is accounted for by his being misinformed. Of course, I do not wish to haggle over a word, but if this is the committee's meaning, it would be a very simple matter to word the specification differently, and avoid the ambiguity.

And now let me recall the fact that I filed a general objection to these specifications on the ground "that they are insufficient in form, in that they do not state the *facts* relied upon to sustain the charge," but in every case the committee's interpretation of the facts. This is evident from their form. No one of them gives my words as a part of the specification. If the words used by me, as given in the citations from the

pamphlet, had been properly embodied in the specification, the discrepancy between the two parts of the specification would have been manifest in every case. In the citations referred to by these two specifications, for example, I have said nothing about the *guilt* of the Chronicler. In the citation on which Specification 3 is based, I have said nothing about his indorsing material by his authority. Formally, therefore, all these specifications are defective. In those I have especially noticed the defect is particularly grave; that is, in Specifications 4, 7, 8 and 11. Let me call your attention again to Specification 7 (p. 18):

"He teaches that the historical unreliability charged by him upon the inspired historical writers of the Old Testament is chargeable, though in a less degree, upon the inspired writers of the New Testament," [should be added] in the words following: "Only it should be observed that the chances for error in the Old Testament are much greater than 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."

Comparison of the two parts of the specification shows that the committee's statement is only an inference.

The fourth objection [p. 19] was answered by Dr. McKibbin only by an affirmation that the experiences disclosed in the Psalms are *normal* experiences. But my first objection is that the specification does not say that. If that is what the committee mean, they should say so. But, as I pointed out, even if that be the meaning of the specification, it is irrelevant to the charge. Much of what Dr. McKibbin says I should agree with. But what we want to know now is

whether this specification is relevant to the charge. On that the committee give no reply, except to say: "It is for this that these experiences have been committed to the Word of God in which we have given to us *a truthful account of a proper experience.*" Now all I have said is, the committee mixed up two things: the truthful account and the proper experience (*i. e.*, an experience free from moral defect). We easily separate the two things—as in the case of Jacob. To deny the one is not to deny the other. Yet the committee wish to make my denial of one a reason for convicting me of denial of the other. I say, as I said in my response, the two things do not go together, and the committee have, in fact, introduced here an entirely new charge in the form of a specification.

Up to this point, therefore, I do not see that the committee have answered a single one of my objections. The most important one still remains to be discussed. I mean the one on page 23, of the Response, which I will repeat here :

I object to Charge II as *insufficient in legal effect* in two respects: (A) Charge II, although it declares that I have taught contrary to a *fundamental* doctrine of the Confession and of the Scriptures, brings no evidence to show that the doctrine alleged by them is fundamental. (B) Charge II alleges that the doctrine against which I have taught, is a doctrine which is not contained in the quotations from the Confession and from Scripture which they have adduced under the charge ; in other words, the doctrine of the committee is a doctrine neither of the Scriptures nor of the Confession. First let me ask your attention in the language of the charge :

"The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., being a minister in said Church and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching, in a pamphlet entitled 'Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration,' contrary to a fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy

Scriptures as to make their utterance absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense."

It is plainly the intention of the committee to assert that the Holy Spirit *did* so "control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense."

The committee not only affirm this as their view, but affirm it as a fundamental doctrine of the Confession and of the Scriptures. That one member argues the point under Charge II, and the other argues it under Charge III, does not concern us here. Now remember we are not asking about the consensus of the theologians. The theologians are system makers. They look at speculative divinity through the eyes of their philosophy. They may be tempted to make fundamental that which is logically necessary to their philosophy. And the tradition of the church is so strong that it is inclined to insist upon every such doctrine as fundamental. Fortunately, we have a check on this tendency in the plain declaration of our Church, that all *doctrines of me nare* to be tried by the Holy Scripture. A fundamental doctrine, then, in the sense in which we now inquire for it, is a doctrine fundamental in Scripture. Of course, this means that it is abundantly testified in Scripture itself. For while a single clear affirmation of truth in Scripture is enough to make us accept it, there is no instance of a fundamental doctrine being asserted in only one passage.

It would seem to be self-evident now that a fundamental doctrine should be capable of clear expression. The committee complain that my doctrine, as they are pleased to call it, is not clearly expressed. The only doctrine I have, however, is the doctrine of the Westminster Assembly, that the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and



New Testaments is the only infallible *rule of faith and practice*. This is certainly clear enough, and it answers the conditions of a fundamental doctrine because it is abundantly asserted in the Scriptures and in the Confession. As against this, the committee assert a doctrine which needs, as we can see, a complicated and carefully balanced statement. It is in substance this: The Scriptures not only contain, but are the Word of God by virtue of their organizing principle which we call inspiration, and which secured that every statement of the writers is absolutely truthful when interpreted in its natural and intended sense, and when the *ipsissima verba* of the original autographs are ascertained.\* Now my first argument against this being a fundamental doctrine is that it is too complicated. Its wording shows a desire to make allowance for a variety of somewhat conflicting considerations. It is limited by this desire, not to say hampered by it, and the result does not make the impression of a single and clear-cut definition, such as are the fundamental doctrines of Presbyterianism.

But when we come to examine this definition, we discover that while the members of the committee agree in defending it, they do not agree in the method in which the inerrancy is brought about. Dr. McKibbin begins with the inspiration of the prophets. This he defines as the inspiration which makes the prophet God's mouth-piece or spokesman, whether in speaking or writing. The Scriptures are written by such inspired men, and are, therefore, the Word of God. Mr. Lowe, on the other hand, taking as his starting point 2 Timothy iii, 16, defines the Scriptures as inspired—it was the *writings*

\* Dr. McKibbin claimed at this point that the "original autographs" are sufficiently designated in the language of the charge, that "the Holy Spirit so controlled the inspired writers in *their composition* of the Holy Scriptures."

which were inspired, not the men. I do not speak of this difference as invalidating the arguments advanced by these gentlemen, but as showing we are on the uncertain ground of speculative theology. The theologians of the seventeenth century had an equal right to speculate, and they did it by analyzing the act of inspiration into three parts: the *impulsus scribendi*, the *suggestio rerum* and the *suggestio verborum*. Now, one of the cautions that we need to take to heart in such an inquiry as this, is against reading our scholastic theories into the Scriptures. It was with reference to this that I inquired about the bearing of certain citations from the systematic theologians. They might give us their view of what is logically necessary to a complete system of theology, and yet not mean to assert that their particular view was asserted in the Confession or the Scriptures. It would not follow that they were anti-scriptural or anti-confessional, only that they went *beyond* Scripture and Confession in their deductions or inferences. For our present inquiry, the testimony of one exegetical scholar is worth more than that of three systematic theologians. And I do not say this as disparaging the systematic theologians, I only say it because the inquiry that most directly concerns us is a distinctly exegetical inquiry.

Now, as to the proof texts brought by the committee, I said in my response that they prove no more than the points well established among us and agreed upon: (1) that a revelation has been given; (2) that prophecy has been fulfilled; (3) that our Lord recognizes the reality of revelation, and the spiritual power of the Old Testament, which contains the revelation; (4) that the Church has the promise of the guidance of the Holy Spirit into spiritual truth. So soon as we recognize the fact that the prophets claim inspiration for themselves, but not for those who *write*, we see that all the affirmations of the Bible itself are concerned with the *revelation* of God in

Scripture, rather than with Scripture as a whole. We found, at any rate, on examining the citations of the committee, that where they referred to any thing as spoken by God or the Holy Ghost it was a distinct revelation, promise or prophecy which was so described. And the weight of this fact can be better estimated if we look at another of Dr. McKibbin's statements. "The inspired *writers*," he says, "identify their *utterances* with God's—their right to *speak* is that they are commissioned by God." Now, it is difficult to characterize such a statement as this without using harsh language. It purports to describe the inspired *writers*, that is, the writers of all the books of the Bible. It then speaks of them as identifying their *utterances* with God's, and says their right to *speak* is that they are commissioned by God. There is a palpable confusion here of writers and speakers. Why did not Dr. McKibbin say: the inspired writers identify their *writings* with God's—their right to *write* is that they are commissioned by God? The reason is plain enough. Such a statement would show its falsehood on its face. There is no instance that I can recall where a writer as distinguished from a prophet makes such a claim. What is meant is that the *prophets* claim to speak as God's spokesmen. *They* identify their utterances with God's. *Their* right to speak is that they are commissioned by God. If any one doubts this let him take the plainly historical portions of the Old Testament. Let him make a thorough examination of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Esther and Nehemiah. He will find not one single instance, I venture to say, in which the writer clearly claims even to be God's spokesman. Much less will he find one where he identifies his utterances with God's utterances. In the books of the prophets we find such expressions in abundance, because the prophet was God's spokesman. He did identify his utterances with God's, and he had a right to. But in the historical portions even of the prophetic books the

writer carefully refrains from making such claims. For example, the history of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in the book of Isaiah (xxxvi-xxxix) or the concluding section of Jeremiah (lii) are as free from any claims of this kind as are the books of Kings, and the same is true of the historical sections of the Pentateuch. The discovery of this fact is fatal to the theory. For it is inconceivable that the Old Testament writers, if all alike conscious of being God's spokesmen or amanuenses (as we should more properly say) should observe this careful reticence. Now, Dr. McKibbin adds that the writers of the Old Testament books are all *believed to be* prophets. So they are by some people. But the belief is apparently no older than the fourth century of our era. We find it in the Talmud, where it is in such a shape that we can not accept all its statements, as that Adam was the author of one of the Psalms. It is not found in the New Testament, except that one of the divisions of the Old Testament is called the Prophets, which, of course, proves nothing. In fact, it is pure conjecture, and is disproved by the fact I have just mentioned, that where we can distinguish the writer from the speaker the latter claims the divine inspiration, the former never does. And there is another significant fact here. If the writers had the same sort of inspiration with the prophets why should it never be said "*God wrote*," or, "*as the Holy Spirit hath written*?" For it must be clear to you that these expressions would be just as appropriate as that "*God spoke*" or "*as saith the Holy Spirit*." Were it true that the writers had such a commission to write for God as the prophets had to speak for him, it would be as proper to say *God wrote*, or *the Holy Spirit writes*, as to use the corresponding expressions. Why, then, do we never find these phrases, but simply *it is written*? There can be no explanation except that the Scripture was not written under the same kind of inspiration as the

prophets enjoyed. The sharp distinction between the two is warranted by the facts.

Now I will not go over all the ground gone over in my Response. I see no reason for doubting that my position there is the correct one. The committee have not condescended to notice my arguments in detail. Only on one or two passages they take issue with me. The first is the important passage in Timothy (see Response, p. 66). Mr. Lowe while preferring the Authorized Version quotes Gausson as holding the Revised Version to be more emphatic. But on that point each one of us has judgment enough to decide for himself. I will not quarrel with any. The decisive point is the word *θεόπνευστος*. However we may define it, it is true that it occurs nowhere else in the New Testament and consequently that we have a fundamental doctrine hanging on one single word—a fact without its parallel among the fundamental doctrines as I venture to think. Mr. Lowe however doubts my definition of the word and seems to think me inconsistent in that I render it *God-breathed*, and *breathing* the Spirit of God. In truth they are one. That which is saturated with an odor gives forth perfume. That which is full of the Spirit of God gives forth a divine influence. Both meanings are probably contained in the word. Let me quote Cremer, a good authority—for I would not have you take my word as decisive. After a discussion of the few instances in which the word is found outside the New Testament, he says: “it can not mean *given* by inspiration of God, but must be equivalent to *breathing the Spirit of God*, or *partaking of the Spirit of God*. For similar forms *ἀπνευστος*, *εὐπνευστος* evidently pass from the passive to the active meaning.”\*

The other passage urged again by Mr. Lowe is John x, 34—

\* Wörterb d. N. T. Gräcität, *sub voce*.

36 (see Response, p. 63) where our Lord says the Scripture can not be broken. In view of his astonishment at my exposition I have carefully reviewed it and can not find any thing obscure or erroneous unless it be that I do not agree with the committee. What I have said I reaffirm. The passage does not seem to me to made any reference to the Scriptures as inerrant or even veracious. They are adduced as *authority* on the strength of which Christ justifies his own assumption of the title "Son of God." Now if we assume that they can not be authoritative in this passage without being inerrant in *every* passage, the text proves the doctrine of the committee, otherwise not.

Now let me notice the manner in which the committee prove their doctrine. They object to my saying that it is a recent doctrine. What I say is that the committee "propose to set up a doctrinal formula drawn from a review article about ten years old." To this they object and claim that the doctrine is much older. Of course it is; it goes back in its full blown beauty to the seventeenth century. But the *statement* in the charge is nevertheless of comparatively recent origin. I have not met it in any thing older than the article of Drs. Hodge and Warfield which is precisely eleven and one-half years old. Now however much we may honor Messrs Hodge and Warfield (and I should be the last to speak slightly of them), it is doing them too much honor to set up their statement of the confessional and Biblical doctrine as the doctrine of the Church. Why does not your committee state their doctrine in the language of the Confession itself? Clearly because it is not expressed there clearly enough to try a heretic by. Therefore they choose a formula that is more definite than the Confession, while they claim that it expresses the doctrine of the Confession.

And now let me call your attention to the procedure known

as begging the questions. If you carefully state your premises so as to affirm the thing you want to prove, you can demonstrate to a certainty just that thing. This is what your committee has done. Not having a high opinion of other people's logic they make skillful use of their own. Dr. McKibbin for example says the fundamental idea of inspiration is "such an influence as made the organ of it God's mouth piece." The mode and extent to which it has suppressed men's idiosyncrasies God has left his Church to determine. "But as to the effect (that the speaker or writer is God's mouth or spokesman) this is asserted on almost every page. *Therefore* it is a doctrine taught in the Scripture, and *therefore* it is to be accepted by every one who accepts the system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures. God is the author [of Scripture] and to impugn this is to impugn God." Inspiration he adds, "is the organizing principle which makes Scripture Holy Scripture." Now we are not questioning the truth of the doctrine. The only question is whether the doctrine is a doctrine of the Scriptures. This is easily proved by this method. You have only to define inspiration in this way and then interpret every text which refers to the prophet or the word of God by your definition, and you have done just what you want. But let any one question the premises and you are gone. Make the clear distinction between Biblical inspiration of the prophet and theological inspiration of the scribe, and while you will find one asserted frequently (though not on every page) you will find the other faintly and rarely indicated. In this method you will find less definiteness perhaps but in the long run more certainty. The other member of the committee gave us a definition which I was not able to get down but which similarly assumed the very point in dispute. And so by asserting plenary inspiration to be the doctrine of our Church, and then giving us Webster's definition of plenary inspiration he

established his position. But the question in dispute is not as to the consensus of the theologians or the declarations of the General Assembly. For neither one has a right to define doctrine for the Church. The doctrine of the Church is contained in the Confession and the Scriptures.

Now your committee have argued at some length for the fundamental character of their doctrine on the ground that it has always been the doctrine of the Church. At the same time they seem to admit that it has not been the formulated doctrine of the Church, because it has never been questioned. "Had there been no heresies, there had been no creeds." Now, on this basis, what is the duty of the committee? Plainly, not to prosecute me, but first to amend the creed. For here, on their own confession, is a new heresy, to meet which we have no distinctly formulated creed statement. At a favorable time when the Church is revising her Confession, it would seem the plain duty of every one who opposes "a great system of errancy," or who wishes even to get a single errorist out of the Church, it would seem to be the duty of such a one (I say) to overture an amendment to the Confession embodying the words of the Charge; then we should know where we stand. The more I think of this, the more I am surprised that it has not been done.

But it would seem to be difficult for the committee to prove both their assertions—that the doctrine has never been questioned, and yet that it is the doctrine of the Church. For as they themselves assert, formulas of doctrine are the result of heresies. This heresy they think so recent that it has not yet given rise to the opposite creed statement. And it is, to say the least, difficult to convict one of having denied a fundamental doctrine when that doctrine has not yet been defined.

Before we can decide on the force of the committee's argument, therefore, we must look a little at the history of the



Church. And here it strikes us at once that the committee are rather sweeping in their generalizations. They claim for their view of inspiration Esdras, Josephus, Philo, the fathers, and every one else down to the Reformation of the Church. Let us look a little into this list. The apocryphal book of (IV) Esdras, to which, I suppose, the first reference is made, represents the Holy Scriptures as lost in the captivity. Ezra receives command to restore them, and in a trance he dictates them to five scribes, not resting for forty days or nights. He dictates not only the canonical books of the Old Testament, but seventy books of secret wisdom to be kept for the initiated. The whole story is invented to give circulation to apocryphal books, and bears the mark of falsehood on its face. Its extravagances discredit its advocacy of any theory. Philo no doubt had a high theory of inspiration. He believes all the Old Testament writers to have been prophets. But his conception of prophecy is more Greek than Hebrew. It makes the prophets inspired in the sense of the pythoness of Apollo. They speak higher mysteries in a state of trance. But with this high doctrine is a theory of exposition that deprives the Scriptures of all its truth. For, as is well known, Philo is the father of the allegorical method. Every sentence of Scripture was to him true *in the higher sense*. But this is against the committee which assert the inspired writer's utterances to be truthful when interpreted in their *natural* sense. This is largely true of the fathers. The Apostolic fathers all believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, but not one says any thing on the subject more than I could say—that is, not one can be quoted in favor of the distinctive view of the committee. Hippolytus emphasizes the truth of revelation and of prophecy and says: "The prophets announce the father's counsel and will," but says nothing about the accuracy of those parts of the Bible which are not directly revealed.

Cyprian likewise says much of inspiration, but nothing distinctly in favor of the committee's view as opposed to that which I hold. The only way in which these men can be used against me is to assume that every time the word inspiration is used, it means inspiration in the sense of the committee's definition. But this is sheer assumption. Justin Martyr, however, asserts plenary and even verbal inspiration, and thus is the first of the fathers to give utterance to the committee's view. But Justin (like Philo) finds types and allegories everywhere, and regards every passage of Scripture as teaching doctrine and morals. In this the committee are probably hardly ready to follow him. Athenagoras goes so far as to assert that the Scripture writers were unconscious in writing. He therefore holds the mantic theory, which we have seen to be of Greek origin. With him agree Montanus and the Montanists, including Tertullian. But this view, though widespread, was rejected by many fathers, and finally declared false by the Church. Irenæus is the first to hold nearly the view of the committee, for he asserts that everything recorded in the Scriptures is correct, though he does not try to allegorize every thing. An anonymous writer in Eusebius, writing about 230 A. D., holds so high a view of inspiration that he condemns text criticism as a sin, so that we have in him an advocate of the view of the committee, but without recourse to the original autograph. Clement and Origen likewise accept the high theory of inspiration, but they allegorize every thing, and the latter (the greatest scholar of the early Church) says distinctly that the literal sense is *not* true, and, therefore, we must seek the allegorical (or spiritual sense) to avoid contradiction. Thus, he harmonizes the theory of inspiration with the existence of discrepancies which he can not deny. The same method is pursued by Augustine, who tells us that he was able to accept the Old Testament

only after its literal discrepancies had been explained by Ambrose in the allegorical method (Conf. v, 14; vi, 4). The general rule for determining when a passage is to be taken allegorically, is stated (Christian Doctrine III, 10): Whatever there is in the Word of God that can not, when *taken literally*, be referred either to purity of life or soundness of doctrine, you may set down as figurative (i. e., as is clear from the context, all matter which is not directly religious or ethical, as dates, chronological tables, scientific statements). The same father elsewhere distinguishes the significant parts of Scripture from the non-significant. Some things are narrated which have no significance, but are, as it were, the framework to which the significant things are attached. As to the truth of these non-significant things, he never expresses himself.

Some of the fathers, however, expressly admit errors in circumstantials, as the golden-mouthed preacher of Constantinople, Chrysostom. In his Homily on Matt. i, 6, he expressly says the *minor errors* in the Gospels are useful as showing there is no collusion in the writers. Admitting these minor discrepancies, he then goes on to show harmony in matters of faith. Jerome once says that Paul speaks under the impulse of his own temper rather than of the Holy Spirit (on Gal. v, 12).

During the Middle Age, both the freer and the stricter view were held, but the latter prevailed *along with the allegorical method of exposition*, and along with the view of the inspiration of the Church, which is announced by the Council of Trent. This decree, which is still the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, is deserving of attention, because it has been urged by the committee as a part of that consensus of the universal Church, which they claim for their side. It is as follows:

"The sacred and holy, ecumenical and general Synod of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the same three legates of the Holy See presiding therein, keeping this always in view, that errors being removed, the purity itself of the Gospel be preserved in the Church; which (Gospel) before promised through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God first promulgated with his own mouth and then commanded to be preached by his Apostles to every creature as the fountain of all both saving truth and moral discipline, and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the *written books and unwritten traditions*, which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even to us, *transmitted* as it were from hand to hand; [the Synod] following the example of the orthodox fathers, *receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence*, all the books of the Old and of the New Testament, seeing that one God is the author of both, *as also the said traditions* [of the Church] as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated either by Christ's own word of mouth or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession." [Follows a list of the books of the Canon including the Apocrypha.]

Now, if any one wants to claim this as favoring the committee's view, he must be prepared to make the following admissions: (1) This view does not assert an inerrant inspiration of the Bible, but of the *Church*. The Bible is received only as a part of the tradition of the *Church*. (2) Whatever this view affirms of the Bible it affirms of the Apocrypha. (3) This view alleges the authority of the fathers as a part of the inerrant tradition. (4) This affirmation, so far as it asserts inerrancy, does it for the Vulgate Version, and does it for this version, not because given by inspired men, but because it is indorsed and authenticated by the *Church*. (5) As we very well know, this view goes hand in hand with an allegorizing exposition, which while seeking

mystical truths behind the letter of Scripture, really deprives the letter of all its meaning. If with these reservations the committee finds enough sound doctrine left to count on their side, I shall not object. But it surely is something new to urge this sort of authority for Presbyterian doctrine.

The fact is the Church did not understand her Bible (especially the Old Testament) until the Reformation. So that for any thing like a doctrine on the origin of the Bible or the mode of inspiration, we must begin with the Reformation. And here the committee make large claims. First they say the consensus of the Protestant creeds is on their side. The only one they were able to cite, however, was the Second Helvetic Confession. However highly honored this may have been, it is rather a narrow basis on which to found a consensus. The fact is that the great majority of Protestant creeds content themselves with affirming the sufficiency of Scripture as a rule of faith and life, and ignore the distinctive doctrine of the committee.

The Augsburg Confession, the mother of the Protestant creeds has no article on Scripture. It only says that the ministry of *teaching the Gospel* was instituted for the obtaining of faith (Art. V). The *Apologia Confessionis* is more specific, in that it says: "The whole Scripture is distributed principally into the two heads, *Law* and Gospel." And again: "Into these two heads is distributed the *whole* Scripture. One part is the Law which discovers, reproves and condemns sin; the other part is the Gospel, that is, the promise of grace given in Christ." Now this is the earliest Protestant affirmation on the subject. It gave tone to much that followed, and it is exactly in line with what I claim for the Westminster Confession, for it takes the spiritual side of the Bible and characterizes it as Law and Gospel. It seems to recognize nothing else in Scripture. But this can not be made *exhaustive* by any ingenuity.

Will committee affirm that every statement in the Scripture is either *Law* or *Gospel*? Of course they can not affirm this; and if not this, they can not claim these creed expressions on their side. On the Reformed side we notice a more distinct formulation of the doctrine of Scripture, as for example in the Helvetic Confession. This declares "Canonical Scripture, the Word of God, delivered by the Holy Spirit and set forth by the prophets and Apostles, the most perfect and most ancient *philosophia*, alone contains what pertains to the knowledge, love and honor of God and to piety of life." And later: "The object of this Canonical Scripture is that man may know that God is gracious to him and has declared his good will through Christ his Son. This grace comes to us through faith alone, and is expressed in love to our neighbor." This is evidently in line with the creeds already examined, and can not be made to assert the distinctive doctrine of your committee.

The Second Helvetic Confession is still more elaborate in its chapter on Scripture, and is claimed by the committee on their side, though I do not think this established by a fair interpretation. Next comes the Heidelberg Catechism, perhaps the most influential among the Reformed Confessions. The only affirmation this creed contains on the subject of Scripture is the following:

"Question 19. Whence knowest thou this? [*i. e.* that Christ is our Mediator].

Answer. From the Holy Gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise, afterwards proclaimed by the holy Patriarchs and Prophets, and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law, and finally fulfilled by his well-beloved Son."

Now, that is the only affirmation concerning Scripture contained in the most prominent of the Reformed Confessions. It

says nothing of the Bible as a whole, nothing of inspiration, nothing of inerrancy. And yet the committee claim that the *whole Church* has always held their view. So far as the creeds go we may arrest our examination here. One out of five among the Protestant creeds is hardly enough to establish the consensus of the whole Church.

But the committee say, further, that all prominent and godly men in the Church have always held their view, and they quote severe words about Dr. Vincent from a reviewer, who asserts the same thing. Let us look at this a little. And first about Luther, the man who recovered the Bible for us. If there ever was a man who had a strong Evangelical faith and the power of the Spirit it was Luther. But it is notorious that Luther did *not* hold the doctrine of an errorless Bible. I did not suppose I should ever see a man with the hardihood to affirm that he did. It is inconceivable that he should use the expressions he does, holding that view. Suppose a member of this Presbytery were to say he hated the book of Esther because it judaizes so. Would you suppose him to hold a view of inspiration that makes every word in the Scripture the word of God himself? Or would this committee adopt Luther's word about one of Paul's arguments in the Epistle to the Galatians—that it is *too weak to hold*? Or the affirmation which I have quoted in the pamphlet that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has mixed some wood, hay or stubble with his gold, silver and precious stones—would the committee regard this as consistent with their doctrine? Or again, would they like to adopt Luther's expression that the Epistle of James is “a regular epistle of straw?” And yet Luther continually calls Scripture the Word of God, prizes it as the Word of God, and draws his comfort, as well as his doctrine, therefrom. No one shows more clearly the ability to value and appropriate the

Word of God in Scripture, without adopting theories of inerrancy as to Scripture as a whole.

And now as to Calvin, let me quote what my beloved and now sainted friend, Dr. Evans, says: "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 accommodare*) 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 exactitude in all matters of detail. "In the thing itself," he adds, "there is but little difference."

So rationalistic, indeed, did Calvin's 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 Judaizans. (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, Hist. of the N. T., § 550). To the phrase *iva πληρωθῇ* 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 Matt. 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 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."

Mr. Lowe seems to think Calvin refers all these errors to transcription. But this can not be the case for he would not have said in that case that the *Apostles* were not very particular. Could the committee with their view of inspiration say any thing like that?

Among the men of Reformation times, Zwingli, Bullinger, Melancthon, and Erasmus are all known to have been as free (or lax if you will) as Luther and more so than Calvin. In the next century the doctrine was more strictly defined by some men no doubt. But these men were logical. Instead of making the guarded affirmations of the committee about a *controlling* of the authors of Scripture or an inspiration of superintendence, they roundly affirmed that every thing in Scripture was directly *revealed* even if it was something already known to the authors by their own observation. They made the Biblical writers the *pens* of the Holy Spirit and believed them to have written without volition of their own. It was in this century that the doctrine of *superintendence* was broached as accounting for the composition of the historical books. It was brought forward by a Roman Catholic and promptly condemned by the Protestant theologians, one of whom declared that it destroyed the foundations of the faith and took away from us all certitude as to doctrine.

It was in this century that the Arminian controversy raged. Arminius himself, Episcopius, and Grotius held the freer view.

I do not mention them as authorities. But I wish to call your attention to the fact for its bearing on the doctrine of the Westminster Confession. The Westminster Divines had no liking for Arminian doctrine. Had they felt that this particular phase of Arminian doctrine was dangerous they would certainly have made some provision against it by introducing a more direct and unmistakable definition into our Confession. So we have another argument confirmatory of what we have already said concerning the purpose of the Westminster Assembly. And this is in line with what Dr. Mitchell says as I have quoted him in the Response. Mr. Lowe quotes what Dr. Mitchell says about *transmission* but ignores the other point (Response, p. 33).

Now remember we are trying to find out whether the doctrine of the committee is fundamental. They claim that it is fundamental because it has always been the doctrine of the Church. Certainly what we have now seen does not point out a universal consent of the Church. Let us look at some further testimony. If this be a fundamental doctrine we shall expect to find it held and emphasized by all leading orthodox divines. But we do not find it so emphasized. Baxter, for example, though holding the doctrine of inerrancy himself does not regard it as essential to the divine authority of the Scriptures. [See the quotation in *Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration*, p. 109]. Note also the following:

Horne's Introduction, the leading conservative authority, quotes the following from Parry:

"Maintaining that the Apostles were under the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, as to every *religious* sentiment contained in their writings, secures the same advantages as would result from supposing that every word and letter was dictated to them by its influence, without being liable to those objections which might be made against that view of the subject." . . . "Another

advantage attending the above view of the apostolic inspiration is, that it will enable us to understand some things in their writings, which it might be difficult to reconcile with another view of the subject. If the inspiration and guidance of the Spirit, respecting the writers of the New Testament extended only to what appears to be its proper province, matter of a religious or moral nature, then there is no necessity to ask, whether every thing contained in their writings were suggested immediately by the Spirit or not, whether Luke were inspired to say, that the ship in which he sailed with Paul was wrecked on the island of Melita "(etc.) . . . "for the answer is obvious: these were not things of a religious nature, and no inspiration was necessary concerning them. The inspired writers sometimes mention common occurrences or things in an incidental manner as any other plain and faithful man might do. Although therefore such things may be found in the evangelic history or in Epistles addressed to churches or individuals, and may stand connected with important declarations concerning Christian doctrine or duty, yet it is not necessary to suppose that they were under any supernatural influence in *mentioning* such *common* or *civil* affairs, though they were as to all the sentiments they inculcated respecting religion. This view will also readily enable a plain Christian in reading his New Testament to distinguish what he is to consider as inspired truth. Every thing which the Apostles have written or taught concerning Christianity; every thing which teaches him a religious sentiment or a branch of duty, he must consider as divinely true, as the mind and will of God recorded under the direction and guidance of his Spirit."

(Parry's "Inquiry into the Nature and Extent of the Inspiration of the Apostles and Writers of the New Testament," pp. 20 and 30, London 1797).

Bp. Warburton (*Doctrine of Grace*, p. 278).

"Thus we see the advantages resulting from a *partial inspiration* as here contended for and explained. It answers all the ends of a Scripture universally and organically inspired by producing an *unerring rule* of faith and manners; and besides *obviates* all those objections to *inspiration* which arise from the too high notion of it; such as trifling errors in circumstances of small importance; for

the least error is inconsistent with organic inspiration, but may well stand with a virtual and co-operating influence." . . .

"In a word, by admitting no more than this lower kind of inspiration, so warmly contended for (and in terms as vague and indeterminate as the Scepticism of the users) by men who were in hopes that the admission of it would end in no inspiration at all, we secure and establish the infallible word of Scripture; and free it from all those embarrassing circumstances which have been so artfully and disingenuously thrown out to its discredit."

Paley (in *Evidences of Christianity*. Bk. III, Chap. 2).

"First [it is sufficient] to separate what was the object of the Apostolic Mission, and declared by them to be so, from what was extraneous to it, or only incidentally connected with it. Of points clearly extraneous to the religion nothing need be said.

"Secondly, that in reading the apostolic writings we distinguish between their doctrines and their arguments. Their doctrines came to them by revelation properly so called; yet in propounding these doctrines in their writings or discourses, they were wont to illustrate, support, and enforce them, by such analogies arguments and considerations as their own thoughts suggested. Thus the call of the Gentiles, that is the admission of the Gentiles to the Christian profession without a previous subjection to the law of Moses, was imparted to the Apostles by revelation, and was attested by the miracles which attended the Christian Ministry among them. The Apostles' own assurance of the matter rested upon this foundation. Nevertheless Saint Paul when treating of the subject offers a great variety of topics in its proof and vindication. The doctrine itself must be received; but it is not necessary in order to defend Christianity, to defend the propriety of every comparison, or the validity of every argument which the Apostle has brought into the discussion."

Bp. Reginald Heber the saintly hymn writer (in his *Bampton Lectures* (1816) on the "*Personality and Office of the Christian Comforter*," VIII, p. 576-577).

Meantime however, I am most anxious to prove that mistakes in points where inspiration did not properly apply can by no means derogate from the inspired character of a work in those

respects where inspiration was either needed or promised. I am desirous to impress on your minds that circumstances which whether true or false have no possible bearing on the doctrine or character of Christ may belong indeed to his history, but are no essential parts of his Gospel; that while the words of Christ are reported to us with supernatural and infallible authority we may submit our faith in the actions of his life to that same human evidence on which we at first believed them; and that we may admit the New Testament as an unerring and imperative rule in every point of doctrine or of practice, though we should be forever ignorant of the year in which Cyrenius governed Syria, or whether the Apostate Judas met his fearful end by strangulation or by rupture. Above all it has been my aim to show that by the Comforter whom Christ foretold and by those blessed aids which he too for Christ's sake dispensed to mankind, the faithful of every age and nation are, no less than the Apostles themselves, infallibly conducted to that truth which is in Jesus; and that for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, "the Scripture of the last no less than of the former covenant is given by inspiration of God."

Thos. Scott (in his *Essay of Inspiration*, pp. 11 and 12).

"Nor does it at all invalidate the complete inspiration of the sacred writers, to allow that they expressed themselves in common language, and wrote of things as men generally spoke of them, rather than according to philosophical exactness or in the style that was used in the schools of the learned during the ages in which they lived. *Supposed or unimportant errors*, or inaccuracies of expression in such things, are not in the least inconsistent with that divine inspiration of which we speak; for the Scriptures were not written to make us exact philosophers, or to instruct us in ancient history or geography, but to make us wise unto salvation."

(p. 11.) By the *divine inspiration* of the Holy Scriptures I mean such an immediate and complete discovery by the Holy Spirit to the minds of the sacred writers of those things which could not have been otherwise known; and such an effectual superintendence, as to those matters which they might be informed of by other means, as entirely preserved them from error, in every particular, which could in the least affect any of the *doctrines* or *precepts* contained in their books."

In the light of these quotations, which might easily be multiplied, it is difficult to understand the words of Drs. Hodge and Warfield (Presb. Rev. 1881, p. 24): "It is not questionable that the great historic Churches have held these creed definitions in the sense of affirming the errorless infallibility of the Bible. This is every where shown by the way in which all the great bodies of Protestant theologians have handled Scripture in their commentaries, systems of theology, catechisms, and sermons. And this has always been pre-eminently characteristic of epochs and agents of reformation and revival. All the great world-moving men, as *Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Whitefield* and *Chalmers*, and proportionately those most like them, have so handled the Divine Word. Even if the more lax doctrine has the suffrage of many scholars, or *even if it be true*, it is nevertheless certain that hitherto in nineteen centuries it has never been held by men who also possessed the secret of using the Word of God like a hammer or a fire."

It is probably with this passage in mind that Mr. Lowe affirms that "without inerrancy the Scriptures lose their power." The doctrine is fundamental because "only an inerrant revelation can accomplish in the human soul the work for which revelation is given." The examples I have given show, at any rate, that it is not necessary to hold to inerrancy in order to feel the Bible's power and to show the fruits of the Spirit.

But the committee have paid very little attention to what I said about errors of transcription. They are not inclined to have any thing to do with the "original autograph," though they say it is referred to in the charge. But this is a matter needing serious attention. For we who study the Bible as exegetes are obliged to notice the actually existing discrepancies. We can not deny their existence or say with Mr. Lowe that

they are not material. We know they are there. My statement of the facts is not questioned. But if the doctrine of the committee is true, then whatever power the Word ever had must be lost. For they make its power depend on its inerrancy. And when as text critics we are asked to say that all the errors have come in by transmission, we must give our honest judgment that they can not be accounted for in this way.

The argument of the committee is that their doctrine of inspiration is fundamental because (1) it has always been held in the Church; (2) it is plainly stated in the Confession; (3) it is plainly taught in the Scriptures; and (4) it is indispensable to the Christian life. On all four points I believe I have shown the committee to be mistaken. It is they, and not I, who are the innovators. They are trying to force as a fundamental doctrine what can not be so regarded.

## CHAPTER XI.

## GUILT OR INNOCENCE.

The reader will have discovered that the discussion up to this point was on the sufficiency of the Charges and Specifications. It resulted in some changes in the form of the specifications, and that all the documents may be in possession of the inquirer, the amended document is given in the Appendix. The evidence adduced in the trial only established what the reader already knows—that my paper on Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration was first read in the ministerial Association and at its request. One witness remembered that he had suggested my appointment to read on this subject, and gave as his reason his surprise at the position taken by Dr. Evans and myself concerning the doctrine of inspiration at the meeting of Presbytery. As we had strictly confined ourselves to general arguments at that meeting and had not made any doctrinal statements whatever, this confirms what was said above, namely: that our defense of Dr. Briggs had already convicted us of heresy in the minds of the majority.

As there was no serious question concerning the evidence the arguments were made again on the doctrinal question. And here it became increasingly evident that the Committee were trying not me, but the specter of infidel Higher Criticism embodied in me. To their minds one admitted error in Scripture destroyed its divine authority and led logically to blank atheism. This had been made plain by an earlier utterance of one member of the Committee, who had said in



substance; "If the writers of the Sacred Books knowingly suppressed the truth or suggested falsehood, their characters for veracity are gone. According to this, they were not even honest men, much less men inspired of God. *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*, is a maxim in the law of evidence. If a witness is found to be a conscious liar in any part of his testimony, the court and jury are not bound to believe one word he says. . . . The charge brought against the Chronicler every honest gentleman would deem an insult. Particularly injurious is it when brought against an historian. Imagine Froude or Parkman under such a charge. . . . If Chronicles be such a book as is alleged, no sort of inspiration is possible therein but satanic. To assert that false statements are inspired of God seems indistinguishable from blasphemy of the Holy Ghost. When the works which Jesus did were declared to be the works of the devil, he declared that sin to be unpardonable. What is the difference between attributing to Beelzebub the works of the Holy Ghost and attributing to the Holy Ghost the proper works of Beelzebub? If one be the sin which hath never forgiveness, what is the other? It were better far to deny all inspiration; that would be simply a negation; to assert an inspiration, of falsehoods is nothing less or other than blasphemy."

This language shows plainly enough that the Committee were incapable of apprehending the real point at issue, or unwilling to apprehend it. When challenged for not charging the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost in their indictment, and in consistency urging the penalty of excommunication, they excused themselves by saying that my views *lead logically* to that sin, though I had not consciously committed it. Analysis of their later argument shows that they were striving to convict not me but the [supposed] logical consequences of my position. "If we accept the premises of mod-

ern criticism, we must accept its conclusions. The Bible at once sinks to the level of other books. It is no longer God's revelation to men. Its supernatural character is at once lost. The Old Testament ceases to be preparatory for Christianity as the religion of a Divine Revelation. There is no sin and no need of a Savior. From this point of view, we can very readily accept the position of a Haeckl, and deny the existence of a personal God. We can not see any stopping place. If we relinquish the Bible and the present discussion involves this, what have we in its place?"

Now let us be frank. If the present discussion involves this, then we must give up the Bible. The position of the Committee is that of Drs. Hodge and Warfield—that one proved error overthrows the Bible. In that case the Bible is already overthrown, for the single proved error is easily found. But, even if this were true, this logic of the Committee could not rightly be forced on one who refuses to receive it. One who is obliged to admit the existence of error, and who yet keeps his Bible and accepts the Confessional assertions concerning it, ought to be safe from conviction, even if it be at the expense of logic. The Committee had no reason to ignore the fact that I do not accept the conclusions to which they would force me. So far from denying, I have strongly asserted the reality of supernatural revelation. The Old Testament I believe fully to be "preparatory for Christianity as the religion of a Divine revelation." The reality of sin, the need of a Savior, the existence of a personal God, I maintain in the strongest terms, and also that these are made known to us in the Bible. How it could be said that "no enemy of Christianity teaches any thing more injurious" than I teach, surpasses my comprehension.

The Chairman of the Committee compared the higher criticism to the Jinnee in the Arabian Nights who was sealed up

in a small jar. When the jar was unstopped, a vast cloud of smoke issued from it which finally took the form of a dreadful giant. In me they insisted this spirit of evil might be crushed. It may be doubted whether the Presbytery actually had the power implied in the comparison. The same gentleman read from Dr. Howard Osgood, who, after naming sixteen representative higher critics, adds: "These authors would all agree in the clear statement and logical position of Professor Kuenen: 'It is the common conviction of all the writers of the New Testament that the Old Testament is inspired of God, and is thus invested with Divine authority. The remark made, as it were in passing, in a passage of the Fourth Gospel, that the Scriptures can not be broken, is assented to by all the writers without distinction. It is unnecessary to support these statements by quoting passages. Such passages are, as every one knows, very numerous. Its judgment may be regarded as diametrically opposed to ours. So long as we regard and judge the authors of the New Testament solely and only as expositors of the writings of the Old Testament, we stand in fact in the presence of this dilemma. We must either cast aside as worthless our dearly bought scientific method, or must forever cease to acknowledge the authority of the New Testament in the domain of the exegesis of the Old. Without hesitation, we choose the latter alternative.'" The speaker for the prosecution added: "And that is the issue: whether the combined testimony of the Word of God, in support of its inspiration, is to stand against the critical theories of Kuenen and his school." The reader will understand, after reading these utterances, why I said in reply that the Committee were arguing the case of all the higher critics in Germany, France, Holland, and Great Britain. For myself, I have never taken a brief for Kuenen or set up any "dearly bought scientific method" against the Word

of God. What I have said is, that we must recognize facts when they are pointed out to us, and must make our doctrine of inspiration correspond to the facts. To argue that one proved error overthrows the Scriptures, is like arguing that a single sin on the part of a Christian shows that there is no such thing as regeneration.

How far the view of the Committee is from commanding the assent of sober minded men is evident from the quotations given from Henry B. Smith in a preceding chapter. To these may be added his opinion concerning Tholuck. Tholuck, as is well known, was an advocate of the freer view of inspiration, distinctly rejecting the theory of inerrancy. Henry B. Smith uses the following words in a lecture delivered in the chapel of the Church of the Covenant, New York, January, 1867 (quoted in *Life of H. B. Smith*, by his wife, pp. 270, 271):

“Tholuck himself is a man who might have been a great orientalist, or a great poet, or a successful dramatist, or the first of German preachers, or unrivaled in the mere amplitude of his general attainments. Something of all these he still is, but he is also more than any one or all—he is a devout believer. His influence turned the tide against rationalism at Halle (its stronghold) when he was still young; his preaching inspired all who heard him with a better and tenderer faith; his life lived down his calumniators; his personal influence—so affable is he, so quick to feel, so felicitous in rebuke—has molded more young men than has any other German theological teacher.” . . . “His lecture room is still thronged, and no one now expounds the most profound and spiritual parts of Scripture with a deeper insight, with an humbler and truer faith.”

It is inconceivable that the distinguished New School theologian could have used such words of a man whom he would

have shut out of the ministry of Christ and the service of the Presbyterian Church.

My object in this chapter is to give such an outline of the arguments as shall enable the reader to form some idea of the issue actually tried. With an allusion to one or two points more I shall leave the subject. One thing that can not be passed by is the attempt of the Committee to range Dr. Evans on their side. "Said Dr. L. J. Evans—whose name is mentioned in this body with most tender memory—in the Presbyterian Review, in one of the most magnificent articles that ever came from his pen, and *in which I believe he establishes* on exegetical grounds (as I shall show you later) *the old doctrine* of the Church, so that even a later *caveat from him* is unable to break the connecting links of his invincible logic" [follows a quotation]—such was the language of the Chairman. The assertion that Dr. Evans in the article quoted [the same quoted in Chapter V, above] established the old doctrine of the Church (*i. e.*, as interpreted by the Committee *their doctrine*) is abundantly refuted by the very article quoted, as I have already shown. So far from the paper on Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration being a later *caveat*, it was to Dr. Evans himself exactly in line with the other article. There is absolutely no evidence that Dr. Evans changed his view or supposed himself to have changed his view on this subject during his whole ministerial life.

The Committee in order to refute my statements concerning the Chronicler read at length from Edersheim (Bible History, VII, pp. 15-21). Whoever will take pains to examine this discussion will discover (1) that it is vitiated by the assumption that the two accounts must be harmonized; (2) that it is not clear or consistent with itself; (3) that it ignores the most important fact, that the part assigned to the guard in Kings is assigned to the Levites in Chronicles.

The question is whether the student who discovers these difficulties is bound nevertheless to accept the harmonistic theory. The logic of the Committee would lead the Church to publish an authorized harmony of the Bible to which her ministers must subscribe.

My argument is given in the next chapter, with the judgment of Presbytery appended.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE ARGUMENT.

## ON CHARGE I.

The charge is of teaching "that a minister in said Church may abandon the essential features of the system of doctrine held by said Church, and which he received and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said Church."

I labor under some embarrassment in arguing this charge, because I still think the charge indefinite in language. One of the prosecutors remarked that I objected to one charge as ambiguous, and then proceeded to argue on it an hour and a half, as if the length of the argument disproved the ambiguity. But it *proves* the ambiguity. For it is obvious that the more indefinite is the charge, the more time must be spent on the inquiry into its meaning. The indefiniteness of this charge was plainly brought out by the very discussion which led to the sustaining of the sufficiency of the charge. For the expressions of the speakers at that time showed wide variety in the apprehension of the charge. Some evidently supposed the offense to be *disloyalty* to the church; some supposed it to be *dishonesty*, or the *teaching of dishonesty*; others took it to be *denial of the right of discipline* and order in the Church; still others supposed it a violation of my vow to study the *peace and purity* of the Church. So there are five possible offenses contained in the charge, and no one knows which is intended. If the five were distinctly specified as five

charges, I should have good hopes of being acquitted. Because I doubt if enough members of the court would pronounce me guilty of either one to secure conviction. As it is, the ambiguity of the charge may lead to my conviction, because it will allow all who interpret it in *either* of the five ways indicated, to vote to sustain the charge.

The evidence shows that I contributed two articles to the New York Evangelist, one entitled "How Much is Implied in Ordination Vows?" the other entitled "The Sin of Schism." The object of the papers is sufficiently indicated in the titles. They were written because of the frequent insinuations or assertions in the press that men in the Presbyterian Church whose views are not in harmony with those of the majority, ought to retire from the Church. These assertions were accompanied by reflections on the loyalty or honesty of those who in these circumstances persist in remaining in the Church. It will be obvious to you that when one does not agree with such assertions, it is his plain duty to examine and state the grounds of his disagreement. This is what I did. And I did what the case required. The interpretation of a contract is always a legitimate subject of inquiry. My first paper was devoted to the examination of ordination engagements with a view to determine what they justly contain. Unless I have been guilty of improper language or of conscious misstatement this could constitute no offense. So far from questioning the authority of the Church, or urging any thing that would undermine that authority, I have recognized that authority all through the article. I did not even examine the regulations of the Church with a view to determine whether they are Scriptural—something which every officer and member of the Church is expressly authorized to do by the Confession and the Form of Government. My sole inquiry was:



"How much is properly and legitimately contained in the questions put to the minister at ordination?"

With this in mind, you can readily determine the bearing of the quotation made by the committee from the first article:

"But it is worth remarking further, that this doctrinal qualification is required only at ordination. That men's views may change after ordination was as true in the last century as it is now. Had it been the intention of the Church to secure strict doctrinal uniformity, it would have required frequent subscription, if not frequent examination. Not only is no provision made for this, but the candidate for ordination is nowhere warned that if his doctrinal views should change, he must acquaint his Presbytery with the fact. Even in the present doctrinal alarm, but one man has proposed repeated subscription, and even he limited his proposition to professors of theology. It is clearly the theory of the Church that a minister once inducted into the sacred office may be safely left to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By his success in the ministry he acquires a right not to be disturbed, except in cases of exceptional gravity, and even here the presumption may be said to be in his favor."

Comparing this with the rest of the article, it will readily be seen that "*this* doctrinal qualification" refers to the act of subscription by the minister. It is mentioned here only as bearing on the mind of the Church. This is seen from the sentence: "Had it been the intention of the Church to secure *strict* doctrinal uniformity, it would have required *frequent* subscription." I now see that the word qualification is in this connection capable of a double interpretation. Had I said "this doctrinal qualification *by the man* is required only at ordination," no one could have mistaken my meaning.

This is not the place to defend the correctness of my argu-

ment. That the words cited do not prove the charge must be evident. For there is no mention of *essential features* of the doctrinal system or of *abandoning* them. There is nothing about a minister's right to remain in the Church after abandoning them. The sole object of discussion is: how much conformity to the doctrinal views held in the Church does the natural and intended sense of the words in the ordination subscription require?

The second citation taken from the article on the "Sin of Schism" has been wrongly interpreted by the committee. The citation, as given by the committee, is:

"My contention is that in this difficult and delicate matter" (exposition of what the ordination 'vows' do imply), "the Church has herself undertaken to draw the line, and that she has undertaken to draw it by judicial process." . . . "And when an alleged error is not treated by the Church as an offense (either in that process is not instituted, or in that conviction does not result), then the Church broadens her interpretation of the 'system of doctrine.' Not long ago I was told sharply that the Church refuses to answer questions *in thesi*. How, then, we can know what is included in the system of doctrine, except by judicial process, does not appear."

You notice that the committee have interpreted my reference to the *difficult and delicate matter* under discussion by inserting in parenthesis, "exposition of what ordination vows do imply." But this does not correctly give my meaning. The preceding paragraph shows that I have in mind the interpretation of the phrase *system of doctrine*. Let me make this clear. It is admitted on all hands that we subscribe to the system of doctrine and that by this is meant the essential and necessary articles of the Confession. Dr. Charles Hodge has abundantly shown this in the article already quoted by

your committee. Now the question arises, how shall we know *what are essential articles?* It was *this* matter which I had in mind when I spoke of the Church herself drawing the line. Let me illustrate. Dr. Hodge, in the article already alluded to, mentions a *definite atonement* as one of the essential articles of our system. On this point some would not agree with him. How does the Church decide between them? I can not see any way which is conclusive of the mind of the Church except by judicial process. The case is precisely parallel to what we see in civil life. Suppose a contract to be differently interpreted by the parties. The only way to settle it is to bring suit in a court. Suppose a number of persons are involved in the same manner. A test case is made in order to construe the contract. When this is finally decided by the highest court, all parties must guide themselves by it because it settles the principle. Now, how do you know whether the doctrine of a definite atonement is essential to our system? Why, you say, the Church does not prosecute those who hold a different view. Suppose any one to think it an essential. The only way in which he can get an authoritative decision is to begin process in the courts of the Church.

Now, remember, we have nothing to do with the correctness of these arguments. The sole question for you is: does this sustain the charge? Plainly it does not. It makes no mention of *abandoning* essential features of our system. It says nothing of a minister's abandoning such features and rightfully remaining in the Church. Its only interest with the essential features is to inquire how we may know them when we see them. Or, to put the charge in the different forms in which it seems to be held in the mind of members of the court, we may notice:

(1) There is no evidence to show that I impugn the Westminster doctrine of the Church.

(2) There is no evidence to show that I assail the fundamental principles of Church order as set forth in the Form of Government.

(3) There is no evidence to show that I teach or encourage disloyalty to the Presbyterian Church.

(4) There is no evidence to show that I teach that a lawful contract may be broken or evaded, or that I encourage any to break or evade a lawful contract.

(5) There is no evidence that I have in any way injured the peace or purity of the Church.

And, if any other offenses are implied in the language of this charge, they are equally unsupported by the evidence.

#### ON CHARGES II AND III.

Expecting that the evidence being now before us, we should argue its bearing on the formulated charges and specifications, I was disappointed to have the committee go into alarmist appeals against supposed dangers to the Church. It would perhaps be enough reply to these to say that no evidence appears in their support, and that the appeals themselves are not formulated in the charges. As however, the alarm raised by such appeals is one of the worst enemies to sobriety of judgment you will I am sure bear with me in the endeavor to point out their exact force and applicability to the case.

In the first place the committee say as they have said before that this issue is forced upon them by me. Let us try to get at the exact meaning of this phrase. The committee acknowledge, of course, that I am (so far) a minister in good standing in the Presbyterian Church. They do not deny as I understand it that I suppose myself to hold the system of doctrine contained in the Confession. I, on my part, do not deny

that they honestly suppose me to have departed from it. There is an honest difference of opinion. If my departure is in their view so wide that my errors strike at the vitals of religion, of course they can not tolerate my presence in the Church. But they are forced by their own consciences not by me. If that is all they mean we need say no more about it. But if I mistake not, they intimate that in some way I am at fault and assume that I am trying to force some doctrine on the Church. But this is no more true than in any other case of discussion. In all such cases the representative of each side tries to show that his doctrine is the correct one. This can hardly be called forcing the doctrine on the Church.

But the committee intimate that it would have been so easy for me to avoid this issue. It would have been easy for me to leave the Church, especially when the General Assembly urged upon all not in agreement with our Church to leave her ministry. And we are told that any company of citizens has a right to associate to defend any absurdity and may determine the objects they will pursue and the terms of their membership. But this comparison seems to forget the very point at issue. The company of citizens who associate in a club to advocate, (let us say), the flatness of the earth will be held by law strictly to its own articles of association. It will not be allowed to expel members at the mere will of the majority. This is the very point in hand. All that I have ever claimed is that being myself convinced that I am in entire harmony with the doctrine of the Church, I can not yield to the resolution of any majority, which assumes to decide that question contrary to the constitution of the Church.

But there is a very much deeper question here than the voluntary association of individuals for some matter of personal interest. The unity of the body of Christ manifests itself in the association of every true Church. The right of the

Church to declare the terms of admission to its communion and the qualifications of its ministers and members, is a right conferred by Christ himself. It is to be exercised as the system of government which He hath appointed. It is to be limited by the rules He has given in the word and by the providential indications of his will. Now let us say in the exercise of this authority a man has been set apart to the Christian ministry in the Presbyterian Church. He has perhaps been born into that Church, has been baptized in it, has been admitted to its communion. As manhood approaches he hears the call of the Master and offers himself to the Presbytery for licensure and then for ordination. The Church is to him the representative of his Lord. Her voice conveys his message and her ordination seals the message with the Master's approval. If such a man is called to the ministry at all he is called by the voice of the Presbyterian Church. But now a majority of the General Assembly supposing him to have departed from the faith thunders at him to get out of our bounds. He asks if this means out of the ministry and is told no—only out of *our* ministry. He asks where he shall go and is told it makes no difference where, only he must go. He finds no providential indication, he sees no call to another denomination, he finds himself in his heart more in harmony with his own denomination than any other. *He dares not go.* He has heard the voice of the Lord in the voice of the Church calling him into the ministry. It may be that the decision of the Church will be that there was a mistake, that he is not called into the ministry. He will listen humbly to that voice, but it surely is not too much to require that the decision shall be rendered according to the forms of law and under the safeguards which the Church has herself thrown around the rights of the individual—rights so apt to be threatened in any community by the zeal or passions of the majority. Of one thing

he is certain. If he was not called into the ministry of Christ by the action of the Presbyterian Church he was not called into it at all. In such circumstances to treat his refusal to leave as a wanton defiance of the voice of the Church, and a willful disturbance of her peace is totally to ignore both the rights of conscience and the principles on which the Church is founded.

But a second informal charge is contained in the argument of the committee. They accuse me of arrogance and contempt of my fellows—pluming myself on my small attainments in scholarship. If this be so I will ask the pardon of the youngest member of this court. If it be so I will accuse myself of worse heresy than any the committee have discovered. “He that hath not the spirit of Christ is none of his.” “He that receiveth not the kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein.” If there is any thing I had supposed myself anxious to avoid it is the pride of attainment. If there is any thing I had supposed myself anxious to cultivate it is the habit of viewing things as a believer in Christ, one of his followers, one who sees light in his light. That I have fallen short of my ideal and of yours in this respect I can very well believe. I beg you not to apply to me a standard too high for human attainment. But while I acknowledge the human infirmity which encompasses us all, I can not find in the passage discussed by the committee the evidence of this accusation. What I say (Rejoinder p. 81) is that “for our present inquiry, the testimony of one exegetical scholar is worth more than that of three systematic theologians.” Remember the point of the inquiry. It is whether a particular doctrine is a doctrine of Scripture. Bearing on this the committee introduced the language of systematic theologians. This language did not assume to expound the Scripture passages but to give a philosophical exposition of the doctrine of inspiration. But this was beside the

point. To decide what the exact force of the Biblical passages is, of course the testimony of a Biblical scholar is of greater value than that of any one else. Otherwise there would be no use in having specialists at all. It was with no reference to the superior value of my own department of study that I used this language but on the common ground that expert testimony in the cases which directly call for that testimony must be of the first importance. In this particular instance therefore I can not convict myself of arrogance or of overweening vanity. And I did not reflect on the ability of the court. Nor did I claim that critics could judge better as to the questions before us than can the members of the court.

But the committee give us a third of these informal charges. They now charge more or less distinctly that I am in the lead of a great host of infidels attacking the Church. I am described as in the lead of the assault. The historic faith of the Church is in danger. The views I advocate are in their tendency destructive of Christianity. The Church is forced to struggle for her very life. It is a case of self preservation. And the committee which a little while ago showed extreme delicacy about discovering private matters to the view of the court does not hesitate to begin their proof of this with the report of a conversation known to but two persons. A pastor and professor we are told had a conversation. The pastor invited the professor to go at certain people with a club. The professor only replied with a faint smile. Now when you are invited to go at a man with a club there may be various reasons for declining. There is such a thing as choice of weapons. Not every man knows how to use a club. The implement used with such grace and skill by your committee might not be as effective in the hands of smaller and less agile men. Then there are clubs and clubs. When a man asks you to go at another with a club and hands you the club you are entitled to



say to him that isn't a club but a *boomerang*—a very different weapon you will acknowledge. Let me illustrate this, for I verily believe there is a lesson here for us. Suppose you own a house—an old family mansion. Part of it was built by the first settlers, part by your grandfather, part by your father. You take pride in it of course and are very happy and comfortable in the possession of it. To you comes a stranger and says: I am a builder and a judge of houses. This house is not as old as you think. It is in fact a modern imitation of various styles very badly mixed. Besides it is so badly built that it will fall to pieces in a little while. It is really uninhabitable now. What do you do? Why says the committee—go at him with a club, there is absolutely no other way to deal with such a fellow. Knock him down and drag him out. Very well! I have no objection, though I do not see how that shows the house to be any stronger. But suppose one of your own children comes to you and says: I have been looking at the house and there are some things not quite clear to me about it. I do not think all of the colonial part is as old as we think it, and I believe the part built fifty years ago has had some changes made in it. Yet I confess it has made a very good home for us, and I do not see why we should not continue to live here as we always have lived here. What will you do with such a child? Why, says the committee he is just as bad as the other. There is nothing for it but the club. And so the poor child must be knocked down and dragged out because he is seeking to establish the beginnings of a great system of errancy.

The committee have given you the key to the situation. A party in Presbytery had a club ready for a brother of our own, a member of another presbytery who is not yet convicted of heresy. I did not consent to the use of the club. I believed the club was more dangerous to its users than to the other

party. I believe so still. I could not conscientiously use it and opposed the use of it by others. This is the very head and front of my offending.

I declined to use the club and opposed the use of it by others. Hence I am become the representative of the *Zeitgeist*—that arrogant and overbearing spirit, tolerant of every thing but Christianity, the same which has always hated and persecuted the Church of God. I am become the accuser of the Presbytery charging it with believing in its religion and with being faithful to its vow to defend the peace and purity of the Church. I am become the cross questioner of the Almighty, the advocate of destructive views, the destroyer of the Church. Moderator, are these things so?

“The Lord judge between me and you.”

Charges II and III are substantially one. Both have to do with the inspiration of the Scriptures; for Charge II states the Holy Spirit's *control* of the inspired writers of the Old Testament as the doctrine impugned; Charge III states the doctrine impugned to be the doctrine of inspiration *in the sense* in which it is attributed to the Holy Scriptures by the Holy Scriptures and the Confession. This was defined by the committee of prosecution to be the doctrine that inspiration secures freedom from error—if inspiration does not secure absolute truth of statement there is no inspiration, was in substance the declaration of the committee. It seems to me impossible therefore to separate the two Charges in thought, and if obliged to argue them separately I should be obliged to make the same speech twice.

The main question before us is one of evidence. And this is of course confined to the particular evidence introduced by your committee. On the details of this I remark the following:

Specification 1 (Charge II) is not sustained by the evidence:

## SPECIFICATION 1.

In a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," published by the said Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., in different editions in the year 1891, which pamphlet has been extensively circulated with his knowledge and approval, he teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has asserted sundry errors of historic fact.—Pages 92, 100, 101, and 102.

The citation on p. 92 discusses Dr. Hodge's doctrine of inspiration, and is entirely covered by Specification 2. It contains no assertion concerning the author of Chronicles. P. 100 characterizes the general method of the Old Testament writers and is entirely covered by Specification 4. P. 102 asserts concerning the Chronicler that he inserts from one source what suits his purpose, and omits a good deal which does not answer his purpose while inserting a good deal from other sources. There is nothing about *asserting* errors of fact.

[What the committee mean here is p. 103 which is entirely covered by Specification 3.]

Specification 2 is partially sustained by the evidence :

## SPECIFICATION 2.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has suppressed sundry historic truths, owing to inability or unwillingness to believe them.—Pages 104, 105, 107, and 109.

The citation from p. 104 affirms that the Chronicler omitted sundry statements of fact. Whether this can fairly be called "suppressing them" which is generally associated with intentional falsification is doubtful.

Specification 3 is partially supported by the evidence :

## SPECIFICATION 3.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles incorporated into his narrative

and indorsed by his authority material drawn from unreliable sources.—Pages 101 and 103.

The citations affirm that the Chronicler incorporated into his narrative material drawn from unreliable sources. Strictly speaking this does not sustain the charge, for material from unreliable sources is not unreliable material—and this alone bears on the charge. Moreover the evidence nowhere shows any assertion that the Chronicler *indorsed* any thing *by his authority*. It is doubtful therefore whether so much of the specification as is established by the evidence can be made to sustain the charge.

Specification 4 is discussed in the Response (p. 18). To affirm that historical documents need investigation, discrimination, and sifting is not to assert that they are historically unreliable. The specification therefore can not be said to be established by the evidence. The true Protestant position is, that the Bible will come out all the more evidently divine from the critical tests that are applied to it.

Specification 5 is not clearly established by the evidence:

#### SPECIFICATION 5.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches the historic unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles to have been such that "the truth of events" can not be ascertained from what he actually asserts, but from what he unwittingly reveals. Pages 100, 108, 109.

The citation from p. 100 says nothing on the subject of this specification. The citation from p. 108 says: "The Book of Chronicles is invaluable to us, not for what it directly teaches, but for the light which it throws *indirectly* upon its own time." We can not understand the New Testament times without this light, though the committee say: "What do we care what the Jews of the Persian period were thinking?"

What I say might be said by the most stringent advocate of inerrancy, and, of course, would not imply historical unreliability. The citation from p. 109 gives the necessary criteria of a real history. It does not deny inerrancy. It only asserts that an inerrant record does not necessarily give us history.

Specification 6 is not established by the evidence offered :

#### SPECIFICATION 6.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles extended to other inspired historic writers of the Old Testament. Page 102.

The pamphlet, on p. 102, only affirms that the Chronicler's *method* is that which we suppose to have been followed by other historical writers, namely, compilation from previously existing sources.

Specification 7 still seems to me not proved by the evidence offered :

#### SPECIFICATION 7.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the historic unreliability charged by him upon the inspired historical writers of the Old Testament is chargeable, though in a less degree, upon the inspired writers of the New Testament. Page 115.

All that the passage cited affirms is that there are greater *chances* for error in the Old Testament than in the New. This does not affirm that there are errors in either. It might be postulated at the beginning of an inquiry, which should result in establishing absence of error in both. The committee find in it a suggestion that there are errors in both—but it is only a suggestion, not a logical inference. Compare what is said in the Response, p. 18. [Bibl. Schol. and Insp. p. 114. Illustrated by Hodge, Outlines, p. 72.]

Specification 8, as amended, reads as follows :

SPECIFICATION 8.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the disclosures of religious experience given by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit, and free from moral defect.—Page 101.\*

The first part of the citation from the pamphlet is the following : “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.”

The committee, in their citations, omitted the next two sentences : “Nor can the authors, though doubtless all were sincere believers in God, be taken as sinless models for the Christian. Only Christ is that.” These two sentences, which I have no doubt the members of the committee also accept as true, are really the key to what precedes, as well as what follows. The prosecutors themselves do not believe that the authors of the Psalms are models for us in the sense in which Christ is a model for us. But if they admit this, they can not hold, it seems to me, that the experiences disclosed to us in the Psalms are *free from moral defect*, which is the point of the charge. Whose experience is free from moral defect?

\* The committee in their argument cited also p. 97 on inaccurate titles.

No saint has such an experience. If it be the mind of the Holy Spirit (and I believe it is; there is certainly no evidence to show that I have denied it), to give us the choice experience of picked men in all conceivable circumstances, it can not yet be an experience free from moral defect, because no such experience exists. When the context is taken into consideration, therefore, the thing asserted is no more than the committee themselves believe. But even if this be not so, then the specification is not relevant to this charge, as was shown by the Response, pp. 20, 21. Charge II has to do with truthfulness of statement, this specification has to do with sinless experience.

Specification 9 is not sustained by the evidence cited:

#### SPECIFICATION 9.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the assertions made by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not to be relied upon as absolutely true.—Page 101.

The evidence is cited just above. The particular sentence relied upon to sustain this specification is: "The assertions of the authors can not be taken for absolute truth." The most natural meaning of this language is that the truth of the Book of Psalms can be understood only as the statements are taken *relatively*. This is brought out by the passage following which is part of the testimony cited: "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."

If you allow me to interpret this by the context I will say that the point is the difference between a doctrinal statement and a description of experience. The interest of the advocate of inerrancy is mainly with direct doctrinal assertions. Such statements there are no doubt in the Psalms: "The Lord reigneth; he is clothed with majesty." But when you come to search for them it is wonderful how few of these there are. The bulk of the Book of Psalms is of another character. The assertions made are understood only as we enter into the *feelings* of those who speak. Such assertions can not be taken therefore for *absolute* truth. Inerrancy can not be predicated of them at all except as meaning that the subjects correctly express their experiences, and this inerrancy is affirmed in the passage cited. Notice what is said about the Book of Job. It seems to me quite evident that the *absolute truth* of the book in the sense of the committee only means that the dialogue is correctly reported, which I have no where denied. Now this being so, we still have left the more important problem of the truth of the thing uttered. The committee have already declined to guarantee the truth of Satan's sayings. Will they do any more for Job's three friends? I suspect not. Will they justify Job himself as giving a truthful disclosure of an experience free from moral defect? I doubt it. The despair of a good man overcome by affliction, which leads him to curse the day of his birth, doubt the goodness of God and accuse him of injustice, however profitable it may be, can not be called free from moral defect. It is this characteristic of the Books of Job and Psalms, the element of experience in them, which makes it difficult to discover what statements the authors of this charge have in mind when they predicate of them *absolute truth*. Where is the *absolute* truth of such a statement as this: "O daughter of Babylon that art to be laid waste, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy



shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the rock?" (Ps. cxxxvii, 8, 9). The *absolute* truth is not our interest, but the experience of God's people.

Specification 1, under Charge III, is not established by the evidence cited.

#### SPECIFICATION 1.

In a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," published by the said Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D. D., in different editions in the year 1891, which pamphlet has been extensively circulated with his knowledge and approval, he teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with the unprofitableness of portions of the sacred writings.

I may here repeat what I said in the Response (p. 14): "Now, it would be easy to challenge the committee to show from the passage cited, or any other, that I teach an inspiration consistent with unprofitableness. The passage cited is an *argumentum ad hominem*. It simply points out that the emphasis of a verse of Scripture often urged against my view is not on *inspiration* but on *profitableness*. It then asks those who insist on a thoroughly verbal inspiration if they are consistent in equally urging the profitableness of every jot and tittle of Scripture. It is in effect saying, 'let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.' Whether this was a legitimate argument or not, is not here in point. It was simply an argument from premises admitted by my opponents (at that time, I mean), and contains no assertion of any kind on my part."

The committee insist that when I say (p. 116): "This seems to me the *hardest* part of it," I mean it is *harder* than to believe in inerrancy (which I do not believe). But reference to the passage shows that I mean it is harder to believe the profitableness than the inspiration. The latter, however, I firmly believe in.

To this evidence the committee now add the note on p. 117 of the pamphlet on "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration." But this note simply affirms that "the profitableness of *all* Scripture is not realized in *ordinary* Christian experience." But later, on the same page, I *affirm* the abundant profitableness of things not ordinarily made profitable in that they help us to a knowledge of the structure of Scripture.

Specification 3 is perhaps supported by the evidence, though it may well be doubted whether it sustains the charge:

SPECIFICATION 3.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification I, he teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with such unreliability in their utterances that the truth of events can not be ascertained from their utterances themselves.

The question is what the charge means by "not ascertaining the truths of events from the utterances themselves." If the committee mean that the historical facts of Scripture can be ascertained fully without help from outside sources, I think few will agree with them. For example, the historical truth of the creative days in Genesis—is this ascertained from the utterances of the sacred writer themselves? Is not our full knowledge of this historical truth acquired rather from Genesis and geology combined? This seems to me undeniable. The same question might be put with regard to the chronology of various parts of the Old Testament. The data given by the Old Testament writers are more fully understood by the light given by the Assyrian monuments (for example) so that it seems to me quite legitimate to say that in these cases the truth of events is not ascertained from the Old Testament utterances themselves. But this does not necessarily imply unreliability and would be admitted by the strictest advocate of inerrancy as quite consistent with his theory of inspiration.

Specification 4 is supported to a certain extent by the evidence, though its language is grossly exaggerated :

SPECIFICATION 4.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with a bias in the inspired writers, rendering them incapable of recording the truth of events because incapable of believing it.

The natural interpretation of this language is that the inspired writers were *all* so biased as *never* to be capable of recording the truth of events. If it be changed to this: that occasionally the bias of the writers shows itself in their narrative, it would be nearer what is conveyed by the evidence cited.

It seems, therefore, that Specification 8, under Charge II, and Specification 3, under Charge III, are not relevant to those charges. Specifications 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9, under Charge II, and Specification 1, under Charge III, are not proven. Specifications 2 and 3, under Charge II, and Specification 4, under Charge III, are mainly established by the evidence, though they are unfortunately worded and ambiguous. The only Specifications fully established by the evidence are 10 and 11 (with the committee's explanation), under Charge II, and Specification 2, under Charge III.

This evidence, therefore, shows that I have asserted the following points: (1) The Chronicler has omitted from his book sundry statements of fact; (2) the inspiration of the Scriptures is consistent with error of fact in their affirmations; (3) the inspiration of the Scriptures is consistent with a bias of the writers which influences their utterances; (4) that a portion of the Book of Isaiah is by another prophet than Isaiah; and (5) it is impossible on the basis of the

facts as we have them to conclude that the Old Testament Scriptures are free from all error of fact.

The other evidence offered shows the circumstances in which these utterances were made to have been as follows: They were made in a discussion before the Ministerial Association and at the invitation of the Association; they were made really, though not formally, as a part of a debate in Presbytery in which the other side was fully represented; they were made under the conscientious conviction that the overture before Presbytery was likely to injure a member of another Presbytery.

The evidence has failed to show that the publication of the address was any thing but incidental to its delivery in the Association.

The negative form of some of the assertions made in the address is accounted for by the fact of its being an argument and not a treatise.

These considerations should be kept in view as bearing in an important sense on the degree of guilt if guilt there be. They show that the question is largely a question of freedom of discussion. The prosecution do not accuse me of teaching any wrong views in the class-room nor of preaching them from a pulpit. My utterances were called out by a debate in which I had a right to take part, and in which it was my duty to take part. The committee have not alleged any desire on my part to make *propaganda*. Their assertion that there was an attempt to *force* these views upon the Church I have already discussed.

The question then is, is it a crime for a minister in these circumstances to argue that inspiration did not so far remove or overcome the bias natural to the human mind as to make every statement of the inspired writers absolutely true? I have already argued at length that this is neither the doc-

trine of the Confession nor of the Scripture. I will not go over these arguments again. While the Confession recognizes the divine element as pervading Scripture, it makes no affirmation as to the human element. It would be absurd to suppose that the authors of the Confession denied the presence of a human element in Scripture.

The precise point at issue is the co-operation of the human and the divine in Scripture. It was at one time thought necessary to affirm that the divine altogether effaced the human. The inspired writers were called the amanuenses, or even the pens of the Holy Spirit. But this point of view has long been given up. It may now be taken as generally conceded that the writers retained their self-consciousness, their individuality of style, and their own mental idiosyncrasies. In fact it is now admitted by the most conservative that the inspired writers drew on the testimony of others, previously existing written documents, their own memories and reasoning powers. I may quote again here from Professors Warfield and Hodge, who say: "Paul and John and Peter largely drew upon the resources and followed the lines of their own personal religious experience in the intuitional or the logical development of their doctrine." The Holy Spirit, therefore, left considerable play to the human faculties of the authors of the Scriptures. *How much* this was is to be established by inductive study of the writings themselves. For it is entirely arbitrary to draw the line at error of statement while allowing every other human imperfection. We must suppose the Holy Spirit to be in himself possessed of all perfections. Did he not limit himself and condescend to the weakness of his instrument he would be as incapable of a mistake in grammar as of a mistake in arithmetic. The Bible, as it came from God, should be as free from one as from the other. Now, hear Drs. Hodge and Warfield

again: "It must be remembered that it is not claimed that the Scriptures, any more than their authors, are omniscient. The information they convey is in the forms of human thought, and *limited* on all sides. They were not designed to teach philosophy, science, or human history as such. They were not designed to furnish an infallible system of speculative theology. They are written in human languages whose words, inflections, constructions and idioms, *bear everywhere indelible traces of human error*. The record itself *furnishes evidence* that the writers were, in large measure, dependent for their knowledge upon sources and methods *in themselves fallible*; and that their personal knowledge and judgments were, in many matters, hesitating and defective, or *even wrong*."

Again: "There is a vast difference between *exactness* of statement, which includes an exhaustive rendering of details, an absolute literalness, which the Scriptures never profess, and accuracy, on the other hand, which secures a correct statement of facts or principles intended to be affirmed. It is this accuracy, and this alone, as distinct from exactness, which the Church doctrine maintains of every affirmation in the original text of Scripture without exception."\* It must be evident that these authors make large concessions to the human element in Scripture. The Holy Spirit, in their view, uses the human mind or human powers without removing *many* natural limitations. Why should we suppose that he always overcomes the tendency to mistake? Or rather why should he stop with making the writers correct *inaccuracies* and yet leave *inexact* or *incomplete* statements? There can be no answer to this except that it pleased him so to do. But how shall we know how much it pleased him to do? Evidently we can know this only by an examination of what he

\* Presbyterian Review, 1881, p. 238.

has done. As Drs. Hodge and Warfield well say: "The question between ourselves and the advocates of the view just stated is one of fact, to be decided only by an exhaustive and impartial examination of all the sources of evidence, *i. e.*, the claims and the phenomena of the Scriptures themselves" (p. 237).

It can not be wrong, therefore, reverently to inquire into what the Holy Spirit actually has done in this matter of inspiration. This is in fact the only way to determine what it is his will to do. Take the parallel case of the sanctification of believers. We are told that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost. *A priori* might we not expect that the actual indwelling of God himself would necessarily burn out all sin from the Christian heart? But those who have drawn this conclusion have often been allowed to discover their mistake by sad experiences of sin in their members warring against the Spirit dwelling in their hearts. The natural deduction has to be corrected by the facts.

In an inductive inquiry as to the extent to which the human element is allowed to appear in revelation, we must notice that the tendency to mistake in the apprehension and statement of fact is universal. Dr. McKibbin has said here that not even the professional and scientific historian is free from bias. And it has also been said here, that in courts of law, the examination of the most careful and honest witnesses shows discrepancies almost without exception. The human authors of Scripture in themselves considered, were therefore liable to mistake in the statement of fact as well as in style or grammar.

Another principle should be noted here: God's method of working in this world is the method of practical sufficiency not of absolute ideality. What he proposes to do is the measure of the means by which he does it. Now, the only

light he gives us as to his purpose in giving us a Scripture, is his declaration that it is to make us *wise unto salvation*. As John says in his Gospel (xx, 30, 31): "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that *ye may believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing ye may have life* in his name." God might have given us a much fuller account of our Lord's life had he so willed. The amount of material was limited by the rule of sufficiency. He gave us enough to bring us into life. If it be God's will to give us, by the hands of fallible men, a rule of faith and practice, we may assume that he will overrule their fallibility so as to make the rule *sufficient* for his purpose. We are not entitled to assume more than this. To speak with 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 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. Bishop 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 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."

Now I want you to bear in mind that this I heartily agree with, or rather, as we are dealing with the evidence presented: The evidence does not show that I deny this *sufficient* inspiration of *all parts* of Scripture. The question is whether, because I do not go on and affirm more than this, I can be found guilty of a crime against the Scriptures and the Confession. And my first point is: If the *facts* of Scripture are against affirming more than this, it can not be wrong not to affirm more. Reasoning on the *phenomena* of the Scriptures is as legitimate as reasoning on their *assertions*. And when we come to examine the facts, we find that even the upholders of inerrancy concede some things with which we must reckon. One of these is the statement concerning the human element in Scripture, already quoted from Drs. Hodge and Warfield. Several similar concessions might be added from the same authors. If my view of inspiration is beyond the pale of the Confession, theirs also must be; for the Confession nowhere makes such concessions as that the language of Scripture shows "indelible traces of human error," or that "the record itself furnishes evidence that the personal knowledge and judgments [of the writers] were in many matters hesitating, or even wrong." Again, Dr. Green says:

"The denial of inerrancy in the *minima* of Scripture, in trivialities which are of no account, and neither disparage the truthfulness of the narrative, nor in any way affect its

doctrinal statements, is compared by Dr. Charles Hodge (Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 170) to the detection of a speck of sandstone here and there in the marble of the Parthenon. If this were all, it need create no uneasiness."—Dr. W. H. Green, in N. Y. Observer, April 16, 1891.

And here let me say that the distinction between supposed *minima* and supposed *maxima* in the sphere we have in mind, is not legitimate. If there be inerrancy, it must extend to the smallest as well as to the largest matters. It is, in fact, impossible for us to draw any such line. Who shall say that the chronology of the Old Testament, in which so many conceded discrepancies occur, shall be called a minimum? The only legitimate line is between things essential to the rule of faith and things not essential to the rule of faith. Infallibility in the former is conceded on all hands. Inerrancy in the latter must be judged by a careful induction of the facts.

Now it would seem that an inerrant book should show its difference from other books on its face. Being unlike other books, we ought to have no difficulty in discovering this fact. But as to its human elements, the Bible is abundantly human. Its self-evidencing infallibility is of quite a different order from the appeal to the understanding which inerrancy should make. On the surface of Scripture, as Drs. Hodge and Warfield concede, are undoubtedly found "many apparent affirmations presumably inconsistent with the present teachings of science, with facts of history, or with other statements of the sacred books themselves." The burden of proof, therefore, rests with those who deny the legitimate conclusion from these surface facts. It rests upon them to show, by careful examination, that these apparent errors of statement are only apparent. Can they do this? Have they done it?

It is, of course, not my purpose to give any list of these apparent errors, or any extended discussion of them. Let

me call your attention to one significant fact. If it were the mind of the Holy Spirit completely to overrule natural bias of the writers of Scripture, he would certainly do so in the record of those facts most important to our faith. But he has not done so even here. For example: The two copies of the Decalogue, given respectively in Exodus and Deuteronomy do not *verbally* agree. Besides minor variations, each has in the Fourth Commandment a whole clause not contained in the other. Now here is the very foundation testimony of the Old Covenant. It consists of the words spoken by God himself, and afterward written down on two tables of stone by his own finger. If there ever was a case where diplomatic exactness was important, this is the case. Yet even here the Holy Spirit did not so control the mind of the writers as to make the two copies agree *verbatim*. The case is the same, as we know, with the Lord's Prayer. It was the prayer Christ taught his disciples. Yet in transmitting it to us, the memories of these disciples were not guided into an inerrant report, so that we can know the exact words which our Lord himself used. The case of the inscription on the Cross is too well known to require discussion. If inerrancy was to be made evident to us, it should have been here. What is true of this is true of the words of institution of the Lord's Supper. Now, what I say is this: Had it, been the mind of God to *overrule bias*, so as to secure absolute truth in every statement, he would have done it in these passages so fundamental to the being of the Church. That he has allowed variations here, strengthens the presumption that he has not been particular to overrule them elsewhere. Bear in mind that I do not charge unreliability on the witnesses in these cases. All I say is that their variations are the same in kind with those of other *reliable* witnesses. The existence of the variations shows that the human element was not so overruled as to se-

cure absolute accuracy—an accuracy unlike what we find in other cases of honest testimony.

Such instances as these are *prima facie* against the theory of inerrancy. But careful examination shows in the historical portions of the Old Testament much more pronounced facts than these. No one, to my knowledge, has questioned my statement of facts in regard to Kings and Chronicles. I may assume that the facts as I have stated them, are substantially correct. What do they show? They show that the Chronicler made up his book largely by compiling from other sources. In this work he had his own point of view, which influenced his choice of material. Dr. W. H. Green very rightly says, in commenting on I. Sam. xxxi, 10: "Chronicles which was less concerned with what became of Saul than with the transfer of the kingdom to David, makes no mention of the disposition of Saul's body. In this narrative Samuel and Chronicles each contain particulars not found in the other, and thus mutually complete each other. This makes it plain that one was not derived directly from the other, but that both were drawn from a common original, which each abridged in its own way, selecting what was most in accordance with its purpose, and omitting some things which the other retained."\* Here we have rightly stated the method in which the human element was allowed to come into the book. The authors are influenced by their own point of view. They meet concrete needs of the hour. They write on particular occasions, and they avail themselves of material already existing in literary form. This is a complex process. Only on the ground of express declarations of Scripture itself can we say that the natural liability to mistake which attends the whole process, is so overruled as to se-

\* S. S. Times, September 7, 1889.

cure absolute truthfulness of every statement incorporated in the narrative. Now look at a parallel instance. The Apostles, as we know, had special divine help for their work of founding the Church. They were full of the Spirit. A part of the work of founding the Church was the example of their own Christian life. "So walk," says Paul, "as ye have us for examples." Now, as if expressly to show us that *this* indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which was vouchsafed in so large measure, did not secure absolute perfection, we are told that Peter, in Antioch, was carried away by the example of the Jewish party, and "dissembled with them." Might we not, *a priori*, have reasoned that one of the chief Apostles in his official intercourse with the young Gentile Church would have been divinely guided so as not to be a stumbling block to the new converts? The case seems to me quite parallel to the one we are considering. It was so taken in the early Church, and it caused some of the Fathers as much searching of heart as does the intimation of possible error in the record of Scripture to some Christians nowadays. The case is this: Peter, a recognized Apostle and leader of the Church, came to Antioch. At first he exercised his Christian liberty, and ate with Gentile converts. But when certain came from James who belonged to the stricter Jewish party, and who held on to the Jewish exclusiveness, Peter "drew back and separated himself, fearing them of the circumcision." This example affected the whole Jewish element of the Church, for they "dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation." Paul was obliged to interfere with an open rebuke, and resist Peter to the face. In a young and growing Church, which needed next to the direct preaching of the Word, the consistent and edifying example of its divinely commissioned leaders, we see the very reverse. Peter is wavering and hypocritical, the

Judaizing missionaries are narrow and bigoted. Paul and Peter are at variance. Yet all parties have the promise of guidance into *truth*, and truth of word is not sufficient without truth of life. So scandalized were some of the Fathers by this state of affairs that they supposed the whole scene to be *contrived* by Peter and Paul. Peter agreed, that is, that he would join the Judaizers in order to give Paul an opportunity to rebuke them *through him*. Whether this hypothesis betters matters I leave you to judge. I only bring it in here to show the real difficulty in the co-operation of the human and the divine. The Holy Spirit certainly is not *chargeable* with Peter's timeserving, or with Barnabas' unworthy following of a bad example. Yet Barnabas was one of the men *full of the Holy Ghost*. What I am saying is that this case may be parallel with the case of inspiration of the record of Scripture. We can not go upon *a priori* theories in one case any more than in the other. The co-existence of the divine and the human does not make the divine chargeable with the errors of the human in one case any more than in the other. In the one case, as in the other, we must inquire into the evidence of the facts. The evidence of the facts seems to me to justify the conclusion that inspiration secured a *sufficient* infallibility, *i. e.*, an infallibility such as we need in a rule of faith and practice. More than this, we are not authorized to affirm. It has been said that the Holy Spirit is chargeable with the errors of the inspired writers. I can not see it. When Drs. Warfield and Hodge say no one now claims that inspiration secured the use of good Greek, do they charge the *Holy Spirit* with not using good Greek? When the same authors say that the Scriptures are written in human language, whose words, inflections, constructions and idioms bear every-where indelible traces of human error, do they mean that the *language of the Holy Spirit* bears every-where indelible traces

of human error? If we are to assert that where the Holy Spirit is, there can be no imperfection, we shall simply rule the Holy Spirit out of human history, and out of human hearts. To assert that the Holy Spirit is present in the whole history of the Church, is not to assert that human error is absent from the whole history of the Church.

We are looking at the charges and the evidence by which they are supported. My contention is that if the theory of inspiration which is implied in the pamphlet be in accordance with the facts of Scripture it can not be contrary to the statements of Scripture. Let us look at another of these facts, one which was alluded to in the discussion of the sufficiency of the charge. As we all know the Holy Spirit uses the expressions the sun rises, the sun sets and the four corners of the earth. On one notable occasion the sun stood still in the midst of heaven. It is argued that these expressions now deceive no one. But two and a half centuries ago how was it? The plain Christian was then confronted with a new theory concerning the relation of the sun to the earth. He had a right to argue that these expressions on the face of them expressed the old theory. They were so understood when first used, they had always been so understood until a few astronomers had brought forward their new tangled theory. On the ground of inerrancy these Christian people would be right. If the Holy Spirit indorses as his own and therefore as absolutely true, every expression which he uses, then he indorsed the geocentric theory of the universe. The fact that now we have no difficulty with these expressions shows simply that we have adjusted ourselves to them. Such an adjustment is going on all the time. The very fact that it goes on disproves the theory of the prosecution.

Now let me allude to a phenomenon which I venture to say throws additional light on the method of inspiration. If the

theory of inerrancy is verifiable anywhere it must be in the harmony of the New Testament with the Old. The New Testament every-where presupposes the Old Testament and argues from its texts as premises. If the care of God were a literal and verbal accuracy it should be visible in the exact correspondence of these two—the Old Testament text and the New Testament application. Remember the point at issue. It is not whether there is *material* variation. It is not whether the New Testament writer makes a legitimate application of what he quotes. It is whether the *absolute truthfulness* which according to the committee is secured to every statement of Scripture is verified by the New Testament quotation. Here we must consider such facts as the following:

Matt. ii, 23. "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets; he shall be called a Nazarene." The formula used by the Evangelist is the one used elsewhere to introduce quotations from the Old Testament. But no such text is found in the Old Testament. A similar case is James iv, 6, already noticed in my Response. Now if it had been the will of God to give us an inerrant Scripture would he not have made the writers avoid these inaccuracies of reference? In John vii, 38, our Lord says: "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." The formula of quotation is the same used elsewhere. But no such passage is found in the Old Testament, and the commentators have difficulty in finding those that remotely suggest it. Whether the Evangelist inserted the words "as saith the Scripture" by a mistake of memory, or whether our Lord gave the substance of some Old Testament promise, makes no difference to us here. On either hypothesis we can not secure more than substantial correctness if even that. But your



committee insist upon *absolute truthfulness* of every statement and will be content with nothing less.

In looking at this and some similar cases one is tempted to say that the advocates of inerrancy do not know the facts of the Bible. The question is whether on the theory of inerrancy the New Testament writers could be allowed to quote an Old Testament passage in a wrong translation. When the Holy Spirit who is omniscient as well as truth itself says *thus it is written*, must he not give us *exactly* what is written? If he is not to allow the play of the human memory he uses even to the extent of some inaccuracy we are shut up to this conclusion. So it is the theory of inaccuracy which charges the error on the Holy Spirit, not the view of the pamphlet which attributes the error to the bias of the human author. For example, Paul says (Rom. xv, 21): "*As it is written, They shall see to whom no tidings of him came, and they who have not heard shall understand.*" The quotation is from Is. lii, 15, where we read: "*That which hath not been told them shall they see; and that which they have not heard shall they understand.*" The sense of the two forms of the passage is entirely different. Paul makes it affirm the spread of the Gospel to *new regions*. Isaiah declares a revelation of *new truths*. Notice no one questions Paul's right to express his thought in any words that are appropriate or to use in illustration of his thought any quotation he chooses. The sole question is whether on the theory of *inerrancy* he can say *it is written*, and then introduce not that which is written but something else. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does the same thing. He quotes the Old Testament from the Septuagint even where that differs materially from the Hebrew text. In x, 5, we have an example where we read, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith: Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not. But a *body* didst thou prepare for me." This is a quota-

tion from Psalm xl, 6, where we find "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in, *ears hast thou digged for me.*" The New Testament author quotes the Psalm as the words of Christ and this he had a right to do. There is no question of the aptness of the citation. But on the theory of inerrancy could he introduce a quotation from a messianic Psalm and not give it in the exact meaning of the original? The same author in his second chapter (11-13) puts together three Old Testament passages in these words: "For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethern, saying: I will declare thy name unto my brethern. In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise. And again: I will put my trust in him. And again: *Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*" It is this last passage which makes the difficulty. The author evidently makes it an assertion by Christ of his oneness with his disciples. I venture to say that one who had paid no attention to the subject would be nothing less than astounded to turn to the Old Testament original which is Is. ix, 18: "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts who dwelleth in Mount Zion." Now note the point here. We are not discussing the right of the author to adapt an Old Testament passage to his argument. The question is whether *on the theory of inerrancy* he has a right to quote an Old Testament passage with a meaning which it does not contain. For it is evident that here a fragment of an Old Testament sentence by being broken out of its context is made to say what the original does not say. I say again, if it had been the intention of the Holy Spirit to give us absolute truthfulness of every statement of the inspired writers, he would not have put these stumbling blocks in the way.

But there are some other facts which bear on the subject to which I wish briefly to advert. In the early Church as we know there were especial manifestations of the divine presence called *charismata*, or gifts, of the Holy Spirit. They were in some ways analogous to that particular gift of the Spirit which fitted the prophets for their work. If the Holy Spirit never uses the powers of men without overruling all tendency to mistake we should expect to find in connection with these gifts the same complete absence of bias or error which the theory of inerrancy postulates for the sacred writers. And among these gifts that which takes the highest rank is the gift of *prophecy*. Concerning this we should have an especial right to postulate an inerrancy, similar to that which is given to the writers of Scripture. For the possessors of this gift assume the name of the organs of the Old Testament revelation. Their office is said to be the edification of the Church. They are named next to the Apostles among the officers which God has bestowed upon the Church. They are expressly said to receive revelations, 1 Cor. xiv, 30. If the activity of the Holy Spirit must be unmistakably free from the admixture of human error we should expect it to be so here. But when we look at the New Testament intimations we are surprised that this is nowhere asserted. Rather do we find the contrary implied. Paul for example (Rom. xii, 6) cautions the possessors of the gift to let it be according to the proportion of faith. He evidently means that this divine inspiration does not itself determine the measure of its expression; but that the recipient of it needs care and judgment not to let the expression go beyond the assurance given him by his faith in Christ. This assumes the possibility of the human error coming in to the expression of the supernatural revelation. In another passage the Apostle intimates the same possibility when he says: "Let the prophets speak by two or three and let the others discrim-

inate," (1 Cor. xiv, 29). Here what is said by way of revelation is submitted to the judgment of the others present who are allowed to judge how far it is the work of the Spirit. And Paul seems to put himself on the level with these prophets when he says in the text already discussed (v. 37): "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you that they are a commandment of the Lord." Confident of the genuineness of his own revelation he submits it fearlessly to their judgment. Elsewhere he protests that even he has not lordship over their faith, (2 Cor. i, 24). Perhaps most significant of all in this connection is the exhortation: "Quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings, (*but* many MSS) prove all things, hold fast that which is good," (1 Thess. v, 20, 21).

I am not arguing that these texts directly assert any thing concerning the inspiration of the Biblical writers. But it has been asserted or intimated on the floor of this house that if the Biblical writers ever made a mistake, the mistake was chargeable to the Holy Spirit. It has been intimated by the prosecution that the denial of inerrancy leads logically to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost—that sin which hath never forgiveness either in this world or in that which is to come. It is only proper if this be the case, if we are approaching the brink of that awful crime against our Sanctifier, that we should inquire into the analogies of the Spirit's action. And the nearest analogy is certainly that extraordinary presence of the Spirit in the early Church, which made all its parts to grow up into him which is the head even Christ. Did these extraordinary gifts secure complete immunity from human error even in the communicating of revealed truth? All the indications are against it. The analogy should make us cautious in arguing on the similar gift of inspiration.

One of the prosecution affirmed that inspiration (by which

he meant the inspiration of the Biblical writers) is "such an influence as made the organ of it God's mouth piece. The inspired writers identify their utterances with God's—their right to speak is that they are commissioned by God." The difficulty with this assertion is that the moment we begin to apply it rigidly we are obliged to make exceptions. When Paul says for example: "I thank God that I baptized none of you save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides I know not whether I baptized any other," (1 Cor. i, 14, 15)—the human element is too palpable to be explained away. Paul's memory is evidently uncertain on the point he is discussing. His first impression is that he baptized but two members of the Corinthian Church. Afterwards he recalls another household. He is apparently uncertain whether there may not be still others. There is no certain error here. But the human element is so prominent that we can not assert that the utterance of the author is identical with that of the Spirit of God. This single instance is enough to overthrow the theory that the writers of the Bible everywhere identify their utterances with God's utterances. The fact that the authors of Scripture are moved by the needs of the hour has already been adverted to. How can we understand Luke's saying that it seemed good to him as well as others who had undertaken to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, to write them in order, *having traced the course of all things accurately from the first?* Is this *Luke* which studied the documents received from the eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, or is it the Holy Spirit? Evidently we can not identify the utterances of the two. And when Paul says we know *in part* and we prophesy *in part*, he evidently does not claim for himself the omniscience of the Spirit.

No doubt you all admit the force of these texts to a certain extent. I do not bring them up as conclusive of my theory, but as showing the complexity of the problem. The co-operation of the Spirit of God and the human will is a matter so difficult to understand that it becomes us to be modest whenever we approach it. That the activity of the Spirit overrules *all* limitations of humanity, no one of us believes. To affirm that it allows defects of language and defects of memory to show themselves, and yet to affirm that no trace of *bias* of any other kind is allowed to remain, can be justified only by extremely distinct and unmistakable affirmations of Scripture. And these I claim have not yet been brought to light. And the theory, if true, ought to have the facts of Scripture on its side, as well as the assertions of Scripture.

Among the facts of Scripture which have been discussed of late as bearing on this subject, there is one to which I will advert briefly, for it is as good for purposes of illustration as any other. In the two lists of unclean animals in Leviticus xi and Deut. xiv, we find the coney described as an animal which chews the cud but does not divide the hoof. As no one has yet been able to discover a cud-chewing coney the example has been urged and, as seems to me, successfully urged, against the theory of inerrancy. The only answer I have ever heard from the inerrancists is this: That the coney is an unknown animal and may have been a ruminant. It would probably be answer enough to this to say that the coney is as well known to us as nine-tenths of the animals mentioned in the Old Testament. In fact there can be no reasonable doubt of its identity, and that it is not a cud-chewing animal. But those who thus took refuge in their ignorance overlooked a nearly related fact. Along with the coney the *hare* is mentioned in both passages, and it also is described as chewing the cud. The hare is still abundant in Syria. Its Hebrew

name is the name given to it in Syriac, Chaldee, Arabic, Modern Hebrew and apparently in Assyrian also. There can be no reasonable doubt, therefore, that the Biblical assertion in both passages is incorrect. Where now are the men who assert\* that "a proved error in Scripture contradicts not only our [their] doctrine but the Scripture claims and therefore its inspiration in making those claims?" Their doctrine is gone and the claims of Scripture as well; and, as we have heard from this platform, the whole Christian system and even the truth of natural religion goes with it. The absurdity of such a conclusion shows that one of the premises is wrong. The one which is wrong is the one which makes the truth of Christianity depend on the truth of every statement in the Biblical books.

The usual method of evading the difficulty into which the advocates of inerrancy are brought by such facts as these, is to say that the errors may have come in by transcription. This is Mr. Lowe's language: "If there be discrepancies that can not otherwise be explained, they can be accounted for upon the supposition of error in transmission." Now, here is a point which needs elucidation. For there is a science of text criticism. The advocates of inerrancy are inclined to make it the only legitimate criticism. This science is able to judge, with some degree of accuracy, what sort of errors come in by transmission. And I believe I can say that the unanimous judgment of the text critics is that transmission will not account for one in a hundred of the discrepancies on the surface of Scripture. "On the *ipsissima verba* original autograph theory," says Dr. Evans,† "textual criticism, as it restores to us the purer, more original form of the text,

\* Hodge and Warfield, p. 245.

† Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration, p. 37.

should tend to eliminate these discrepancies, and to bring the various representatives 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." Dr. Evans gives a number of examples which show this very plainly. But we are not dependent on the evidence of the experts. The Revised Version puts into every one's hands a means of judging just what textual criticism will do. For it is morally certain that the Revised Version is considerably nearer the original autograph than is the Authorized Version. In other words, the errors of transcription in the Authorized Version have been largely removed in the Revised Version. Have the discrepancies and apparent errors of statement also disappeared? I know of but one instance in which a real difficulty (to the theory of inerrancy, I mean) has been removed by the return to a purer text, while in a number of instances the difficulty has been brought more sharply into view.

Another statement often made loosely on this subject is that difficulties are disappearing under the light of modern discovery, and we have only to wait for more light, and the absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures will be vindicated. The state of the case here is not unlike what we have seen to be true of textual criticism. Some difficulties have been removed, and the *general* accuracy of that portion of Old Testament history which comes into contact with Assyrian history has been confirmed. But the minute accuracy which inerrancy calls for has been made, if any thing, more doubtful by these discov-



eries. The Old Testament Chronology, for example, has had to be readjusted by the Assyrian data.

In view of these facts you will readily understand that the authors of the pamphlet could not honestly see the Presbytery committed to the theory of inerrancy. But the question raised by the prosecution will be said perhaps to be the narrower one of the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church. What I have been saying bears on this problem also. For it would be suicidal to commit the Presbyterian Church to a doctrine opposed to the facts of Scripture. Not to emphasize this at present, let us now look at the relation of the pamphlet to the Confessional doctrine. And the first point I make is that the pamphlet nowhere directly contradicts the doctrine of the Confession. A polemic is not an all-round treatise. The addresses on "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration" were not written as a treatise on inspiration, but as an argument against inerrancy. The objections of the committee and others that my doctrine of inspiration is not clear to them, are not well taken. I am not obliged to formulate any doctrine of inspiration. My address was not designed to formulate any such doctrine. As Dr. Roberts pointed out, it would be going beyond my province to formulate a positive doctrine on this or any other department of dogmatic theology. As an exegete it is my duty to deal with the facts of Scripture, and state them. It is the duty of the theologians to make their theory accord with these facts, and if the theory is not in accord with the facts, the fault does not lie with the facts. And, as I have remarked, no one has yet shown that the facts of the Scripture record have been misstated or misrepresented in the pamphlet.

It is only necessary, therefore, for me to affirm the main statement of the Confession that the Word of God is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and challenge the committee to show any thing in the pamphlet which contradicts this.

They have not done it and they can not do it. What they have done is to affirm that a book can not be an infallible rule of faith and practice without being inerrant in its every statement. But this only brings the committee into hopeless difficulty. For on their own confession there are discrepancies in the present text of Scripture. Its authority as a rule of faith is therefore gone with its inerrancy. I see no escape from this difficulty. The pious opinion that there once existed inerrant autographs is a pious opinion only. It does no harm until it is forced as the doctrine of the Church. It has no practical bearing on the life of the Church, and may be allowed as a harmless but unverifiable hypothesis. But the great fundamental doctrines of the Church are of practical importance. They deal with the present Bible as a rule of present belief and of present life. From this point of view the Confession must be judged. And, first, it is clear that the Confession will have nothing to do with original autographs different from our present Hebrew and Greek texts. The contrary has been intimated, but a glance at the language of the Confession dissipates the delusion.

“VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations), *being immediately inspired of God*, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, *are therefore authentic*; so as in all controversies of religion the Church is *finally to appeal to them*. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore, they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation into which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may wor-

ship him in acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope."

The main interest of the section is evidently in an authentic copy of the Scriptures *for present reference* in controversies of religion. The Roman Catholic Church had directed that the Vulgate version having attained currency in the Church should be the standard in all controversy. It was especially against the Roman Catholic affirmation that this section of the Confession was directed. It emphasizes the present Greek and Hebrew copies as being the fountain-head from which the versions flow. It stands to reason that the fountain is purer than the stream. It was probably with reference to the Vulgate which the framers of the Confession supposed to have been corrupted by the tradition of the Church, that they emphasized also the purity of the Greek and Hebrew texts. The only *originals* they have in mind are the present copies *in the original* languages. This is evident if we try to insert the original autographs. We should then read :

"The original autograph copies being immediately inspired of God *were*, and so far as they can be recovered by text criticism *still are* authentic, so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal to them."

The absurdity of such a statement is seen at a glance. It makes the standard of faith to be an unknown quantity, and makes the decision in all controversies of religion dependent upon the as yet imperfect science of text criticism. I do not know how to make it plainer that the original autographs were never in the mind of the Westminster man as differing from our present Scriptures. Unless the standard of faith is to be impaired, we must affirm with the Confession that the Scriptures have been kept pure in all ages. But in affirming this we all agree that we mean not that *no* error has crept in,

but that the infallibility of the rule of faith has not been impaired. But if this infallibility has not been impaired by error of transmission, it is not absurd to affirm that it may originally have co-existed with error in the autograph.

The doctrine of our Church has been said to be established by the terms of reunion and the action of the Assembly of 1874. But this I deny *in toto*. It is beyond the power of the Assembly to define the doctrine of the Church. What is meant is that these Assemblies declared the majority of the Church to hold a certain view of inspiration. But this does not make it the faith of the Church. The faith of the Church is formulated in the Confession. The Assembly can interpret the Confession by way of judicial decision, not otherwise. The resolution of the last Assembly can not add to the Confession what is not there already.

It comes then to the question : is the doctrine of the committee found in the Confession? Notice, their doctrine is that of the *absolute truth* of every statement of the Scriptures. It is not, as they are now inclined to say, the historic reliability of the whole Bible. The committee seem to think a book can not be historically reliable which is not inerrant. In which case they would not have any reliable history outside the Bible at all. But the question is one of inspiration, and I must make one more attempt to get before your side some distinctions which the committee are inclined to ignore. They object to my definition of *Biblical* inspiration [Response, p. 55], as if I recognized only this inspiration and no other. They quote and misrepresent my affirmation that something is *technically called* inspiration, as if I meant that technical inspiration is not *real* inspiration. I beg you to notice the difference in the use of words. The *Biblical* idea of inspiration and the *theological* idea of inspiration are different. Both may be justified as correct, but they are not the same.

Biblical inspiration, *i. e.*, *inspiration in the Biblical sense* is generally associated with *revelation*. This is what I meant by describing Biblical inspiration as a divine *afflatus* carrying the man along so that he can not resist. I mean, the idea of inspiration which we find in the Bible is here defined for us. Let us look at it a little more closely. The word inspiration, as I have said, occurs nowhere in the Old Testament, and but once in the New Testament. But the thing is often described in the Old Testament. It is the extraordinary activity of the Holy Spirit fitting men to do certain things. So in Judges iii, 10, it leads Gideon to deliver Israel. In Judg. xiv, 6, the Spirit of the Lord comes mightily upon Samson, and he rends the lion like a kid. Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of God . . . to devise cunning works, to work in gold, in silver, and brass; . . . to work in all manner of workmanship. But its commonest function is to fit the organ of revelation for his work. The *prophet* is distinctly the man of the Spirit. It is unnecessary for me to quote examples. The coming of the Spirit upon the prophet was the method by which God put his words into his mouth. The possessor of this inspiration is for the time being the organ of the divine will. He identifies his utterances with the utterances of God himself. This I say is the Biblical *idea* of inspiration. It always goes with revelation, I do not confuse revelation with inspiration—I distinguish between the Biblical and the theological idea of inspiration. Biblical language always associates inspiration and revelation. At least I have called hitherto in vain for a text which connects inspiration with the activity of the scribe as distinguished from the prophet.

Now theological usage is different. Theology needs a word to connote another activity of the Holy Spirit. It takes the word inspiration for this purpose. This is what I mean when

I say this influence is *technically called* inspiration. There is nothing about a *technical inspiration* which Mr. Lowe supposes to be distinguished from a *real* inspiration. When I say that the technical theological sense of a word is different from the Biblical sense, I do not mean that both senses are not justified by the facts. If we are to discuss the organizing principle of Scripture we must have a name for it. Inspiration is the name the theologians have chosen. What I am concerned to point out is that there are two senses of the word, and that there is a difference between theological and Biblical usage. In theology inspiration is the organizing principle of the books. In the Bible itself inspiration is the activity of the Spirit which fits the organs of *revelation* for their work. Now if this distinction is clearly grasped it shows that a member of the court was mistaken in thinking that I confound inspiration and revelation. To show this let me call your attention to page 31 of the response, where I say:

"Now, up to this point we are all agreed. All parties here acknowledge the following points: (a) The Bible contains a revelation from God. (b) It contains other material not in the proper sense revealed. (c) This material is of importance to us because of its bearing on the history of revelation. (d) This material was chosen and arranged by men acting under a distinct influence of the Holy Spirit, which influence we call technically *inspiration*; and (e) the result is a book which in its totality is the Church's permanent and infallible rule of faith and life. I say, all parties agree up to this."

The point in which parties differ is the extent of this activity which *in theology* we call inspiration. It is an activity concerned in collecting (in the parts of the Bible now in view) and arranging literary material from all available sources. It led the writers of the books to make the books. It led them to make the books out of this complex material. Now

I submit that the extent of this activity, the extent to which it overruled natural bias, may rightly be made the subject of inquiry, and that that inquiry must not proceed on the assumption that the material so used is necessarily corrected from error when incorporated in the Biblical book. To take the example of the Chronicler. When he introduced into his narrative statements so seemingly contradictory to those in the books of Kings, did he correct the errors which we may naturally suppose were already in them? I say, we have no reason to think so. This is the point of my question about the Holy Spirit making use of a quotation. I did not allude to the comparatively rare cases in which a Biblical author avowedly quotes from another writer. I meant those cases (like the Chronicler) in which a book is made up by compilation. Can the Holy Spirit not lead a man to compile a book without leading him to correct every mistake in the material which he uses without avowedly quoting? The committee gives a negative answer to this question. This I can not do. And here is just the point of difference. I have no interest in modern Biblical science except to acknowledge honestly the facts it brings to light. Among these facts unmistakably is this—that the historical books of the Old Testament are very largely compilations from previously existing documents. If this be a fact we must acknowledge it and must give room for it in our doctrine of inspiration. But the doctrine as held by your committee refuses to acknowledge this fact. At least it seems to me unable to allow it. This doctrine insists in its full vigor that every affirmation of the Biblical authors is the direct affirmation of God himself. What I say is: we must distinguish. It is only in a secondary sense that we can say compiled books are the works of the compiler. It depends on how extensive his activity was. The theory of superintendence held by Messrs. Hodge and Warfield is as inconsistent

with the theory of your committee as is mine. Does the Holy Spirit by *superintending* the work of compilation make every affirmation of the book compiled *his own*, so that he is chargeable with the statements of the book? It seems to me not so. But your committee would hardly want to rule me out of the Church by a test that would have excluded the sainted Archibald Alexander Hodge, and would exclude his brilliant successor the present Professor of Theology at Princeton. The only difference between these gentlemen and myself is that they insist on a superintendence that excluded *certain* forms of error (inaccuracies that is) but not other forms of error. How much error it excluded I hold we must fix by *interpretation* as your committee would say.

And now what have I said about the Confession of Faith? Its main interest is in the Word of God in Scripture—this is what I said about it and this I still maintain. Its main interest is in the direct revelation, that is, which forms the heart of Scripture. This is the part most prominently in the mind of the authors when they speak of the Word of God, because without this (the revelation) the Scripture would lose its value. In predicating what they do of all Scripture however they recognize that whatever the Sacred Books contain is by its association with the revelation and its bearing on it also (though in a subordinate sense) the Word of God. This I have never denied. What I have refused to do is to draw the conclusion that human error must be absent from every part because divine truth is present in every part. Where the human and the divine coexist we can not always so conclude. The sinlessness of our Lord which is often held up as an analogue, is abundantly testified in Scripture.

But I wish to notice again the statement I have already made that it is contrary to analogy to affirm a doctrine to be a *fundamental* doctrine of the Confession when it is not clearly



stated in the Confession itself. To take any other ground is to open the door to any amount of arbitrary construction, and to read into the Confession fundamental doctrines without end. The most disastrous principle to the formulation of any creed whatever as a test of doctrine would be this. And in this particular connection I beg your attention to the argument made in the court that the doctrine of the historic trustworthiness (by which in order to the decision of the case before you must be understood the *entire* historic trustworthiness) of the Scriptures "*underlies* the whole Confessional doctrine and requires no explicit and formal statement, just as the doctrine of the divine existence underlies the Scriptures themselves, and does not require a formal statement. For both in the Scriptures and in the Confession there are some things which constitute the bed rock of faith, the statement of which would be mere surplusage." I must dissent from these propositions because they seem to me to ignore the essential difference between Scripture and Confession. In the Scriptures fundamental truth may be under the surface as the foundation, without distinct and categorical assertion. But the Confession exists to *state* doctrine. Its very reason for existence is that it may bring into distinct formulation the doctrines of Scripture. To assert that fundamental doctrine underlies the Confession is to affirm the deficiency of the Confession and its inadequacy to the very purpose that called it into existence.

But more than this may be said. Granting, for the moment, that the divine existence is nowhere affirmed in the Scriptures, but simply underlies them, we can easily show the fundamental character of this doctrine by trying to abstract it from them. Denying the divine existence simply reduces the Scriptures to inanity. Take away that foundation stone and the whole fair structure falls into shapeless heaps of rubbish. But can we say the same of the doctrine of the absolute his-

toric truthfulness of Scripture in its relation to the Confession? Withdraw this from the foundation; is the building disturbed? It seems to me not. Separate in thought between the rule of faith and the matters of secular interest in the Scriptures and so long as you keep the rule of faith under the Confession, the whole system is unshaken. You may refuse to make this distinction in thought. You may say there can be no rule of faith unless it be inerrant. But that is your individual opinion and can not bind any one who finds himself able to separate the two things. And the question before you is not what you find logical, but the extent to which you can reasonably insist that your doctrine is the only possible basis of ministerial standing. In this light I think you must hesitate to force the acceptance of an *implied* fundamental doctrine upon a man who does not find it implied at all. Even your committee do not insist upon their logic as a test of doctrinal soundness. What I have said on this subject is [Response p. 28]: "It is contrary to all analogy to express a fundamental doctrine by implication. That the Word of God in Scripture is the rule of faith and life, that as opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrine it is the only infallible rule of faith and life; that it contains what is necessary for salvation; that its authority depends upon God, its author—these are fundamental doctrines, and they are plainly set down in the Confession. Not so the doctrine of the committee. Therefore I conclude that it is not fundamental." Now, when we come to look at the doctrine which is said to underlie the Confession, we are unable to say exactly what it is. That the system of doctrine we receive presupposes the historic reality of a revelation we shall all admit. To deny *all* historic truthfulness to the Scriptures is, of course, destructive of Christianity. If the Gospels be myths, if the Acts of the Apostles be a romance, if the Epistles be forgeries—then the historic facts which lie at the basis

of our religion are gone. I hope I need not protest that *this* historic truthfulness is as dear to me as to any one. But the committee have raised an entirely different issue. They affirm that the authors of the Bible were so kept from mistake that their every statement is absolutely true, *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in its natural and intended sense. Such an historic truthfulness I find nowhere claimed for the Scriptures by the Scriptures themselves or by the Confession. And when such historic truthfulness, as distinguished from the general historic truthfulness which we all admit, is said to *underlie* the Confession, I can not find that it is even suggested.

But it is fair for me to point out that the doctrine I am opposing is dangerous to the faith of the Church, and that it does not accomplish the ends claimed for it. The committee have argued at length on the supposed consequence of my errors to show that they are only evil, and that continually. It is allowable for me to show the results of forcing their doctrine on the Church. Let us suppose ourselves to affirm unanimously with the committee that the Holy Spirit so controlled the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances "absolutely truthful, *i. e.* free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense." It is legitimate to point out first that this affirmation does not in itself secure the certainty in belief that we desire. This doctrine has been held, no doubt, more or less consciously by theologians in all ages of the Church. So far from securing doctrinal unity, which is the legitimate test of doctrinal certainty, it has produced the reverse. For, in the seventeenth century, when the doctrine of inerrancy was most stringently held, the doctrinal differences between Christians of the different schools were most tenaciously defended and even emphasized as essential. In the second place, it does not secure the historical trustworthiness you so

much desire. Historical trustworthiness does not depend upon dogmatic affirmations. Whether you allow it or not the historic trustworthiness of the Scriptures will be tested by historic methods of inquiry. If they can not stand this test they will go down in spite of your most emphatic testimony to your belief in their inerrancy. Here is the vice of this whole matter. It is an attempt to decide a historic question on metaphysical presuppositions. Much has been said here about the danger of new views. The danger is in not meeting new views by right methods. The modern apologetic method is to defend Christianity without the use of the doctrine of inerrancy. The historic trustworthiness of the Scripture is not thereby taken away, but rather established. This is the true Protestant position. The Word of God will stand any tests that are applied to it. When it is claimed that it must go down before such tests, the true answer is to apply the tests boldly and impartially, not to condemn the application on the ground of a dogmatic presupposition which is not even clearly affirmed in your own Confession.

But again, the insistence upon this as a fundamental doctrine of the Church is to encourage doubt and uncertainty in the mind of believers. Suppose this Presbytery decides in the most solemn manner in which it can be called upon to decide—under the charge of the Moderator and as judges of a court of Jesus Christ—that it is a fundamental doctrine of the Church that *every* affirmation of the Scriptures on no matter what subject is absolutely true. Will not every one of your members recall the difficulties that lie on the surface of Scripture? They will begin to argue your doctrine, that one proved error overthrows the Bible, and they will argue it in this way—one apparent error apparently overthrows our faith. If one holding your theory comes to you with an ap-

parent discrepancy and you tell him that it has come in by transmission, you shock his faith scarce less than if you admitted it to be in the original. As Dr. Evans has well said [Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration, pp. 39, 40]:

“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. But what is the value of an infallible editorship which does not secure a permanently infallible 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? You say: 'A single error breaks down the Bible.' One comes up and points out an apparent error. Drs. Hodge and Warfield are constrained to admit that it has all the appearance of error, 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 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 it 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?"

By it he being dead, yet speaketh.

I can hardly add to the force of this presentation. It puts before us with solemn emphasis the danger of putting the infallibility of the Bible not where God puts it but somewhere else. *One proved* error overthrows our Christianity! Alas that the Presbytery of Cincinnati should put it so easily into the power of the enemy to overthrow our religion—the most precious possession given us by God.

But again to emphasize the doctrine of the committee is to change the nature of Christian faith. The citation from the Confession already used on this subject is as follows:

Chap. XIV, Sec. 2. "By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true *whatsoever* is revealed in the word, for the authority of *God himself speaking* therein; and acteth differently, upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

Notice again that this emphasizes whatever is *revealed* in the Word, not *whatsoever* is *contained* in the Word. It emphasizes obeying the commands and embracing the promises. It further lays stress on accepting, receiving and resting upon Christ. Now notice the next section:

"This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith."

The theory of your committee puts a different assurance in place of this. It has been said on the floor of the house that the riper faith is, the more fully it is assured of the absolute truth of the Bible. But the Confession evidently means by the "full assurance through Christ," the assurance of the believer that he is redeemed from sin and accepted in the Beloved. This assurance does not necessarily bring with it the intellectual conviction of the inerrant truth of every statement of Scripture. Nor does the firm resolution to believe the inerrant truth necessarily lead to the full trust in Christ

as a personal Savior, which alone is of religious value, and which the Confession emphasizes.

Now, moderator and gentlemen of the court, I respectfully submit the case to your judgment. The evidence shows that I admit a bias in the inspired writers sometimes affecting their statements of fact. Your committee have failed to show that this is contrary to the Scriptures or the Confession of Faith.

Your committee have failed to show that I deny the infallibility of the Scriptures as the rule of faith and life.

Your committee has failed to show that my doctrine of inspiration is in any way contrary to that affirmed in the Scriptures and the Confession.

Your committee has failed to show that I advocate *anything* out of harmony with the facts of Scripture or with the statements of Scripture rightly interpreted.

Your committee has failed to show that I have in any way impugned the essential and necessary articles of the Westminster system.

On these grounds I respectfully ask, that in accordance with the law and the evidence, and with my own plea, I may be found *not guilty* of the charges brought by your committee.



*[Transcript from the Records of the Presbytery of Cincinnati of action taken at a meeting held in the First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Tuesday, December 13, 1892.]*

### JUDGMENT.

IN THE CASE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST THE REV. HENRY  
PRESERVED SMITH, D.D.

Presbytery, after careful deliberation upon the charges, specifications, and testimony, has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Charge I, and the two specifications under it, are not sustained. Dr. Smith is, therefore, declared not guilty of this charge, and is hereby fully acquitted.

2. Charge II is sustained. All the specifications under this charge are also sustained, except the VIIIth, which is not sustained.

3. Charge III is sustained. All the specifications under this charge are sustained.

Charges II and III have thus been proved, and Dr. Smith is found guilty of both these charges.

Therefore, the judgment of the Presbytery, sitting as a court, is, that the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., be, and hereby is, suspended from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church until such time as he shall make manifest, to

the satisfaction of Presbytery, his renunciation of the errors he has been found to hold, and his solemn purpose no longer to teach or propagate them.

At the same time, Presbytery expresses the kindest feelings toward Prof. Smith, and it makes this disposition of the case only because the interests of truth imperatively demand it.

This certifies that the foregoing is a true copy of the Judgment of the Presbytery of Cincinnati in the judicial case of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America against the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D.

Attest:

EDWARD T. SWIGGETT,

*Stated Clerk of Presbytery of Cincinnati.*

# CHARGES AND SPECIFICATIONS

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SUBMITTED TO THE PRESBYTERY OF CINCINNATI, OCTOBER  
17, 1892, AND AMENDED NOVEMBER 29, 1892.

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## CHARGE I.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., a minister in said Church, and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching (in two articles in the New York *Evangelist*, dated respectively March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892) "contrary to the regulations and practice of the Church founded" on the Holy Scriptures, and set forth in the Constitution of said Church, that a minister in said Church may abandon the essential features of the system of doctrine held by said Church, and which he received and adopted at his ordination, and rightfully retain his position as a minister in said Church.

### SPECIFICATION 1.

He teaches erroneously in the New York *Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, that a doctrinal qualification is only required in the officers of the Church at the time of ordination.

### SPECIFICATION 2.

He teaches erroneously in the New York *Evangelist*, March 10, 1892, and April 7, 1892, that whether in any individual case the Church requires continued adherence to the doctrinal standard received and adopted at ordination, is only to be made known by judicial process.

## CHARGE II.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., being a minister in said Church and a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, with teaching, in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," contrary to a fundamental doctrine of the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful; *i. e.*, free from error when interpreted in their natural and intended sense.

## SPECIFICATION 1.

In a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," published by the said Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., in different editions in the year 1891, which pamphlet has been extensively circulated with his knowledge and approval, he teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has asserted sundry errors of historic fact.—Pages 92, 100, 101 and 102.

## SPECIFICATION 2.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles has suppressed sundry historic truths, owing to inability or unwillingness to believe them.—Pages 104, 105, 107, 109.

## SPECIFICATION 3.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspired author of Chronicles incorporated into his narrative and indorsed by his authority material drawn from unreliable sources.—Pages 101, 103.

## SPECIFICATION 4.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles was so great, that the truth of history therein contained can only be discovered by such investigation, discrimination and sifting as is necessary to the discovery of the truth in histories by uninspired and fallible men.—Page 100.

## SPECIFICATION 5.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches the historic unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles to have been such that "the truth of events" can not be ascertained from what he actually asserts, but from what he unwittingly reveals.—Pages 100, 108, 109.

## SPECIFICATION 6.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the historical unreliability of the inspired author of Chronicles extended to other inspired historic writers of the Old Testament.—Page 102.

## SPECIFICATION 7.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the historic unreliability charged by him upon the inspired historical writers of the Old Testament is chargeable, though in a less degree, upon the inspired writers of the New Testament.—Page 115.

## SPECIFICATION 8.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the disclosures of religious experience given by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not in accord with the mind of the Holy Spirit, and free from moral defect.—Page 101.

## SPECIFICATION 9.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the assertions made by the inspired authors of the Psalms are not to be relied upon as absolutely true.—Page 101.

## SPECIFICATION 10.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the last twenty-seven chapters of the Book of Isaiah are not correctly ascribed to him.—Pages 95, 96 of pamphlet.

## SPECIFICATION 11.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he specifically affirms the impossibility of the Old Testament Scriptures being free from all error of fact.—Page 92.

## CHARGE III.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America charges the Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., a minister in said Church, a member of the Presbytery of Cincinnati, in a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," while alleging that the Holy Scriptures are inspired, and an infallible rule of faith and practice, with denying in fact their inspiration in the sense in which inspiration is attributed to the Holy Scriptures, by the Holy Scriptures themselves and by the Confession of Faith.

## SPECIFICATION 1.

In a pamphlet entitled "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," published by the said Rev. Henry Preserved Smith, D.D., in different editions in the year 1891, which pamphlet has been extensively circulated with his knowledge and approval, he teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

is consistent with the unprofitableness of portions of the sacred writings.—Page 116.

SPECIFICATION 2.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with error of fact in their affirmations.—Pages 92, 93, 95, 96, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 109, 115, cited under Charge II.

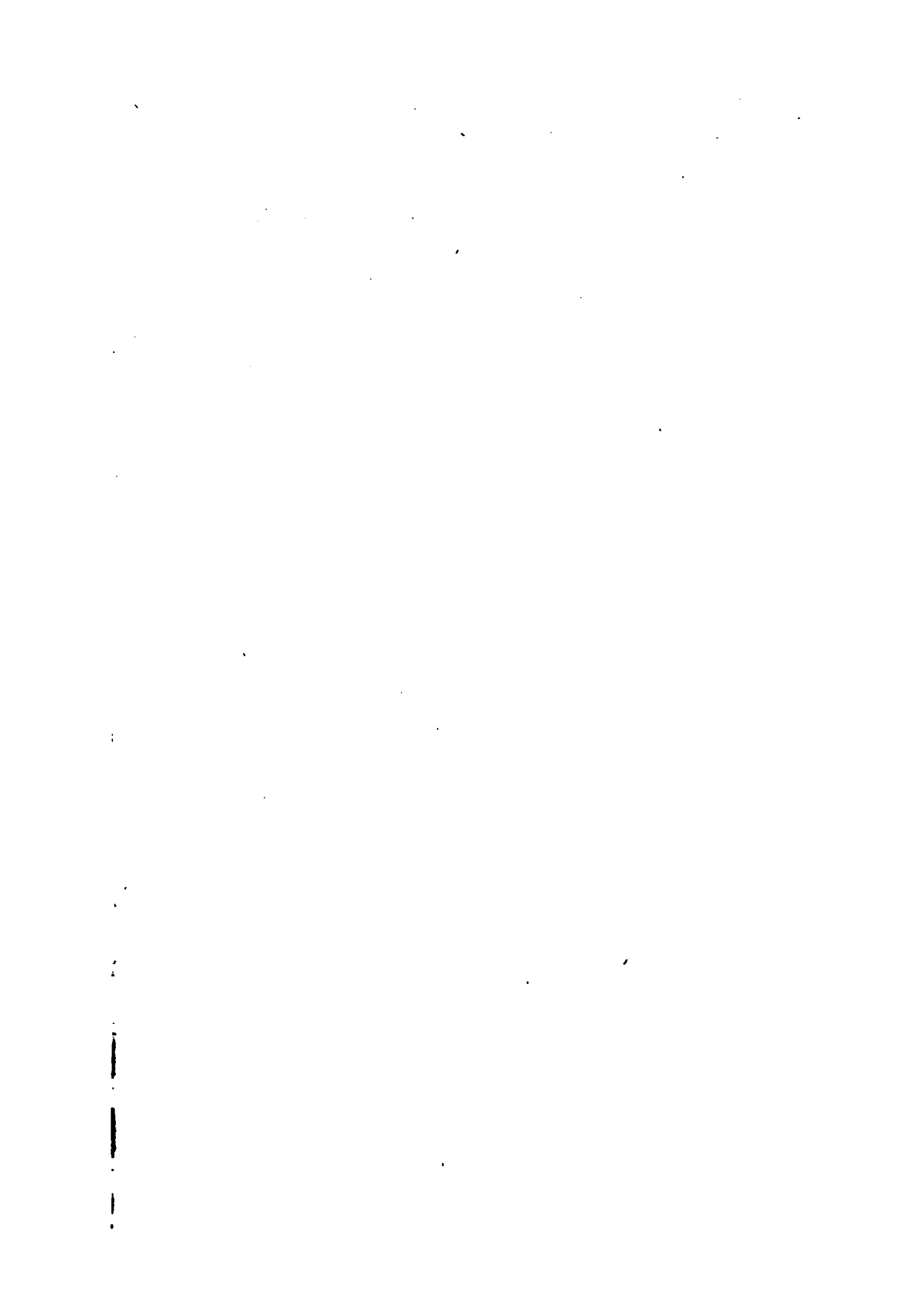
SPECIFICATION 3.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with such unreliability in their utterances that the truth of events can not be ascertained from their utterances themselves.—Pages 100, 102, 108, 109, cited under Charge II.

SPECIFICATION 4.

In the pamphlet referred to in Specification 1, he teaches that the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is consistent with a bias in the inspired writers, rendering them incapable of recording the truth of events because incapable of believing it. Pages 104, 105, 107, 109, cited under Charge II.

The End.







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