

25847

THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO SPEECHES

ON THE TEACHING OF

EVOLUTION

IN

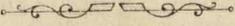
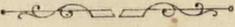
COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

DELIVERED IN THE SYNOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

AT GREENVILLE, S. C., OCT. 1884,

BY

JOHN L. GIRARDEAU, D. D.


PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.


COLUMBIA, S. C.:
WILLIAM SLOANE, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER.

1885.

THE SUBSTANCE OF TWO SPEECHES

ON THE TEACHING OF

EVOLUTION

IN

COLUMBIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

DELIVERED IN THE SYNOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

AT GREENVILLE, S. C., OCT. 1884.

BY

JOHN L. GIRARDEAU, D. D.

REPRINTED BY REQUEST
OF THE

COLUMBIA S. C.
WALKER BROS., PRINTERS AND JOB PRINTERS
1885

SPEECHES.

PREFATORY NOTE.—At a meeting of the Board of Directors of Columbia Theological Seminary, held in September, the Address of Dr. James Woodrow on Evolution was submitted to them by him for their consideration. By a majority of 8 to 3, the Board took the following action:

The Board having carefully considered the address of Dr. Woodrow, published in pursuance of the request of this Board, adopts the following:

1st. *Resolved*, That the Board does hereby tender to Dr. Woodrow its thanks for the ability and faithfulness with which he has complied with its request.

2d. That in the judgment of this Board the relations subsisting between the teachings of Scripture and the teachings of natural science are plainly, correctly and satisfactorily set forth in said address.

3d. That the Board is not prepared to concur in the view expressed by Dr. Woodrow as to the probable method of the creation of Adam's body—yet, in the judgment of the Board, there is nothing in the doctrine of evolution, as defined and limited by him, which appears inconsistent with perfect soundness in the faith.

4th. That the Board takes this occasion to record its deep and ever growing sense of the wisdom of our Synods in the establishment of the chair of "the Perkins Professorship of Natural Science in connexion with Revelation," and of the importance of such instruction as is thereby afforded, that our ministry may be the better prepared to resist the objections of infidel scientists and defend the Scriptures against their insidious charges.

Against this action the minority entered the following protest:

1. Evolution is an unproved hypothesis, and the Seminary is not the place for such teachings.

2. Belief in evolution changes the interpretation of many passages of Scripture from that now received by the Church.

3. The view that the body of Adam was evolved from lower animals, and not formed by a supernatural act of God, is dangerous and hurtful.

4. The theory that Adam's body was formed by the natural law of evolution, while Eve's was created by a supernatural act of God, is contrary to our confession of faith as that confession of faith has been and is interpreted by our Church.

5. The advocacy of views which have received neither the endorsement of the Board nor that of the Synods having control of the Seminary, which have not been established by science, which have no authority from the Word of God, which tend to unsettle the received interpretation of many passages of Scripture and to destroy the confidence of the Church in her doctrinal standards, which have already produced so much evil, and

which will injure the Seminary and may rend our Church, *ought not to be allowed.*

The report of the Board having been submitted to the Synod of South Carolina, was referred to a Standing Committee on the Theological Seminary. That Committee presented a majority and minority report. The majority report was as follows:

Resolved, 1. That inasmuch as the hypothesis of evolution concerning the earth, the lower animals, and the body of man, as advanced by the Professor of Natural Science in connexion with Revelation, is a purely scientific and extra-scriptural hypothesis, the Church as such is not called upon to make any deliverance concerning its truth or falsity.

2d. That in view of the deep interest in this matter experienced by all, and the fears expressed by some lest this doctrine of evolution should become an article of church faith, the Synod deems it expedient to say that the Church, being set for the defence of the gospel and the promulgation of Scriptural doctrines, can never, without transcending her proper sphere, incorporate into her Confession of Faith any of the hypotheses, theories, or systems of human science.

3d. That while the presentation of the hypothesis of evolution in its relations to Scripture falls necessarily within the scope of the duties pertaining to the Perkins Professorship, nevertheless, neither this nor any other scientific hypothesis is or can be taught in our Theological Seminary as an article of church faith.

4th. That in view of the above considerations, the Synod sees no sufficient reason to interfere with the present order of our Theological Seminary as determined by the Board of Directors.

The minority report was as follows:

Resolved, 1st. That the question whether Dr. Woodrow's views in regard to evolution involve heresy, is not before the Synod.

2d. That the Synod is called upon to decide, not upon the question whether the said views of Dr. Woodrow contradict the Bible in its highest and absolute sense, but upon the question whether they contradict the interpretation of the Bible by the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

3d. That the declaration of the Board of Directors that "the relations subsisting between the teachings of Scripture and the teachings of Natural Science are plainly, correctly, and satisfactorily set forth" in Dr. Woodrow's Address on Evolution was inexpedient and injudicious.

4th. That the action of the Board of Directors virtually approving the inculcation and the defence of the unverified hypothesis of evolution in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, is, the majority of the Synods of Georgia, Alabama, South Georgia and Florida concurring, hereby reversed; and that the inculcation and defence of the said hypothesis, even as a probable one, in the Theological Seminary, as being contrary to the

interpretation of the Scriptures by our church and to her prevailing and recognized views, is, a majority of the associated Synods concurring, hereby prohibited.

The question was on the adoption of the majority report. The greater part of the ensuing remarks is a re-production *verbatim* of what was spoken from full notes on the floor of the Synod. The same verbal accuracy is not vouched for in regard to the whole of them. It is not the writer's intention to invite controversy. He has consented to the publication of the speech, partly because it was very inadequately reported, and partly because it enounces principles which, it is humbly conceived, may prove of some benefit to the Church.

After some introductory remarks, in which he expressed his reluctance to oppose a colleague with whom he had for eight years been associated, his appreciation of Dr. Woodrow's transcendent abilities as a teacher, and the obligation imposed upon him by his position as a presbyter and a member of the Synod to utter his convictions upon the subject under consideration, the speaker proceeded to say:

Mr. Moderator:—The question is not before this Synod whether Dr. Woodrow is liable to the charge of heresy.

In the first place, the Synod is directly dealing with the action of the Board of Directors, which in due order comes before it for consideration. But there is no evidence furnished by the report of the Board, that any charge or allegation of heretical teaching on the part of Dr. Woodrow was laid before them. Consequently they did not consider such an accusation. The question of heresy was not properly before them, and as we have to do with the proceedings of the Board that question is not properly before us. Allegations to the effect that Dr. Woodrow teaches heretical doctrine have been made by certain newspapers and individuals; and were it proper for this Synod to notice such statements, I would as one of its members favor its vindication of him against them. We are, however, not directly concerned about outside and irresponsible allegations, but about the official action of the Board of Directors and the matters with which it specifically dealt.

In the second place, I believe—although others may differ with me on this point—that there is no ground in fact upon which a charge of heresy in this case could be based, and therefore no ground for the raising of the question by this body. "

We have been referred by one of the speakers for a definition of heresy to our Book of Discipline, chapter iii. That chapter defines offenses, which are objects of judicial process, and declares that "general offenses are heresies or immoralities." But as no specific difference of heresy is here indicated, no definition is furnished. It is evident that we must look elsewhere for a definition of heresy.

Nor will it do to say that heresy is that which is contrary to the Scriptures and our Doctrinal Standards. No doubt all heresy is contrary to the Scriptures and our Standards, but all that is so characterized is not necessarily heresy. There are degrees of opposition to the Scriptures and the Standards, and of some of them we are not warranted in affirming that they are heretical. Take as an example a single case. Our Standards,

professing to found their doctrine on the subject upon the teachings of the Scriptures, deliver the Post-millennial view of the second advent of Christ. Would we stigmatise as heretics the brethren among us who hold the Pre-millennial view, because that tenet is contrary to the Confession of Faith interpreting the Scriptures?

What, then, is heresy, according to our conception? It involves a serious departure either from the fundamental elements of the gospel, or what is the same thing the scheme of redemption, or from the vital doctrines of the Calvinistic Theology.* This is the definition of heresy accepted by our theologians, and tried by this Standard I fail to see how Dr. Woodrow's views can be pronounced heretical. He denies no fundamental element of the gospel scheme; but, on the contrary, professes cordially to hold every one of them. And it would be a difficult task to show how his views, in themselves considered apart from his professions, logically contravene any essential part of the scheme of redemption. He denies no vital doctrine of the Calvinistic Theology; but, on the other hand, professes to maintain every one of them. He avows himself a theist, holds that God originally created matter out of nothing, and that he immediately created the human soul in the first instance. He expressly asserts the doctrine of a *concursus* of Divine Providence with all the forces and processes of nature. He affirms his belief in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures and in all the miracles which they record, including the miraculous production of the human nature of our incarnate Lord; and, in fine, in all the facts, whether miraculous or otherwise of the gospel history and of the scheme of redemption. He also professes his acceptance of the federal headship of Adam, in answer to those who have charged his views with involving a rejection of that doctrine. I am not able to perceive, therefore, how his teaching can be adjudged to be heretical. Whether it contradicts the Scriptures, and, if so, in what sense, are questions which will be considered in the progress of this argument.

The question which is before the Synod is, whether it will approve or disapprove the action of the Board of Directors, and, by implication, the inculcation of Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis of evolution in the Theological Seminary.

The action of the Board, so far as it fairly comes before us for consideration, consists of two parts: first, the endorsement of Dr. Woodrow's exposition of the relations between the Bible and Natural Science as plain, correct and satisfactory; secondly, the judgment that Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis of evolution is consistent with perfect soundness in the faith, and, by necessary inference, the Board's consent to its being inculcated in the Theological Seminary.

I.—I proceed to assign some reasons why this Synod should not give its formal approval to the first element of the action of the Board, to which attention has been cited.

1. The question of the relations between the Bible and science is one which has long been discussed, and one which demands the most mature and careful treatment.¹ There was no urgent reason requiring the Board to pass their official judgment upon that difficult subject. They might

* These terms were used in a wide sense as including what is common to Calvinism and orthodoxy as well as what is peculiar to it.

have left Dr. Woodrow's exposition to speak for itself upon its own merits. Nor is there any evidence that in the joint deliberations of the Board this particular question received a consideration proportionate to its importance. For ought that appears, their decision in regard to it was of the nature of a snap judgment. The difficulties inherent in the subject, and the high position of the Board of Directors as the custodians, and in some measure the exponents, of a correct theology, rendered unwise so dogmatic and sweeping a judgment as was embodied in their action. I trust, therefore, that the Synod will either express its sense of the injudiciousness of that decision, or at least refrain from giving it its solemn approval.

2. There are, in my humble judgment, certain defects in the exposition of the relations between the Bible and science, which should have induced the Board to hesitate before pronouncing so absolute a judgment as that it is plain, correct and satisfactory.

(1.) The proposition that "the Bible does not teach science," although in an important sense true, is yet in some degree vague and ambiguous, and needed further qualification than is imposed upon it in the exposition. It is not my intention to criticise its author in regard to this matter. It may be admitted that it was impracticable, within the limits of a single discourse so wide in its range, to give this particular proposition any fuller elucidation than was actually furnished. I make this statement in order to evince the inexpediency of the Board's unrestricted declaration that the exposition was satisfactory. But this point is not of great consequence in the present discussion. We may concede the truth of the proposition in the sense intended by its maintainers, and nothing material will be gained or lost on one side or the other.

"(2.) Another difficulty is occasioned by the assertion in the exposition of a marked difference between non-contradiction and harmony. The position is definitely taken that we are not to expect harmony, but merely non-contradiction, between the statements of the Bible and those of science. Now a distinction is obvious and necessary—namely, between the cases in which the respective statements do, and those in which they do not, relate to the same thing. But the illustrative cases mentioned in the exposition are those in which different classes of statements do not relate, or are not apt to relate, to the same thing. "We do not speak," says the author, "of the harmony of mathematics and chemistry, or of zoology and astronomy, or the reconciliation of physics and metaphysics." Here the object-matter of the sciences specified is so different that there is but little chance of conflict. The statements do not terminate upon the same things, and, therefore, no harmony of positive statement is to be expected.

Our question is a different one. It arises in regard to those cases in which the Bible and science speak about the same thing—in which the object-matter is, in some sense, the same. Here there is a chance of conflict; and the question of harmony or disharmony becomes pertinent. The distinction which has been emphasised is one that cannot be overlooked.

But even in those cases in which the object-matter of the statements differs, the inquiry occurs, is all harmony excluded? Every truth is, in

some sense, harmonious with every other truth. It constitutes a part of a system the constituent elements of which are consistent with each other. All truth tends to unity. There is a common relation which it sustains to God as at once its author and its end. The word and the works of God concur in illustrating His perfections and subserving His glory. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handy-work," and the Bible echoes these sublime lessons and gives them an articulate utterance. Nature and Redemption combine to swell the volume of praise which ascends to their common author; and science, unless it could establish a claim to be Godless, should harmonise with religion in laying its offerings of worship upon a common altar. Further than this, I make bold to say, the Bible and science sustain a common relation to Christ the Mediator. However they may now differ in consequence of the disturbing influence of sin, they are destined ultimately to come into harmony at his cross and to kiss each other there. Their absolute divorce is illegitimate. What God has, in a certain sense, joined together, let not man put asunder. I fear this doctrine of a total separation of the Bible and science. But if, as has been briefly intimated, there is, or ought to be, some harmony between them, all harmony cannot be excluded.

Let us, however, come to the question more immediately before us: Are we to expect only non-contradiction and not harmony, where the Bible and science make statements about the same thing—for example, the origin of Adam's body? The exposition lays down this as a principle; and this has been regarded as a great discovery. Would that it were! It would be an honor to the author, to our Seminary and to our Church. No more conflict would be possible between the Bible and science. A permanent peace would be established between them—"a consummation devoutly to be wished." But I fear more is promised than can be performed.

The hope that a principle has been discovered which will hereafter render impossible a conflict between scientific men and the Bible, namely the potent principle of non-contradiction, will prove to be a charming but delusive dream. As well might we hope to discover a principle, the formulation of which would arrest the conflict between the Bible and the Devil. Sir, ever since the fall of man, there have been two parties in this poor, sinful world that are in irreconcilable conflict with each other: the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; the one headed by a Divine-human Redeemer, the other by the arch-conspirator against God and His elect church. Nor will that conflict cease until the final apostasy has been developed, and the hosts of Gog and Magog led by Satan shall hurl themselves in one last, desperate assault against the camp of the saints. Then shall that final blow of mediatorial power be struck which will deliver the church from more than Egyptian tyranny, introduce her into an everlasting rest, and put into her mouth the triumphant song of Moses and the Lamb.

The exigencies of the discussion necessitate the examination of the distinction, so broadly drawn, between non-contradiction and harmony. Is it true that two statements may be non-contradictory without being in some degree harmonious? "There are certain fundamental laws of thought which bear upon and regulate all the processes of the thinking faculty. They are the laws of Identity, Contradiction, or—as some prefer to call

it—Non-contradiction, and Excluded Middle or Third. These laws are universally applicable. They do not, it is true, furnish the matter of thought; but, that being given, wherever the relations of affirmation and negation obtain between statements, there they assert their control. And as the question before us is one which is concerned about the relations between the statements of science and those of the Bible, the appeal to their authority becomes perfectly legitimate.

Now these laws are but specific explications of one ultimate and generic principle, upon which they are reducible to unity. That principle is: All thought, to be valid, must be consistent, or what is the same thing harmonious, with itself. Here is the radical and underlying law of all valid thinking upon any subject—the Harmony of Thought with itself.

Let us apply the relation of this generic law to the specific laws which have been indicated. Under the operation of the law of Identity, the highest form is realised in which harmony of thought can be manifested. A thing is equal to itself: a thing is the same as itself: in these respective statements no inconsistency is possible—complete harmony obtains. If two statements upon any given subject are identical with each other, absolute harmony is the result. The Bible, for example, says, the sun shines: science says, the sun shines. These statements being identical, perfect harmony exists. The Bible says, the body of Adam was made of the dust of the ground: should science say, the body of Adam was made of the dust of the ground, there would be between these statements the harmony of identity.

Under the operation of the second law, that of Contradiction, two statements may be conceived as contradicting each other. Here there is no harmony—there is the perfect absence of harmony. The consequence is that thought is estopped from proceeding further, until that impediment to harmony is removed. Hence, some say—Sir William Hamilton, for instance—that the law is really that of non-contradiction. For, where two statements sustain simply the relation of non-contradiction, there is, although not the highest, yet some, harmony between them—the harmony, not of identity, but of non-contradiction. The Bible says, the body of Adam was made of dust. Now, if science should say, the body of Adam was not made of dust, the two statements would be flatly contradictory, and there would be the perfect absence of harmony between them. Or, if the Bible be interpreted to mean that Adam's body was made of inorganic dust, and science should affirm that Adam's body was not made of inorganic but of organic dust, there would be a contradiction between the two statements, and all harmony would be excluded. But if the Bible says, Adam's body was made of dust, without specifying the sort of dust, and science should say, Adam's body was made of organic dust, it might be held, as by some in this debate, that the two statements are not contradictory—that there is between them simply the relation of non-contradiction. In that case, the hindrance to harmony, it might be contended, is, in a measure, removed. It might be claimed, that there would exist between them the harmony which consists with the absence of contradiction.

The third law—that of Excluded Middle or Third, requires that where two statements contradict each other, one must be held as true and the other as false. No middle or third supposition is possible. While this state of the case lasts, no harmony of thought is possible. We must elect between the contradictory alternatives. If, then, we reject one of the

contradictories as false and choose the other as true, we harmonise our thinking with our previous thinking. The obstacle to the progress of thought is taken away, and we move on harmoniously with ourselves. For example again, if the Bible is interpreted as saying, Adam's body was made of inorganic dust, and science should say, Adam's body was made of organic dust, we are confronted with contradictory statements. All harmony is excluded, and while that contradiction remains in force all progress of thought on the subject is blocked. We must, in order to move on, elect between the contradictory statements. This, of course, may be done in either of two ways. We may reject the interpretation of the Bible, namely, that Adam's body was made of inorganic dust, as the false alternative; and then we would be shut up to accept as true the contradictory scientific alternative, namely, that Adam's body was made of organic dust. Or, on the other hand, we may reject the scientific affirmation as false, and then we would be necessitated to accept as true the biblical interpretation. In either case, we remove the barrier to the progress of thought erected by the contradiction, and advance consistently with ourselves; we reach that harmony of thinking which is secured by the application of the law of Excluded Middle.

From this analysis of the fundamental laws which regulate all our thinking in regard to the relation of statements to each other, it follows that where two affirmations referring to the same subject are simply non-contradictory, there is not the complete absence of harmony. The relation, it is true, does not involve the harmony of identity, but still some harmony is implied. What the author of the exposition of the relations between the Bible and Science ought, in my judgment, to have said is, Expect not the harmony of identity between them. That principle needed clear explication, and he has done good service in calling attention to its importance. With that I have no quarrel. But if he insist on meaning, Expect not harmony between the statements of the Bible and those of Science, he would throw himself in revolt against the fundamental laws of all thinking. That principle would exclude what he labors to establish, namely, the relation of non-contradiction between the statements of the Bible and those of Science. He would defeat his own intentions.

The author says: "We are not to look for harmony, but for non-contradiction." The true view is: We are to look for the harmony of non-contradiction. The principle which ought to have been enounced, and the enouncement of which—I say it with all respect—must have been really intended, is, that where the Bible and science speak about the same thing we are not to look for the harmony of identical statement, but for the harmony of non-contradictory statements. This is a difficulty in the exposition of the relations between the Bible and science which should have deterred the Board of Directors from declaring it to be plain, correct and satisfactory.

(3.) Another defect is, that when the exposition provided for the case in which the church's interpretation of the Bible is contradicted by a "proved truth of science," it ought, for completeness' sake, to have noticed the complementary case in which the church's interpretation of the Bible is contradicted by a disproved assumption of science. The law, that of two contradictories one is true and the other false, applies equally to both cases. Does an interpretation of the Bible contradict a proved

truth of science? The interpretation is, of course, false, and the Christian man should say: Let the interpretation go, and admit the scientific truth. Does an interpretation of the Bible contradict a disproved assumption of science? The assumption is, of course, false, and the scientific man should say: Let the assumption go, and admit the truth of the interpretation. One of these things is as important as the other. The exposition omits one, and favors the scientific side. It does not make the demand upon it which it makes upon the other side.

“(4.) A fourth defect is, that the exposition makes no provision for cases in which the Bible and unproved scientific hypotheses contradict one another. Will it be said, that the principle of non-contradiction is the only one which should be considered as holding in those cases? Why, there not only may be, but there are such contradictions. What is the reason of the present agitation? Do not many in our church believe and urge the existence of a contradiction between the Bible and Dr. Woodrow’s hypothesis of evolution? This is sufficient to show that the principle of non-contradiction, although true under limitations, is not broad enough to cover all cases of conflict. The Board, for this reason also, acted unwisely in pronouncing an authoritative judgment as to the satisfactoriness of the principles set forth in the Address.”

(5.) The last defect which I point out is, that the exposition fails to define with accuracy the most important terms in the discussion; and to indicate the most common mode in which conflicts occur between the Bible and science, and the way in which they should be adjusted.

The term *science*, whatever may be said of the legitimacy of the practice, is actually and ordinarily employed in different senses. It is used to signify that which is true science; that which is a true interpretation of the facts of nature. Considered in this, its highest and absolute sense, it is an accurate registrar of those facts, derives from them good and necessary inferences, and makes no mistake in its inductions and generalisations. But we also apply the term to unverified hypotheses in regard to the facts of nature and their relations. And still further, men are accustomed to speak of hypotheses of science which have been exploded; as when they speak of the scientific hypothesis of Ptolemy. It may be said that in the two last named instances the term is abusively employed. That is true, but still it is employed, and will continue to be.

The same thing is true of the term *theology*, which may be cited as an illustration. There is a true theology, a theology in the highest and absolute sense; and it has been urged that to use the term in any other sense is to employ it abusively. But notwithstanding this, it is employed in senses in which those who use it believe it to be false. So Calvinists are accustomed to speak of the Arminian theology and Arminian theologians, and Protestants have no hesitation in talking of the Romanist theology and Romanist theologians.

The term *Bible* is also employed in widely different senses. There is an absolute sense in which it is infallibly and unchangeably true. When we use the term in this sense, we designate the meaning of the Scriptures which God Himself, their author, intended them to convey. In emphasising this signification, I am supported by Dr. Woodrow, in the Address delivered at his inauguration as Perkins Professor in the Seminary. “Believing firmly and cordially,” he said, “that every part of the Bible is the

very word of God, and that, therefore, every part of it is absolutely true, in the sense in which it was the design of its real Author, the Holy Spirit, that it should be understood," etc.

There is also a relative sense in which the word Bible is obliged to be accepted—the sense in which it is the Bible relatively to our apprehension of its meaning. The interpretations which we honestly place upon it constitute it the Bible for us—our ultimate standard of judgment in matters of faith and practice. Now these interpretations *may or may not coincide with the absolute meaning of the Bible. If they do, they are as unchanging as that meaning itself. If they do not, they are a fluctuating quantity, and are liable to be modified or even abandoned.* But whether or not the Church's interpretation of the Bible be identical with its absolute and infallible meaning, so long as she sincerely believes it so to be, it is the Bible to her.

Let me illustrate this distinction by a reference to conscience as the law of God impressed upon our moral constitution. Had not man sinned his intellectual interpretation of the law given in conscience would have coincided with the law itself. But as he is a sinner, his intellectual judgments colored by the feelings are liable to impose incorrect interpretations upon the law. Here there is an absolute and a relative sense of the law of conscience. Still although the relative and interpretative sense may not coincide with the absolute, it becomes the regulative standard of action. In such a case, if one comply with its requirements he does what is materially, if he does not, what is formally, wrong. The application is easy to the analogous distinction in hand.

Another illustration is furnished by the principle of the relativity of knowledge. Of existence not related to our cognitive faculties we can know nothing. But the measure of our knowledge is not the measure of existence. Because the mind of man cannot compass the universe, we cannot say there is no universe. There may be, there must be, a vast body of truth in the realm of nature which lies beyond the scope of our faculties; and there are mysterious principles and forces connected with the phenomena which are in relation to our faculty of observation—recondite laws, with which our interpretations of the obtrusive facts of nature may or may not coincide. There is an absolute and a relative sense of nature. Who is there bold enough to say that his knowledge of nature exhausts its meaning? Even so, there are heights and depths in the word of God which we are unable to reach with our limited faculties. Of that illimitable system of truth revealed to us in the Scriptures, we certainly possess a part under the illumination of the Holy Ghost; but it would be the climax of arrogance to claim that we know the whole. Hence the possibility of growth in our subjective apprehension of doctrines which in themselves are unchangeable. Hence the duty of conforming our knowledge more and more to the highest and absolute meaning of the Bible. Hence, too, the differing interpretations of the Scriptures by the people of God. The Baptists and their opponents, for example, differ in regard to the mode and significance of baptism. It is perfectly clear that both cannot have the absolute sense of the Bible in relation to that ordinance.

It is evident that any discussion of the relations between the Bible and science which fails to note these distinctions must lead to confusion of thought. Between the Bible in its absolute sense as the very word of God, and science in its absolute sense as a true interpretation of the facts of

nature, it is unnecessary to say there can be no contradiction. They are both revelations of God's truth. Between the Bible, as interpreted by the church composed of uninspired and fallible men, and science in its absolute sense, contradiction is possible; and it is also possible between false science or even hypothetical science and the Bible in its absolute sense. Here again we find a reason why the Board should have paused before emitting the unqualified judgment of approval which is now under consideration.

In the next place, neither is the mode indicated in which conflicts between the Bible and science most commonly occur, nor the way in which they may be adjusted. I have admitted that no contradiction is possible between the Bible, as it is what God its author intended it to mean, and science as the true interpretation of the facts of nature. As no contradiction is possible, no conflict can take place. There is no difference of view between us here. But of what practical value with reference to conflicts would be this old principle were it universally accepted? Admit here the principle of non-contradiction, and what conflict will be settled? None; for, according to the supposition, there is no conflict to be settled. What conflict will be prevented? None; for, according to the supposition, no conflict is possible. We have a principle for preventing an impossible event; a rule of action for avoiding impossible actions! We need a principle to help us, a rule of action to guide us, when conflicts actually occur, as occur they inevitably will.

If all men held the Bible in the sense which was intended by its Author, accepted its real and absolute meaning, and all men knew the real facts and processes of nature; ah, then our principle of non-contradiction would be mighty. We would be in Paradise. But men will put, must put, their interpretations upon the Bible and nature alike, and it is ordinarily between these interpretations that contradiction, in an imperfect and sinful world, occurs. You may cry, non-contradiction! as much as you please, and the shouts of conflict will be your answer.

I admit, also, that Dr. Woodrow's principle that our interpretations of the Bible must square with the proved truths of science is perfectly true. And here, I must say, he has been incorrectly represented by some of his critics. But, in such cases, the conflict is ended. The church must yield, has ever yielded, an interpretation of the Bible contradictory to a settled conclusion of science. We still want a principle, a rule of action, which will help us when the actual conflict is upon us. The mode in which contradiction and conflict emerge is the opposition between the church's interpretation of the Bible and scientific hypotheses. It is really not a conflict between the Bible itself and science itself, but between the church's Bible and the scientific man's science. The contradiction is between theology and scientific hypotheses.

What ought the church to do in such cases? Shall she give up her Bible—the Bible as she interprets it—for unverified scientific hypotheses which contradict it? That is the great and practical question, the decision of which is big with momentous consequences. It is a defect in the exposition of the relations between the Bible and science, that it does not undertake the settlement of that question. Of this we are now witnesses. This Synod has just such a conflict upon it. Could it adjust the issue by consulting the principles of the address?

3. It may be added that the action of the Board involves them in inconsistency with themselves.

They endorse Dr. Woodrow's exposition of the relations between the Bible and science as plain, correct and satisfactory. It follows, that they endorse his exposition of the relation between the Bible and his science. But they declare that they are not prepared to endorse his hypothesis of evolution as to Adam's body. Why? Manifestly because they could not see how it is consistently related to the Bible. The exposition of the relations between the Bible and science *is* plain, correct and satisfactory. The exposition of the relation between the Bible and this hypothesis of science is *not* plain, correct and satisfactory!

Here is an inconsistency in the action of the Board which should restrain the Synod from approving that action. For, unless the Synod is prepared to say that it believes Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis of evolution to be consistent with Scripture, it would, by concurring in the action of the Board, implicate itself in the same inconsistency with them.

[Other strictures were passed upon the action of the Board, but they are here omitted, as they had a passing value during the progress of the discussion, and I have no motive to give them further utterance].

Let me now briefly recapitulate the reasons which have been urged, why this Synod should not, by its solemn judgment, approve the action of the Board of Directors formally pronouncing the exposition of the relations between the Bible and science plain, correct and satisfactory.

First, The assertion that the Bible does not teach science needed further qualifications than were actually expressed.

Secondly, The affirmation that we are not to look for harmony, but merely non-contradiction, between the statements of the Bible and those of science, is a departure from the fundamental laws of all thinking.

Thirdly, The exposition, while it provides for cases in which the church's interpretation of the Bible and a proved truth of science contradict each other, makes no provision for cases in which the church's interpretation of the Bible and a disproved assumption of science contradict each other. It gives the advantage to science.

Fourthly, The exposition has nothing to say about the contradiction between the church's interpretation of the Bible and an unproved scientific hypothesis. This is a signal omission.

Fifthly, The exposition furnishes no accurate definitions of the vitally important terms *science* and *the Bible*; fails to indicate the mode in which conflicts generally occur between the Bible and science; and offers no rule of action to guide us when conflicts actually arise.

Sixthly, The Board of Directors were, in the action in question, inconsistent with themselves.

II.—The second question, which I propose to discuss, is in regard to the action of the Board of Directors concerning the teaching of Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis of evolution in our Theological Seminary.

The Board virtually, but formally and authoritatively, approved its teaching.* The minority of the Board protested, and affirmed the posi-

* The Board did not approve the view, but by permitting it to be taught, they approved the teaching.

tion that it should not be permitted. I oppose the Board's action and maintain the view of the minority. I contend that this Synod ought to reverse the action of the Board, and prohibit the teaching of Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis in the Theological Seminary. By teaching it I mean, not the exposition of it as an unproved hypothesis, but the inculcation and defence of it as either a proved or a probable hypothesis.

The question, I conceive, is not, Is the Synod called upon to say whether Dr. Woodrow's view contradicts the Bible in its absolute sense? As the distinction has already been signalled between the absolute meaning of the Bible as that which God, its author, intended it to bear, and its relative meaning as that which exists to the church interpreting it, that distinction need not now be explained. It would seem to be clear that contradiction to the Bible in one of these senses is not necessarily the same as contradiction to it in the other.

I trust that the Synod will not undertake to decide, and pronounce upon, the question whether Dr. Woodrow's view contradicts the Bible in its absolute, infallible sense, for reasons which I will briefly state.

In the first place, our knowledge is not sufficient to warrant us in dogmatising upon that question. In order to its dogmatic decision, we would require to possess perfect certainty as to the correctness of our interpretation of the Scriptures upon this point, and perfect certainty as to our interpretation of nature in regard to it. But as we are not gifted with infallibility in either respect, our liability to err should check the utterance of an authoritative judgment in the premises.

In the second place, it becomes us to heed the cautions furnished by the history of the church. It cannot be denied that she has sometimes grievously blundered in pronouncing determinative judgments upon questions of science, with reference to which her policy was to be silent. There is always the danger of such mistakes, the consequences of which must needs be deplorable. Should the church commit them, she is subjected to the humiliation of recanting her error, and there follows a disastrous reaction upon the trustworthiness of her whole teaching. Confidence in her authority as a spiritual guide is, at least to some extent, impaired.

In the third place, should we decide that Dr. Woodrow's view contradicts the Bible in its absolute sense, we would not only declare that it ought not to be taught in a Presbyterian school, but that no Christian man has a right to hold it. Are we prepared to do that?

The question which, in my judgment, is really before the Synod is in regard to the relation between Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis and the Bible as our church interprets it: between this scientific view and our Bible—the Bible as it is to us. This is our court of last resort, our ultimate standard of judgment; and, from the nature of the case, must be. This being, as I apprehend it, the state of the question, the first proposition which I shall lay down for the Synod's consideration is:

A scientific hypothesis which has not been proved, so as to have become an established theory or law, and which is contrary to our church's interpretation of the Bible, and to her prevailing and recognised views, ought not to be inculcated and maintained in our Theological Seminaries.

I argue this from the nature and design of a theological school. It is contradistinguished to secular schools. It is established and supported by the church. Its nature and end are, therefore, ecclesiastical. It is designed to teach what the church holds and believes. For it to teach the contrary is to violate its very nature and end. The church has the right to require, is solemnly bound to require, that her doctrines be taught, and that what is contrary to her doctrines be *not* taught. Otherwise, the results must be flagrant inconsistency, unfaithfulness to her convictions of truth, recreancy to sacred trusts and deliberate suicide. And in the event of a view, opposed to her own, being supported by great talents and acquirements, and, as in the case of scientific hypotheses, beyond effective resistance by the other chairs, she actually makes arrangements for the overthrow of her own views. She arranges for her own sacrifice.

A theological seminary is peculiarly, disinctively, entirely, a church school; and so is different from institutions which, although they may have some connexion with the church, are partly maintained by other influences than her own.

"The great end of a theological seminary, I have urged, is to teach the church's interpretation of the word of God." For this it exists; this is the law of its being. All other things are incidental and subordinate to this, its chief end. The teaching of Hebrew and Greek is not for their own sake. The Seminary is not a classical school. The end is the correct interpretation of God's word in the original text. But this interpretation must accord with the church's Standards, or the teacher, breaking with the church, ought to be silent on the points of difference, or else retire. The teaching of Rhetoric is not for its own sake. It is a means, the end of which is the powerful preaching of the Gospel. The Seminary is not a school of Rhetoric. The teaching of science is not for its own sake. The end is the defence of the Scriptures from infidel assaults. The church-school is not a scientific school. The same principle holds in regard to the teaching of Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy. The fact is, that our church does not formally provide for the teaching of those branches, as she does for that of the others mentioned. But if she did, the same principle would apply. They would not be taught for their own sake, but to facilitate the mastery of theology, and vindicate the Scriptures against the attacks of an infidel philosophy. The Seminary is not a school of philosophy—of Plato or Aristotle or Zeno, of Locke or Kant or Hamilton—it is a school of Christ. These teachings may all be used to illustrate, to elucidate, to defend the church's interpretation of the Bible; never to gainsay, to weaken, to disprove it.

Further, our own Seminary was not designed simply to teach the Scriptures. Every theological seminary of every evangelical denomination is designed to teach the Scriptures. There must be something distinctive to mark off ours from others—some specific difference. What is it? This: ours was designed to teach the Scriptures as interpreted by the Presbyterian Church; and is now maintained for the purpose of teaching them as interpreted by the Southern Presbyterian Church. This is too plain to need argument. The teachings of our sacred school must conform to this end, or they become self-contradictory, injurious, fatal.

The conclusion is obvious. Such being the nature and design of a theological seminary, that which contravenes them ought not to be taught in its halls.

" Even a proved truth of science ought not to be inculcated in a theological seminary when it contradicts our Standards as the church's interpretation of the Scriptures. The only true course, in this case, is for the church authoritatively to expunge the untrue interpretation and substitute for it that which has been proved to be true. But, until that is done, the Standards unchanged are the law by which all official teaching must be regulated. That law cannot be legitimately resisted and violated. The teacher is not the judge; the church alone is judge, in the premises.

We hear much, in connexion with the proceedings before us, of strict compliance with the law, the constitutional law, the written law. Down with all interpretations, opinions, views, but that law! Well, with what grace could an official teacher, who inculcates views contrary to that law, appeal to the same law for his vindication? In the Seminary the law is of no force, but in the Board or in the Synods it is supreme!

If there be a principle of great practical consequence which we are now called upon to establish, it is that until our Standards, as our interpretation of the Scriptures, be, as to points objected to, changed in a constitutional way, no professor in a Theological Seminary has the right to oppose what they teach and to shake the confidence of his pupils and of the church in them. Not even when he is conscientiously convinced that certain elements contained in them are untrue, has he the right, as Professor, to teach the contrary. His duty as to those challenged elements is to be silent or else to withdraw. But of this further on.

An unproved scientific hypothesis ought not to be inculcated in a Theological Seminary, when that hypothesis is contrary to the church's interpretation of the Bible, not only because of the reasons already presented, but because such an hypothesis may never be verified. In that event the church would be convicted of having taught scientific error. She would be obliged to retreat from her position and confess her sin.

This makes it perfectly evident, that the church is bound to adhere to her interpretations of the Scriptures until they are proved to be incorrect. Only then ought she to abandon or modify them. But it is clear that she has not reached that point when she is only confronted with unproved hypotheses. What a wretched course it would be for the church to surrender her views at the demand of unverified hypotheses! Who would confide in her stability? Who would not pronounce her fickle? Fallible she is, but she is in some degree guided by the Holy Spirit in her interpretations of His word. She has the promise of that guidance; and she would be untrue to her dependence on this illumination, were she to give up her views at the challenge of hypotheses not yet established upon competent evidence.

These considerations are immensely enhanced by the fact which should not in this discussion be lost sight of but noticed and marked, that there have been instances in the church's history in which she maintained her hold upon her old interpretations of Scripture in the face of opposing scientific hypotheses, and in which she was subsequently proved to have been right by the weight of scientific evidence itself. In such conflicts had she yielded to the pressure upon her and let go her grasp upon her old views, what lamentable consequences would have resulted! The hypothesis of the Specific Diversity of the Human Races as opposed to the church's doctrine of the Unity of the Race, within the memory of some here present, was almost as freely discussed as is now the hypothesis of

Evolution. The church was agitated, but she adhered to her received interpretation of the Bible upon that point, and subsequent developments have served to justify the conservative position she then maintained. The same thing has been true, in part, of the hypothesis of the extreme Antiquity of Man as being at variance with the church's view of the biblical chronology, and ever and anon coming to the front. So, also, the hypothesis of Spontaneous Generation at one time bade fair to receive the suffrages of the scientific world as an ascertained truth; but Huxley himself has declared that Pasteur gave it its finishing stroke. The church, too, has held her ground against formidable objections, derived from the hypothesis of the Original Diversity of Languages, to her doctrine of their Original Unity.

The inference from these facts scarcely needs to be pressed before a body like this, which has been distinguished by its conservatism, and its tenacious adherence to the traditional faith of the Presbyterian Church. Suppose that in the instances cited, in which the Church's old, recognised interpretations of the Bible came, to a greater or less extent, into conflict with unproved scientific hypotheses, she had with a fatal readiness yielded, and squared her views with their demands, who could estimate the damaging results which would have ensued?

The application is plain to the hypothesis now under consideration. If it can be shown to be a mere hypothesis not yet verified and established as a settled conclusion of science, like the Copernican theory or the law of gravitation, can we resist the obligation, enforced as well by the history of past conflicts as by the requirements of conservatism and self-consistency, to cling to our old view until it shall have been proved to be untrue and therefore untenable? And if that course be the dictate of policy and duty alike, are we not bound as a Synod to prohibit the inculcation and defence of this hypothesis in the sacred school, of whose purity of doctrine we are one of the responsible guardians?

It cannot be left to scientific men to determine what is or is not to be taught in our Theological Seminaries; nor can it be left to any Professor, whatever may be his department of instruction, to determine that question. It is unnecessary to describe the injurious effects of such liberty. They are patent to the least reflection. Who are to determine this all-important question? Proximately, the Board of Directors; but only proximately; ultimately the Associated Synods. They have the power to make the Constitution of the Seminary, and therefore the power to say what is or is not to be taught in its chairs. They have the ultimate authority to control the *matter* of the views which are inculcated. It is not, I repeat it, the Professors, nor even the Board of Directors, but these Synods, who are ultimately to determine what is or is not to be taught in the Seminary. And for the discharge of this most important and solemn function, the Synods are responsible before the church at large and to their divine Lord and Judge.

Another thing vital to this discussion must not be overlooked: I mean the manifest distinction between a Christian man and an official teacher. The terms of admission into the church must not be confounded with the terms of admission into the teaching office. This is true of all official teachers of every grade in the church—ruling elders and preaching elders; and is eminently true of the teachers of teachers, the Professors in our Theological Seminaries, the Normal Institutes of the church. We cannot

dictate to a Professor what, as a man, he is to believe and hold. "God alone is Lord of the conscience." We are not sovereigns—no, sir, we are not even co-ordinates, in the domain of private judgment. Into that inner sanctuary none may enter but the soul and its God. But it is our right, it is our duty, to dictate what, as a teacher in his official capacity, a Professor can or can not teach in a Theological Seminary. It is our right, and it is *now* our duty, to say whether the Perkins Professor, as an official teacher and a servant of the church, can or can not inculcate his hypothesis of evolution in our Theological Seminary.

It is urged that all the Professors in the Seminary do what the Perkins Professor is alleged to do; and that therefore a judgment adverse to his teaching would be also opposed to theirs. The principle to be here observed is, that if a view taught by any Professor is contrary to the general judgment of the church he must be sure, he must be able to show, that it is positively supported by the Standards. This alone would justify him in throwing himself against the general views of the church. But if the church's views and the Standards coincide, he must refrain from inculcating the objectionable tenet.

Now, is the ground taken that all the Professors in the Seminary teach views which are opposed to the general judgment of the church? And is it asserted that there has been a public expression of opinion to that effect? If not, where is the likeness between the Perkins Professor's teachings and those of the other Professors? It is clear that there is none. And have the other Professors been led by public opinion to point out the relation of the views they teach to the Bible? If not, then I ask again, where is the likeness between the cases? There is none. For it is perfectly certain that Dr. Woodrow's views have been challenged, and that he has been led to indicate the relations of science in general to the Bible and the relation to it of his hypothesis of evolution in particular. Were the other Professors similarly situated with himself, their cases as well as his ought to have been before the Board of Directors, and so may have been before the Synod, for consideration.

But it will be said that this is not the whole of the argument, nor its chief point. No; but it is a part of the argument, and that, I submit, has been answered. And now for the chief point: it is that every other Professor than the Perkins Professor teaches as well as he certain things between which and the Bible there is no harmony. The object-matter of them is such that the Bible has nothing to say about them: there is simply the relation of non-contradiction. Ah, here is the mighty principle of non-contradiction. It is applied to all the chairs. If all the others teach certain things between which and the Bible there is simply the relation of non-contradiction, why may not the Perkins chair do the same thing? And if it is to be condemned for doing that thing, why should not the others share the condemnation, seeing they do the same?

Let us specify. The Professor of Biblical Literature teaches Hebrew, Greek and Philology. Between these and the Bible there is simply the relation of non-contradiction. Granted. The Professor of Church History teaches the canons of Historical Criticism. Between them and the Bible there is simply the relation of non-contradiction. Granted. A Professor teaches Rhetoric. Between that and the Bible there is the same relation. Granted. The Professor of Systematic Theology teaches Metaphysics. Between it and the Bible there is simply the relation of

non-contradiction. Hold! Not granted. There may be the relation of contradiction. Should he inculcate even the probable truth of Idealism, or Materialism, or Pantheism, or Agnosticism, would not the church say that his teachings contradict the Bible as she interprets it? And would she not arrest such teachings?

The Perkins Professor teaches Natural Science. Between it and the Bible there is simply the relation of non-contradiction. Hold, again! Not granted. It might be that there would obtain simply the harmony of non-contradiction. But it might be, also, that there would exist the disharmony of contradiction. While Dr. Woodrow taught evolution expositively, without expressing any opinion in its favor, he taught, as I conceive, nothing contradictory to the Bible. But now when he announces himself as holding it as probable, under limitations, the church says: Your view contradicts my interpretation of the Bible; and as my interpretation of the Bible is the Bible to me, your view contradicts the Bible. The relation, then, between his hypothesis and the Bible is, in the church's judgment, not that simply of non-contradiction. The analogy, which is alleged to exist between Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis of evolution and the matters specified as taught by the Professors of Biblical Literature, Church History and Rhetoric utterly breaks down.

But it may be contended that the Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology positively inculcates metaphysical hypotheses which are extra-scriptural, and that therefore the analogy does hold between his case and that of the Perkins Professor. Speaking for the chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology, I would say: It does inculcate hypotheses which are not to be found stated in scientific form in the Scriptures. Between them and the statements of the Bible there is not the harmony of identity. But it is believed by the instructor that between them and the Bible there is the harmony of non-contradiction. Further than this, it is believed that between them and the church's interpretation of the Bible there is harmony—the harmony of non-contradictory statements. To speak in plain language, it is believed that they are perfectly consistent and harmonious with the Bible as the church understands and teaches it. And further still, I would say that they are inculcated with the end in view, at least partly and chiefly, of evincing the harmony between them and our church's interpretation of the Bible. The connexion between Metaphysical Science and Revelation is so taught as to make the former a defender of the latter, its vindicator against the assaults of a sceptical philosophy. In a word, metaphysical teachings are so used as not to make it necessary to adjust the church's interpretation of the Bible to them, but by them to elucidate and strengthen that interpretation.

Now, Natural Science may be employed in the same way, and the analogy would then hold between the two chairs. But if an hypothesis of Natural Science be maintained in contradiction to the church's interpretation of the Bible, even on probable grounds, the analogy, in point of fact, ceases. The true question is, whether the actual attitude of the two chairs is alike; whether the real, existing posture of the Perkins chair towards the Bible as interpreted by our church is the real, existing posture of the metaphysical chair towards the same standard. That being the true state of the question, no unprejudiced mind can hesitate as to the decision. In the respects mentioned, they are not alike—the analogy *practically* fails.

While I am speaking upon this subject, let me add, that, as teaching in Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy is not necessitated by the Constitution of the Seminary, the Synods may at any time through the Board of Directors order its exclusion. But if it be deemed expedient to retain it, should it appear that the teachings of the present incumbent of the chair are opposed to the general views of the church he would hold himself obligated to suppress them, or else retire.

The chief point of the argument in question, namely, all the Professors do what the Perkins Professor is alleged to do, has now been considered, and it has been shown that it is *no* point at all.

Another special argument which is urged is, that there are differences upon important points between the Professors in our Seminaries, and between parties in the church, as serious as the difference between the Perkins Professor and others, and yet these differences are tolerated. The very teaching of them is permitted. Why, then, should the teachings of the Perkins Professor be subjected to peculiar censure? Particular instances have been furnished of these differences: Upon Predestination and the Will; upon the Imputation of Adam's guilt; upon the Call to the Ministry, etc. It is argued that all are agreed upon the question of substantial *fact*, but upon the question of *mode* discrepancies occur. So, in this particular case before us, all are agreed in regard to the fact of creation, but the difference arises with reference to the mode, and that is permissible. This argument has not even the air of plausibility. One or two plain considerations will effectually destroy the analogy upon which it is based, and so subvert it along with its foundation.

First, the parties who differ upon the questions instanced—Predestination, the Will, Imputation, the Call to the Ministry, etc.—profess to derive the proofs of their respective positions *from the Scriptures*. Both sides appeal to them for support. Those who maintain this hypothesis of evolution profess to derive the reasons in its favor *from science*; and further, the opponents of this particular hypothesis profess to get their argument from the Bible as well as from science. The difference between the cases is a mighty one. There is no analogy between them.

Secondly, both parties to the questions alleged appeal to our Standards for proof of their views. For proof of this scientific hypothesis no appeal to the Standards is possible. Here is another mighty difference.

Thirdly, none of the parties to the questions specified would maintain views which are plainly contrary to the Standards. If this scientific hypothesis can be proved to be plainly contrary to the Standards, it would not stand upon the same foot with the subjects upon which difference of teaching is allowable. It would be in another and peculiar category.

As the teaching of the Professor of Systematic Theology in our Seminary, upon the subject of the Will, is involved in this allegation, the Synod will, I trust, indulge me in a few special remarks about that matter. The principles of difference, which have been signalled between the cases affirmed to be common, will receive a special illustration in this instance. The view taught by that Professor is neither extra-scriptural nor extra-confessional. It professes to be both scriptural and confessional. It claims to derive its proofs from the Bible, from the doctrine of Calvin, from the symbols of the Reformed Church, and especially from the Standards of

our own Church. Whether or not these claims have been made good, they have been made. Such is the method of proof, as any one may satisfy himself who will consult the Professor's published exposition of his views in the Southern Presbyterian Review. Now to say that the teaching of that view is on the same foot with the teaching of the Perkins Professor's view of evolution, as he now holds it, is simply to throw facts out of account.

So much for the argument that as differences of views upon important subjects are tolerated in our church, and different teachings in regard to them are permitted even in our Theological Seminaries, the same liberty should be accorded to the inculcation of the hypothesis of evolution which is in question.

Are, then, Theological Professors debarred from inculcating, within the Seminaries, views which although opposed to the Standards they sincerely and conscientiously believe to be true? Without hesitation I answer, and I hope and believe this Synod will answer: They *are* debarred, as Professors, from inculcating such views: In the first place, because they are appointed to teach the Standards, not to gainsay and oppose them; in the second place, because they are bound by their solemn subscription to the Standards not to teach what is contrary to them; in the third place, because this principle is the only safeguard of the church against the teaching in our Theological Seminaries of contra-confessional doctrines and views. The Standards are our impregnable rampart against error. Let that go down, and truth as we hold it will go down with it. In the fourth place, to be allowed to teach one view opposed to the Standards is to be allowed to teach other views opposed to them. No limit can be assigned to this fatal liberty. The reduction to absurdity is obvious.

Are, then, Theological Professors bound to inculcate in the Seminaries views which they conscientiously believe to be erroneous, because they are taught in our Standards? I answer, no. Two courses are open to them: either to be silent in regard to those views, or to withdraw from the institutions. And if the views excepted against are of fundamental or even of high importance, the only alternative is to withdraw; for silent in regard to such views they have no right to be. Let us take a specimen case: the law in our Standards touching the marriage of a man with his deceased wife's sister. I speak not now of the question whether it be scriptural or unscriptural, whether it ought to be retained in the Standards or expunged. But I take the ground that as long as it was or is a part of our Standards and therefore of our Constitutional Law, no Professor in our Theological Seminaries had or has the right, as Professor and within the institutions, to oppose it or to teach the contrary. This has been done. The fact shows that the liberty which belongs to the individual man is transferred to the official teacher and the distinction between them overslaughed. But, what is this but insubordination to law in high places, and the encouragement of the temper of insubordination to law in those who are to be its expounders and defenders?

I maintain that a Theological Seminary is not the place, and instruction in its halls not the means, to create sentiments adverse to any objectionable features of our Doctrinal Standards, or to attempt the inauguration of measures looking to their elimination from them. There are other relations sustained by Theological Professors, and other means accessible to them, through which they may legitimately exert their influence for the

attainment of that end. Chiefly, there are the church courts, which alone have the power to alter the Standards, and the Professors are members of those courts. There they may put forth their energies to secure emendations of the Constitutional Law. Theological Professors, as such, are absolutely debarred from opposing by their teachings the Standards of the Church. This discussion is exceedingly important, contemplated in the light of such a question as this. If, as it would appear, we have not already settled our rule of action in regard to this weighty business, it would be well for us to avail ourselves of this great opportunity to accomplish so desirable, so necessary an end.

I have thus endeavored to sustain the leading proposition of this argument—namely, that a scientific hypothesis which has not been proved, so as to have become an established theory or law, and which is contrary to our church's interpretation of the Bible and to her prevailing and recognised views, ought not to be inculcated and maintained in our Theological Seminaries. And I cannot leave the point without holding up to especial notice some of the principles which have been brought out, and which, if not determined before, deserve now, in connexion with this case, to be definitely settled by us as rules of action for the future:

" 1. The church is bound to cleave to her interpretation in her Standards of God's word, and to her traditional views, until they have been proved to be untrue and therefore untenable.

2. No unverified hypothesis can afford such proof.

3. No Professor in a Theological Seminary, as Professor, is at liberty in the class-room or in the chapel to inculcate views contrary to the Standards of the church, or to oppose any element of those Standards. If he conscientiously hold views which are inconsistent with them, he ought to refrain from inculcating those views, or else retire from the institution.

4. I add, that should he persist in claiming and exercising such liberty, it is the duty of the church through her constituted organs of control to arrest him.

The second proposition which I submit is, That the Perkins Professor's view of evolution is a scientific hypothesis, which has not been proved so as to have become an established theory or law, and which is contrary to our church's interpretation of the Bible, and to her prevailing and recognised views.

Is this view of evolution a scientific hypothesis which has not been proved so as to have become an established theory or law? There are several modes in which it may be shown that a scientific hypothesis is not proved: by the fact that it lacks the common consent of scientific men as proved; by the fact that it is opposed by formidable difficulties which have not been removed; by the fact that it is absolutely contradicted by the statements of supernatural revelation. It is not my purpose to resort to any of these methods of proof in respect to the hypothesis before us: others may do so if they please. I think it sufficient to appeal to an authority which ought to be conclusive—the authority of Dr. Woodrow himself. What he claims for his view is that it is "probably true." That is an admission that, in his own judgment, it is not a proved truth of science. For that which is only probable is not proved. If in this I have misstated Dr. Woodrow's position, I am open to correction.

If this be admitted, I pass on to the next allegation, to wit, that this hypothesis is contrary to our church's interpretation of the Bible, and to her prevailing and recognised views.

First, It is contrary to the Standards as the formal and authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures by our church. The relevant statement of the Confession of Faith is: "It pleased God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom and goodness, in the beginning, to create or make of nothing the world and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good." The statement of the Larger Catechism is: "The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of His power, make of nothing the world and all things therein for Himself, within the space of six days, and all very good." The statement of the Shorter Catechism is: "The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good."

The hypothesis of evolution is inconsistent with the face-meaning of these statements. The connexion between the words "of nothing" and the words "in the space of six days," "within the space of six days," justifies this view. If the Standards had meant to teach creation out of nothing in the first instance only, they would have so connected the words "of nothing" with the words "in the beginning" as definitely to have conveyed that meaning. But they also connect the words "of nothing" with the words "in the space of six days," so that the impression is irresistibly made that they intended to teach that creation out of nothing went along with the six days.* It does not much matter here whether or not the Standards mean by six days six literal days of twenty-four hours each. If they could be diverted from their face-meaning and construed to mean six periods, still the doctrine that creation out of nothing proceeded concurrently with those periods, at least in connexion with the beginning of each, is contrary to Dr. Woodrow's view that creation out of nothing occurred in absolutely the first instance only, and that the evolution of the earth, of the lower animals, and probably of Adam's body, was by the process of mediate creation.) But it is not necessary to insist upon this point. I believe that Dr. Woodrow himself candidly admits the inconsistency of his views with the obvious, intended meaning of the statements of the Standards in regard to creation.

It will in reply to this be said, that when Dr. Woodrow was inaugurated as Professor he expressly stated, in his Inaugural Address before the Board of Directors, his conviction of the truth of the geological hypothesis touching the antiquity of the earth with its strata and fossil remains; that inasmuch as that statement was unchallenged he virtually, if not formally, had authority from the Board and the Synods controlling the Seminary to inculcate that view; and that as he now believes that a certain kind of evolution is proved by geology, he is entitled to teach his evolutionist view by the same authority.

But, first, He ought to have made his statement, virtually excepting against the doctrine of the Standards, before he formally subscribed them,

* It is noteworthy that the Shorter Catechism omits the words "in the beginning."

and before he delivered his Inaugural Address, which came after the solemnity of his subscription. It was almost too late to file the exception in the Address. It would have been exceedingly awkward to arrest the process of induction at that point.

Secondly, Dr. Woodrow, however, cannot be charged with a breach of trust in teaching his geological views, for the inculcation of which he had received a special dispensation. And as to his subscription to the Standards we would have to allow the force of his exception, on the supposition that he had previously acquainted the Board with it and they had raised no objection.

But, thirdly, The question before this Synod is one which is not determined by the Board of Directors and the controlling Synods in the exception filed by Dr. Woodrow before them. The question now is, What will this Synod and the Associated Synods do as to the future? And here I must call attention to the principle already maintained as indispensable, to wit, that no Professor in a Theological Seminary ought to be permitted to inculcate any view which is contrary to the Standards. The Board of Directors, and by implication the Synods which installed Dr. Woodrow, committed a mistake. They were fallible, and it does not become us to censure them. A similar question has been before our Presbyteries in many instances. One I remember in connexion with my own, in which exception was taken to the law prohibiting marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Reflection has convinced me that the solution of the difficulty presented by such cases is this: That we must allow these conscientious exceptions, *in points not involving heresy*, so far as the *holding* of them is concerned, but that we cannot allow them so far as the *official, authoritative teaching* of them is concerned.

The developments in this case exhibit the danger resulting from a failure to abide by this rule of action. One thing leads on to another. If one exception to the Standards be allowed in an official teacher, another and another may be. Where shall the line be drawn—the limit fixed? Manifestly, there ought to be a limitation; and it is what has been mentioned: no official teacher ought, as such, to have liberty to inculcate views contrary to the Standards. If those formularies are wrong in the features objected to, let them be altered by the constitutional action of the church. It is, then, the duty of the Synods to avoid the mistake made in the past, and without reflecting on Dr. Woodrow for the teaching of views for which he had the sanction of authority, to take order against the inculcation of anti-confessional views *in the future*.

Fourthly, It has in these remarks been conceded that allowance must be made for Dr. Woodrow's past teaching upon certain points notwithstanding the fact that it was not consistent with the Standards,* for the reason that he explicitly enounced his opinions as to those points at the time of his inauguration as Professor. But in his late address and his expositions of it, he also teaches as very probable the evolution of the earth

* Here I meant the face-meaning of the Standards, as intended by their framers. I cannot concur in Dr. Mitchell's attempt, in his Lectures on the Westminster Assembly, to show that the words "six days" were purposely made indefinite so as to be susceptible of the meaning, six long periods. Nor have I any idea that the Board of Directors which installed Dr. Woodrow put that construction upon the intention of the Westminster Assembly. Whether the words may *by us* be made to bear another than the obvious, literal interpretation is another question. If they may, the church ought in some authoritative way to say so, in order that relief may be afforded to a conscientious teacher.

and of the lower animals, and as probable the evolution of Adam's body. At the same time, I understand him as admitting that the Standards teach that the earth and all its contents were created out of nothing in the space of six days. And if he should also admit that the days of the Standards are literal days, the case is strengthened. He must, upon either supposition, admit the teaching of the Standards to be, that the earth and its contents were *not evolved*. For the evolution of the earth and the creatures upon it out of nothing in six days, especially in six literal days, is out of the question.* Here, then, is a new view not covered by the exception entered at his inauguration—a new view confessedly contrary to the Standards.

Should the ground be taken that, granted the liberty to maintain in his teaching the great antiquity of the globe for geological reasons, the Professor's liberty also to maintain his view of evolution is a good and necessary consequence, I reply, that the liberty to inculcate his view of evolution is not a good and necessary consequence. For, it has been held by distinguished scientific men, like Louis Agassiz, that the fossil remains in the strata of the earth represent extinct species, which were not evolved from other species, but were supernaturally originated by the power of the Creator.

It may further be said, that it is a recognised principle that when an adequate authority commands the performance of a certain office, it gives all the rights necessary to the accomplishment of the contemplated end. This principle is, under limitations, true. But the question is in regard to its application in the present instance. In the first place, the authority commanding the teaching of science in connexion with revelation confers the right to teach science in a certain sense—to expound it with a view to show its relations to the Bible. But that it grants the right to inculcate science as opposed to the very charter in which the authority itself is grounded, and the statute-law by which itself is governed,—this is infinitely absurd. In the second place, if the authority gave the right to inculcate a geological theory, notwithstanding its inconsistency with the obvious meaning of the Standards, it was a special dispensation limited to that particular teaching. The teacher could not, without further authorisation, inculcate any other view opposed to the Constitution.

Secondly, I proceed to show that the hypothesis in question is contrary to the church's prevailing and recognised views. When I speak of the church's views, I allude not to mere popular opinions or sentiments, but to the statements of representative theologians and the orthodox belief of God's people in the Presbyterian Church. These views of the church with reference to the subject before us—the origin of Adam's body—are in their nature interpretations of the statements of the Bible and of our Standards in regard to it; and it deserves to be remarked that the two classes of statements are so nearly coincident with each other that the interpretation of one is substantially the interpretation of the other. The Standards do not so much interpret the Scriptures in relation to this subject as re-produce their statements. But were the question, whether interpretations of the Standards as themselves an interpretation of the

*Here Dr. Woodrow made an objection, the precise point of which I regret my inability to recall. What I intended was, that an hypothesis of evolution professedly theistic requires an indefinite period, with creation out of nothing as its initial point; and that is inconsistent with any construction of the statements of the Standards.

Scriptures would not involve the absurdity of an interpretation of an interpretation, the answer would be that there is no absurdity in that supposition. The principle of interpretation of the Constitutional Law is not only legitimated by that law itself, but it could easily be shown that it is absolutely necessary. Whenever two parties, both appealing to the law, oppose each other, there is a conflict of interpretations. The judicatory which decides between them, whether acting judicially or deliberatively, either elects one of these conflicting interpretations and sustains it, or frames one of its own differing from both. In either case there is the interpretation of the Standards as themselves an interpretation of the Scriptures; and from the nature of the case the interpreting decision is the joint judgment of the constituent members of the body. The interpretation of each member is a factor in the aggregate of interpretations which is termed the decision. So far for the authoritative action of judicatories.

The same principle, with different applications however, holds in regard to the views of the church as interpretations of the Standards with reference to questions, like the one before us, of public interest. There is an aggregate of interpretations which constitutes the general judgment of God's people in the church—their prevailing and recognised views; and it is proper to consider those interpretative views as entering into the standard of judgment into comparison with which the teachings of a Theological Seminary are brought.* Now, the church holds certain views it regard to the statements of the Standards—and they are substantially the statements of the Bible—concerning the formation of man's body in the first instance; and the position now taken is that the hypothesis of evolution under consideration is contrary to those views. Let us compare them.

1. The hypothesis is, that the dust from which Adam's body was formed was organic dust. The church's view is, that it was inorganic dust—the words "of the ground," designating the sort of dust; that the sentence, "unto dust shalt thou return," and the inspired words in Ecclesiastes, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was," indicate not animal forms, but what is commonly known as dust and so universally called.

2. The hypothesis is, that Adam's body was evolved out of, descended with modification from, a long line of animal ancestry reaching back for a protracted period. The church's view is, that Adam's body was formed of dust by a sudden, supernatural, constructive act of God.

3. The hypothesis is, that Adam as to his body was born of animal parents. The church's view is, that Adam as to his body was not born at all—that he had no animal parents.

4. The hypothesis is, that Adam as to his body was at first in an infantile condition, and grew to the stature of a man. The church's view is, that Adam as to his body never was an infant, that he did not grow, but was

*In thus speaking of the views of the church, I had no intention to affirm that they constitute standards of judgment in cases in which alleged heresy is tried by church-courts. The opening sentences of this speech show that no such application of them is pleaded for in the present instance. But that the general views of the church do, and ought to, exercise a powerful influence upon the question, what sort of teachings should exist in a Theological Seminary, supported and controlled by the church, is too plain to require argument. To take any other view is to break with common sense. The very lowest consideration in regard to the matter is conclusive: the church cannot be expected to pay for teaching to which she is conscientiously opposed.

suddenly and supernaturally formed in the full possession of mature bodily powers.

5. The hypothesis is, that the existence of Adam's body preceded for years the formation of Eve's body. The church's view is, that Adam's body did not precede for years the formation of Eve's; but that the formation of Eve's body followed closely upon the formation of Adam's. //

Thus, in five particulars, it has been shown that the hypothesis before us is contrary to the church's views.

But are the church's views what they have now been assumed to be? and are they her prevailing and recognised views? Of that I will proceed to furnish proof. //

It will not be denied that up to the time of the emergence of this controversy, occasioned by the delivery and publication of Dr. Woodrow's address, the church's general views were what I have represented them to be. How has it been since? What are the views of the church which have been developed, brought out into light and maintained during the discussion which has occurred?

I cite, first, The Faculty of Columbia Seminary. Every member of it has declared his inability to concur in Dr. Woodrow's interpretation of Scripture so far as his hypothesis of the evolution of Adam's body is concerned. The question as to the relations of the Bible and science is not just here alluded to, and therefore I do not undertake to say how far there may be concurrence in his views on that subject. The question is as to the relation of the church's views to this particular scientific hypothesis. Let us keep the state of the question clearly and definitely before us. I repeat it, that upon that question every member of the Faculty holds a view opposed to that of their colleague.

I mention, next, the Board of Directors of Columbia Seminary. Every member of it has declared his inability to concur in Dr. Woodrow's view: the minority of course, and the majority also in the paper which they adopted and which was reported to the Synod. //

I would refer, too, to the religious journals of our church. Of these there are eight. One of them is Dr. Woodrow's own paper and must therefore be thrown out of account. Of the other seven only one has advocated Dr. Woodrow's view. Here, then, are six of the old, established journals of the church, which fail to concur in the hypothesis in question. Is it not to be inferred that they represent the opinion of the great majority of the church?

It may be said that all this is a begging of the question—that the Synods have not yet acted upon the case, and it may prove to be fact that they will by vote sustain the Board and consequently Dr. Woodrow's teaching: it is but an assumption that the church is opposed to his view; that remains to be seen. I have not begged the question, and have made no unwarrantable assumption. Were the question upon which this Synod is called upon to decide, whether it can concur in Dr. Woodrow's view and it should vote that it does concur, I would have made an unjustifiable assumption as to the sentiments of this body. But if the question be, as indeed it is, whether the Synod will allow the teaching of Dr. Woodrow's view in the Seminary, and it should decide to allow it, that decision would not exhibit the opinions of the members as to the view itself. Witness the action of the Board of Directors. And I undertake to say,

that if the question before us now were, whether this Synod can concur in Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis, there are but few who would express such concurrence.

No; it cannot be successfully denied that the overwhelming mass of the views of our church—as also of all evangelical churches—is opposed to the hypothesis of the Perkins Professor.

If, now, these propositions have been sustained by competent proofs: first, that a scientific hypothesis which has not been proved, so as to have become an established theory or law, and which is contrary to our church's interpretation of the Bible, and to her prevailing and recognised views, ought not to be inculcated and maintained in our Theological Seminaries; secondly, that the Perkins Professor's view of evolution is a scientific hypothesis which has not been proved so as to have become an established theory or law, and which is contrary to our church's interpretation of the Bible and to her prevailing and recognised views,—the conclusion is irresistible, that the Perkins Professor's view of evolution ought not to be inculcated and maintained in our Theological Seminaries. The practical result ought to be, that the Synod should prohibit its inculcation and maintenance, even as probably true, in our own Theological Seminary.

During this discussion the majority report has by some speakers been sustained in affirming that, as this hypothesis of evolution is extra-scriptural, the church can make no deliverance concerning its truth or falsity. To this I reply, first, that the Board of Directors did make a deliverance concerning it, when, having Dr. Woodrow's Address before them in which the probable truth of the hypothesis is asserted, they declared it to be consistent with perfect soundness in the faith, and thus gave their official consent to its being inculcated in the Seminary. Were not the Board representatives of the church in making that deliverance? This Synod is now asked to do the same thing. If it does it, will it not by its deliverance approve the teaching in the Seminary of the probable truth of this hypothesis? And will not the church utter itself through the Synod's deliverance? Secondly, It has been maintained that the church cannot teach science, because it is extra-scriptural. But it has also been maintained that the duties of the Perkins chair necessitate the teaching of science in connexion with revelation. Some teaching of science by the chair is unavoidable. But the chair is an exponent of the church's teachings. It comes to this then; that in one breath it is denied that the church can teach science, and in another it is affirmed that she does teach it. Thirdly, I take issue with the assertion that this hypothesis of evolution is extra-scriptural. What is the hypothesis? It is that the evolution of Adam's body from animal forms is probably true. But the well-nigh universal interpretation by the church of the biblical statement is, that Adam's body was supernaturally formed out of the literal dust of the ground. Now there is here a conflict of probabilities. To the extent of the probability of the hypothesis we are obliged to admit the improbability of the ordinary interpretation of the Bible account of the origin of Adam's body. It is clear that the hypothesis enters the domain of the Scriptures,

and to the extent of its probability claims to modify their interpretation. It cannot, therefore, be simply extra scriptural.*

It has been said that outside bodies and writers have undertaken to settle this question before us, and have charged the Perkins Professor with heresy and infidelity; and it is implied that this influence from without is operating upon the Synod. In reply I would remark, that the advocates of the minority report propose to shield Dr. Woodrow from the accusation of heretical teaching. That is the very purpose of the first resolution of that report. It is, therefore, illegitimate to imply that the Synod is influenced by outside opinions, or that it will not form an independent judgment of its own.

It has been asserted that it is really our church which is now on trial in the face of the civilized world, and that the opponents of the teaching of the hypothesis would cause her to re-enact the blunders of the middle ages. I answer, that, on the contrary, we ask the Synod not to decide upon the question, whether this hypothesis contradicts the Bible in its highest and absolute sense—the sense divinely intended, and therefore infallible and immutable. We do not propose to take our church back to the middle ages and make her a suppressor of the free investigations of science. Let science pursue her inquiries in her own field untrammelled; but surely the church has a right to say what may or may not be taught in her own theological schools.

The ground has been taken that Christianity itself is an instance of evolution. To this astonishing statement I reply: there is a manifest distinction to be here observed—a distinction which I have heard Dr. Woodrow himself point out, and in which I agreed with him, between the progressive *development* of a plan by supernatural interventions of an intelligent author and *evolution* by inherent forces in the things evolved.

[Here Dr. Woodrow objected that he was misrepresented—that he had expressly asserted the contrary. He misunderstood me, as I afterwards learned. I supposed him to object to the statement that he had approved such a distinction, and answered that nevertheless it was a good one. But he excepted against the statement as to the nature of evolution as having come from him. I did not, however, say self-originated or self-subsisting forces. I used the word inherent; and if evolution does not proceed by forces, however originated or sustained, inherent in the things evolved, I know not what it is.]

Now Christianity, or more properly the plan of redemption, has been developed through the past by supernatural additions. It did not evolve under Divine superintendence by a force inherent in itself, and springing from the first promise as a primordial germ. There is, therefore, no

* Some notice of a dilemma urged by one of the speakers was intended, but was excluded by the pressure of time. It was this: either the hypothesis is extra-scriptural, or it is intra-scriptural. These are contradictories. If, therefore, the opponents of the majority report deny that it is extra-scriptural, they must admit that it is intra-scriptural. The opponents of the majority report accept the situation. They deny that it is extra scriptural and affirm that it is intra-scriptural. But it is one thing to affirm that it is intra-scriptural, and quite another to affirm that it is scriptural. They affirm that it is both intra-scriptural and contra-scriptural. It goes within Scripture in order to invade it. Satan sometimes speaks within Scripture, but he is never scriptural. If the dilemma had been: Either the hypothesis is unscriptural or it is scriptural, the opponents of the majority report would have affirmed that it is unscriptural and denied that it is scriptural. The horns of the dilemma, which were considered by some very formidable, were as harmless as those of an Irish bull. The opponents of the majority report took one of them, but it had hay on it. No blood was spilt—there was no gore.

analogy between the doctrine of the development of the gospel and the hypothesis of the evolution of nature.

I have heard with surprise the allegation that theological development has always taken place through the discussion of unproved hypotheses, and that consequently it would be a great mistake to prohibit the teaching of this hypothesis because it is unproved. The church has always maintained her doctrines upon scriptural grounds. They are divinely revealed and therefore cannot be hypotheses. In her progress towards a clearer apprehension of them she has discussed, it is true, many unproved hypotheses, but she has done it in order to refute them.

It has been contemptuously charged that the minority report is a piece of patchwork, illogical and unworthy to be submitted to the Synod. On what ground? Because, as it is alleged, it affirms that Dr. Woodrow's hypothesis neither involves heresy nor contradiction to the Scriptures, and yet that its teaching should be prohibited in the Seminary. I reply, that the report does exonerate Dr. Woodrow from the charge of heresy, but it is altogether incorrect to say that it does not represent his teaching as contradictory to the Scriptures. It draws the distinction, already emphasised in these remarks, between the Bible in its highest and absolute sense—the sense which was intended by God, its author—and the Bible as interpreted by our church. It maintains that the Synod ought not to decide upon the question whether this view of evolution is contrary to the Bible in the first of these senses, and that it ought to decide upon the question whether it is contrary to the Bible in the second sense. Further, it asks the Synod to decide that it is contrary to the Bible in the latter of these senses. Until this distinction is overthrown, the charge that the report is illogical and weak is destitute of foundation. If the distinction is ridiculous and unintelligible, upon what grounds is it competent to the church to amend her doctrinal Standards? On what ground is she now engaged in amending them? If the Standards as her interpretation of the Bible are in every respect identical with the Bible in its infallible and unchangeable sense, how can she amend the Standards? Can she amend the Bible in its highest and absolute sense? I believe and hold that in many and important particulars, especially the essential elements of the plan of salvation, the Standards are identical with the absolute meaning of the Bible, and that we are entitled to speak upon those points confidently and authoritatively; but to say that such an identity exists in every particular, even the most unessential, is to say that the church's knowledge absolutely exhausts the meaning of the Scriptures, and that her Standards are as infallible and unchangeable as it. So far from being illogical and unworthy of consideration, the positions of the minority report are grounded in distinctions as impregnable as they are clear.

It has, in the course of this discussion, been contended that the pledge subscribed by the Professors in the Seminary only binds them not to teach any doctrine contrary to their belief that the Standards are "a just *summary* of the doctrines contained in the Bible;" that it does not obligate them not to teach what they may believe to be contrary to some particular statement of the Standards. I am constrained to think this a mistaken construction of the pledge. Evidently by the term *summary* it

is meant to affirm, that while the Standards do not give a minute statement of all the details of Scripture they do furnish a comprehensive statement of all its doctrines. Those doctrines are given comprehensively, but still they are given. Consequently to teach what is contrary to any statement of the doctrinal Standards is to teach what is contrary to some statement of doctrine in the Scriptures. To teach, for example, what is contrary to the doctrine of the Standards concerning creation is, our church being judge, to teach what is contrary to the doctrine of the Bible concerning that subject. To adopt any other view would be to take the ground of the New School men in the controversy of 1837 and 1838—that the subscription to the Standards is a subscription to them only “for substance of doctrine.” That ground being allowed, the check provided in the pledge to the teaching of error would have scarcely more than a nominal value.

The view has been urged that the proceedings of the Synod in this matter are unconstitutional—that is, inconsistent with the Constitution of the Seminary and also with the rights conferred by the Constitution of our church. By some it has been contended, that “the Synods have no right to remove a Professor;” that by the Constitution of the Seminary the Board alone possess that power; that the Synods can only act in such a case through the Board; that the Constitution is a Bill of Rights guaranteeing protection to the Board and the Professors as well as to the Synods; that Dr. Woodrow’s rights as secured to him by that instrument are not respected in these extra-legal proceedings; and that charges should have been tabled against him and a formal trial had, when a case would have been submitted to the review and control of the Synods. In reply, I would say:

First, The party supporting Dr. Woodrow are inconsistent with themselves in taking this ground. It would have been different, if they had contented themselves with protesting against the unconstitutionality of these proceedings, and confined their argument to that question. This they have not done; but have appeared in Synod as advocates and have argued the whole question as to its merits—as to evolution and the legitimacy of teaching it, as probably true, in the class-exercises of the Seminary. It is therefore not now competent to them to except against the unconstitutionality of the Synod’s proceedings.

Secondly, The Bill of Rights, so eloquently described by one of the speakers, is not only intended to guard the rights of the Board and of individual teachers; but also to guard the rights of the Seminary, of the Synods, of the church and of the truth. The Constitution does give to the Board the power to remove Professors. But it also declares that all the acts of the Board are subject to the control of the Synods, which alone possess ultimate power. They can veto the election of a Professor by the Board. They can veto the removal of a Professor by that body; and, by necessary implication, they can veto the refusal of the Board to remove a Professor. Let us suppose that a Professor should even teach heresy, and that the Board were so enamored of his gifts and abilities as to refuse to remove him, would the Synods allow justice to be baffled by mere techni-

calities? No, sir; they would sweep away the Board and the teacher alike.*

Thirdly, It is forgotten by those who offer these objections to the constitutionality of the Synod's proceedings that a Professor in a Theological Seminary sustains two relations—one in which he is responsible as a teacher to the Curators of an educational institute, and another in which he is responsible as a minister of the gospel to his Presbytery. There is no question, to my mind, that the Constitution gives the Board of Directors the power in some way to try a Professor; but the question is whether there are no cases in which the Board may arrest certain objectionable teachings, or even take steps looking to the removal of an objectionable teacher, without the formality of a regular trial. † In regard to that question I submit the following considerations:

1. It would violate all analogy to suppose that the Curators of an educational institution could not, upon grounds of expediency, prevent certain teachings, or even request the resignation of a teacher, without instituting formal process against him. If they should be convinced by sufficient evidence that his teaching of certain views, or his continuance in office, would be detrimental to the interests of the institution and to other related interests, what hinders them from taking that course? And is it not almost un-supposable that one, requested to vacate his position by competent authority, should refuse to comply with the request, or demand a formal trial before he will admit the necessity of his retirement?

2. There was in this instance no need for the tabling of charges and for a formal trial. The evidence before the Board and the Associated Synods was sufficient to ground action on the part of either. The Board might have proceeded, upon that evidence, to prohibit the inculcation of the Perkins Professor's peculiar views if they had deemed them prejudicial to the welfare of the Seminary and the interests of the church. They declined to do so. The same evidence comes before this Synod as one of the bodies controlling the Seminary, and it is competent for it to examine the evidence and decide whether it be sufficient to justify it in prohibiting the teaching in the institution of the views in question. The evidence referred to is the Perkins Professor's Address upon Evolution, which he laid before the Board for their consideration. In that Address he exhibits the views he holds upon the subject of evolution—the views which it might be expected that he would inculcate in his class-room. This kind of evidence is universally admitted to be valid. Had the Professor appeared in person and orally expounded his views, could he have more clearly set them forth than he had done in that carefully prepared Address? What need was there, what need is there now, to institute a

*This is obvious, so far as the Board are concerned. Since these remarks were uttered, the Synods have changed the personal composition of the Board, so as to secure one which will execute their will. But if in any case, the Synods should fail to execute their will mediately through a Board, from a lack of nerve on the part of the members or for any other reason, they would have the power and the right to execute their will immediately. And in taking that course they would act constitutionally. Why? Because the Constitution requires that no Professor shall teach anything contrary to the Standards of the Church. If, then, the Board will not enforce that requirement, what remains but that the Synods shall themselves enforce it? Shall the creator and ruler be estopped from carrying into execution its own code of rules because its creature and subject will not? Yes; the Synods not only have the power to remove the Board, but in certain supposable cases a Professor himself.

† The Seminary Constitution says nothing about the tabling of charges and formal process.

formal trial involving process in order to ascertain his views? The published document is before the Synod, along with the subsequent expositions of it by its author, and he himself is present in this body, with ample opportunity accorded to him of stating, explaining and vindicating his views. Is not the Synod then entitled, with all this evidence before it rendering a formal trial upon charges unnecessary, to proceed with the investigation and come to a decision of the question whether the Professor's peculiar teachings should be continued or prevented in the halls of the Theological Seminary? The Synod would, in pursuing this course, be sustained by the precedents of the Supreme Court of the Presbyterian Church.

In confirmation of this position I refer to the decisions rendered upon the examination of published views in the instances of the Rev. Samuel Harker, of the Rev. Hezekiah Balch, of the Rev. William C. Davis, of the Rev. Thomas B. Craighead, and of the Rev. Albert Barnes.*

Here a distinction must be observed: between the relation of the Perkins Professor personally to the Seminary, and the relation to it of the teaching of his views on the subject in question; between his continuing to teach, and his continuing to teach his special hypothesis of evolution. The Synod is not asked to remove him, but to disapprove the action of the Board consenting to his inculcation of that hypothesis, and also to prohibit the inculcation of the hypothesis, even as probably true. That the Synod's pronouncing judgment upon the Professor's published views, and taking order in regard to their being taught in the Seminary, would be, as has been charged, "to persecute him and tyrannise over him," I am unable to see.

It is contended that with the question of the truth or falsity of evolution this body has nothing to do. I answer that Dr. Woodrow affirms it, under limitations, to be probably true; and with the question whether, as Professor, he shall so teach, the Seminary *has* to do, and the Board of Directors has to do with it, and with it this Synod has to do.

It has been said: The minority report asserts that Dr. Woodrow inculcates and defends the hypothesis of evolution. I reply: It does not. It asks the Synod to adopt a resolution prohibiting its inculcation and defence. How prohibiting that sort of teaching can refer to the past, it is impossible to see.

It has been maintained that Dr. Woodrow has not taught the probable truth of his evolution hypothesis. No one has made the statement that he has. I never thought that he did more than expound the hypothesis without expressing an opinion in its favor. But he *now* states his belief of its probable truth, and his intention to teach its probable truth. What we move the Synod to do is to prohibit that teaching. It is vain to say—as has been said—that although, in obedience to his convictions, he will teach the probable truth of his hypothesis, he will not urge its acceptance upon the students. It will not be necessary for so able a teacher, after giving his reasons in favor of its probable truth, to exhort his pupils to receive it.

The point, it is urged again and again, the only point to which Dr. Woodrow directs his instructions, is the connexion between this hypothesis and the Bible. That is all. Yes; but what sort of connexion? Why,

* Baird's Digest, Bk. vii., Parts iv., vi., ix., x., xi.

this: the hypothesis being probably true, the ordinary interpretation of the Bible is probably untrue. It is modified by the hypothesis. It is to the teaching in a Seminary of that kind of connexion that objection is made and the Synod is asked to oppose their prohibition.

„ In the course of his speech Dr. Woodrow said that if we hold to an absolute sense of the Scriptures which may be different from the interpreted sense, we must believe that the Standards are not scriptural. No, sir; we believe that the Standards express the absolute sense, but in some respects our belief may not coincide with that sense. We are not infallible. When Dr. Woodrow has denied the scripturalness of the law in the Standards concerning marriage with a deceased wife's sister, did he believe that that part of the Standards expressed the absolute meaning of the Scriptures? If he did, he opposed what he believed to be the absolute sense of the Scriptures. If he did not, he admitted his belief that the Standards do not always express that sense.

The formidable array of testimonies which Dr. Woodrow has exhibited, in order to prove that his hypothesis of evolution is not in so unverified a condition as has been asserted, goes to show that he is satisfied with the evidence which supports it. He frankly confesses before the Synod that he is, under the limitations he states, a pronounced evolutionist. Is the Synod prepared to permit his inculcation of this view in our theological school?

I have never believed heretofore that the foundations of the Seminary were seriously endangered. Even in its darkest days I trusted that the kind Providence which had favored it from its beginning would continue to sustain it. But now I feel that the institution is on the edge of deadly peril. Since coming to this meeting I have heard the witticism that the opponents of evolution are not so much wrong as too late! I must retort that the advocates of its maintenance in the Seminary are too soon—too soon, sir, for the sentiment of the church by which the institution is upheld! In a certain part of this State there stood what seemed to be a sacred edifice. A stranger passing by inquired what it was, and was told that it was a Universalist church. Oh, said he, that is the no-hell church. The epithet damaged it. Let the hypothesis of evolution be inculcated in the theological school at Columbia, and to the question of the stranger, What institution is this? the answer will be, This is the Evolution Seminary. I do not deny that students may come to it, but the chief attraction will be its scientific teaching, and the majority of the people of God will withdraw from it their sympathy and their support.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the origin of life is a problem of the first importance, and that it is one of the most important problems of the present day. The author discusses the various theories of the origin of life, and shows that the most probable theory is that of spontaneous generation. He then discusses the evidence in favor of this theory, and shows that it is supported by the facts of the case. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the evidence in favor of the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the evidence is of the highest quality, and that it is of the most convincing nature. The author discusses the various experiments which have been conducted, and shows that they all support the theory of spontaneous generation. He then discusses the various objections which have been raised against this theory, and shows that they are all unavailing. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the evidence in favor of the theory of spontaneous generation. It is shown that the evidence is of the highest quality, and that it is of the most convincing nature. The author discusses the various experiments which have been conducted, and shows that they all support the theory of spontaneous generation. He then discusses the various objections which have been raised against this theory, and shows that they are all unavailing.



