





ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In the United States of America,

WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY, 1893.

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*THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,*  
*APPELLANT,*

*AGAINST*

*THE REV. CHARLES A. BRIGGS, D. D.,*  
*APPELLEE.*

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APPELLANT'S ARGUMENT IN SUPPORT OF MOTION TO  
SUSTAIN THE APPEAL.

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*Argument of*

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JOHN C. RANKIN CO., PRINTERS,  
34 CORTLANDT ST., NEW YORK.

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In accordance with Section 95 of the Book of Discipline, the Appellants assign five grounds of appeal, viz. : Irregularity in the proceedings of the Presbytery of New York ; receiving improper, and declining to receive important testimony ; manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case ; and mistake or injustice in the decision.

Some of the specifications under these grounds have reference only to the order of procedure. Your attention is called to them for the reason that errors of procedure should not be allowed to become precedents for future cases.

1st. The first ground is that of irregularity in the proceedings of the lower judicatory.

1. The first important error was the rejection of Charges 4 and 7 of the amended form ; for if these charges were essential parts of the original charges, sent down

by the General Assembly of 1892 to the Presbytery of New York, to be tried on the merits thereof, and, if Dr. Briggs has really not disavowed the serious errors charged against him in them, then it was irregular for the Presbytery to order the Committee of Prosecution to strike them out, and the Appellants were in duty bound to bring them here, as has been done in the first and second specifications under the first ground of appeal.

Two principal objections were made to these charges :  
 1. That they were new charges. 2. That the defendant had disclaimed the teaching with which these charges were concerned.

The substance of Charge 4 was originally a specification under the first of the original charges (Spec. 7). It was objected to as being vague and indefinite, and, in accordance with Dr. Briggs' own criticisms, it was made definite. It was objected that it did not charge the contravening of any essential doctrine, and so an explanatory clause was added to show the essential character of the doctrine which had been contravened.

The 7th specification of the first original charge accused Dr. Briggs of teaching that much of predictive prophecy had been reversed by history, and that many predictions had not been and could not be fulfilled. Charge 4 is more specific. It relates principally to Messianic prophecy. It refers to the exact words of Dr. Briggs. The general nature so far is not changed ; the general nature of Specification 7 was predictive prophecy, and, as Messianic proph-



ecy is a species of predictive prophecy, it is not changing the general nature to raise the question of the species instead of the question of predictive prophecy generally.

But objection was made to the explanatory clause in the 4th amended charge. Does this make the charge new? If so, then one must ask this question :

Why is it an offence to deny the fulfillment of the great body of Messianic prediction? Well, your answer may be either (a) Because the word of God is infallible, in which case you assume the infallibility of the Bible as the ground for belief in the Messianic prophecy, or (b) Because of the attributes of God. Dr. Briggs affirms that the great body of Messianic prediction not only has not been fulfilled but cannot be fulfilled. If that be the correct view, it must be asked, What is to be thought of Him who inspires a false prophecy, and of the words of Jesus Himself that all things must be fulfilled? Inasmuch as Dr. Briggs had denied the truthfulness of Scripture, and yet had admitted its Inspiration, the only possible essential reason which could be adduced for the doctrine of the fulfillment of all Messianic prediction was that it came with the authority of God. That God being true could not lie; that God being omniscient could not be ignorant; that God being immutable could not change. Undoubtedly the charge was serious; possibly the defendant was not aware of what he had been denying. But, if innocent of the charge, it was for him to retract the assertion, or to meet the evidence of the Committee with

proper evidence of his own. On the contrary, he asserts before the testimony is taken, that he does not hold any such doctrine, and yet reaffirms the doctrine by declining to retract the original statement. Can any one say that such a manner of dealing with the subject did not demand the judicial decision of the Presbytery?

This brings us to the other ground upon which Charge 4 was struck out. It was because of the alleged disclaimers and disavowals of the defendant.

All the eight amended charges alleged certain offences. The evidence for these allegations was contained in verbatim citations from the writings of Dr. Briggs, which he himself put in evidence, and which he declined to withdraw or retract. Prior to being called upon to plead "guilty" or "not guilty" to the charges, and while the sufficiency of the charges was under discussion, his alleged disclaimers and disavowals, which were not at that time in evidence, were brought forward as a ground upon which Charge 4 and also Charge 7 should be struck out. He objected, and Dr. George Alexander objected on his behalf, to going to trial on Charges 4 and 7, because he had never taught the doctrines with teaching which he is therein charged. Why, then, did he consent to go to trial on the remaining charges? Was it because he has taught the doctrines therein alleged? If that is the reason, then why did he plead not guilty to these remaining charges? Why did he not disclaim these as he disclaimed Charges 4 and 7? But, if he has not taught

any of the doctrines alleged in the amended eight charges, why not go to trial on all eight of them, or else disclaim having committed the offences contained in all eight of them? The Committee had no wish to find more errors in the Inaugural than were really there; but the duty of the Committee was to the church, to come to a decision as to these doctrines taught explicitly in the Inaugural Address, which had never been withdrawn or retracted by the defendant. A plea of not guilty is not sufficient evidence in a man's defence. Still less is a plea of not guilty sufficient evidence when it is not introduced as evidence, but is brought forward irregularly as a preliminary objection to the indictment.

Much fault was found with the committee for noticing this doctrine of predictive prophecy in connection with Dr. Briggs' doctrine of Scripture, but the mandate of the Assembly was that the case should be tried on its merits, and this was a part of the original case. The Inaugural Address had been put in evidence by the defendant himself; it was no injustice to discuss that evidence.

Having discussed so especially Charge 4, but little remains to be said with respect to the amended Charge 7. It will be sufficient to inquire whether it was a new charge. Charge 7 of the amended charges is a subdivision of Charge 2 of the original charges.

The latter charged the defendant with teaching a doctrine of "the character, state and sanctification of believers "after death." Notice the exact words. It is not a doc-

trine of the *sanctification* of believers after death alone, but is a doctrine with respect to the state and character after death. What is the state and character of the believer after death? Is he one who has already believed in this life, or has he come to faith and penitence beyond the grave? On this subject the teaching of the Inaugural Address is definite, although it might be said that the second original charge was indefinite. To make the accusation definite, so that the defendant might have knowledge of the specific offence with which he was charged, the original Charge 2 was divided into amended Charges 7 and 8. The general nature of original Charge 2 was eschatological. It was also so closely related to Dr. Briggs' doctrine of Redemption, that one of these doctrines could not be understood to the exclusion of the other. The Committee was prepared to show that the defendant had taught that other processes than sanctification were continued in the life to come, and they summed these up in the words, state and character, as distinguished from sanctification. Dr. Briggs has expressly taught that more than one of the processes of redemption may go on in the future state. The Committee were prepared to prove this at the time when the original charges were presented, and they are prepared to prove the amended Charge 7, to which Dr. Briggs, in advance of being called to plead, made the alleged disclaimer. Judicial process was necessary to determine whether his written words upon which the charges are based or his verbal disclaimer were to be taken as the truth. The language of the

Inaugural is on this point unambiguous, and has never been retracted.

The original Charge 2 deals with the subject-matter of both amended Charges 7 and 8.

Under the specification to the original charge is cited that passage of the Inaugural Address where it is said: "Another fault of Protestant theology is in its limitation "of the process of redemption to this world." The process of redemption is a process which corresponds to the "character and state" referred to under original Charge 2. The process of redemption, according to the defendant, is a manifold process. It includes regeneration, faith, as well as sanctification. The denial of Dr. Briggs, as it is called, in answer to the question on this subject as propounded by the Directors of Union Seminary, took place before the General Assembly of 1892 sent the case for full trial to the lower judicatory. The Prosecuting Committee reappears here with the same complaint, that being ready to prove the charge with respect to the defendant's views of the future life, in spite of the opinions of judges who were his advocates on the floor of the Presbytery, the general nature of original Charge 2 was so changed by the order of the court that the mandate of the General Assembly has been disobeyed in one of the most important particulars.

The changes made in extracts from the Confession cannot change the general nature of the charge. The references to the Confession in both series of charges and

specifications are practically the same, the changes being comparatively few. But it matters not whether they are few or many, for references to the Standards are proofs to the charges, not part of the charges themselves. In any event, it must be remembered that the Standards are always in the Court, both as law and evidence, and that any part of them can be cited at any time in support of a charge.

2. The second error was in compelling transfer of the proofs from their proper place after the specifications to a place immediately following the charges. Since the Presbytery was to vote on the matter contained in the specifications, either to sustain or not to sustain the charges, it was the Committee's duty to show that the statements contained in the specifications are in conflict with Scripture and the Standards. The order to transfer the references to Scripture and the Standards from the specifications to the charges was made with the evident purpose to place them where they could not be used effectively as proofs. This order therefore was a gross error in procedure on the part of the Presbytery as pointed out in the third specification.

3. The insertion of a large amount of matter into the official stenographic report, at the request of the defendant and with the approval of the Moderator, after the adjournment of the Court and after both parties had given notice that they had presented all the evidence which they intended to offer, was grossly irregular and therefore

more than a mistake, as indicated in Specifications 7 and 8. It needs no discussion to convince the Assembly that evidence can be introduced regularly only in open Court and at the proper time.

4. The vote to strike from the record the request of the Committee of Prosecution, as stated in Specifications 9 and 10; the refusal to permit the members of the judicatory to vote to sustain in part, as indicated in the eleventh specification; and the decision to give to the unsworn statements, explanations and disclaimers of the defendant the force of sworn, approbated and subscribed testimony as noticed in the sixth specification, were all flagrant errors of procedure. The bare mentioning of them makes plain their irregularity.

5. The sixth specification refers to the new matter alleged to have been introduced in the argument replying to that of Dr. Briggs. If that contention had any force, it obliges us to make the terms "new matter" equivalent to new evidence. A reference to the argument will show any thoughtful man that no new evidence was introduced. That new matter, in the way of varied presentation of the case, in the way of illustration and argument was brought in, there can be no doubt, otherwise the closing argument would have been but a repetition of the opening. The argument was confined strictly within the limits of the evidence submitted, and in every case was directed against the pivotal positions of the Appellee. It was unnecessary to follow the defence step by step. It was no

less the Committee's duty than its privilege to show in any legitimate way which seemed most effective that he had evaded the main issue and had not harmonized his views with the Holy Scripture and the Standards.

The defendant errs in maintaining that we had only the right of rebuttal. The Committee's argument was not in rebuttal, but was the closing argument of the prosecution, in which all the evidence submitted by both was at our disposal for use in answer to that of the defence.

The Appellee also errs in speaking of illustration in argument as the introduction of new evidence. It is a well-settled principle of ecclesiastical procedure that authorities quoted in illustration have the force, not of evidence, but of argument.

It was therefore irregular to allow the defendant to reply to the closing argument of the prosecution.

6. The twelfth specification calls your attention to the order of the inferior judicatory, directing that each item of the several charges should be voted on separately, for the alleged reason that each charge contained as many offences as it contains direct references to doctrines of the Standards. But this is clearly a mistake. Each one of the five charges contains but a single offence as any one will see from a single glance at them.

The double or triple reference to doctrines of the Confession does not multiply the offence to that extent, but furnishes so many proofs to establish the one offence.



Had we cited a dozen doctrines of the Confession in support of a charge and in addition a hundred texts from the Bible, they would not have made so many different offences in the charge, but would have been merely so many added proofs to establish the one offence of the charge. If the position taken by the Presbytery be correct, then it will be impossible ever to cite more than one proof in support of an offence.

2d. The second and third grounds of appeal refer to the question of testimony, and they may be considered together.

1. That large amount of matter which, by the request of the defendant and with the approval of the Moderator, was inserted into the official stenographic report, after the adjournment of the Presbytery, cannot, in any proper sense, be called testimony at all. And yet it was allowed by the Presbytery to remain on the record as competent evidence.

In regard to the other evidence offered by Dr. Briggs, it should be said that he declined to verify it under oath. He denounced the request that he be required to do so as an outrage. He was both counsel and client, and, as counsel, he made statements, explanations and disclaimers in regard to the language which his client had used, to which the inferior judicatory, contrary to the directions of Sections 61 and 62 of the Book of Discipline, gave the full value of competent evidence for making up their final verdict.

This was especially unfortunate, as it has been all along evident, we are not so much concerned with the form of the defendant's statements as with the meaning which he puts into the form. Had the Presbytery ordered Dr. Briggs to put his client on the witness-stand to make affirmations under oath, as the Book directs, it might have been possible to determine more exactly the value and meaning which are to be attached to his statements.

2. Furthermore, the Presbytery erred in declining to receive important testimony. We have shown that the fourth and seventh charges properly belong to the amended series, since the matter contained in them was essentially in the original charges.

In these charges Dr. Briggs is accused of teaching grave errors. The Committee of Prosecution offered to produce testimony to prove those charges; and whether competent to prove them or not, it was certainly important testimony, and for that reason should have been received and examined by the Presbytery. But instead of that the Presbytery ordered the charges to be stricken out on the ground principally of some general disclaimers which Dr. Briggs was alleged to have made, but which were not specified and were not presented to the Court as testimony.

3rd. The state of things to which your attention is called in the specifications given under the fourth ground of appeal, shows conclusively that prejudice was manifested in

the conduct of the case. I need not speak of them at length. Similar conduct by members of the Presbytery of New York was declared by the Assembly of 1892 to be a manifestation of prejudice.

A number of the members of the lower Court showed a deep personal interest in the case of the defendant. Some manifested all the zeal of advocates instead of maintaining the calmness and equipoise of judges.

One of the judges allowed his zeal to carry him so far that he affirmed and re-affirmed that some of the charges gave Dr. Briggs the lie direct.

The names of some of the judges are introduced because of a principle which is here involved. It is not simply that in assuming the rôle of advocates they exhibited prejudice. It is especially on account of the grounds upon which they made prejudiced appeals to the Court. Their remarks also have especial interest from the time at which they were made.

In the closing argument for the prosecution citations by way of argument and illustrations were made from many eminent writers as expressive of the views which the speaker was maintaining. It was not new evidence, for the time of taking evidence was past. This kind of argument was characterized by Dr. George Alexander as a "fresh assault" upon Dr. Briggs, and another judge insisted that new matter had been introduced. They were called upon to specify the "new matter." They did not and could not do so.

Their objection was to the quotations which illustrated.

the speaker's denial of the claim of Dr. Briggs that his views represented the belief of historic Presbyterianism. These extracts made every drop of Anglo-Saxon blood in the brethren named "to protest and boil." The quotations were from men like Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Baxter, the Westminster divines, and especially from the writings of American Presbyterians like Jonathan Dickinson, Samuel Davies, Jonathan Edwards, John Witherspoon, Ashbel Green, Archibald Alexander, Thomas H. Skinner, Albert Barnes and Henry B. Smith. If the time has come when Presbyterian blood boils at the words of such men as these, I insist that the attention of the General Assembly should be called to the fact; especially since the blood of the same judges did not "protest and boil" when the defendant introduced a large number of names as authorities in support of his doctrine of an errant Bible, many of whom advance rationalistic, if not infidel, views, and none of them, in my opinion, hold the true Presbyterian doctrine respecting the Holy Scripture.

This claim on the part of the Committee, that there was prepossession of opinion and prejudiced judgment on the part of certain officials of Union Seminary, is not essentially different from the declaration of the Directors themselves. This declaration was made through Mr. Kingsley, their representative in the General Assembly in 1892. According to him, previous to the regular trial in the Presbytery of New York there had been an investigation of the charges brought against Dr. Briggs. This investigation was made by the officers of Union Seminary. The

result was the questions put by the Directors of Union Seminary and answered by Dr. Briggs, to which allusion has so often been made. I quote from the report of the Directors read by Mr. Kingsley before the Portland Assembly :

“This board had carefully investigated the charges which the Presbyteries were bringing against Dr. Briggs and had received from him a clear and positive denial of each charge, on the ground of which denials the board resolved to sustain him, saying that ‘we will stand by him heartily on the ground of this report’ (i. e., the report of his denials received from the committee of investigation).”

And again in his remarks on the report Mr. Kingsley said : “It was due to ourselves and to Dr. Briggs that we should be true to the promise we had made ‘to stand by him.’”

Prejudice was also manifested by the Presbytery in allowing the defendant the largest liberty for introducing improper testimony ; in declining to receive important testimony offered by the Committee of Prosecution ; in throwing out Charges 4 and 7 ; in expressing a desire to relieve the Committee of Prosecution from any further responsibility in connection with the case ; and in stating it to be their “earnest conviction that the grave issues involved in this case will be more wisely and justly determined by calm investigation and fraternal discussion than by judicial arraignment and process.”

As the issues involved are acknowledged to be “grave,”

it would be reasonable for unbiased judges to conclude that those issues would be more wisely and justly determined by judicial process rather than by the calm investigation and fraternal discussion, by which nothing can be determined authoritatively.

4th. The facts presented in the specifications under the fifth ground of appeal show that mistakes and injustice have entered into the final judgment of the inferior judicatory.

A brief consideration of a few of these facts cannot fail to convince you.

1. According to Section 58 of the Book of Discipline, if the specifications of fact on which a charge is based have been shown to be true, then the charge is to be considered as sustained. Dr. Briggs offered no proof to show that he had not made the statements which are cited in the specifications. On the contrary, he admitted and authenticated them all. The charges were based on these statements and sustained by them. Under such circumstances, a verdict of acquittal could be justified only on the ground that the charges themselves were not relevant or that they contained no valid offences. But when the Presbytery declared the charges and specifications to be sufficient in form and legal effect, it thereby decided that the charges severally alleged an offence. Otherwise, the charges and specifications would not have been sufficient in form and legal effect. And therefore, since the charges were sustained by the facts stated in the specifications,

it must be that the verdict of acquittal was not reached in accordance with the law and evidence in the case.

2. That the charges were proved becomes still more evident from the statement made in the verdict rendered by the inferior judicatory to the effect that in acquitting Dr. Briggs, the Presbytery is not to be understood as “expressing approval of the critical and theological views embodied in his Inaugural Address.” A resolution to that effect was introduced on the floor of Presbytery when the voting was about to commence, possibly with the intention of securing votes for acquittal which otherwise might be conscientiously withheld.

But why this caveat if the views of Dr. Briggs are in harmony with received truth? Manifestly, the majority of Presbytery do not desire to burden themselves or cloud their reputation by an espousal of those views. They must consider the influence of such doctrines baneful to no slight extent.

For those critical and theological views, Dr. Briggs was put on trial. He not only approves them, but diligently propagates them. And it was the duty of the lower Court, by a calm and impartial investigation, to ascertain whether or not, those critical and theological views are in harmony with the Holy Scripture and the Standards; and to condemn them if they did not find them in harmony with those authorities, and thus to check their spread and influence in the most effective way.

The fact that they felt disinclined to acquit the defendant, without expressing a distinct disavowal of his critical and theological views, for which he is on trial, leads to a very strong presumption that the decision is contrary to the evidence not only, but that those rendering the decision recognize the views of the defendant as conflicting with the Scripture and the Standards; for, certainly, no body of Presbyterian ministers and elders need be at pains to disavow views which are in accord with the Bible and our Creed. The inferior judicatory, in this final judgment, has not given us either good Presbyterian law or doctrine.

3. The presumption that the charges were proved is strengthened by reference to the method by which the verdict was reached. This was by "giving due consideration to the defendant's explanation of the language used in his Inaugural Address, accepting his frank and full disclaimer of the interpretation which has been put upon some of its phrases and illustrations," and "crediting his affirmations of loyalty to the Standards of the Church and to the Holy Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

This can only mean that they have taken Dr. Briggs at his own word. By their own confession, therefore, they have not decided the case on the law and the evidence.

It is well known that Dr. Briggs entered a plea of "not guilty"; that he claims to be orthodox and that he subscribes to an orthodox creed. But, in spite of all



that, he has made and persists in making the statements for which he has been called in question, and which have alarmed the whole Church.

The question to be determined is, whether or not the views of Dr. Briggs can be tolerated under the orthodox creed to which he subscribes ; and to take his word for it is to evade the whole issue. The explanations and disclaimers referred to have not been indicated in the verdict. One wonders where and what they are. They are certainly not competent evidence. Dr. Briggs has, in fact, disclaimed nothing, but has distinctly reaffirmed all the views of his Inaugural Address of every kind.

Is it to be expected that, if the statements of Dr. Briggs did not relieve the minds of his devoted personal friends in the New York Presbytery, they can bring assurance and peace to the Church ?

4. The lower judicatory, in its final judgment, makes also a number of vague, misleading and contradictory statements which give further evidence of mistake and injustice in that judgment.

It is intimated in the verdict that the present controversy is unjustifiable ; that the principles at stake are non-essential, belonging with " truths and forms with regard " to which men of good character may differ," and are within the limits allowed under the constitution to " scholarship and opinion " ; and that there has been an effort made to convict the defendant by " inference and

“implication,” and by the unfavorable interpretation of “ambiguous expressions.”

Is it true then that doctrines such as the sole supremacy of the Holy Scriptures as an authority in matters of religion, their entire veracity and absolute trustworthiness, and the question whether the process of redemption is confined to this life, or is to be extended to the life beyond the grave, are matters about which Presbyterian ministers and elders may differ, or mere matters of opinion which the scholars of our Church may adopt or reject? May one who has assumed the ordination vow of a Presbyterian minister teach that the Church, as a great Fountain of divine authority, can savingly enlighten men and give them religious certainty apart from the Holy Scripture; that the Reason as a great fountain of divine authority can savingly enlighten and give religious certainty to those who not only reject the Scripture, but the entire body of distinctively evangelical truth? May he teach that the process of redemption extends into the next world? It is neither candid nor honest to evade these questions.

The majority of Presbytery hesitate indeed, and, while they acquit, enter a caveat. They say that “grave issues” are involved in the case. But if the issues are grave, then there must be something more than mere “inference,” “implication,” and non-essential principles, as to which Presbyterian ministers may differ.

5. It is further evident from the language used in the final judgment, that the inferior judicatory did not make a decision on the merits of the case. They declare it to be their “earnest conviction that the grave issues involved “in this case will be more wisely and justly determined “by calm investigation and fraternal discussion than by “judicial arraignment and process.” What is this but to say that they threw the case out of Court for the reason that they have an “earnest conviction against settling the “grave issues involved in it by judicial arraignment and “process?”

The Presbytery was constituted a Court to try the case by judicial process, and the acknowledgment that the members had an “earnest conviction” against determining the issues involved in that way amounts to a confession on their part that they were disqualified to sit as judges. The Presbytery of New York, in the first instance, decided that the case was a proper one for judicial investigation; the General Assembly sent it back to Presbytery with direction to try the case on its merits, and the members of the Court were solemnly charged to determine the issues of the case by judicial process; if the majority of the lower Court were prepossessed against determining such issues in that way, they should have withdrawn from the Court and thus have permitted the case to be tried by those who believe in determining important questions of doctrine by means of judicial arraignment and process, as the constitution directs.

But it is certain that a body having this earnest conviction against settling the questions in dispute by judicial process, could not give a righteous or even intelligent judgment on the merits of the case. The verdict is self-contradictory. In effect, the opinions of Dr. Briggs are declared to be in harmony with the Scripture and the Standards, but discredit is thrown on the judgment by the refusal to approve the very views which form the basis of the trial. Such a verdict is unjust to all and can do nothing to allay the disquietude which pervades the Presbyterian Church.

We are now to show by an examination of the merits of the case, that the final judgment rendered in it by the Presbytery of New York, is not in harmony with the Holy Scripture, the Standards, and with the evidence submitted.

Dr. Briggs has disavowed nothing. He expressly declares that he holds firmly to all the views contained in the Inaugural Address. He says: "The Inaugural Address was simply a concentration of opinions expressed more at length in other places and under other circumstances. The defendant is altogether unconscious of any substantial change of opinion on the subject-matters of the charges for many years. \* \* \* The defendant has not asked for toleration. He claims his rights under the constitution of his Church to teach anything and everything that he has ever taught." (Defence, Preface, p. 18.)

Nor has he made any statements or explanations which show the views, which are the subject of these charges, to be in harmony with the Bible and our Standards.

The bare categorical replies by Dr. Briggs to a series of questions put to him by sympathetic professors and directors of the Union Seminary, neither explain or disavow anything ; for all but one of the questions are susceptible of more than one meaning, and the answers can be made by one holding the doctrines of Dr. Briggs. They give us no more light than does his orthodox subscription.

It is conceded freely and cheerfully that Dr. Briggs has made many orthodox statements and that he has supported them efficiently. No accusation is made against him for these. But he has been charged with the propagation of views which are believed to be heretical. For these he has been put on trial.

In his Defence, Dr. Briggs made a number of statements in reference to the law by which he is to be judged, which, if accepted, reduce that law as nearly as possible to a nonentity.

He contends that the Court must determine whether or not the doctrines are essential to our system ; but he contends also that the decision must depend upon the extent of the system as understood by the Westminster divines, so that in so far as the doctrines of that system are differently understood now than they were by those

divines, he is not to be tried by them. He forgets that we have nothing to do with the opinions of the Westminster divines. If we have to do with any, we should follow those of the American divines, who adopted the Presbyterian Standards of 1788 as representative of their own views.

He maintains also that he is not to be tried by the Bible except so far as it has been embodied and defined in our Standards. But he does not wish to be tried by the Standards except in so far as they can be proven to be true by express statements of the Scripture; nor would he be tried by all that part of the Standards which is supported by express statements of Scripture. The measuring-rod, according to Dr. Briggs, must consist only of those doctrines which are stated in the Confession and in both of the Catechisms. If a doctrine of the Confession be not restated in both Catechisms, then it is not to enter into consideration even though it be shown to be true from the Holy Scripture. This fencing about the law gives the impression that the defendant is conscious of inherent weakness.

There is no need of hedging and fencing. The Book of Discipline gives the law by which a person is to be tried in our judicatories. Sections 3 and 4 tell us, "An offence is anything in the doctrine, principles or practice of a Church member, officer or judicatory, which is contrary to the Word of God; or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification. Nothing shall, therefore, be the

“ object of judicial process, which cannot be proved to be  
 “ contrary to the Holy Scriptures, or to the regulations  
 “ and practice of the Church founded thereon.” It is  
 clear that anything which can be shown to be contrary to  
 the *Holy Scriptures*, is an offence and may be made the  
 object of judicial process, even though it be not embodied  
 or defined in the Standards ; and in like manner that  
*anything* which can be shown to be contrary to the  
*Standards* is an offence which may be made the object of  
 judicial process, even though it be not supported by ex-  
 press statements of Scripture, for the Standards accept  
 doctrines derived from Scripture by necessary inference.

The prosecution therefore have to prove the offence  
 either against the Scripture or the Standards or against  
 both ; but let it be distinctly observed that proof from  
 either Scripture or Standards alone is sufficient to estab-  
 lish the offence.

The degree of the offence and the measure or kind of  
 discipline to be inflicted for it, are not for us, but for the  
 Court to determine. We have never said, and do not now,  
 say a word about the kind of discipline which should be  
 exercised if the offence were established ; but we contend  
 that the offence is one which merits discipline.

The Craighead case, to which Dr. Briggs has referred,  
 was essentially different from the one in hand and does  
 not apply to it ; but it is maintained by all alike that if the  
 statements of Dr. Briggs are capable of two constructions,  
 he must have the benefit of the more favorable construc-

tion, should he claim that as his, even if the more evident construction, is plainly heretical ; and also that he is not to be charged with an opinion which he disavows.

#### FOUNTAINS OF DIVINE AUTHORITY.

The first and second charges refer to the subject of divine authority and may be considered together. In them he is charged with teaching : “*First*, that the Reason is a fountain of divine authority which may and does savingly enlighten men, even such men as reject the Scriptures as the authoritative proclamation of the will of God and reject also the way of salvation through the mediation and sacrifice of the Son of God as revealed therein.” “*Second*, that the Church is a fountain of divine authority which, apart from the Holy Scripture, may and does savingly enlighten men.” We ask you to notice the statements contained in the citations made from the Inaugural Address in the specifications under these charges, as amply justifying these charges.

On page 24 of the Inaugural, after having referred to the imperfection and errancy of all the forms of human authority, he states in definition of divine authority, “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 18th 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.” \* \* \* There are historically three great fountains of divine authority—the Bible, the Church and the Reason.”

The Bible, the Church and the Reason, then, are equal in being great fountains of divine authority. The quality of divinity, and the right of divine authority belong alike to all three ; and, as such, each can be to man an infallible guide of life, and speak to him with eternal and immutable certainty, for he can yield to each implicit obedience, rest on each with loving certainty and build with joyous confidence.

It does not in the least relieve the matter to say that the Bible differs from the other two fountains of divine authority in being in addition also an infallible rule of faith and practice, for according to Dr. Briggs' own definition, the Church and the Reason, as infallible guides, can do for men precisely the same things which the Bible does for them as an infallible rule.

We have to do with the Church and the Reason. In respect to them Dr. Briggs affirms : *first*, that they can conduct men to a saving acquaintance with God ; and *second*, that they can give to men immutable certainty or assurance in matter of religion. Martineau and the rationalists are examples for the Reason. Newman and the Churchman for the Church.

“Newman could not reach certainty through the Bible, “striving never so hard.” He and the majority of Christians from the apostolic age have found God through the Church. “Martyrs and saints, fathers and schoolmen, “the profoundest intellects, the saintliest lives, have “had this experience. Institutional Christianity has “been to them the presence-chamber of God.” Dr. Briggs affirms this to be true categorically, although, he remarks : “It is difficult for many Protestants to regard “this experience as any other than pious illusion and de-  
“lusion.” (Inaugural, p. 25.)

“Martineau could not find divine authority in the “Church or the Bible, but he did find God enthroned in “his own soul.” (Inaugural, p. 27.) To him and the rationalists, the Reason is the Holy of Holies of human nature, in which God presents Himself to those who seek Him. (Inaugural, p. 26.) And therefore, although it is well known that they reject the Scriptures as the authoritative proclamation of the will of God and the way of salvation through the mediation and sacrifice of the Son of God as revealed therein, Dr. Briggs nevertheless would not “refuse these Rationalists a place in the “company of the faithful.” (Inaugural, p. 27).

That Dr. Briggs conceives of each one of the three fountains of divine authority as capable of imparting a saving knowledge of God is evident from his own statements on the subject. He says : “Unless God’s authority “is discerned in the forms of the Reason, there is no ground “upon which any of the heathen could ever have been

“ saved, for they know nothing of Bible or Church. If  
 “ they are not savingly enlightened by the light of the  
 “ World in the forms of the Reason the whole heathen  
 “ world is lost forever.” (Inaug., 2d ed., pp. 88, 89.)  
 The divine authority in the Reason therefore does sav-  
 ingly enlighten men in the view of Dr. Briggs.

Again he says: “ Spurgeon is an example of the  
 “ average modern Evangelical, who holds the Protestant  
 “ position and assails the Church and Reason in the in-  
 “ terest of the authority of Scripture. But the average  
 “ opinion of the Christian world would not assign him a  
 “ higher place in the Kingdom of God than Martineau or  
 “ Newman. May we not conclude on the whole, that  
 “ these three representative Christians of our time, living  
 “ in or near the world’s metropolis, have, each in his way,  
 “ found God and rested on Divine authority? \* \* \*  
 “ Men are influenced by their temperaments and environ-  
 “ ments which of the three ways of access to God they  
 “ may pursue.” (Inaugural, p. 28.) Here Dr. Briggs not  
 only teaches that men may and do find God savingly  
 through any one of the three fountains of divine authority,  
 but admits that the Bible, as the *only* way for obtaining sal-  
 vation and certainty, as held by Spurgeon, is the Pro-  
 testant doctrine. And therefore, since the Presbyterian  
 Church is a Protestant Church, he convicts himself of  
 teaching doctrines which are not Presbyterian.

The labored argument made by Dr. Briggs in his  
 Defence to show that according to the teaching of both

the Bible and the Standards, the Church and the Reason are great fountains of divine authority, is wide of the mark and wholly unsuccessful.

The facts that God can give evidence of himself to man's soul and that man has the power of verifying truth, that he can receive communications from God, and be the subject of gracious influences, show that as created in the image of God, man is endowed with a moral and rational nature, but does not at all prove that his reason is a great fountain of divine authority.

The Church, as shown by the citations which Dr. Briggs made from the Standards, has no authority except such as Christ has delegated to it, and prescribed for it in his word. The Church is guilty of usurpation whenever it attempts to exercise authority not so delegated or prescribed, so that it may become a curse instead of a blessing, as abundantly shown in the history of the Church.

Christ is supreme in the Church and in all matters of faith and life. But we know nothing about Him, except through the Bible story. The truth by means of which He saves and assures His people is treasured up in the Scriptures, so that we are shut up to them, both for a saving knowledge of God and for assurance. The Bible alone tells us what we need to know about God, ourselves, the plan of salvation, our duty and the conditions of eternal life and destiny. For this reason, the Bible alone, as against the Church and Reason, gives light in the moral and spiritual realm. It is a light to man's pathway and a

lamp to his feet, by which he discovers his way through the darkness of this world to the world of eternal light. The Bible is as the bread of God to give life to men's souls, for man shall live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The Church is constituted of errant men and women only partially sanctified, and the Reason, unless enlightened by the word of God, gropes in the darkness of sin. Neither has power to enlighten, assure and quicken a human soul, but light and life come from the Holy Scriptures to believing hearts, for in them the Holy Spirit speaks with divine love and power.

In harmony with all evangelical Protestants, Presbyterians believe that salvation and assurance are obtained through belief of truth revealed in the Holy Scripture ; they do not hesitate to say that, since the Holy Spirit bears witness by and with the word of this blessed book which has expressly set down in it the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, men who tell us they cannot find God and certainty in these Holy Scriptures are, as those Scriptures declare, dead in trespasses and sins.

The Scripture expressly declares that men by wisdom, that is through the forms of the Reason, have not known God. History shows that to be absolutely true. Reason, unaided by revealed truth, has never been able to bring man out of the bondage of sin to God. And, therefore, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save " them that believe." God begets men to a new life by the

word of truth and saves them by the belief of that truth, “ for how shall they believe on Him of whom they have “ not heard and how shall they hear without a preacher ?” (Rom. 10 ; 14.)

Any discussion in respect to the salvation of infants, incapables and exceptional cases of heathen, through the working of the Spirit, is immaterial here—no question is raised in the charges in reference to them. The matter in hand is wholly different. Can one having the Bible and rejecting it find the way to God through either Church or Reason ? The Bible teaches that those possessing the revealed truth which it contains are saved through belief in that truth, and not otherwise. The Holy Spirit has given the Bible to enlighten men savingly, and it is hardly to be supposed that He will enlighten in other ways those who reject the Holy Scripture, or find it an unsatisfactory source of comfort. There is nothing in the Church and Reason, apart from the Bible, by which the Spirit can savingly enlighten men. He bears witness *by and with the Word* in the hearts of those who believe unto salvation. Albert Barnes states very truly on 1 Peter, 1 : 23 : “ It is “ the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures that divine truth “ is made the instrument of quickening the soul unto “ spiritual life.”

The same is true in reference to the question of certainty. Assurance stands solely on the truth of Scripture, on God’s promises. Christian assurance, resting on a firm belief in doctrines respecting Christ and salvation, must

stand or fall with faith in Scripture's truth. It is absurd to suppose, and dangerous to teach, that the Holy Spirit would give this assurance through Church or Reason to those who either reject or turn away from the Holy Scripture. As Albert Barnes states in 2 Thess., 2 : 13 : " No one who is not a believer in the truth can have " evidence that God has chosen him."

That the Holy Scriptures claim for themselves supreme authority in matters of faith and life is indicated by texts which we have cited in connection with these two charges and their specifications. These texts are to be taken in their obvious meaning, and not in the strained interpretation which Dr. Briggs puts upon them.

Christ and the New Testament writers invariably appeal to the Holy Scripture as the ultimate authority for the settlement of all religious and moral questions. "*It is " written "*" was with them a final settlement, since for them God speaks in what is written. Christ convicted the rationalistic Sadducees of error respecting the resurrection, and the churchly Pharisees of error respecting divorce, due in each case to ignorance of the Scriptures. (Mt. 22 : 29 ; 19 : 3-6.)

With Christ and the Apostles the Bible alone held the place of absolute and final authority. They never appealed to either Church or Reason, but brought both Church and Reason to the bar of Scripture for judgment and light.

In harmony with this truth of Scripture, our Standards as cited by us affirm that “the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory and man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture,” so that all who will may become savingly acquainted with God and gain assurance of his love; that the Holy Scripture is “*most necessary*,” as it makes the full discovery of the “*only way*” of man’s salvation, the Holy Spirit bearing witness “*by and with the word*” in the heart for the conversion and comfort of the soul; and that all matters of religion are to be authoritatively settled by an appeal to the Holy Scriptures, since the Holy Spirit speaks in them as the “Supreme Judge.”

Dr. Briggs’ teachings conflict with both Scripture and the Standards. They touch matters which are vitally essential to Presbyterians, whose faith and practice are based solely on the authority of Holy Scripture.

According to these views we must recognize the Church of Rome as a great fountain of divine authority, able to give men, without or above the Bible, a saving knowledge of God and divine assurance. This would be a complete abandonment of the Reformation position; and for the Presbyterian Church it would mean denominational suicide. Whether or not Dr. Briggs would regard this as in any sense a calamity, cannot be determined with certainty, for he regards it to be the duty of the



hour, in the interest of the broadest comprehension, to destroy all denominational barriers which separate Protestants, and to form an "alliance between Protestantism and Romanism and all other branches of Christendom." (Whither, p. XI.)

The positions taken in his Inaugural certainly entitle him to the dignity of chief Apostle in such a movement.

Dr. Briggs' teachings respecting the Reason are even worse than those respecting the Church. In referring to Martineau as an illustration, he has made his meaning unmistakable. Martineau's late work shows that he rejects the entire Bible as a revelation from God, and all the distinctive doctrines of grace, rejects Christ Himself as Lord and Saviour, and consigns the account of His Incarnation, Resurrection and other miraculous events to the wonders of an invented Messianic Mythology or popular apotheosis. The Bible states: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10: 9.) Christ declared: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (Jno. 8: 24.) "Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven." (Mt. 10: 33.) "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." (Jno. 14: 61.) Martineau, therefore, in refusing to believe in the resurrection of Christ, and in rejecting the Saviour, puts himself among

those to whom Christ and the Scripture deny salvation. Yet Dr. Briggs, with a full knowledge of these facts, states, in his Defence: "It is plain to me that Martineau " has gained a higher stage of Christian freedom and " direct communion with God, and it is immaterial how " he gained it." (Defence p. 67.)

If men of that type are to be heralded as representative Christian men, if after rejecting Christ and the Scripture, they have entered into friendly communion with God and obtained divine assurance through the forms of the Reason, then our entire Church life and activity is a mistake and of all men we are most miserable. It would be wise to close our Churches and Theological Seminaries and to devote our money to causes better adapted to human advancement than Home and Foreign Missions can be.

Surely it is clear that the final judgment of the New York Presbytery on the first and second charges, is not in accordance with the law and evidence in the case, and that it should be reversed.

#### THE TRUTHFULNESS OF THE BIBLE.

The third charge has reference to the subject of inspiration. In it Dr. Briggs is charged with teaching that errors may have existed in the original text of Scripture, as it came from its authors. Dr. Briggs admits the correctness of the facts cited in the specifications, and that the charge correctly states his teaching on this point, but denies that it is an offence.

Our Standards assert that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God ; therefore to say that there may have been errors in the original text, is to assert that God may have put into that text that which is not true.

Dr. Briggs' view of inspiration does not give assurance of entire truthfulness in the genuine text of the Holy Scripture. On the contrary, it enables him to teach, as we shall show from the evidence submitted, that the genuine text of the Bible contains errors.

It is in evidence that Dr. Briggs maintains three propositions in regard to the Holy Scripture which, if true, render not merely possible, but even quite certain, that errors pervade its contents. They are vitally connected with his view on this question.

1. He contends that instead of saying the Scriptures *are* the Word of God, the true statement is, that they "*contain*" the Word of God, using that expression not in the Shorter Catechism sense which is equivalent to the statement that the Scriptures are the Word of God, but in the sense, that some parts of their contents are not the Word of God. (The Bible, the Church and the Reason, p. 99).

2. He makes the anti-confessional statement that there are in the Holy Scripture certain circumstantial and non-essential elements which, whether inspired or not, are pervaded by errors. (Inaugural, pp. 35, 36.) In our Standards some portions of the Bible are

regarded as more important than others; but all alike are regarded as truly inspired and entirely truthful.

3. He affirms that not the language of the Bible but the concept or thought conveyed by the language is inspired. (Inaugural, pp. 31, 32.)

In his view "we cannot term the providential care of " God over the *external production* of His Word " inspiration. (Inaugural, pp. 31, 32. Biblical Study, p. 161.)

Thus the entire text of the Bible from beginning to end is exclusively of human and not of divine origin. It is the human setting in which the "divine jewel" of the substance of the thought or the concept is held. The writers of the Bible received concepts of divine truth which they were left to dress up in human language. The Bible is therefore only the fallible expression of divine truth of which the concepts were imparted to the writers by God. As no one has ever seen or known those concepts in their naked reality, we can never be entirely certain, according to Dr. Briggs, that the human authors of the Bible received anything more than a fallible impression of the truth. At all events, if the divine inspiration did not extend to the language of the Bible then the revelation which God made to the writers perished with them. The record of that revelation at least is only human and fallible and the Scriptures are but the human account of the Word of God—not that Word itself. If so the Bible is only one of the many good books which contain divine truth, and

is not the Book of books, which Christians have always considered it to be.

Holding such views, Dr. Briggs naturally enough teaches that the genuine text of Scripture may contain errors and he need find no difficulty in holding that it must contain errors since nothing human is free from error.

So after having pointed out a number of cases of what he regards as biblical errors, Dr. Briggs states (Defence, p. 114), "The number of such instances as I have given above might be increased to an indefinite extent, extending over a large part of the Old Testament and the New Testament."

Dr. Briggs teaches then that the number of errors in the Bible extending over large parts of both Testaments, is very great, and the connection clearly shows that he holds those errors to be in the genuine text of Scripture. This conclusion is supported by the evidence in the case, for he states, in *The Bible, the Church and the Reason* : "These human features render it improbable that the Bible should be free from errors in its human setting. \* \* How could it be otherwise if the divine revelation was to come through such men as the ancient times were capable of producing? Holy Scripture does not claim inerrancy in its human setting, and it does not in fact possess it." (p. 108.) Further on he states: "The Evangelist seems to have overlooked the fact that one of these passages is from Malachi 3 : 1. Here are two

“slips of memory on the part of the Evangelists, such as any writer is liable to make.” (The Bible, the Church and the Reason, p. 109.)

It will be conceded that what the Evangelists wrote belonged to the genuine text of Scripture, yet, according to Dr. Briggs, such a text is marred by errors of memory. It is clear that inspiration, as understood by Dr. Briggs, did not keep the writers of the Bible from making such errors “as other men are liable to make.”

This doctrine of Dr. Briggs conflicts irreconcilably with the doctrine respecting the Holy Scripture as formulated in the Standards of our Church. There it is affirmed that the writings, not the concept merely, were inspired throughout, and that they are entirely truthful for the reason that they are inspired.

In regard to the text of the Bible, as we have it, the Confession makes mention of the marvelous fact that by God’s “singular care and providence” it has been “kept pure in all ages”; but of the genuine text it affirms that “the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek were *immediately inspired by God.*” Of the one, as cared for by the singular providence of God it affirms relative accuracy, for the general providential care of God does keep men from all error; but of the other, as coming immediately from God, it asserts absolute accuracy, as we shall see.

The Confession states that the Scripture, in its genuine text, was committed “wholly unto writing” by the Lord

Himself, so that the entire series of canonical books constitute the one "Holy Scripture," or "the Word of God" "written," having all of them been "given by inspiration" "of God to be the rule of faith and life." And it further declares that "the authority of the Holy Scripture, for" "which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth" "wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof;" "and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word" "of God." And this declaration is made in reference to the entire written contents of all the canonical books. The books were written by men, yet the God of truth is in such a deep sense their author, that everything written therein is to be received, believed and obeyed because it is His word. A statement so sweeping and solemn could not be made if the Scriptures were only partially inspired and were mixed with error. But that the Confession does not tolerate the idea of the presence of errors in the Holy Scripture is still further evident from the fact that the "entire perfection" of the Scripture is given as proof that it is the word of God, while the assertion is made that the Holy Spirit assures the believer of the "infallible truth and divine authority thereof." A book which contains errors cannot have the quality of "entire perfection" and the Holy Spirit could not assure us of its "infallible truth." Our Standards teach the truthfulness of the entire written Bible because it is the "very word" of the God of truth.

This is the doctrine of the Holy Scripture itself. That Scripture claims full inspiration throughout for both

matter and form. If the inspiration stopped in the writer and did not extend through him to the language, then are the writings themselves not inspired and we have no Holy Scripture.

But the Bible affirms inspiration of the language as well as of the thought. "All Scripture is given by inspiration "of God," not merely the substance of truth, but the Scripture or writing itself. And it matters not whether we take the rendering of the Revised Version, "*every* "Scripture," or the "*all Scripture*" of the Authorized Version, for the word Scripture was used only of inspired writings, and we must take it in the obvious sense in which Paul employed it. There can be no question that he meant the entire Old Testament, all of which Timothy had known from his childhood, and recognized as entirely God-inspired.

Again the Scripture states that "God, who at sundry "times and in divers manners spake in time past unto "the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days "spoken to us by His Son." (Heb. 1 : 1, 2.) God, then, did not speak merely to the prophets and His Son, but by them, through them, to men. He not only revealed truth to them, but controlled their language in conveying the truth. It is also evident that what God delivered by the prophets is put on an equality with what He spake "to us by His "Son." It is all His Word commended to our faith by the same divine authority. The entire Epistle to the Hebrews carries out this idea that the statements of Scripture are the sayings of God.



Peter and Paul unite in affirming that both the thought and language of the Scripture are inspired : “ The prophecy “ came not in the old time by the will of man ; but holy “ men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy “ Ghost.” (2 Pet. 1 : 21.)

Paul declares : “ Now we have received, not the spirit “ of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we “ might know the things which are freely given to us of “ God. Which things also we speak, *not in words which “ man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost “ teacheth.*” It is then the positive teaching of the Scriptures themselves that their entire contents are inspired, both in respect to matter and form.

In the New Testament, a large number of quotations from the Old Testament are attributed to God or the Holy Spirit, even when the Old Testament text does not represent them as the speakers. Even narrative parts are in this way attributed directly to God. Mt. 1 : 22 ; 2 : 15 ; Acts 4 : 25 ; 13 : 34 ; Rom. 1 : 2 ; Acts 1 : 16 ; 28 : 25 ; Heb. 3 : 7 ; 4 : 7 ; 9 : 8 ; 10 : 15, etc.

In many places the phrases, “ *it is written* ” and “ *the Scripture saith,* ” are used as equivalent to what God says. The human authorship is not excluded. The Scripture is the joint product of a human and divine authorship ; but infinite knowledge pervades the whole Scripture, and the human authorship was so under the control of the divine that the entire Scripture bears the stamp of divine authority and is absolutely reliable.

Writers of the most advanced school of Theology admit that the authors of Scripture claim inspiration for the Holy Writings as such and not merely for the substance of truth contained in them. Richard Rothe, quoted in my argument before the Presbytery, is an example. He says of the New Testament writers : “They see nothing in the “ sacred volume which is simply the word of its human “ author, and not at the same time the very word of God “ Himself. \* \* \* They refer the prophetic inspiration “ to the *actus scribendi* of the biblical authors.”

The biblical writers also teach the entire truthfulness of the Holy Scripture for the reason that it is fully inspired. It is impossible for God to lie. Everywhere this is assumed and arguments are enforced on it as the basis. Paul supports an important Christological argument in Gal. 3 : 16, on the fact that the singular instead of the plural number of a word is used in the Old Testament. The Word of God “is true from the beginning.” Christ declared to God in prayer, “Thy word is truth,” and affirmed, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one “ tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Mt. 5 : 18). He based the fact that a certain statement had been made in the olden time on the absolute infallibility of the record of the Scripture, in which it is reported, when He said : “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 Scripture cannot “ be broken.*” According, then, to the infallible opinion of

Jesus Christ, absolute truthfulness of any sentence or statement is proved if it be a constituent part of the Scripture. Christ and the Apostles teach therefore the inerrancy of the entire written Word of God. Not an utterance did they make which can warrant the belief on our part that they thought the Holy Scriptures tainted with errors. They referred to them always as absolutely true, and taught that disbelief in them is sin.

The full inspiration and the entire truthfulness of the written Scripture is therefore a doctrine which is clearly taught in the Bible itself, and is to be received, like all other biblical doctrines, for the reason that the Holy Scripture teaches it. The doctrine is obtained from Scripture by application of the strictest principles of exegesis and by the broadest induction from all the relevant facts, statements, claims and allusions of the Scripture in reference to the subject; it is supported by the entire evidence showing the New Testament writers to be trustworthy teachers of Christian doctrine. Ultimately this evidence rests on the authority and trustworthiness of Christ Himself, for He refers us to them for His statement of doctrine, assuring us that He fitted the writers by giving them the Spirit of truth, to guide them into all truth and to teach them whatsoever He desired them to communicate.

This doctrine of the truthfulness of the Scriptures due to their full inspiration, as taught in the Bible, has been held by the Church of Jesus Christ from New Testament

times until now. Dr. Briggs has misunderstood the faith of the Church on this point. All the great historic names which he has cited in favor of an errant Bible are on record in defence of the opposite doctrine. Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Baxter and the Westminster divines have left their testimony that the whole Bible is the inerrant word of God.

It is preposterous at this late day to advance the claim that insisting on the truthfulness of the Bible is tantamount to setting up a new test of orthodoxy. The Church has never believed anything else. Especially is this true of the Presbyterian Church. It will not be possible to point to a single representative Presbyterian divine, from the Westminster period down, and especially among American Presbyterians, who has taught the doctrine of the errancy of the Holy Scriptures. All sides, parties and schools in our Church have been agreed in affirming the inerrancy of the Word of God. Green, Alexander and Hodge cordially unite with Richards and Barnes in subscribing to the statement of Dr. Henry B. Smith that inspiration extends to both thoughts and words and gives us "truth without error" in the Bible. Our Church has always held that, when we have determined the exact historic-grammatical meaning of a statement in the Bible, we have then the absolute truthfulness of that statement certified to us by the Spirit of God.

The issue before this Assembly is whether or not the Presbyterian Church will abandon the historic faith of the

Church of Jesus Christ and affix its imprimatur to the doctrine that the Bible is permeated with errors to “an indefinite extent.”

To sum up, the teaching of Dr. Briggs in this matter constitutes an offence as defined in the Book of Discipline, for several reasons :

1. It conflicts with the teaching of both Scripture and Confession.

2. If this teaching be true, the Holy Scripture cannot be an infallible rule of faith and practice, since, according to it, we cannot say the Bible is the Word of God, but only that it *contains* the Word of God. Webster defines the word infallible as “not fallible ; not capable of erring ; entirely exempt from liability to mistake ; unerring ; inerrable.” In plain English, therefore, a book which is pervaded by errors “to an indefinite extent,” cannot be an infallible rule. It lacks the one essential of infallibility, viz., absolute truthfulness for all its contents.

3. This teaching subjects the Bible to the reason. For if the Scripture has any erroneous circumstantial, and if the entire visible text is simply human, each man must determine for himself by his own reason or conscience how much may be accepted as the Word of God. Thus the Bible can have practically no objective authority, for it will have to each man only such authority as he may be pleased to accord it.

4. It undermines the trustworthiness of the whole Bible. For if the writers of the Holy Scripture were not

enabled to make correct statements on matters of history and every-day occurrence, in which it is comparatively easy to avoid errors, most men must feel that the statements of such writers respecting the more difficult questions of faith and morals are unworthy of acceptance.

Furthermore, the doctrine of the truthfulness of the Holy Scripture is supported by the entire evidence, which commends all its other doctrines to our faith. If this evidence is not trustworthy in the case of one, it is not trustworthy in respect of any doctrine.

The final judgment of the Presbytery, therefore, on this charge, is not in accord with the law and testimony in the case, and it should be reversed.

#### GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY.

I. In the fourth charge, the fifth of the amended series, relating to the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch, Dr. Briggs is charged with denying the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He admits that both specification and charge are accurate, but denies that his teaching on this point constitutes an offence.

In his Response to the original charges and specifications, Dr. Briggs affirmed that Mosaic history, Mosaic institutions and Mosaic legislation lie at the base of all the original documents. In his Defence he asserts that a Mosaic code exists in Chapters 12 to 26 of Deuteronomy; that some Mosaic laws are contained in Chapters 20 to 23 of Exodus, and that some general principles for direction

to the priesthood were given by Moses, the place of which he does not indicate. (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? pp. 23, 158, 159.)

This legislation, however, was merely rudimentary. The Pentateuch, as we have it, was a development. Deuteronomy did not attain its present form until in the times of King Josiah; the Priest code not until the times of Ezra, and the code of holiness came "into the historic field first in connection with Ezekiel." (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? pp. 124, 157.) Yet, because a few rudimentary laws given by Moses were the basis of the small original documents, we are told that "the name of Moses pervades the Pentateuch as a sweet fragrance."

Dr. Briggs maintains that such elaborate codes as those of the Pentateuch could not have originated in the early national existence of Israel. "Several generations are necessary," he says, "to account for such a series of modifications of the same law." (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? p. 106.) Again he states: "There seems to be no room for them (the laws), in the times of Moses or Joshua or Samuel or David. The providential historical circumstances did not admit of obedience to such elaborate codes before we find them in the history of the times of Josiah and Ezra. A priestly code seems to require its historical origin in a dominant priesthood. A prophetic code seems best

“ to originate in a period when prophets were in the pre-eminence. A theocratic code suits best a prosperous Kingdom and a period when elders and judges were in authority.” (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? p. 124.)

Thus Dr. Briggs declares the great body of laws and regulations which are contained in the Pentateuch to be not merely post-Mosaic in origin, but to be post-Mosaic by several centuries, so that, naturally enough, he can call the Pentateuch an “ anonymous ” book, and Deuteronomy a “ pseudonym.” He reaches this result by using processes based on naturalism and evolution, which enable him to determine at what period in the history of Israel the literature and laws of the Pentateuch could have arisen and come to their present form. By the same processes, he is enabled to declare the laws of the Pentateuchal Codes mutually inconsistent (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? pp. 101, etc.); and to speak of the histories of the patriarchs, as well as some later Mosaic history, as stories derived from an unreliable tradition. (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? pp. 75, 79.)

Dr. Briggs informs us that these results are endorsed by a virtual consensus of biblical scholarship. This we deny. A large number of biblical scholars does not consent. All the leading names in the list, given by Dr. Briggs, are, in my opinion, not biblical, but anti-biblical scholars, since they deny the presence of the Supernatural in the Bible ; and the rest do not hold to a true doctrine of inspiration.



But there is in fact no consensus among the higher critics in regard to the source of the Pentateuchal documents, their number, the times of their composition, and the results reached from an investigation of them. And when further, we remember that the higher critics conduct their inquiry by principles which are purely subjective to themselves, and that the results which they have reached are not only contrary to all known historical facts, but also to the obvious teaching of the Word of God, it is preposterous to ask Christian people to put confidence in their conclusions.

Criticism of this type ignores the one great fact in the life and history of Israel, which harmonizes and verifies everything in the Pentateuch as the work of Moses ; it fails to recognize the visible presence of Jehovah with the Israelites to control their entire national life, whether civil or religious.

The Holy Scripture, as shown by the texts appended to the specification of this charge, gives an account of the origin of the Pentateuch, altogether different from that given by Dr. Briggs.

The Pentateuch itself points to Moses as its author. It speaks of him as a maker of books, in which he wrote history and laws by the command of Jehovah.

A great part of the document is ascribed to the pen of Moses. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy are credited to him, as the medium through whom God

communicated them to his people, when Israel was in the Wilderness, and when Aaron and Eliezer were high-priests. The laws of all the codes appear in the Pentateuch as a unit on the background of Israel's wilderness life, not mutually conflicting, but mutually supplementary to each other.

It is conceded that Genesis has a common authorship with the other four books. So that we must accept the conclusion that the Pentateuch claims Moses as its author. Scholars like Kuenen freely admit this.

If this claim be not true, then the Pentateuch is neither genuine nor authentic, and it must be untrustworthy. If the Pentateuch's claim of Mosaic authorship be false, and the work originated piece by piece during centuries after the death of Moses, the document as it has come to us is a fraud, and no dependence can be placed upon it.

Dr. Briggs would have us believe that a book thus constructed may still be spoken of as inspired. Thus he says, on page 121 of the *Defence*: "If Ezra can be shown to be responsible for our present Pentateuch, is he not as truly a well-known biblical and inspired man and as capable of producing a rule of faith and practice as Moses?" Well, we should say not. For we would have to change our ideas completely, not only of Ezra, but of inspiration, to suppose that he, as an inspired man, could palm off on a credulous people, a piece of deceit and fraud as the truth of God. If Ezra could do that, then we say without hesitation that he was

not as capable of producing a rule of faith and practice as Moses.

Inspiration, as understood by Dr. Briggs, is clearly not that kind of inspiration which will keep the inspired writer from making mistakes or telling lies.

But the Pentateuch is not alone in asserting that Moses is its author. The other books of the Old Testament concur in that claim. The entire body of the Mosaic legislation seems to have been in existence immediately after the death of Moses in the times of Joshua, for the people are commanded by the Lord to guide their life and conduct by it. The Book of Joshua gives evidence of the existence at that time of Mosaic regulations, which Dr. Briggs assigns to succeeding centuries; as, for instance, the command to the 3½ tribes to help their brethren in conquering the land (1:13), the rule that the Levites should have no inheritance (13:14); that Hebron should be given to Caleb (14:6); that the land should be divided by lot (14:2); that cities of refuge should be set apart; and many other regulations. The same can be said of the other preexilic books, especially of Hosea and Amos, and of some of the Davidic Psalms. They testify to the existence of the Mosaic laws as a whole by direct statements, and by revelations of the life and customs of the people in their respective periods. Indeed, all the books of the Old Testament testify in favor of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Wellhausen says that in the time of Chronicles, Moses

was already taken to be the author of the Pentateuch. (Encyclopedia Britannica. Pentateuch.)

It must then either have existed and been believed in as Mosaic in the time of the Kings before the Exile as the book states ; or the account must have been worked into Chronicles fictitiously by Ezra after the Exile. If the latter supposition be true, as the critics assert, then Ezra perpetrated a fraud ; and he did it so well that not only did none of his learned contemporaries detect it, but neither Jews nor Christians for many centuries since then had the slightest suspicion of its being a fraud.

The Jewish people for 3,000 years have given their united testimony in behalf of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The Christian Church has always united in that testimony. This singular unanimity of God's people on this question for so many centuries is of such great value that it cannot be sneered out of Court as mere traditionalism.

Such a consensus is not to be cast aside for the trivial reason that it does not accord with the subjective impressions of the higher critics, which impressions are those of men as fallible as the rest of us.

Prof. Thayer, of Harvard, himself a progressive critic, says that the recent discovery of the Gospel according to Peter "affords conjectural criticism some edifying lessons." He states, it "consigns the staple of books like 'Super-natural Religion,' with their conjectural criticism on the "Gospels, 'to the Museum of biblical antiquities.'"

Conjectural criticism on the Pentateuch is likely to be consigned some day to the same museum of biblical antiquities. It has not established its claim to our confidence. For not all of those who use it attain to good results when working in fields where the rest of us can follow.

Thus Dr. Briggs has misapprehended completely the teaching of the Fathers, Reformers, and Westminster divines respecting the truthfulness of the Bible. If he has not been unable to understand them on a point which they make so clear, how can we trust ourselves to him in the more difficult task of ascertaining what kind of Hebrew history and doctrine, holy inspired men ought to have written in the Bible?

But Christ and the writers of the New Testament give unqualified testimony to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. When speaking of "*the law*," "*the law of Moses*," "*the book of Moses*," and "*Moses' writings*," they used those terms, in the accepted meanings of that time, as referring to the entire Pentateuch. They charged the Jews with sin in not believing and obeying what Moses had written. They accepted and endorsed the belief of the Jews that Moses was responsible for the whole Pentateuch.

Christ refers to Moses by name eighteen times, not as referring to a book of that name, but to him personally, as a great national leader, his own forerunner, who gave laws and commandments, and also wrote of Him.

In assigning to Moses the patriarchal institution of circumcision (John 7: 22); laws like those concerning divorce (Mark 10: 5); and the account concerning the burning bush (Mark 12: 26); he credits Moses with being the author of the Pre-Mosaic, the legislative and the historical parts of the Pentateuch. That includes the entire document. He certainly assigns the whole body of Pentateuchal laws to Moses (Luke 16: 29; Jno. 7: 19; Mt. 8: 14; 19: 8; 23: 2; John 7: 23); and never spoke of any part of the Pentateuch in a disparaging way; but by what he said and did not say, made it clear that He regarded the whole of it to be the Word of God, reliable and true in all its parts.

The higher critics feel the force of this testimony of Christ, and feel called upon to explain how it is that their statements about the Pentateuch are in conflict with the teaching of Christ. Dr. Briggs maintains that when Christ assigns a particular law or statement to Moses, it and no more belongs to the great law-giver. He minimizes the testimony of Christ on this point, thus: "When Jesus uses Moses as another name for the law or Pentateuch, it is by no means certain that Jesus meant to say that Moses wrote the Pentateuch." (*Who Wrote the Pentateuch?* p. 25.) But why should it not be certain? That is what He was understood to say, and it certainly did not behoove Him, as the great Teacher of truth, consciously to leave a false impression on the minds of His hearers.

The critics have two ways of explaining this discrepancy between their teaching and that of Jesus Christ :

1. One is, that He knew Moses not to be the author of the Pentateuch, but, since all His contemporaries believed Moses to be its author, He accommodated Himself to their belief and way of speaking.

Dr. Briggs says : “ Jesus was not obliged to correct all “ the errors of His contemporaries.” (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? p. 29.) Well, if that is true, then it is a great pity that Dr. Briggs did not follow so good an example so as not to disturb the peace of a great Church.

But this explanation cannot be accepted. It would not be creditable to Christ, especially from Dr. Briggs' point of view. For Dr. Briggs holds the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch to be one of the barriers set up by theologians to deprive men of the Bible, and states that we shall not be able to see “ the magnificent unity of the whole “ Bible, to capture all its sacred treasures and to enjoy all “ its heavenly glories,” until this mischievous error is removed from the face of the earth by the destructive process of the higher critics. If Christ knew that the belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch would prevent the Bible from being understood and would rob people of its treasures and heavenly glories, then should He not have exploded that error at once? We can believe nothing less of Him.

2. The other and more commonly adopted view, is

that Christ did not know the real author of the Pentateuch, and so fell into the common error, with His contemporaries, of believing and teaching that Moses was its author. He never enjoyed the advantage of going to Oxford or to Germany to acquire a scientific and conjectural theory for searching out the truth of the Bible. He did not know the Scriptures, and the higher critics do. Dr. Briggs speaks approvingly of this theory, as follows: "If we should say Jesus did not know whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not, we would not go beyond His own saying that He knew not the time of His own advent. Those who understand the doctrine of the humiliation of Christ and the incarnation of Christ, find no more difficulty in supposing that Jesus did not know the author of the Pentateuch than that He did not know the day of His own advent." (Who Wrote the Pentateuch? pp. 28, 29.) Conscious ignorance of that distant future day is one thing; but the unconscious teaching of error is quite another. The one would not detract from the truthful testimony of Christ, the other would. He made no disclaimer of knowledge on this point, but claimed and made the impression that He did know all about the Pentateuch and its author. He is the truth. He came into the world to bear witness to the truth, and positively asserted that He always spoke the truth. He declared to the Jews: "He that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him." Could He affirm in a more solemn way the entire truthfulness of all that He said?



The New Testament gives a large amount of evidence that, as sinlessly perfect and as filled with the Holy Spirit, the knowledge of Christ was universal. And to affirm that when He declared Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch, He erred through ignorance, is a reflection upon His mental as well as upon His moral character, which discredits the New Testament representation of Him as in all respects perfect.

This teaching of Dr. Briggs in regard to the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is in vital conflict with the teaching of the whole Bible. It necessarily involves the positions that the Pentateuch, as we have it, is not only erroneous, but also fraudulent; that the writers of the other Old Testament books either knowingly connived at the fraud, or unintentionally perpetuated it; and that the testimony of Christ and the writers of the New Testament must be discredited.

This teaching is far more dangerous than affirming the Scripture to be in error in matter of minor importance; it tends to a total destruction of faith in the Bible. It has done that already for many. It is entirely at variance with the confessional doctrine of the Holy Scripture.

II. The question concerning the book of Isaiah involves the same principles as does that concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch.

The matter is formulated in the fifth charge, or the sixth of the amended form, in which Dr. Briggs is charged "with teaching that Isaiah is not the author of half the

“book that bears his name.” He admits this to be his teaching but denies that it is an offence.

In his Defence, he points out the 26 Chapters which he allots to Isaiah, and the 39 which he takes from him, although bearing his name.

He is led to this result, not by historic facts, but, as shown in his Defence (pp. 132-146), by subjective impressions whereby he finds himself able to determine the style in which a man like Isaiah ought to have written, what theological ideas it was possible for him to express, and from what historical situation it was possible for him to utter predictive prophecies. The last, however, is the decisive test. It is with the critics a canon of infallible authority that a prophet of God can predict future events only from his own historical point of view, and to the needs of the people of his age. Chapter 13 to 14 : 23 is taken from Isaiah for the reason that that section cannot stand this test of their canon of criticism. The style and theological ideas are correct enough, but it contains a predictive prophecy which Isaiah could not have given from his own historical situation, and the passage can therefore not be assigned to him. But the Scripture credits Isaiah with it. It begins with the statement : “The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos “did see.” (Isa. 13 : 1.) The explanation by which Dr. Briggs seeks to nullify this distinct affirmation of the Bible is weak, far-fetched and entirely unsatisfactory. In the same way the entire book could be taken from Isaiah.

But it shows that any statement of the Bible, which comes in conflict with the theory of higher criticism, must be discredited ; and thus we see here again, as in the case of the Pentateuch, that this criticism undermines the trustworthiness of a biblical writing by denying its claim about itself. If Isaiah did not write Chapter 13 to 14 : 23, then that section is neither genuine nor authentic. It makes a false claim. It pretends to be what it is not, and so is wholly unworthy of confidence.

The assumption of the critics by which this result is reached also destroys the evidential value of prophecy. For, if a prophet can only speak from his own historical point of view and to the needs of his own times, then predictive prophecy requires no more divine help than that long foresight by the help of which wise statesmen have often been able to point out needed lessons for the future from the drift of present events. Here again we see the damaging nature of the theory of higher criticism. It aims to explain supernatural phenomena in biblical history and prophecy on merely naturalistic principles.

But this division of Isaiah is in direct conflict with the statements of Christ and the writers of the New Testament. They assign quotations from all parts of the book to him, as a person. With reference to the disputed parts it is said : “ For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our “ report ? ” But Esaias is very bold, “ I was found of “ them that sought me not ; I was made manifest unto “ them that asked not after me. These things said “ Esaias, when he saw His glory and spake of Him.”

It is clear that, with all his contemporaries, Christ believes Isaiah to be the author of the entire book which bears his name, as He held Moses to be the author of the Pentateuch; and it must destroy confidence in Him as the great Teacher of the New Testament dispensation, if He was so ignorant respecting the character and origin of the Old Testament, which He pretended to know thoroughly, which He came to fulfill, and on which He claimed to found the doctrines of the Gospel. This teaching must bring discredit on Christ as the Teacher.

These declarations of Dr. Briggs in reference to the authorship of the Pentateuch and of Isaiah, but especially of the former, create distrust of the entire Bible. His teaching necessarily involves that. He says: "Higher criticism comes into conflict with the authority of Scripture when it finds that its statements are not authoritative and its revelations are not credible." (Biblical Study, p. 243.)

Dr. Briggs here admits that higher criticism does come into conflict with the authority of Scripture to the extent of finding some of its statements not authoritative and some of its revelations not credible. And how is it possible to keep the whole Bible from being involved in distrust if higher criticism finds its statements not authoritative and its revelations not credible?

This teaching of Dr. Briggs is contrary also to our Confessional statements. "The consent of all the parts,"

can bear no testimony to the entire perfection of such a Bible as the higher criticism gives us. In fact, all the parts dissent as we have seen, and Dr. Briggs' position comes to this, that the Bible is so full of conflicting and mutually inconsistent elements, that it requires to be cut to pieces by the higher criticism and reconstructed on a different basis before the different parts will consent harmoniously.

This criticism also contravenes that statement of our Confession which says : " The infallible rule of interpretation of Scriptures is Scripture itself," for it does not interpret Scripture by " other places of Scripture which " speak more plainly," but by the evolutionary principles of the conjectural theory. If we allow Scripture to interpret itself we find confirmed the authorship of the Pentateuch and Isaiah by Moses and Isaiah respectively.

But our Standards assert that the entire written Bible is to be believed, received and obeyed, for the reason that it is the word of God, the God of truth being the author thereof, and that the Christian shows his faith by believing " to be true, whatsoever is revealed in the word, for the " authority of God Himself speaking therein."

It is impossible to require such faith in a Scripture which is not only erroneous but also tainted with fraud.

The verdict of acquittal by the inferior judicatory on these two charges is therefore contrary to the law and evidence in this case and should not be allowed to stand as the judgment of our Church.

The rejected charges may be considered at this point. We claim that the inferior judicatory erred in ordering these two charges to be stricken out. It was an error for the reason that they allege valid offences, as we will now show.

#### I. PREDICTIVE PROPHECY.

In the fourth of the amended charges, Dr. Briggs is charged "with teaching that many of the Old Testament predictions have been reversed by history, and that the great body of Messianic prediction cannot be fulfilled."

He complains that he is misquoted, and that invalid inferences are drawn from his statement, but the complaint is not well founded. The entire statement is given in the specification, and it sustains the charge. The qualifying clause concerning "the details of predictive prophecy of the Old Testament" in no wise modifies the statement that "many of these predictions have been reversed by history."

The statement was originally made by Kuenen, and when Dr. Briggs adopted it as his own, he failed to state that he did not use it with Kuenen's meaning. Kuenen sustained his position by denial of the reality of predictive prophecy, the inspiration of the prophet and the presence of the supernatural in the Bible. He says: "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 from the fourth Gos-  
 “ pel, that the Scripture cannot be broken, is assented  
 “ to by all the writers, without distinction. In accordance  
 “ with this they ascribe divine fore-knowledge to the  
 “ Israelitish prophets. And far indeed from limiting this  
 “ fore-knowledge to generalities, and thus depriving it of  
 “ all its importance, they refer us repeatedly to the  
 “ agreement between specific prophetic utterances and  
 “ single historical facts, and have no hesitation in declar-  
 “ ing their conviction, both that the prophet spoke of  
 “ these specific facts, and that they, under God’s direction,  
 “ occurred in order that the word of the prophet might be  
 “ fulfilled. \* \* \* The New Testament judgment  
 “ concerning the origin and nature of the prophetic ex-  
 “ pectations, and concerning their relation to historical  
 “ reality, may be regarded as *diametrically opposed to*  
 “ *ours.*” (Kuenen, *Prophets and Prophecy in Israel*,  
 pp. 448, 449.)

Kuenen here acknowledges that all the New Testa-  
 ment writers without distinction believed in the fulfillment  
 of the details of predictive prophecy and that he aimed to  
 disprove the details, the *specific prophetic utterances and*  
*single historical facts*, for the purpose of destroying the  
 value of the prophecy itself.

It must be conceded that whenever predictive prophecy  
 may become an actual occurrence, there must be a suffi-  
 cient number of details to make that event possible ; and  
 hence, to deny details is to deny the actual occurrence of  
 the event predicted.

But even if admitting that the qualifying clause covers the last sentence, the case is not changed. Dr. Briggs categorically asserts all that is charged against him, for he says, that “the great body of the Messianic prediction “has not only never been fulfilled, but cannot now be “fulfilled”; and also that “the prediction of Jonah is not “the only unfulfilled prediction in the Old Testament.” These utterances of Dr. Briggs have caused alarm and justly. The leaders of the higher criticism school are, for the most part, avowedly hostile to that supernatural element in Scripture which predictive prophecy calls for; consistently, therefore, they deny the existence of such prophecy, and hold that the prophets of Scripture were nothing more than men of extraordinary genius and illumination, whose utterances concerning the future were based on a far-seeing foresight of the providential drift of things in their historical situation.

The Scripture contains a large number of predictions. Some of them have been fulfilled, while others remain thus far unfulfilled. It is possible that both the matter and form of some predictive prophecies have been misunderstood, and thus misinterpreted, but it is impossible to misunderstand the Scripture position, that all which the Lord has spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets is to be fulfilled. Joshua states the biblical point of view in these words: “Ye know in your hearts and in all “your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good “things which the Lord your God spake concerning



“ you ; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing “ hath failed thereof.” How different this from Dr. Briggs’ position.

The New Testament writers repeatedly assert that the Scriptures contain predictive prophecy, take for granted that every part of it will be fulfilled, and give detailed instances where either it has come to pass or will yet surely take place. They thus refer to the ministry of John ; the fact that Christ was born of a virgin, and at Bethlehem, and resided at Nazareth ; that He rode on an ass into Jerusalem ; was forsaken by His disciples ; was sold for thirty pieces of silver, and that lots were cast for His vesture. (Isa. 40 : 3, and Mt. 3 : 3 ; Isa. 7 : 14, and Mt. 1 : 23, 24 ; Micah 5 : 2, and Mt. 2 : 5, 6 ; Mt. 2 : 23 ; Zech. 9 : 9, and Mt. 21 : 4, 5 ; Zech. 11 : 12, 13, and Mt. 27 : 9 ; Zech. 13 : 7, and Mt. 26 : 31 ; Ps. 22 : 18, and Mt. 27 : 33.) Similarly, allusion is made to the abomination of desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet as certain to be fulfilled. (Dan. 9 : 27, and Mt. 24 : 15.) Here the fulfillment of Old Testament predictions are cited to the minutest detail.

The language of Christ is still more emphatic. He came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law and the prophets, and most solemnly affirmed that rather would heaven and earth pass away than that one jot or one tittle of them should remain unfulfilled. (Matt. 5 : 17, 18.) He claimed the fulfillment in Himself of what the Spirit foretold by the mouth of David in Psalm cx., and told His

disciples, after the resurrection : “ That all things must “ be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, “ and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.” (Luke 24 : 44.) Our Lord here affirms that there is a *divine necessity* that, not merely prophecy in general, but *all things* concerning Him must be fulfilled ; “ All things ” must surely include Messianic predictions. Much more might be cited to the same effect, but this is sufficient.

If, in view of all this, the statements of Dr. Briggs are to be considered as correct, that “ many predictions of “ the Old Testament have been reversed by history ”; and that “ the great body of the Messianic prediction has “ not only never been fulfilled, but cannot now be fulfilled,” then the plain utterances of Scripture coming ostensibly from the Lord by the mouth of His servants the prophets, together with the declarations of Christ concerning prophecy in general, and Messianic prophecy in particular, are contradicted. It is the Bible and Christ against Dr. Briggs. The attributes of God, pointed out in the charge, are here involved.

These statements of Dr. Briggs being in conflict with the declarations of Scripture and the citations from the Standards should be condemned by this Court and be disavowed by him.

## 2. REDEMPTION AFTER DEATH.

The other rejected charge is the 7th of the amended form, in which Dr. Briggs is charged “ with teaching that

“ the processes of redemption extend to the world to  
 “ come in the case of many who die in sin.”

It is claimed that he disavowed this doctrine by categorically answering a question propounded to him in private by directors of Union Seminary. But such a categorical answer under such circumstances proves nothing and disavows nothing ; the more so, because since that time Dr. Briggs has affirmed his adherence to everything which he has stated in the Inaugural both as to “ matter  
 “ and form.”

We therefore ask this Venerable Body to consider whether the facts pointed out in the specification do not, in the light of the evidence submitted, prove the charge.

He accuses Protestants of the fault of not extending the process of redemption to the vast periods of time in the middle state between death and the resurrection. (Inaugural, p. 53.)

“ The processes of redemption,” he states, “ ever keep  
 “ the race in mind. The Bible tells us of a race origin, a  
 “ race ideal, a race Redeemer and a race redemption.”  
 (Inaugural, p. 50.)

According to Dr. Briggs, redemption is not limited by election. He says, “ The Bible does not teach universal  
 “ salvation, but it does teach the salvation of the world, of  
 “ the race of man, and that cannot be accomplished by  
 “ the selection of a limited number of individuals from the

“ mass. \* \* \* The salvation of the world can only mean  
 “ the world as a whole, compared with which the unre-  
 “ deemed will be so few and insignificant and evidently  
 “ beyond the reach of redemption by their own act of  
 “ rejecting it and hardening themselves against it, and by  
 “ descending into such depths of demoniacal depravity in  
 “ the middle state, that they will vanish from the sight of  
 “ the redeemed as altogether and irredeemably evil  
 “ and never more disturb the harmonies of the saints.”  
 (Inaugural, pp. 55, 56.)

If Dr. Briggs does not teach in this passage that some men who die impenitent might have been redeemed in the middle state but for their “ descending into such depths of “ demoniacal depravity in the middle state,” then certainly when he tried to clothe his concept with language, he puts its clothes on upside down. The unmistakable drift of the entire passage is that the redemption of the world, of the race of man, is largely to be accomplished by means of the opportunities which will be given them in the middle state.

And this agrees with what Dr. Briggs has stated concerning “ a judgment immediately after death.” (Inaugural, p. 54.) He calls it a “ hurtful unchristian error,” a “ bugbear,” which “ makes death a terror to the best of men.” This points unmistakably to another chance after death, since the issues of life are not to be regarded as final at death. It is a hurtful error which he renounces.

In line with this, Dr. Briggs terms the statements of

Dr. Dorner concerning the possibility of repentance in the next world, "excellent thoughts." (Whither, p. 211.) His remarks about the unpardonable sin cited in the specification, point in the same direction. He says of some classes of people that not until they reach the middle state "are they justified, for there can be no justification without faith for them any more than for others. "The intermediate state is for them a *state of blessed possibilities of redemption.*" (Magazine of Christian Literature, Dec., 1889, p. 110.) "We are opening our minds," he says, "to see that the Redeemer's work upon the cross was the beginning of a larger work in the realm of the dead, and from His heavenly throne whence the exalted Saviour is drawing all men to Himself." (Andover Review, vol. 13, p. 59.) And again, "If life in this world is brief, and life in the middle state is long, we must rise to the conception of the love of God as accomplishing even greater works of redemption in the middle state than in this world." (Magazine of Christian Literature, Dec., 1889, p. 106.)

These are dangerous utterances, all the more so because they come from a professor of a prominent Theological Seminary. They are calculated to make men careless about their eternal welfare and lead them to presume on the mercy of God. The Scriptures and the Standards of our Church, as shown by the citations annexed to this charge, confine the work of redemption to this life under the dispensation of the Gospel. Both

Scripture and Standards agree in declaring that “*now* is “ the accepted time, behold *now* is the day of salvation ” ; that “ it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* “ *judgment,*” and that there is an impassable “ gulf fixed ” immediately after death between the righteous and the wicked. (2 Cor. 6 : 2 ; Heb. 9 : 27 ; Luke 16 : 26.)

This teaching of Dr. Briggs should be condemned by this Court, and be retracted by him.

#### PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION AFTER DEATH.

The last or 8th charge of the amended form refers to the subject of Progressive Sanctification after death, in which Dr. Briggs is charged “ with teaching that Sancti-  
“ fication is not complete at death.”

He admits the charge, but denies that it constitutes an offence, alleging not only that the doctrine is not contrary to the Scripture and Standards, but also that it is the very doctrine taught in them.

Sanctification has for its aim, the removal of sin from the nature of believers with all its effects. “ Sanctifica-  
“ tion is a work of God’s free grace, whereby we are  
“ renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and  
“ are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live  
“ unto righteousness.” And when we are completely dead to sin, when it has been entirely exterminated from the soul, then sanctification has completed its work, and the believer, having been renewed in the whole man

after the image of God, will live unto righteousness, and be perfectly holy. He will be no longer in need of either sanctification or redemption.

Adam, before he sinned, as created in the image of God, was perfectly holy, and did not need to have any part of the process of redemption applied to him. It was possible for him to advance in the breadth and intensity of holy life to all eternity, but such an onward growth in holy life cannot be called a process of sanctification.

Christ was perfectly holy when He was born. After that He grew, as the God-man, into a larger and fuller life, but He was at no time more holy or morally perfect than on the day of His birth. In the same way the believer will, when at death he has been made perfect in holiness, advance along all the lines of holy life forever. That is not the question at issue.

That Dr. Briggs uses the term sanctification in the sense of eliminating sin from the soul of believers is plain from the language of the Inaugural. In order to maintain his doctrine of progressive sanctification after death, he finds it necessary to attack the Protestant doctrine, which limits the process of redemption to this world, and refuses to extend it to the vast periods of the world beyond the grave. (Inaugural, pp. 53, 54.) The Protestant doctrine, according to which the believer is made perfectly holy at death, stands in the way of Dr. Briggs' doctrine.

He affirms that progressive sanctification after death is necessary, "in order that the work of redemption may be "complete." (Inaugural, p. 54.)

He terms the transformation of the saint, in the dying hour, a magical illusion, which should be banished from the world and renounced as a hurtful unchristian error. (Inaugural, p. 54.) He maintains that believers, after death, "are still the same persons, with all the gifts and graces, "and also the same habits of mind, disposition and temper, "which they had when they left the world. Death de- "stroys the body. It does not change the moral and "religious nature of man." ("Evil Habits," in Magazine of Christian Literature.) Sin, therefore, remains still in the higher nature of man, and it is the office of progressive sanctification after death to overcome sin in that nature. (Inaugural, 2d ed., p. 108.)

"The intermediate state," he says, "is for all believers, "without exception, a state for their sanctification. They "are there trained in the School of Christ, and are pre- "pared for the Christian perfection which they must "attain ere the judgment day." (Magazine of Christian Literature, Dec., 1889, p. 112.) He assures us that believers are, in the middle state, "delivered from all "temptations such as spring from without, from the world "and the devil. They are encircled with influences for "good such as they never enjoyed before." (Inaugural, p. 107.) Therefore, "we may justly hold," he states, "that "the evil which still lingers in the higher moral nature of



“ believers will be suppressed and modified with an energy  
 “ of repentance, humiliation, confession and determination  
 “ that will be more powerful than ever before, because it  
 “ will be stimulated by the presence of Christ and His  
 “ saints.” (Magazine of Christian Lit., Dec., 1889, p. 114.)

These statements show that, in the view of Dr. Briggs, believers do not enter the next world free from sin. If they were without sin, then certainly there could be no place for confession, repentance and humiliation for sin, and endeavors to suppress it.

His reference to Abraham, in illustration of the doctrine, confirms this view. In his earthly life, Dr. Briggs tells us, the old patriarch lived on a plane of moral advancement so low, that, were he living now, we could not receive him into our families; nay, we might be obliged even to imprison him lest he should defile the community by his example. But when he “went into  
 “ the abode of the dead, he held his pre-eminence among  
 “ the departed. He made up for his defects in this life by  
 “ advancing in the school of sanctification there open to  
 “ him.” (Inaugural, pp. 56, 57.) Abraham was freed from sin and moral imperfection in the intermediate state.

This is still further confirmed by the naturalistic principle of evolution which, in the opinion of Dr. Briggs, necessitates the extension of the process of sanctification into the next world. He states: “It is unpsychological  
 “ and unethical to suppose that the character of a disem-  
 “ bodied spirit will all be changed in the moment of  
 “ death.” (Inaugural, pp 107, 108.)

In his Defence, he maintains the same position. He states that the best of Christians leave this world weak and imperfect (Defence, p. 177); that they are still impure, in need of Christ as their Priest, and of cleansing by His blood (Defence, pp. 166-8); and that they are morally imperfect in nature and conduct. (Defence, pp. 166, 169, 170, 172, 173, 175.) Those who are impure and morally defective in character and life are sinful; for sin does not consist merely of positive transgressions, but any want of conformity to the law of God is sin. He does in fact affirm that not until the judgment day shall believers be fully and forever freed from all sin (Defence, p. 156); and therefore when he says, "I see believers enter " the middle state still imperfect, but they are cleansed " by the blood of Christ from all sin, and are therefore " sinless" (Defence, p. 177), he must in consistency be understood to mean that sin is not imputed to them, as it is not to believers in this world. This accords perfectly with his statement on pp. 158, 159 of Defence, where he says: "I do not doubt that the fountain which flows " from the Redeemer's side cleanseth from all sin in the " hour of death *as in any hour of life*, when the sinner " opens his heart in faith and repentance to the saving " love of Jesus." All believers are thus imputatively sinless.

The whole contention of Dr. Briggs, in his Defence, is that the Bible and the Standards favor the view that the work of making believers pure, morally perfect and holy, is accomplished by means of progressive sanctification

after death. In discussing one of the rejected charges, it was shown that, according to his teaching, the exercise of faith and the act of justification may possibly take place after death; so that, as sin cannot be removed before justification nor before the exercise of faith and repentance, it is clear that believers can enter the next world sinful and morally imperfect.

This doctrine is contrary to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. The two passages of Scripture appended to this charge, show in the one case that the spirits of just men in the state between death and the resurrection are perfect; and in the other, that the transformation of the saints, who shall be on the earth when Christ shall come again, from their imperfect and sinful condition in this life to perfect holiness shall take place instantly, "in the twinkling of an eye." It is easily possible for the Spirit of God to work the same change in the souls of all believers instantly at their death, in spite of any natural principle of psychology or ethics.

But the Bible teaches in many other places that believers enter immediately after death into a state of perfect holiness. It represents them there as the "inheritors of the promises," as arrayed in white robes with palms in their hands, as having entered into the perfect rest of God and exchanged the mortal for the immortal. It speaks of them as housed in heaven, where only the undefiled can go, and as having gone to be forever with Christ, whom only the holy shall see. The

Bible gives no intimation of any process of redemption or sanctification in the next world.

The Standards of our Church, too, are as silent as the Bible respecting any Gospel work, processes of redemption or ministrations of the Spirit in the life after death. They confine redemption in all its processes to this life.

The Confession states that "the souls of the righteous" immediately after death, "being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heaven"; the Larger Catechism tells us, "The Communion in glory with Christ which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory," and the Shorter Catechism asserts, "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory"; by no violence can such language be made consistent with the doctrine of progressive sanctification after death; it is impossible to conceive that the authors of our Standards could have intended to teach any such doctrine, for they held the opposing doctrine, which they have expressed so well in the statements quoted. They say in L. C., 85, that the righteous "even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it; so that although they die, yet it is out of God's love, to *free them perfectly from sin and misery.*"

This doctrine of Dr. Briggs then is an offence according to the Book of Discipline for the following three reasons :

1. The doctrine is contrary to the Bible and the Standards. It is injected into them at the behest of a naturalistic principle of psychology and ethics according to which the instant change of a saint of God at death to perfect holiness by the divine Spirit is declared to be a magical illusion.

2. It is separated from the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory by so frail a barrier that it will easily pass into it.

3. It will lead to graver departures from the faith. The doctrine of redemption after death is advocated at present principally in the interest of the doctrine of Second Probation, Dr. Briggs entertains the largest hopes in respect to the possibilities of redemption in the middle state.

He says, in *Whither*, p. 221 : “The question which we have to determine as Calvinists is—whether the divine act of regeneration may take place in the middle state or not.”

Certainly, if we once admit that one of the processes of redemption takes place in the middle state, we will be compelled, ere long, in logical consistency, to affirm that all the processes of redemption may be carried on there.

The verdict of acquittal, therefore, on this charge, is

contrary to the evidence and to Presbyterian doctrine, and should be reversed.

We have shown that the Presbytery of New York has rendered a decision contrary to the law and evidence in giving its verdict of acquittal in this case. As not in accord with true Presbyterian doctrine, the verdict should be reversed and another should be formulated in harmony with our doctrines and the evidence in this case.

The Presbytery, while not approving the erroneous views of Dr. Briggs, suggests that they should be tolerated in the interest of scholarship and liberty.

The Presbyterian Church favors the best scholarship and insists that its ministers shall be thoroughly educated. It welcomes the deepest research, but it requires also a reverent handling of the Word of God. The type of higher criticism which is before us has no monopoly of scholarship. Scholars who in knowledge and skill are at least easily the peers of those who claim to be the higher critics dispute their claims. Since the methods of higher criticism are uncertain and its results so far not large, it becomes its apostles to be modest. They have, however, laid themselves open to suspicion by inordinate conceit and utter recklessness.

The Presbyterian Church is the friend of liberty. It has always been foremost in efforts to promote religious, civil, social and individual freedom. It demands the freest and fullest honest investigation of all the facts and phenomena of the Bible.

But as in all other relations and institutions, divine and human, liberty in our Church or in any other Church must be regulated liberty. It has its limitations. The freedom of one's house does not mean the right to pull out its foundation. And liberty in a denomination cannot mean the right to destroy its denominational life and doctrines.

No one restrains the liberty of Dr. Briggs. He is as free to go as he was to come. On his own responsibility he can proclaim his theological and critical views from the house-tops. The whole world will give him a hearing. But he may not exercise this liberty in the denomination, at the expense of that of his brethren. They have an equal right with him to the enjoyment of liberty.

The Presbyterian Church is also entitled to her share of the blessings of liberty. If she feels in conscience bound to maintain her unbroken testimony for doctrines which were taught by Christ and the Apostles, and which have been held by the Church of Christ from New Testament times to the present, then in God's name, the liberty to do this should be freely accorded to her. No man may wrench from her hand her imprimatur and affix it to doctrines which are abhorrent to her membership and destructive of her denominational tenets, genius and life.

At three different times the General Assembly has warned the churches against the baneful influence of that kind of biblical criticism, which Dr. Briggs champions, as

tending to undermine faith in the Holy Scripture ; and enjoined the Presbyteries to see to it that our students for the ministry were not subjected to this criticism during their theological training. The Church has been very patient in this matter, and Dr. Briggs, not having heeded the warning of the Assembly, has now no right to complain that his liberty is unduly interfered with, if they refuse longer to be responsible for the destructive opinions which he propagates.

Greater things than mere liberty and scholarship are involved in this issue. Truth, honor and fidelity to great trusts committed claim our attention. We are in a crisis. Not only are great doctrines of our faith emasculated ; the Bible itself is in peril. It is assailed from unusual quarters. It is wounded in the house of its friends. Our people are profoundly stirred. They are greatly troubled, and look to this Assembly for relief.

A great responsibility rests on you to-day, Mr. Moderator and Brethren. It is for you to decide whether our great Church shall continue her faith in the sole supremacy of the Holy Scriptures as the source of authority in religion for salvation and certainty ; or admit the Church and the Reason to an equality with the Scriptures in this matter ; whether we will continue our testimony for the absolute truthfulness and trustworthiness of the Word of God, or tolerate the propagation of the doctrine of an errant Scripture ; whether we will still affirm the plenary in-



spiration of the Holy Scripture to the extent of entire truthfulness, or so lower the doctrine of inspiration as will permit us to say that an inspired writer in penning the Bible not only committed errors but stated what he knew to be false, and whether we shall still teach that the work of redemption is confined to this life, or that it is to be extended to the vast periods of time which intervene between death and the resurrection.

These questions have hitherto not been relegated in the Presbyterian Church to the domain of liberty of opinion. They have been regarded as of such vital importance that those who have assumed the vow to which Presbyterian Ministers subscribe might not differ in respect to them.

The Presbytery of New York concedes that "grave issues" are involved. Truly, truly. Tolerate the errors, say the Presbytery, but be careful not to approve them. Strange delusion. Now, our people not only, but Christian people generally, are anxiously waiting to hear what answer this great Assembly will give to these questions. And the opportunity is offered to this Venerable Body to allay anxiety, to restore confidence and to re-establish peace, by wise counsels, by bearing clear testimony for the truth of God, by speaking with no uncertain sound, by contending "earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," and by firmly holding "fast the form of sound words."





